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Performing Distance: The Response of Irish Professionals to Immigrants and Immigration

A thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology at Trinity College, University of Dublin, in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

2014

University of Dublin
Trinity College

Martina Byrne

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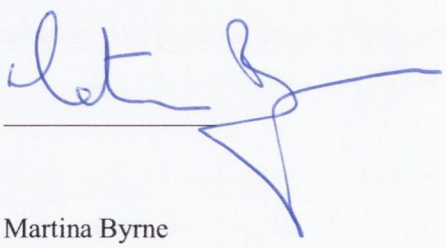

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Summary

Literature on immigration in Ireland has focused on analyses of rates and flows, the impact of labour migration, immigrants' experiences of racism and integration, and asylum/refugee studies. Empirical work on the response of the host population to immigration is dominated by studies on people occupying the lower levels of socio-economic attainment. Such studies consistently argue that the lower classes are less tolerant toward immigrants and more likely to exhibit racist behaviour than other social classes due to real or perceived competition for economic resources and/or low levels of education. There have been no in-depth qualitative studies of the Irish professional class in this respect until now. This peer research study seeks to generate a substantive theory of how members of this class respond to immigrants and immigration. Reaching this objective requires examining how Irish professionals conceptualise contemporary immigration, eliciting the factors that influence how they respond to immigrants and immigration, and exploring their main concerns in such discussions. My research contributes to the literature on the intersection of race, ethnicity, and class and to the literature on a small, yet influential, section of the Irish population whose relative advantages include workplace decision making, political power, and access to influential social networks such as the media. I employ grounded theory methodology, with its emphasis on the emergence of new theory through data rather than testing ideas or existing theories. Iterative coding and analysis is informed by the grounded theory recommendation to go beyond 'what are people saying' and explore 'what is happening'. The interviewees were formerly my professional class peers and aged between 30 and 60. Fieldwork was conducted in 2008 and 2009, a period of socio-economic change in Ireland, substantial even by historic and international comparison. Based on my findings, I argue that the main concern of the Irish professional class, when discussing immigration, is to perform, and be seen to perform, the professional social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism. Dissonance between negative perceptions of some immigrants and some fellow-nationals on the one hand, and class norms of tolerance and anti-racism on the other, is managed through a process I conceptualise as Performing Distance, which, I argue, is operationalised through a range of discursive strategies deemed suitable for the public domain or 'frontstage': disclaiming, hierarchising, distancing, deflecting, and rationalising. Critically, the performance of racialising discourse is confined to the private domain or 'backstage' among trusted friends and family. *Disclaiming* refers to the Performance of Distance by claiming to know little or nothing about the subject. *Hierarchising* refers to indigenous, as well as foreign-born, groups in Irish society categorised and deemed more/less socially acceptable. *Distancing* from raced and classed

others is further supported by descriptions of living and working in homogenous raced and classed spaces with no/few work colleagues, neighbours, or friends, who would be categorised as immigrants. Critically however, this study found that there exists an understanding of the term 'immigrant' which, while drawing on perceptions of racial and ethnic difference, distinguishes between people perceived to be in a position to contribute economically to the host state and groups deemed dependent, or potentially dependent, on state resources. Thus, professional class immigrants are not 'real immigrants'. While immigration is presented as 'not an issue' for the higher social classes, it is perceived to 'impinge' on the lower social classes who are understood to be in competition for resources such as jobs and welfare. Thus the 'problem' of immigration is *deflected* on to the Irish lower social classes. When immigration is problematised, the rhetoric of *rationality* is used, grounded mainly in economic arguments and, to a lesser extent, in a perceived threat to Irish cultural identity. Finally, *racialising* refers to my finding of a 'backstage' discourse which employs racial terms, stereotypes and tropes.

Although presented as six discrete sub-categories, the discursive strategies that constitute the process of Performing Distance are fuzzy and iterative, each shaping and influencing the other. Distancing is understood here in the sense of *pushing away* and excluding the unacceptable raced and/or classed other, not in the sense of *pulling away*, of retreat or retrenchment. The process of Performing Distance is understood in the sense of maintaining and re-producing existing privilege.

Theoretically, the study is informed by intersectionality which Whiteness theorists draw on to give a materialist grounding to the concepts of racism and racialisation because of what they identify as constructed racial hierarchies and ideologies whereby whites, regardless of class, hold common political and economic interests in opposition to the group interests of non-whites. Importantly, however, they propose that whiteness, as a constructed racial category, can be mediated by class and that intra-racial and inter-racial division is reflected in a discourse of norms, values, and respectability. Following Goffman's dramaturgical approach, Whiteness Studies theorise the emergence of a 'backstage' area where performances, which do not concur with contemporary values of political correctness, tolerance, and anti-racism, can be performed among trusted peers without fear of rejection. The bonding social capital of people regarded as peers is theorised as constructing a culturally acceptable 'backstage' space which protects the social, political, and economic advantage of a group that is racially, culturally, and materially privileged.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> From a rock in the middle of the ocean, we have populated the globe with approximately 70 million O'Sullivans, Murphys, and Walshes, not to mention the roughly one million Irish-born people who are currently living abroad. Of course, we don't go traipsing around the world without returning the favour – apart from the black stuff and a certain pint-sized, sunglasses-wearing rock star, we are renowned for our hospitality and love having people visit. It's no wonder then that in Irish, welcome, *céad míle fáilte*, translates as 'a hundred thousand welcomes'.
>
> (The Gathering, 2013).

A Hundred Thousand Welcomes

The text above is from a webpage entitled 'What it means to be Irish' on the website of *The Gathering Ireland 2013*, a government-backed project designed to tap into the tourism potential offered by the Irish diaspora. The Irish government hopes to attract 325,000 visitors in 2013 who otherwise would not have visited. This, the organisers say, would generate an extra €200 million in tourism revenue (The Gathering, 2013).

I find this extract useful to illustrate two prevailing, yet contested, tropes that surround what Mac Éinri (2012) calls Ireland's 'historically embedded tradition' of emigration. Firstly, that the Irish have emigrated, settled all over the world, and been successful, and secondly, that because of the welcome the Irish have received everywhere, there exists 'a hundred thousand welcomes' for visitors. Of course visitors, whether members of the Irish diaspora or not, merely visit. It is assumed and expected they will leave. But what of immigrants who have come to the Republic of Ireland, [1] and settled, in the past two decades? Are they extended a *céad míle fáilte,* a hundred thousand welcomes? That's the question at the centre of this research: how have the Irish responded to Simmel's eponymous stranger 'who comes today and stays tomorrow'?

[1] Henceforth 'the Republic' or 'Ireland'.

> The stranger is thus being discussed here, not in the sense often touched upon in the past, as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the person who comes today and stays tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the potential wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going. He is fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself (Simmel, 1950: 402).

It is twenty one years since Mc Veigh (1992) traced the specificities of racism in Irish society to the country's political history and structural location in the world. Mc Veigh argued that the historical legacy of being a white European colony and a country of emigration, with experience of anti-Irish racism at home and abroad, was used to refute any suggestion that Irish society could be racist. He demonstrated how this continued refutation ignored evidence to the contrary in the form of the racialisation of Irishness, diasporic and repatriated racism, religious sectarianism, and racism towards Irish Travellers. At the time Mc Veigh was writing, Ireland was still four years away from reaching its migration 'turning point': the last EU member state to become a country of net immigration (Ruhs, 2005). Almost a decade later, Lentin would critique the ongoing denial that Irish people could be racist and the prevalence of the notion that any racism evident was 'new', 'part of human nature', or 'caused' by the arrival of asylum seekers, refugees, and economic migrants (Lentin, 2001) in the 1990s and 2000s. Then, as the fieldwork for this thesis was underway, Garner described contemporary Ireland as being exemplary of a Western shift from 'racism without race' (i.e. the recognition that groups could be racialised in the absence of somatic or phenotypical [2] difference) to 'racism without racists' having become: 'an economic and social space organised by neoliberal principles of governance and the movement of capital and labour, resulting in the racialization of immigrants and Irish nationals alike, regardless of whether or not they are ostensibly white' (Garner, 2009: 41).

[2] Macro-level expressions of genetic make-up (Glasgow, 2009).

Situating the Research: The Economic and Social Space

In 1992, when Mc Veigh was writing on the specificities of racism in the Irish context, the Irish economy was coming out of the recession of the 1980s and entering the nascent period of unprecedented economic growth that characterised the mid-1990s to mid-2000s and came to be known as 'The Celtic Tiger'. [3] There had been substantial emigration throughout the 1980s. The annual outflow peaked at over 70,000 in 1989 (Quinn et al, 2008). However, the position stabilised in the early 1990s when the migration inflows and outflows were more or less in balance (ibid). Inward migration then grew steadily from the mid-1990s, arguably generated by employment opportunities accompanying exceptional economic growth. In addition to full employment, until 2004, Ireland had comparatively generous social welfare payments for individuals who met the requirements (Sweeney, 2007) and retained *jus solis* [4] citizenship entitlement, which had prevailed since the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, and constitutionally entitled all people born in the island of Ireland to birth-right citizenship. From 2000 to 2008, the Republic is said to have experienced one of the highest rates of inward immigration of all member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (O.E.C.D., 2008) peaking at almost 110,000 in the twelve months to April 2007 (Quinn et al, 2008). In 2008 and 2009, the period within which my research is situated, Ireland was, without question, demographically multi-ethnic, with non-Irish nationals representing 9.9 per cent of the population (Joyce, 2011). Media coverage of in-migration ranged from stories stressing the contribution of immigrants to the economy (Mac Cormaic, 2008) to the cost to the state of deporting asylum seekers (Lally, 2009).

However, by 2009, when the second tranche of my fieldwork was underway, Ireland was in the early stages of one of the most dramatic reversals of fortune of recent economic history (E.S.R.I., 2008). In the first quarter of 2008, the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) recorded unemployment at 4.6 per cent and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) estimated it could reach 7 per cent by 2011 (Tansey, 2008). In fact, unemployment reached 11.6 per cent in 2009 (C.S.O., 2009) and a return to net emigration was recorded (C.S.O., 2010). Political and popular discourse was now

[3] The term 'Celtic Tiger' was coined by the US investment bankers Morgan Stanley in 1994. For an outline of the 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom see Kirby (2002).

[4] Citizenship entitlement to all born on the island of Ireland. This changed to *jus sanguinis* or blood-right citizenship following a constitutional referendum in 2004 (see Lentin and Mc Veigh, 2006: 51).

dominated by talk of recession and emigration, with the media citing anecdotes of professionals such as accountants applying for jobs in McDonalds (O' Connell, 2009).

Much of the literature on immigration in Ireland has focused on statistical analyses of rates and flows, the impact of labour migration, migrants' experiences of racism, asylum and refugee studies, children and migration, return migration, gender and migration, and integration and citizenship (Mac Éinrí and White, 2008). While studies have been conducted on the response of Irish people to immigrants and immigration, very little qualitative research has been carried out on the response of Irish professionals to contemporary immigration (see Chapter 2). My study seeks to find out how immigrants are perceived and received by well-educated white Irish members of the professional social class.

Irish Professionals, Immigrants and Immigration

As I mention above, Mac Éinrí and White (2008) argue that the literature on immigration in Ireland focuses largely on the labour market and the lived experiences of immigrants both voluntary (e.g. many, but not all, economic migrants) and involuntary (e.g. asylum seekers and refugees). Available attitudinal research on immigration in Ireland includes large-scale quantitative studies such as the European Union-led *Eurobarometer* and *European Social Surveys* and secondary analysis of same (Coenders et al, 2005; Garner and White, 2001; O' Connell, 2003; Quillian, 1995; Semyonov et al, 2008). There also exist national quantitative surveys including three social distance surveys by Mac Gréil and the *Irish Social and Political Attitudes Survey* (ISPAS) undertaken in 2002 (Garry et al, 2006; Mac Gréil, 1978, 1996, 2011) in addition to quantitative studies in specific regions (Haynes et al, 2008a). Small qualitative studies have also been carried out, mostly among immigrants or in lower class areas with high levels of population diversity (Amnesty International, 2000; Feldman, 2006; Haynes et al, 2008a; Mac Lachlan and O' Connell, 2000; See National Action Plan Against Racism, 2005; Ní Chonaill, 2007).

Much of this research, including the *European Social Surveys* and *Eurobarometer,* suggests a hardening of attitudes in Ireland on immigration issues between 1997 and 2003 (Garner and White, 2001; Haynes et al, 2008a; Hughes et al, 2007; Ní Chonaill, 2007; Semyonov et al, 2008). Drawing on data from Mac Gréil's (1996) longitudinal social distance survey, European-wide survey data (Eurobarometer, 1997, 2000), and the *Irish*

Social and Political Attitudes Survey (ISPAS) of 2002, O'Connell (2003) found widespread agreement with negative statements about minorities in Ireland. He found this apparent hardening of attitudes over the period 1997 to 2002 despite 'claims of ever greater political correctness and the background of an unprecedented economic boom' and at a time of greater contact with, and presence of, immigrant minorities in Ireland (2003: 47). This period coincided with a rise in the average inflow of immigrants from 23,400 per annum between 1996 and 2000 to 51,000 per annum in 2005 (Barrett and Bergin, 2007).

In 2008, prior to the Irish public becoming aware of the imminent recession, Haynes et al surveyed people living in the west, mid-west, and south-west of Ireland on their knowledge and beliefs regarding immigrants (including asylum seekers and refugees). They found 86.6 per cent agreed that it was a 'good thing for any society to be made up of people from different cultures and religions', and 69.7 per cent felt that 'diversity in terms of race, religion, or culture adds to its strengths.' However, 78.9 per cent tended to agree that there was a 'limit to how many people of other races, religions or cultures a society can accept' and 67.1 per cent believed Irish society had 'reached its limits' and that there 'would be problems' if there was further immigration (Haynes et al, 2008a). Just over a year later, with the public now very much aware of the recession, a survey of a national quota sample, commissioned by *The Irish Times* reported that 72 per cent of people interviewed wanted a reduction in the number of immigrants in Ireland and 29 per cent of those would like 'most immigrants' to leave (O' Brien, 2009). It is due to research outputs such as these that I am interested in the Irish response to immigration.

I am specifically interested in the response of Irish professionals not least because, throughout Europe, the response of the professional social class to immigrants is under-researched and there have been no in-depth, qualitative studies undertaken in Ireland until now. Empirical work on immigration in Ireland is dominated by studies which focus on people occupying the lower levels of socio-economic attainment (i.e. the working class and unemployed) rather than the middle or professional classes. Such studies consistently argue that the lower classes are less tolerant towards immigrants and more likely to exhibit racist behaviour and attitudes than other social classes due to real or perceived competition for economic resources and/or low levels of education (Hughes et al, 2007; Keogh, 2000; Mac Gréil, 1978, 1996, 2011; O' Connell, 2003). 'Academic and journalistic practice', writes Garner, 'has been to characterise working class communities either as the sole source of racism, or as the most stubbornly racist section of an

otherwise increasingly tolerant society' (2007b: 55). While the focus on the lower classes has undoubtedly provided rich data, little or no interrogation is made of the disposition of tolerance and anti-racism attributed to the higher classes. Mac Gréil, for example, attributes what he calls the 'tolerance exhibited by the top classes' to the sense of personal security which 'enables them to be more tolerant and open than their less secure fellow citizens at the bottom of the class ladder' (1996: 150). On the other extreme, Van Dijk writes of 'white elite groups and institutions, such as politics, the media, scholarship and corporate business, whose prestige, power and influence have played a prominent role in the 'pre-formulation' of racism at large' (Van Dijk, 1997: 165). Decades previously Blumer (1958: 6) identified intellectual and social elites and public figures of prominence as key figures in the 'characterisation of the subordinate group'.

That unemployed and lower skilled Irish people perceive themselves in competition with immigrants for resources such as employment, social welfare payments, healthcare, housing, and schools, is the rationale given most commonly for hardening attitudes among this social class. Generally, resource-competition arguments suggest hostility intensifies in economic downturns (Quillian, 1995; Scheepers et al, 2002). However, Garner (2003) argues that racism in Ireland intensified from the mid-1990s as the economy was growing. Analyses of the *European Social Survey* 2002/2003 by O'Connell (2005) suggest that, when European economies like Ireland are growing, and concerns over economic rivalry between groups decrease, concerns related to cultural identity increase, giving rise to what Barker (1981) theorised as 'new' racism', a form of racism based on differences in culture rather than biology.

The argument that resource-competition, where it exists, affects the lower classes more significantly is, however, compelling, and is perhaps one reason why, throughout Europe, the interaction between members of the indigenous professional social class and immigrants is under-researched by comparison to studies on other social classes and why no in-depth qualitative studies have been undertaken in Ireland on the response of the professional social class to immigration and immigrants. As well as the common-sense notion that professionals are not in competition with immigrants for employment, housing, hospital beds, or school places, there exists the assumption that the well-educated are more tolerant and welcoming of population diversity than the lower classes. For example, referring to the European Social Survey (ESS) 2003, Hughes et al note that the data 'conceal differences between sub-populations and that in Ireland, as elsewhere, more highly educated people and younger people are more likely to exhibit more tolerant

attitudes to migrants' (2007: 233).This assumption by Hughes et al and others persists as common sense despite Jackman and Muja (1984) contesting whether formal education in the United States (US) fundamentally changes attitudes or simply teaches people to answer sensitive questions in a socially desirable way and Wellman (1993) arguing that middle class whites in the US are educated to verbalise tolerance. Williams (1997) too, has critiqued the way in which racism as 'ignorance' is defined as a property of the lower classes implying that a good education inevitably lifts one 'above that sort of thing'. Class should not be 'an explanatory trash-bin of racial prejudice', she argues (1997: 33).

It should be noted that I use the term 'tolerance' because it is the word most commonly used in the literature and empirical studies to which I refer. However, I problematize the term with its overtones of 'allowing', 'indulging', or 'enduring.' Following Essed (1991), I feel it is useful to point out that 'being tolerant' of someone or something is fundamentally different from 'being respectful', 'welcoming', or 'well-disposed'.

In the European context, Balibar argues that the higher social classes are not especially tolerant of the immigrant other and that there exists 'the tendency to magnify popular racism while letting pass the strategies of denial of 'cultivated' individuals more skilled in the wiles of the political language-game' (1991b: 223). Balibar (1991b) also theorised, and a number of empirical studies have shown, the higher social classes strategically deflect attention towards the intolerance of others, most often the indigenous lower classes (Houts Picca and Feagin, 2007; Van Dijk, 1993). Such negative representations of the lower class should be understood as attempts on the part of middle class people to accrue value for themselves and their own social class position (Skeggs, 2004: 118). Indeed, Lawler describes the white working class in England being essentialised by the media and politicians as racist, threatened, unhappy, inferior, and backward (Lawler, 2012). The more these representations are reproduced, the more the white middle class remains 'ordinary, progressive, and "normal"' (Lawler, 2012: 422) rendering them, I suggest, of less interest to researchers.

Indeed Wellman implicates the sociological methodologies of middle class researchers in the perpetuation of the 'self-aggrandising conclusion that racism is restricted to poor and working class whites' (Wellman, 1993: 60). He argues, for example, that if an interviewee expresses an attitude which, from the researcher's point of view, is based on an accurate judgement or belief, then it is not coded as racial prejudice.

As a result, it is likely that individuals coded as prejudiced will be individuals who express 'incorrect' judgements - in other words judgements that do not share the sociologist's racial world view which is frequently a middle or professional class world view:

> Thus, the sociological 'net' with which we go fishing for racists is really capable of catching only those whose racial facts differ from our own. When we 'catch' people like ourselves, we are without a systematic theory to explain why they are in our net. But our usual catch of prejudiced people has been limited to poor and working-class people –the Archie Bunkers. They are the people who, because of their class origins have either not learned the proper ways of presenting racial views to sociological questioners or find middle class ideas about race relations irrelevant to their situation (Wellman, 1993: 31).

My research aims to contribute then, not alone to the literature on the intersection of race, ethnicity, and class, but also to the literature on a small, [5] yet influential, section of the Irish population whose relative advantages include workplace decision making, political power [6] and access to influential social networks such as the media (Garner, 2003; Wieviorka, 1995). Documentary research carried out for this study indicates that much of the research into class in Ireland has been empirical, conceptualising class in terms of positions in the overall economic structure, focusing on mobility, distribution of wealth and poverty, and saying little about the social, cultural and agency dimensions of class. Significantly less information is available, for example, on the professional and managerial classes and how their norms and values, behaviour, and lifestyles shape contemporary Irish society. Following Breen and Whelan (1996), I argue that such individuals are located within a framework of social power (whether they are aware of it or not) and that race and ethnicity as well as class are dimensions of such social power.

Selecting Grounded Theory

The overall aim of my study is to develop a substantive grounded theory of how white Irish professionals respond to immigrants and immigration in contemporary Ireland.

[5] 12.4 per cent of the workforce (C.S.O., 2007b: 57)
[6] 47 per cent of the politicians elected to Dáil Eireann in 2002 were from the professional social class (Galligan, 2005).

There were a number of reasons why grounded theory appealed, three of which I mention just briefly here as I discuss my choice of grounded theory methods in detail in Chapter 4.

Firstly, the paucity of literature on the professional class and immigrants, which might have suggested hypotheses for testing, coupled with the fact that the fieldwork was taking place in what was a rapidly changing socio-economic context, meant this study was, unavoidably, 'knowledge in the making' (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998: 174). As I had no hypotheses from which to work, the 'open mind' approach of grounded theory appealed, as did the endorsement by Glaser (1978) not just to ask 'what are they saying here?' but to persistently pose the question: 'what is happening here?' Secondly, a distinction is made in grounded theory between substantive and formal theories. Substantive theories are closely linked to the context in which the research is grounded and, only after they have been taken up and used can these theories become formal (Bryant, 2009). Last but not least, ontologically, I was drawn toward the emergence of new theory through research data rather than testing existing ideas or theories (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 2002; Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Research Objective and Questions

As I explain in detail in Chapter 4, which covers the methodology and method of this research, pre-defining research questions in a grounded theory study is contradictory, as the focus of the research problem should emerge through the process and from the research participants' perspective. However, to give the reader some guidance as to what to expect, the broad aim of this study is to develop a substantive theory of how members of the Irish professional class respond to immigration and immigrants in contemporary Ireland. Reaching this objective required:

- Ascertaining how white Irish members of the professional class conceptualise contemporary immigration and immigrants.
- Eliciting the factors that influence how Irish professionals respond to immigrants and immigration.
- Exploring the main concern/s of the Irish professional class in discussions on immigrants and immigration.

With these aims in mind, the research questions which provided focus for the early part of the fieldwork included:

- Who do Irish professionals categorise as immigrants and what discourse or experience informs these categories?
- What do Irish professionals profess to know about the lived experience of immigrants they meet in the workplace, neighbourhood, through the schools and colleges of their children, and other public places?
- Are their opinions formed by third party or mediated information, informal/formal conversations, or storytelling?
- How do Irish professionals respond to Ireland's multi-ethnic status: as an opportunity or a threat? And as an opportunity for, or threat to, which aspects of Irish life?
- What factors influence this response and what is happening when Irish professionals discuss immigrants and immigration?

Details of the questions asked and topics raised in interviews are provided in Chapter 4.

A Personal Statement

To assist the reader in judging to what extent the subject of this study and its findings are influenced by my personal background, let me provide some information about myself and 'where I'm coming from'.

My professional background is in corporate and political communications. Working as a consultant in Dublin in the 2000s, I noticed a disinterest among some Irish colleagues and clients when, cognisant of Ireland's 'new' multi-ethnic population, it was recommended that say, public information campaigns we were working on should include culture- and language-appropriate messages. While some of my peers welcomed the diverse population as a positive development and an indication that Ireland had 'joined the 21st century', others appeared tongue-tied when discussing population groups from outside Ireland, most specifically people who were visibly different to themselves, particularly in skin tone. If I thought about it at all at the time, I just assumed this was due to a concern not to publicly embarrass themselves by saying 'the wrong thing' or using 'un-PC' language in the context of a business meeting. And yet, in my experience, clients were

normally anxious to obtain the highest possible 'opportunities to see' [7] for their publicity/public information campaigns. Yet, regularly, a hasty decision would be taken to 'take an advertisement in *Polska Gazetta* [8] and have some of information materials translated into Mandarin, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

I was also aware that in more informal circumstances than prevailed at business meetings, negative stereotypes of some immigrant (and indigenous) groups were occasionally used in, for example, stories of welfare fraud, disease, or crime. At most, someone might express his or her discomfort, usually non-verbally, perhaps with a glare or a raised eyebrow but frequently the response (and defence) would be an admonition to 'get a sense of humour' or 'not be so bloody PC'. I do not wish to suggest that I thought much about these divergent formal/informal comments at the time but during the analysis of the data collected for this study, the memory returned. Of course, I knew that such stories and comments went against the professional social class norm of tolerance and anti-racism and that there were situations where such comments would have been taboo, for example, in front of people one did not know well. Not that any of this was a common occurrence. I can recall few, if any, in-depth conversations in the workplace, formally or informally, when immigration or Ireland's changed demographics were discussed. For a profession that prides itself on its knowledge of current affairs and societal trends and changes, immigration simply was not a topic of conversation.

It was, however, an occasional topic of conversation among relatives and friends. Like most Irish families, mine have experienced emigration in every generation to-date and relatives have worked and settled in three continents. Also, in the 2000s, in the rural area of my childhood home, Polish immigrants began working on local farms and were generally referred to in positive terms as hard working and observant of their Catholic faith. Many friends had immigrant home helps and live-in child carers who were also generally discussed in positive terms, not least because they were so much more readily available and less expensive than their Irish peers. However, some friends and acquaintances also talked of the reluctance (not inability) of some immigrant groups to gain proficiency in the English language; of excessive drinking – although not in pubs; of providing exaggerated or false qualifications; of 'work shy' habits; illegal working; social welfare fraud and other criminal activity; of poor hygiene habits (specifically the numbers

[7] A standard communications industry measurement for such campaigns.
[8] The newspaper with the largest Polish readership in the Republic at the time.

sharing a room/house) and of killing and eating swans. [9] Ironically, I was aware, as were most of the speakers, that we all knew Irish people who had worked illegally or on the black market abroad, some of whom pretended to have work experience they did not, such as the '*Aer Lingus* carpenters' (i.e. individuals who received their 'carpentry qualification' during the flight to the US). Certainly we were all familiar with the experience of emigrants sharing accommodation (including the couches and floors) of other Irish emigrants. It was practically a rite of passage. More seriously, I heard stories of increased levels of crime being attributable to immigrants and was warned of the dangers (ranging from overcharging to sexual assault) of taking taxis driven by black drivers.

In *The Art of Listening*, Les Back suggests one of the tasks of sociology is to 'pay attention to what is ignored' (2007: 48). A significant factor in the decision to undertake a MPhil in Race and Ethnicity and, subsequently, a PhD on this topic, was my curiosity about the mis-match between the experiences in my professional and private life and the paucity of literature on the Irish professional social class and immigrants. I was even more surprised to discover that such literature was scant not just in Ireland, but in other countries, including countries with much longer histories of population diversity.

This is perhaps an appropriate time to clarify that it was not my intention to go 'fishing for racists' per Wellman (1993) (above) in the sense of labelling individual peoples' words or actions. I want to position this thesis in a wide structural or societal approach to the intersection of class, race and ethnicity, so individual discourse is understood as the embodiment of societal class and racial/ethnic relations. I understand racism not as individual ignorance, nor even as solely grounded in phenotypical difference or resource competition, but rather as a collective phenomenon with a range of expressions, in other words, taking a range of forms over time and space. Per Van Dijk (1993: 6), individual discourses are only the 'locally variable, micro-level manifestations' of a system of domination. I also find persuasive Memmi's (2000) assessment that:

> We risk behaving in a racist manner each time we believe ourselves threatened in our privileges, in our wellbeing, or in our security. We conduct ourselves like racists when we try to reconstruct a state of parity that we believe has been or might soon be lost. If these situations arise often, racism assuredly becomes one of the most

[9] On one occasion, an acquaintance gave me precise figures on the reduction in swans in Galway bay caused by immigrants killing and eating them.

> ordinary responses. And the onus rests on us not to succumb, to exorcise the fear, to analyse what is most often an illusory danger, and to defend ourselves by means other than a destructive confabulation or mythification of the other. Conversely, one gains nothing by closing one's eyes to this aspect of human reality. On the contrary, only by being fully cognizant of it can we hope to succeed (Memmi, 2000: 23-25).

Finally, following Bonilla-Silva (2006), I argue that individuals are responsible for their own actions, and indeed inactions, that may contribute towards the racialisation of any group (be that on the basis of phenotype or economic, social or cultural capital) and the perpetuation of racisms, covertly or overtly, whether that is passing on urban myths about predatory black taxi drivers or employment practices which filter eligible candidates with 'foreign' names.

Format

The next chapter presents an overview of the socio-economic and political context within which the fieldwork for this study was undertaken in 2008 and 2009. Chapter 3 examines the theoretical discourses that have shaped my understanding of the intersection of race, ethnicity and class, most particularly work by Whiteness Studies scholars. In Chapter 4, the ontological, epistemological, and methodological propositions that inform the study are described, as well as the methods undertaken in its conduct, and issues associated with carrying out peer research. Also in this chapter, I capture the methodological and practical challenges I encountered and document some of my own learning and reflections on the process of conducting the study. Chapter 5 links the research method employed to the findings that emerged, presenting an overview of the substantive theory of Performing Distance, which represents the core finding of my study. This chapter also serves to introduce the findings that inform the core category of Performing Distance and which are presented and discussed in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. The final chapter summarises the theoretical and methodological contribution of my research and addresses the implications and the limitations of the study.

I can only wish that this typical thesis format reflected the actual trajectory of this study. After all, '[t]he traditional method for establishing believability in the social and

behavioural sciences takes a sequential, narrative form' (Wellman, 1993: 63). 'The research act', he says, 'supposedly duplicates the linear, sequential form in which the findings are communicated' (ibid: 64). That's not how it happened for Wellman, he admits, and that is not how it happened for me either and I would feel sorry for any reader who had to follow a written representation of the multi-directional, forwards and backwards, starts and stops, false trails, loops, and serendipitous discoveries, that went on over the past few years. Accepting this, please follow this straightforward, linear format in the knowledge that is not how it was and that, for example, a lot of literature was being read while the fieldwork was going on as I searched to find some theory, any theory, that would help explain the messy, confusing data I was transcribing at the same time. This thesis thus does not reflect the research journey; rather, it's where I ended up.

Chapter 2: Expansion and Contraction: Ireland 2008-09

> While we in Ireland have a near morbid fascination with emigration, there is almost no discussion of immigration (O' Brien, 2013b).

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I referred to the unprecedented socio-economic and demographic changes in the Republic of Ireland that provide the backdrop to this study. Since I understand all research to be contingent and contextual, and to assist the reader's understanding of what may have informed the comments of the people interviewed, in this chapter I present an overview of the economic, demographic, and political and policy context within which this study is set.

The economic context is relevant because, arguably, it was both a 'pull' factor for new and returning immigrants and a 'push' factor for new and returning emigrants and, as my data shows, immigration and the economy are closely associated for the participants in my study, much more so than cultural issues. The view that immigration is a predominantly economic matter is also pertinent when discussing various definitions of the term 'immigrant' and how official definitions differ from the popular understanding and use of the term. As my data captures some of the misinformation that exists in public discourse in Ireland, it is also useful to present available statistics on actual inward migration. Legislative and policy changes, as well as the discourse of politicians and the media, are also relevant because interviewees reference perceived action (and inaction) of the Irish government in relation to immigration, and the approach taken by the Irish media, to support their response to immigration. Also in this chapter I summarise some of the empirical studies undertaken by other researchers in and around the period of my fieldwork (2008-2009). Finally, since my data shows that, for a minority of the professionals I talked to, the perceived threat of cultural diminution informs their responses, I outline the construction of modern Irish identity as Catholic, Gaelic and Nationalist, and show how, since independence, concerns have existed that openness to the other necessitates a disavowal or diminution of Irish national identity.

'This historic contraction': The Socio-Economic Context

In the 1990s, Ireland's economy experienced 'unprecedented levels of prosperity' (Ruhs and Quinn, 2009) and its economic policies were put forward as a model for other EU member states (Allen, 2007), although some commentators, then and now, critique these policies as favouring higher income groups while people in lower income groups lost out (Allen, 2000; Coulter and Coleman, 2003; O' Hearn, 2003). On the one hand, for example, Fahey et al found a dramatic increase in the proportion of professional and managerial jobs for both men and women between 1991 and 2002 (2007: 72) while on the other hand, as we see in this chapter, poverty levels remained stubbornly high.

In addition to cutting corporate tax and reducing regulation on business, the Irish government sought to develop a 'flexible' labour market in the 1990s and 2000s. The principle target of this planning was immigrant labour, according to Allen (2007), and this informed (among other policies) the introduction of employment or work permits and visas, restrictions on family re-unification and access to social welfare, that combined to essentialise incoming immigrant workers as *gastarbeiten* (guest workers) that is to say temporary, transient individuals (rather than members of family units) requiring little by way of social supports or legislative protection. Quinn describes Ireland's approach to economic migration as a 'relatively liberal system' which was 'employer-led' and 'lightly regulated' (Quinn, 2010b: xxvi). The political and business discourse of the time was of labour and skills shortages, numbered in the thousands depending on the sector, which had the potential to jeopardise burgeoning economic growth (Allen, 2007; Hayward and Howard, 2007). A report by Power and Szlovak on immigrants and the Irish economy, highlights that, given the full employment that characterised 2001 to 2007, and the related difficulties for employers in recruiting and retaining employees, the 'inflows of migrant labour from overseas became a very necessary requirement in order to sustain growth in the economy and to push the potential growth rate higher' (Power and Szlovak, 2012: ix). In this chapter, and in my findings chapters, we see how such 'necessary' and desirable inward migration pre-recession subsequently comes to be characterised as a problematic 'influx' and 'flood'.

Between 2000 and 2007 the annual average growth in Irish Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 5.7 per cent (E.S.R.I., 2013). At its peak, in 2004, Ireland had the second highest GDP per capita, expressed in terms of purchasing power, within the EU (C.S.O., 2006b).

During these years property prices in Ireland rose by a compound annual rate of 11 per cent (E.S.R.I., 2013). All was well, as *An Taoiseach,* [10] Bertie Ahern, said in 2006, the 'boom was getting more boomier' (O' Toole, 2009: 117).

In fact, the unemployment rate in Ireland had increased slightly from a low point of 3.6 per cent in 2001 to 4.2 per cent in 2005 but remained the lowest unemployment rate in the EU at less than half of the EU average (C.S.O., 2006b). The long-term unemployment rate was 1.4 per cent in 2004, considerably lower than the EU average of 4.1 per cent and yet, importantly, the proportion of people-at-risk-of-poverty was 21 per cent in 2004, one of the highest rates in the EU (ibid) and was 18 per cent in 2006 when the EU average was 16 per cent (C.S.O., 2007c). The effect of pensions and social welfare transfers on reducing the at-risk-of-poverty rate was low in Ireland compared with other EU countries. In 2002, for example, social protection expenditure in Ireland was less than 16 per cent of GDP, the lowest of the EU 15 [11] (C.S.O., 2006b). One possible explanation is given by the economics editor of *The Irish Times* when he said that social insurance contributions are very low in Ireland compared to the average in the euro zone (O' Brien, 2013a) so there is less to re-distribute. These poverty statistics underpin angry public rebuttals to subsequent statements by Irish politicians to the effect that 'we all partied [during the economic boom]', a comment made by the Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan, on the RTE television programme *Prime Time* in 2010 (R.T.E., 2010) and that Irish people 'simply went mad borrowing' in a 'system that spawned greed', according to *An Taoiseach,* Enda Kenny, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2012 (R.T.E., 2012).

Early signs of trouble came in June 2008 when, just as the first tranche of my field-work was underway, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) forecast that, later in the year, Ireland could experience a recession for the first time since 1983 (Barrett et al, 2008) and, between the first quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of 2009, the number of people unemployed in Ireland increased by 104 per cent (Ruhs and Quinn, 2009). By September 2008, the global financial services firm, Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., had become the biggest bankruptcy in US history (Humer and Stempel, 2011). At the end of that month, amid international banking turmoil, the Irish government announced a €400 billion guarantee scheme covering the country's six main banks (Murray-Brown and

[10] *An Taoiseach* is the Irish language equivalent of 'leader of the government'.
[11] EU 15: Ireland, United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden

Dennis, 2008). The previous summer, the few commentators who warned of potential economic downturn were admonished by *An Taoiseach*, Bertie Ahern, who said he 'did not know how people who engaged in moaning about the economy did not commit suicide'. [12]

By 2009, when the second tranche of my fieldwork was underway, a 'contraction' in the Irish economy occurred, 'large by both historic and international comparisons' (E.S.R.I., 2008). Indeed, Ireland was in the early stages of one of the most dramatic reversals of fortune of recent economic history and one which would, in time, require a financial rescue package from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F., 2010). With the onset of the global financial crisis, the Irish property sector collapsed and prices of residential properties halved from their peak in 2007 to March 2013 (E.S.R.I., 2013). The collapse of the construction and banking sectors meant that the Irish economy entered a very deep recession in 2008 as evidenced by the fact that between 2008 and 2011 real GDP declined by 5.4 per cent (ibid). By 2010, 6.2 per cent of the population was living in consistent poverty and unemployment had increased substantially so that, by 2011, the country's unemployment rate was the fifth highest in the EU (C.S.O., 2012). One could say the Irish economy retained its position as a model for other European countries except that, by 2009, it was as a model of public and private debt and economic collapse.

This was the period of rapid economic expansion and contraction during which I was in the field, and which informs my interviewees' comments, including that, pre-recession, immigrants were (largely) welcome as necessary drivers of economic growth while post-recession, the expectation was that most of these transient individuals would 'go home' or 'move on' to the next boom in the next country of destination.

'One in ten are foreign nationals': The Demographic Context

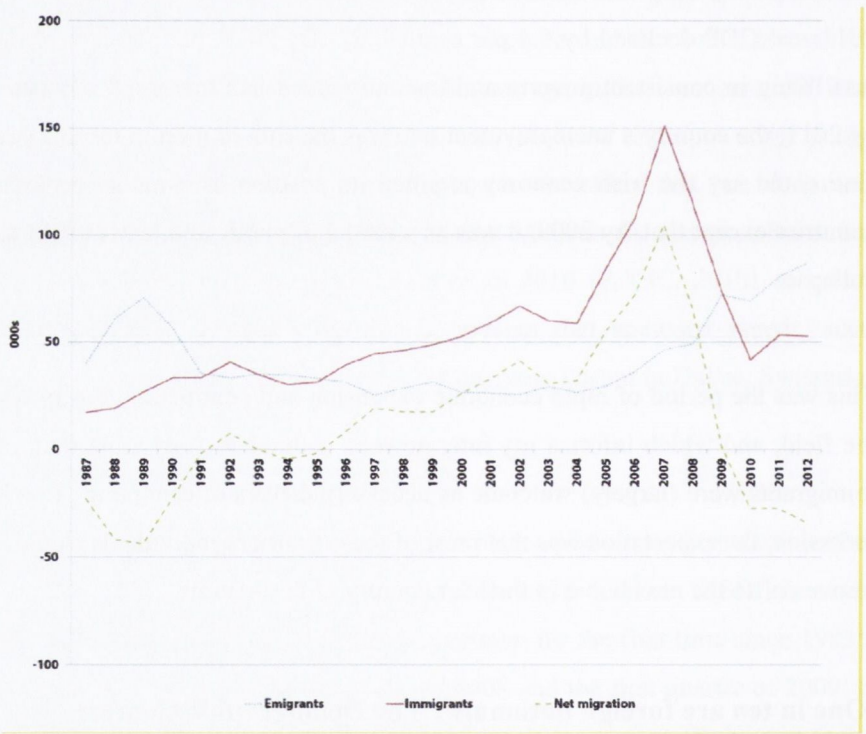
In the period 1996 to 2005 the population in the Republic of Ireland had increased by almost 14 per cent to over 4.1 million, the second highest rate of increase in the EU and significantly higher than EU growth of just 2.5 per cent (C.S.O., 2006b). Contributing to this population growth was the increase in non-Irish.

[12] Bertie Ahern subsequently apologised for the remark (R.T.E., 2007).

In just under a decade, between 2002 and 2011, the proportion of non-Irish increased from 6 to 12 per cent (Mc Ginnity et al, 2013). Table 1 (below) illustrates the dramatic nature of this demographic shift, in particular, that which followed the accession of the EU 10 states in 2004 and entry into recession in 2009.

While net inward migration was no doubt the major contributing factor, another was the traditionally high fertility rate in Ireland, which remained the highest in the EU in 2004 (C.S.O., 2006b), a fact rarely mentioned, if at all, in political and media commentary on the 'maternity hospital crisis' which preceded a Citizenship Referendum in 2004 and to which I return below.

Table 1: Immigration, Emigration and Net Migration 1987-2012



Note: Year to April of reference year. Source: CSO, Population and Migration Estimates, various releases (includes revised 2007-2011 data). Reproduced from: *Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2012* (Mc Ginnity et al, 2013: 15).

Before I look at what are, unquestionably, exceptional inward migration figures, it is helpful to know how the United Nations (UN) distinguishes two basic categories of immigrant, long and short-term. A long-term immigrant is someone who moves to a country other than that of her/his usual residence for a period of at least a year so that the country of destination effectively becomes the country of residence. A short-term immigrant is someone who moves for a period of more than three months but less than a year and so includes people staying for recreation or business. Long-term immigrants can be sub-divided into nationals of the European Economic Area [13] (EEA) and non-EEA nationals. The latter can be further divided into employment-based immigrants and non-employment based immigrants, which includes applicants for asylum (Quinn et al, 2008: 62). However, Quinn et al (2008) also report that it is clear from published materials that, contrary to the UN definition, some European Union (EU) member states regard the term 'immigrant' as applicable only to non-EU nationals. As discussed in Chapter 6, my findings suggest the term 'immigrant' has an even more limited application than what Quinn et al posit, even among the well-educated, politically-aware, and media-literate.

The Irish Census of 2006 is the census data pertaining at the time of data collection for this study and, importantly, is the data informing public (including media) discourse. It records that 10.1 per cent of the population of the Republic of Ireland (of just over four million persons) was not of Irish nationality or, to use the Central Statistics Office term, 'non-Irish nationals'. See breakdown by nationality in Table 2 below (Nolan and Maitre, 2009: 43)

Table 2: Total Population in 2006 Classified by Nationality

Irish	3,706,683
UK	112,548
Other EU 15	42,693
EU 10	120,534
Other Europe	24,425
Asia	46,952
Africa	35,326
America (USA)	21,124
Total Population	4,172,013
Non-Irish Population	419,733
Per cent Non-Irish	10.1

[13] EEA: The European Economic Area comprises all EU member states plus Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

As a proportion of the 10.1 per cent, in 2006 immigrants from the US accounted for 5 per cent , Asians comprised 11 per cent, and 8 per cent were from Africa (Nolan and Maitre, 2009: 43). The largest immigrant group was UK nationals (Nolan and Maitre, 2009: 43) constituting over 26 per cent of 'non-nationals', the majority having arrived in the 1990s.

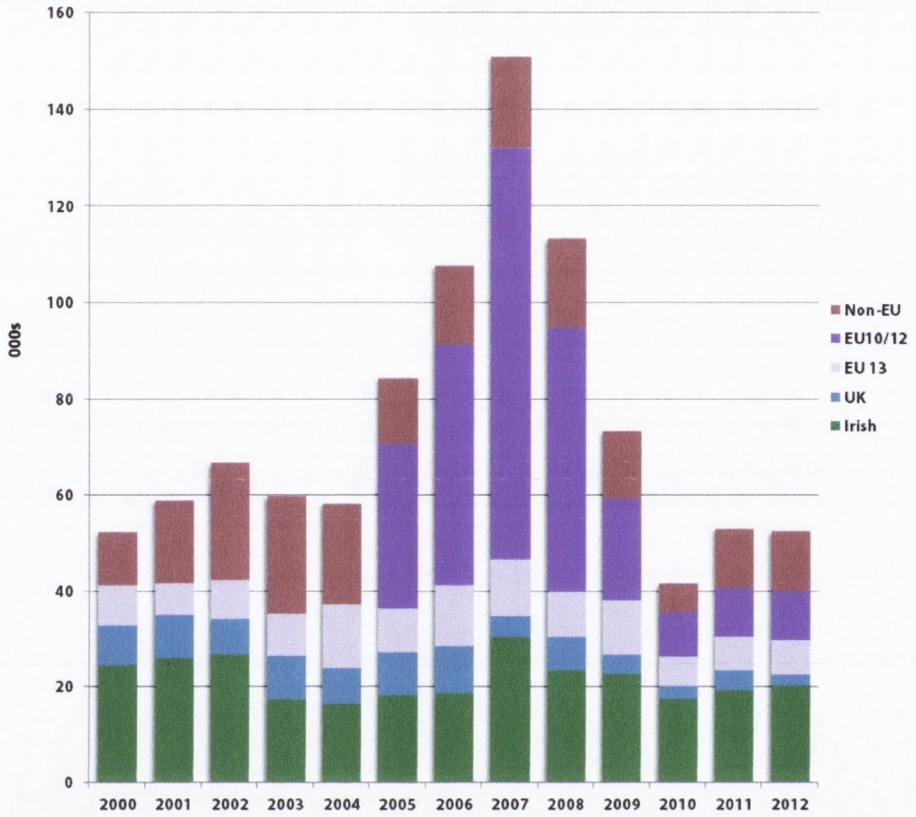
Nationals of the EU 15 [14] accounted for 37 per cent of non-nationals and nationals from the EU 10 [15] (i.e. states that acceded in 2004) accounted for 29 per cent of non-nationals (Nolan and Maitre, 2009). Taken together, this means that 66 per cent of immigrants living in the Republic were from another EU member state (see Table 2 above). Nationals of many (but not all) EU member states have reciprocal unrestricted legal rights to migrate to/from and work in another EU state.

Table 3 (below) shows the data above from Census 2006 in the context of the decade.

[14] EU 15: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

[15] EU 10: The states that acceded in 2004, namely Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. (Note: EU 12 refers to the EU 10 plus the two states who acceded in 2007, namely Bulgaria and Romania).

Table 3: Nationality breakdown of immigration flows 2000-2012



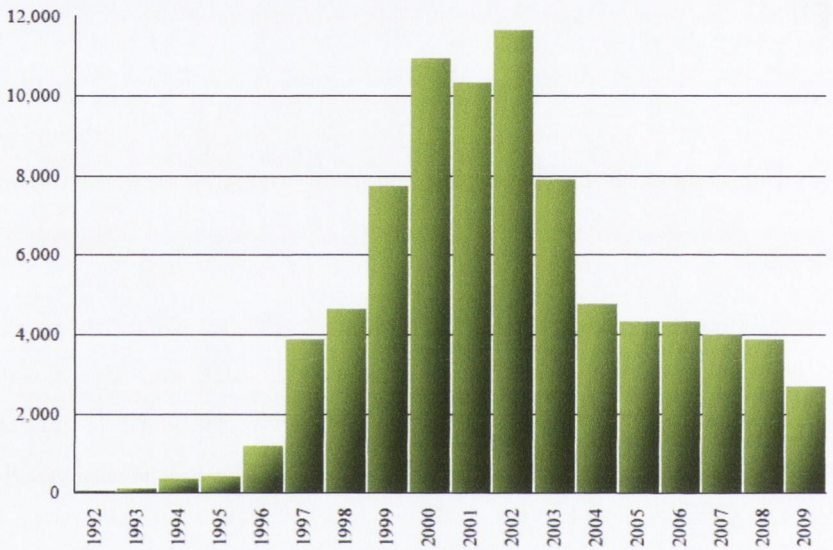
Note: Year to April of reference year. Source: CSO, Population and Migration Estimates, various releases (includes revised 2007-2011 data). Reproduced from: *Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2012* (Mc Ginnity et al, 2013: 17)

Legal routes for people from outside the EU to immigrate to the Republic of Ireland include work-permits, visas or authorisations, intra-company transfers/traineeships, and business permits. To put this into context, the number of Employment Permits issued in 2006 was 23,898 which included 16,600 renewals (Nolan and Maitre, 2009).

Non-employment related immigrants include students, asylum applicants, family members, and dependents of both Irish and EEA nationals as well as non-Irish and non-EEA nationals. In 2005, there were 27,000 registered non-EEA students in Ireland (Nolan and Maitre, 2009). The number of asylum applications made in Ireland fell from a peak of 11,600 in 2002 to 4,300 in 2006 (Nolan and Maitre, 2009).

In 2009, there were approximately 6,500 persons in the Irish asylum process and the number of new asylum applicants was 2,689, of which the largest national groups were Nigerians at 21 per cent, Pakistanis at 10 per cent and Chinese at 7 per cent (Reception and Integration Agency, 2009). The largest group of asylum seekers is an amalgam of nationalities, officially designated as 'others'.

Table 4: Number of Asylum applications Per Year (1992-2009)



Source: Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (2009: 57)

Since 2000, in addition to asylum applications, 200 people are admitted to the Republic each year under a government sanctioned (programme refugee) resettlement programme (Nolan and Maitre, 2009). Since the 1950s, programme refugee arrivals have included Hungarians (in 1956), Chileans (1973-4), Vietnamese (1979), Iranian Baha'ia (1985) and, in 1992, Bosnians (Moreo and Lentin, 2010).

However, in a detailed analysis of Irish inward and outward migration from 2000 to 2012, and cross-referencing a number of sources, Gilmartin demonstrates the difficulties of quantitatively categorising people as immigrants even when drawing on Census data (Gilmartin, 2012). Firstly, the figures capture both non-Irish immigrants and returning Irish emigrants and, in 2009, returning Irish comprised 31 per cent of total in-migration (Gilmartin, 2012) and, in 2005, one quarter of inward migration.

Indeed until 2001, the majority of immigrants were returning Irish (Nolan and Maitre, 2009). Yet these returning Irish emigrants are not regarded as immigrants in either popular or political discourse and their numbers are absorbed into the cumulative figure. Secondly, in 2009, 49.6 per cent or half of all immigrants to Ireland were of British and other EU nationality (Joyce, 2011: 1), all of whom enjoy reciprocal and unrestricted rights to migrate to/from, and work, in other EU countries including Ireland. However, as Gilmartin argues, there is a lack of information on intra-EU immigrants to corroborate the (voluntarily submitted) census figures as EU citizens need no special permission to enter Ireland and are not required to register with Irish authorities, unlike Europeans moving to work and live in many [16] other European states (Gilmartin, 2012).

This lack of definitive information about what is the most significant proportion of inward immigration to Ireland is in contrast to the monitoring of the much smaller immigrant from outside the EU/EEA who, in 2009, comprised just 14.3 per cent of all immigrants and included 6,500 asylum seekers (many of whom had been in the Irish asylum system for a number of years). Asylum seekers in Ireland experience particularly high levels of monitoring, not least because since 2000 they must live in state designated direct provision accommodation centres, are not allowed to work, [17] and cannot avail of universal welfare payments such as Child Benefit. During 2008, some 4,581 asylum applicants received decisions and, of the cases finalised, 6.4 per cent (Joyce, 2009: 21) or 293 individuals were granted refugee status. The overall number of asylum decisions (including first and final applications) made during 2009 was 6,560 of which 395 were granted positive decisions (Joyce, 2011: 5), again, just over 6 per cent were successful.

Other non-EU/EEA nationals must hold either a Green Card or a valid Employment Permit under the Employment Permits Acts 2003 and 2006 in order to work in Ireland. The Green Card scheme applies to occupations with salaries of 60,000 euro per annum and above, no labour market test is required, and the Green Card is valid for two years initially and normally leads to the granting of permanent or long-term residency. The issue of an Employment Permit requires a job offer with a salary in the range of 30,000 to 60,000 euro from a prospective Irish employer who can prove he or she has made every effort to recruit an Irish or EEA national.

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[16] There is no compulsory resident registration in the United Kingdom as there is, for example, in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Denmark.

[17] Asylum seekers who made their application prior to the 26 July 1999 had, and retained, the right to work and so have different rights and entitlements from asylum seekers in Direct Provision such as the right to Unemployment Assistance and the right to live in private rented accommodation while awaiting a decision on their claim for refugee status (N.C.C.R.I., 2008).

The holder of the permit is only allowed to work in the employment, and for the employer, stated in the permit. [18] This policy approach was designed to meet all labour and skills needs from within the enlarged EEA as far as possible and to limit non-EEA labour migration to that of the most highly skilled workers (Ruhs and Quinn, 2009). Indeed, as far back as the 1990s, Irish state-sponsored recruitment campaigns abroad were designed to appeal first and foremost to the 'ethnic consanguinity' of the Irish diaspora while recruitment among the non-Irish focused on the message of 'economic rationality', in other words that Ireland was a land of opportunity for people with 'the right kind of skills' (Hayward and Howard, 2007: 57). In the next chapter, I refer to the work of Fekete (2001), Sivanandan (2001), and McDowell (2009), on what they regard as a First World discourse of migration management which privileges skilled migrants. Certainly my findings show that the more skilled immigrants to Ireland are less likely to be considered as immigrants.

However, the heterogeneity of the immigrant population in terms of employment and legal status, welfare entitlement/exclusion, and planned duration of stay, was rarely highlighted in the popular and political discourse of 2008-2009. Instead, the use of cumulative or gross immigration statistics, presented without context, served to limit public discourse to the 'problem of immigration', and ignore the significant numbers of returning Irish and the predominance of employment-based immigrants of whom the majority were Europeans. Rather, it was the phrase 'one in ten are (sic) foreign nationals' that had entered popular discourse. A similar, simplified, conflation of the numbers of labour migrants and asylum seekers and an emphasis placed on illegality was evident in discourse on immigration in the UK (Garner, 2007b).

In addition, in relation to the heterogeneity of the immigrant population, the common-sense notion that immigrants in Ireland were predominantly low skilled and taking the so-called '3 D' jobs (dirty, dangerous and difficult) is misleading. Figures from the *Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2011* show an immigrant population with a high skills and education profile. A higher proportion of non-Irish nationals have attained third level education (45 per cent) compared to Irish nationals (32 per cent) (Mc Ginnity et al, 2012).

[18] In the event that a permit holder wishes to change employer, an application for a new employment permit has to be submitted. However, in line with the Employment Permits Act 2006 if this is the individual holder's first Employment Permit in the Irish state, a new application must be made (except in exceptional circumstances), once a period of 12 months has elapsed (Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation, 2013). In other words the individual must stay in the first job for a minimum of one year.

The subsequent *Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2012* also found non-EU nationals, in general, have high rates of third-level education although the authors point to the age gradient in educational attainment in Ireland and the age profile of immigrants as important considerations in making comparisons (Mc Ginnity et al, 2013). That said, even at 41.6 and 48.6 per cent with third level education, the African and 'rest of Europe, rest of world' groups have a higher proportion with third level than Irish nationals (Mc Ginnity et al, 2013: 35). Indeed, Ireland has a more skilled immigrant population than most EU states (Power and Szlovak, 2012). According to Barrett and Duffy (2007: 17), who drew on a nationally representative sample (of immigrants and natives) in 2005, immigrants were working across all occupational levels and were well represented in the top two occupational levels: professional and associate professional/technical (i.e. the occupational levels of the people I interviewed). See Table 5 for a breakdown of the distribution.

Table 5: Occupational Distribution of Immigrants and Natives

	Native %	Immigrants %
Professional	12.1	13
Associate professional/technical	9.5	12.4
Manager/administrators	19.2	9.5
Clerical Secretarial	13.9	10.1
Craft and related	15.2	16.8
Personal/protective service	11.1	17.4
Sales	9.5	10.8
Plant/machine operatives	9.5	10.1
% in top three occupations	40.8	34.9

Source: Barrett and Duffy (2007: 17)

Data collected three years earlier, in 2002, in the *Irish Social and Political Attitudes Survey* found that 66 per cent of a representative sample of the Irish population claimed to have no work contacts with people from a minority ethnic group, 28 per cent said they had some, and only 5 per cent reported having many contacts (O' Connell, 2003). The disconnect between popular perceptions of huge numbers of immigrants, mostly working in low skill level occupations, and claims by Irish employees of low levels of contact and interaction, is discussed in Chapter 6.

I argue that by including returning Irish emigrants, under-representing intra-EU immigrants and occupational level distribution, and not differentiating between asylum seekers, refugees, and non-EEA economic immigrants, the cumulative immigration statistics in the public domain are open to (mis)interpretation as predominantly consisting of non-EU/EEA immigrants, a large proportion of whom are assumed to be 'not genuine' asylum seekers or 'welfare tourists' and thus an economic liability to the Irish state rather than being capable and willing to make a contribution.

As a result, the popular perception of immigration to Ireland in the late 2000s was of a country, to quote one of my interviewees (pre-recession), 'bombarded' by large numbers of people 'from every race and culture and province and creed' which 'shook the country to its core'. [19] This 'bombardment' was perceived to include, as another interviewee put it, 'thousands of [asylum] applications that we should never have had to process in the first place'. [20] Ireland is 'a small country' and this was 'a huge additional burden'. [21] Record-breaking immigration figures cited by politicians, public servants and the media, without context or breakdown, contributed to this sense of 'bombardment' as did a lack of public information or understanding as to the varying motivations of these arrivals and/or their various legal statuses (which affect the level of socio-economic contribution they are allowed to make) and entitlement to welfare, if any.

Since the recession some commentators have 'emphasised costs' to the state, citing the increasing numbers of immigrant jobseekers (Power and Szlovak, 2012: ix) while appearing to ignore that successful applicants for welfare supports must demonstrate a link to the country i.e. satisfy the Habitual Residence requirements [22] and have been in employment for a sufficiently long period of time to have an entitlement to social welfare

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[19] Interviewee: Beryl in 2008.

[20] This is a reference to the 'Dublin Convention' otherwise the EU Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 of 2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application. This Regulation establishes the principle that only one Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application. The objective is to avoid asylum seekers being sent from one country to another, and also to prevent abuse of the system by the submission of several applications for asylum by one person. Usually, the responsible Member State will be the state through which the asylum seeker first entered the EU (Europa, 2013). A number of my interviewees alluded to public discourse at the time to the effect that 'there are no direct flights from Nigeria to Dublin' so Ireland should not have to deal with asylum applicants from that country.

[21] Interviewee: Claudette in 2008.

[22] The term 'Habitually Resident' is not defined in Irish law. In practice, it means a person must have a proven close link to Ireland e.g. a person has been living here for some time and intends to stay here for the foreseeable future. Proof of Habitual Residency relies heavily on fact. One must be Habitually Resident in the state to claim social welfare payments (Citizens Information Board, 2012).

payments if they lose their jobs. Power and Szlovak find that many immigrants who lost their jobs in the 2008-2011 period did not become recipients of the jobseekers payment and that, contrary to popular assumptions, 'immigrants in Ireland tend to be less dependent on welfare than the native populations' and that non-EU nationals might not apply because doing so would jeopardise their application for long term residency and citizenship, with the result that the potential and desire for non-Irish to receive welfare may be smaller than believed (2012: 21).

Moreover, and also contrary to popular opinion, immigrants have been harder hit by the current recession than Irish nationals, with more job losses and a higher unemployment rate. There were 14.7 per cent non-Irish unemployed in the first quarter of 2009 compared to 9.4 per cent for Irish nationals (Ruhs and Quinn, 2009). However, even with the Habitual Residency condition referred to above, the number of unemployed immigrants entitled to support is substantial. Based on an analysis of data from the Central Statistics Office, non-Irish nationals made up 18.5 per cent of all persons on the Live Register in July 2009 and, of these, over half were from EU 12 countries (Ruhs and Quinn, 2009).

From late 2008, media coverage of the recession and job losses appeared alongside coverage of a return to emigration, particularly of young people. Some commentators noted that the recession was affecting not just low skilled workers but also professionals, while others, including employers, said they still could not find Irish people to fill vacancies in, for example, the hospitality and retail sectors. In March 2009, *The Irish Times* reported that a new McDonald's outlet in Co. Clare was overwhelmed by the volume of prospective employees 'but what was truly remarkable was the number of well-qualified professionals, including accountants, architects and bankers, among the throngs looking for a job' (O' Connell, 2009). In April 2009, an *Irish Times* columnist wrote of the 'powerful images of the recession' on television and YouTube of over 200 people in a queue for minimum wage jobs in Londis grocery stores. However, she noted, there had been 'little or no coverage of the fact that less than 2.5 per cent of the people in the queue were Irish' and that the minimum wages retail jobs remained among 'the jobs that the Irish won't do' (Hourihan, 2009).

The above provides an overview of the significant expansion in population diversity in the Republic at the turn of the millennium. Yet, as significant a demographic shift as it incontrovertibly was, the popular perception was of even greater numbers of people

arriving. Most were perceived to be low- or unskilled and many to be unable or unwilling to take care of their own needs and likely to view the Irish welfare system as a 'soft touch'. This increasingly negative perception was not overtly challenged by the political and media discourse but was leveraged to assist in constitutional and legislative changes which endeavoured to continue to privilege skilled immigrants and limit all others, most particularly people seeking asylum. In the next section, I outline the response of the Irish government, the media, and other public institutions to the immigration of the 1990s and 2000s.

'Citizenship Tourists': The Political and Policy Context

The year 2008 was also a year of political tensions between the government and the EU when, in June, the Irish electorate voted against the Lisbon Treaty that had been promoted by all political parties in the Republic, with the exception of *Sinn Féin*, as providing for the enhancement of the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the EU. This was a political embarrassment on the European stage for the Irish government and politicians were divided as to whether immigration might be one of the issues that swayed an electorate as yet ignorant of the imminent economic 'contraction' to reject the Treaty. Speaking in *An Dáil Eireann* [23] after the Lisbon Treaty referendum, *Fiánna Fail* T.D., [24] Chris Andrews, said that immigration was not 'lurking' as an issue but 'very much on its hind legs' and about to 'cause severe problems'. Andrews also told a *Sunday Tribune* reporter that immigration was an issue not just in lower class communities 'but right across the social classes' (Coleman, 2008).

In the preceding years, a number of legislative and policy changes impacted significantly on immigrants to Ireland and their families, including asylum seekers and their children. These changes included the removal, in 2000, of the entitlement of asylum seekers to full rates of supplementary welfare assistance which was replaced with the direct provision of accommodation and meals (Fanning, 2002; Fanning and Veale, 2004). In 2013, the Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, described direct provision as 'possibly the next national scandal' and warned that Ireland's treatment of asylum seekers 'may well be in breach of not just our own Constitution but also international human rights conventions' (Mc Garry, 2013).

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[23] *Dáil Eireann*: the lower house, but principal chamber, of the *Oireachtas* (Irish parliament)
[24] An elected member of *Dáil Eireann* in Irish is *'Teachta Dála'* which in English means 'Deputy to *An Dáil*'

A significant constitutional change occurred in 2004 when, following an overwhelmingly supportive vote of 79.17 per cent in favour, The Irish Nationality and Citizenship (Amendment) Act changed the *jus solis* citizenship entitlement to all people born on the island of Ireland to an entitlement based on *jus sanguinis*, meaning people born in the island of Ireland after the amendment would not have a right to be Irish citizens unless, at the time of their birth, one of their parents was an Irish citizen or was entitled to be an Irish citizen (The Referendum Commission, 2013). Prior to 2004, the Irish Constitution accorded Irish nationality to children born in Ireland, including children of immigrants and, critically, asylum seekers. Based on a 1989 Supreme Court ruling, asylum seekers were granted leave to remain to give 'care and company' to their citizen child (Lentin and Mc Veigh, 2006). As Garner points out, '[t]he only *parents* to whom this was valuable were nationals of non-EU member states, since it extended residence to parents of "Irish-born children"' [emphasis in original] (2007a: 122).

Among the arguments used to support the need for the constitutional amendment was what the then Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Michael McDowell, called the 'growing crisis' caused by 'citizenship tourists' putting pressure on maternity hospitals and social welfare resources (Luibhéid, 2004; Moriarty, 2006b). Lentin describes the debates around the Citizenship Referendum in 2004 as constructed around what Balibar (1991b) termed 'crisis racism', that is to say blaming immigrants for the problems of the system (Lentin, 2007), in this case blaming (certain) immigrants having babies in Ireland for the long term under-funding of public maternity hospitals. [25] Other arguments for the need for the Citizenship Amendment presented by the Irish government were 'fairness, administration and "good housekeeping"' (Garner, 2007a: 122), in other words, concerns of state rather than reflecting a populist demand for reform. Ireland was not alone in the move towards *jus sanguinis* citizenship. A report in 2010 by the EUDO Citizenship Observatory argued there was a process of convergence between countries with *jus solis* and *jus sanguinis* traditions. While traditional *jus sanguinis* countries (e.g. Belgium, Germany, Greece) introduced or extended *jus solis* provisions for second and third-generation immigrants, classic *jus solis* countries (including the UK and Ireland) have limited these provisions (Vink and de Groot, 2010: 4). Concern about 'citizenship tourists' was followed by concerns surrounding 'welfare tourism'.

[25] See King (2004) for discussion and break-down of the cumulative birth rate figures used by media and politicians.

In 2004, when EU enlargement saw the accession of ten states, Ireland did not impose restrictions on the immigration of workers from the new states but did respond to concerns about 'welfare tourism' by introducing a new Habitual Residence Condition [26] of two years in relation to all means-tested welfare allowances and Child Benefit (Cousins, 2006: 188; Dail Eireann, 2004). Arguably, the Irish government had legitimate reasons for concern. According to Sweeney, the value of Ireland's Child Benefit, from the perspective of several of the new EU states, is significant (Sweeney, 2007: 91) and available to EU/EEA citizens and Swiss nationals working in Ireland who satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition. This is also the case if the worker becomes unemployed and is in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit even if the children are living in another EU/EEA country. The Habitual Residence requirement proved controversial, negatively impacting on returning Irish emigrants in addition to immigrants and their families. In particular, the removal of Child Benefit payments from asylum seeker children had a serious and detrimental effect on asylum seekers' families (M.R.C.I., 2006c; O' Brien, 2007; Pillinger, 2006). As the right to work and access to universal welfare was withdrawn and replaced by direct provision accommodation, asylum seekers experienced increased poverty, isolation, discrimination and racism (Fanning, 2007). In 2005, Minister Michael McDowell made one of a number of negative statements about asylum seekers, on one occasion at an *Oireachtas* Justice Committee meeting where he referred to 'bogus' asylum-seekers telling 'cock-and-bull stories' to get into the country. The Minister went on to say 'there's a lot of political correctness that goes on here and it is manifestly bogus, far-fetched nonsense and it's about time we said it' (R.T.E., 2005). This view, that the country was being duped into providing social welfare for undeserving foreigners and that this abuse is abetted by self-imposed censorship related to political correctness, is recurrent in my data.

Those in the workforce had their share of issues. Earlier in this chapter I cited Quinn's description of Ireland's approach to economic migration as 'employer-led' and 'lightly regulated' (Quinn, 2010b: xxvi). While this did indeed generate 'a flexible' workforce, many immigrant domestic and childcare workers, as well as agricultural and horticultural workers, were badly treated and exploited by individual employers (M.R.C.I., 2004). This was the institutional background to cases such as GAMA Construction, where Turkish workers on major Irish state-funded projects were being systematically underpaid and forced to work eighty-hour-weeks (Downes, 2005). In response, the Employment Permits Act 2006 was enacted to improve immigrants' rights (Ruhs and Quinn, 2009). For

[26] Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004

example employment permits, which state certain rights and entitlements of the worker concerned, had now to be granted to the employee and not the employer and prohibited employers from retaining an employee's passport or other personal documents. It is difficult to assess the true level of protection afforded by the 2006 Act however because, despite increased numbers of inspectors appointed in 2005, by mid-2008 there were still no convictions under the Employment Permits Act 2000 (Ruhs and Quinn, 2009).

Conroy and Brennan (2003) found that the experience of immigrants could depend on their position in the occupational hierarchy (see Table 5 above). For example, computer professionals enjoyed equal pay and conditions compared to Irish peers but agricultural workers suffered discrimination and exploitation. There were variances within sectors too, for example in the health sector, people employed in hospitals reported much better circumstances than in less regulated private nursing homes. The *Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2010* (Mc Ginnity et al, 2011) shows 16 per cent of non-Irish nationals employed in the accommodation and food services sector compared to 5 per cent of Irish nationals; 17 per cent employed in manufacturing, compared to 12 per cent of Irish nationals; and less than one per cent of non-Irish nationals employed in the public administration, defence and social security sectors compared to 6 per cent of Irish nationals. Of particular interest for the purposes of my study, is that while Mc Ginnity et al found immigrants concentrated in the lower occupational categories, a considerable share of UK and EU 13 [27] nationals ('old member states') are employed as managers, administrators and professionals, while a marked share of associate professionals are non-EU nationals (Mc Ginnity et al, 2011: ix). For further analysis of the labour market experience of immigrants in Ireland at this time see Barrett and Duffy (2007), O'Connell and Mc Ginnity (2008) and Barrett and Bergin (2009).

Research on the labour market experience of immigrants in Ireland by O'Connell and Mc Ginnity (2008) found that immigrants fared less well than Irish nationals in terms of unemployment levels, access to privileged occupations, in their experience of discrimination at work, and in looking of work. English language skills were identified as an important factor in determining the quality of the immigrants' experience. They also found specific and higher levels of disadvantage for black people with lower employment rates among both black and Asian respondents (although in the case of the latter, one

[27] EU 13 refers to EU 15 excluding Ireland and UK (in other words prior to enlargement in 2004) namely Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden

third were students). Evidence from the (second) *QNHS Equality Module 2010 on Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market* by Kingston et al (2013) found black Africans are seven times more likely than white Irish to report discrimination when looking for work even when the researchers controlled for education, age and gender.

Black Africans, and white EU New Member States (NMS) [28] citizens, and Asians, are less likely than white Irish individuals to be in the most privileged occupations (Kingston et al, 2013). Significantly, for the purposes of my study, these patterns in occupational attainment do not appear to be affected by recession and only white UK and white EU 13 groups do not report significant rates of discrimination in the workplace.

Fanning (2007) argues that no immigration policy *per se* exists in Ireland and that relevant social policies lag behind the immigration levels experienced over the previous decade. Much of what has been developed has been in response to perceived problems created by the arrival of people who are represented as different to the 'homogenous Irish' (Christie, 2004; Share et al, 2007) and there appears to have been little co-ordination 'with different agencies and Government departments pursuing unrelated and sometimes contradictory roles' (Mac Éinrí, 2007: 87). Indeed, Mac Éinri describes an Irish state constructing immigration-related policies with 'a less than positive attitude towards difference and a largely mono-cultural tradition' (Mac Éinrí, 2001: 59).

One explanation for any gaps in inter/multi-cultural informed policy is perhaps that support for immigrants is deemed detrimental to a political career. [29] Ten years after that assessment by Mac Éinri, an independent research survey carried out in association with The Integration Centre found that 36 per cent of TDs felt that speaking in favour of immigrants would have a negative effect on their constituency support and only 4 per cent felt it would be electorally beneficial. More than half (58 per cent) claim to have encountered racist sentiments while canvassing in the 2011 General Elections and one in three believed that immigration would become more politically contentious in the future (Integration Centre, 2012). Although immigrants have not, as yet, an organised political voice, the election of two Nigerians, as Mayor and Local Councillor in Portlaoise and

[28] New Member States (NMS): Defined in this report as Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia (Kingston et al, 2013: 2).
[29] For further on the response of Irish political parties to immigrants see, for example, Chadamoyo et al (2007) Haynes et al (2010) and Fanning and Boyle (2010).

Ennis respectively, has been regarded by some as a positive 'portent for change' (Mac Éinrí, 2007: 80).

While expressing dissatisfaction with the response of the state and its politicians to immigration, a number of interviewees in this study also expressed satisfaction that Ireland has no significant anti-immigration political parties such as exist in other EU states. The British National Party (BNP) was the example most commonly cited in my data. However, one 'home-grown' anti-immigration political party, the Immigration Control Platform (ICP) did run independent candidates in the 2002 and 2007 General Elections. In 2007, the highest vote an ICP candidate achieved was 804 first preference votes (Mac Cormaic, 2007), although Garner (2007a) argues that even without a single representative in the *Dail* the ICP was not without influence. He cites, for example, that the ICP call for AIDs testing of all foreigners was included in the *Fine Gael* election manifesto in 2002, and repeated by the head of the Garda National Immigration Bureau in 2003, and that the change to Irish citizenship law, a major objective of ICP, was secured.

The impact of immigrants on education infrastructure and resources, and the perception of a lack of engagement with this issue by the state, was the focus of much public and media attention in the first decade of the 2000s and this too is reflected in my data. The Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) was vocal on the difficulties its members faced in implementing the *National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Guidelines on Intercultural Education in the Primary School* due to lack of resources and training support (I.N.T.O., 2006) even before the recession. Issues surrounding the integration of immigrant children were highlighted in particular in September 2007 when what was described by the media as an 'emergency school' was opened in Balbriggan in north county Dublin by the multi-denominational educational agency, Educate Together, for immigrant and black-Irish children who could not secure places in their local schools (Mc Donald, 2007). Public debate centred on school enrolment policies, with a disproportionate number of immigrant children enrolled in schools in disadvantaged areas as well as the fact that, although state-funded, 98 per cent of schools were (and are) faith-based and both managed and owned predominantly by the Catholic Church. A debate over whether or not the Department of Education should have a policy on Muslim girls wearing the *hijab* at school was also current during the fieldwork (Mc Donagh, 2008) and appears in my data as an example of ineffectual state engagement. In addition, some commentators (and some individuals I interviewed) speculated that the growth in

popularity and prestige of *Gaelscoileanna* (providing schooling through the Irish language) might be due, in part at least, to parents' expectations that the majority of children will be ethnic-Irish (O' Regan, 2007). For further information on immigrants and the Irish education system see Devine (2005), Byrne et al (2010), and Curry et al (2011).

The Irish media has also been criticised as not being reflective of the full range of views in Irish society, of being the mouthpiece of the dominant consensus, and of being largely drawn from the middle to upper end of the social class spectrum with a tendency towards left/liberal politics, and yet exclusionary of certain disadvantaged sections of society (Corcoran, 2004). The coverage of immigration issues is among the topics for which it has been both complimented and criticised (Fanning, 2002; Haughey, 2001a; Kiberd, 1999; Moriarty, 2006a) and again, this is echoed in my data. While the majority of Irish professionals I interviewed criticised what one described as the 'send 'em home variety' of late-night commercial radio programming, others felt the 'quality media' were reluctant to tackle negative issues relating to immigration. Interestingly, while Corcoran examines the age, gender, class position, political orientation, and value system of the Irish media, racial or ethnic diversity is not mentioned, suggesting it was not deemed a useful or significant category of analysis (Corcoran, 2004).

Haynes et al researched the way media content shapes public perceptions and beliefs about socially contentious issues and specifically how Irish people's knowledge of, and beliefs about, immigration are shaped by coverage in the Irish media (Haynes et al, 2008b, 2009). They found considerable confusion and misinformation among the Irish public concerning immigration but also that, given the generally low levels of contact reported by their respondents, the media still plays the pivotal role in informing the general public about immigration and that public beliefs and attitudes 'can be perverted by a knowledge vacuum, in the absence of an informed media debate' (Haynes et al, 2009: 11). For more on the Irish media framing of the debates around immigration and asylum seekers and, for example, providing little challenge to the predominant discourse that preceded the citizenship referendum debate see Breen et al (2005) and Breen et al (2006).

This criticism, and the argument that politicians 'are privileged sources with direct access to the mass media by the simple mechanism of speaking in the *Dail*' (Breen et al, 2006: 67), is borne out by a cross-section of newspaper headlines (by no means a representative sample) I collected during 2008 and 2009.

These include: 'Returning [Irish] emigrants refused welfare benefits' (O' Brien, 2007); 'Immigration will cause problems says FF TD' (Coleman, 2008); 'Time for open debate on immigration issue' (FitzGerald, 2008); 'Africa is giving nothing to anyone - apart from AIDS' [30] (Myers, 2008); 'TD suggests lump sum for jobless foreigners [to leave]' (Hennessy, 2008); 'CSO figures show foreign nationals filling 90 per cent of new jobs in past year' (Tansey, 2008); 'Importance of migrants stressed' (Mac Cormaic, 2008); 'We'll buy you a ticket home: Out-of-work immigrants offered deal to leave Ireland using EU money and cash from Irish taxpayers' (Molony, 2009); '[Senator] O'Murchú warns of racism towards immigrants in Republic' (Walsh, 2009); 'Non-Irish still waiting for a fair deal in the workplace' (Rajasekar, 2009); 'State spent over €150,000 to deport Ghanaian man' (Lally, 2009); 'Roma raise children to steal – Judge' (Tuite, 2009); and 'Don't let the [credit] crunch make you a racist [says Minister]' (Herald A.M., 2009).

The latter headline, which appeared in February 2009, refers to a statement by the then Minister of Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin. The Minister was also quoted in *The Irish Times* as saying that: 'in a recession attitudes towards migrant workers change. Perceptions included "they are all taking our jobs" or "they are all scamming the welfare", but this was untrue' (Gartland, 2009). A month later, the then Minister of State for Integration, Conor Lenihan, said his office was working to 'ensure the type of social tensions between immigrants and the native-born population that were seen in some European countries did not emerge here'. 'This was especially important during a time of economic downturn,' the Minister of State said, 'when such tensions have a tendency to surface' (Mac Cormaic, 2009). As can be seen in some of the headlines above there existed, certainly in the early months of the recession with business closures and job losses, an expectation in some quarters that the downturn would result in the majority of immigrants 'going home,' an expectation which has not been realised (Krings et al, 2009) and which 'denies the reality of the migrant experience throughout the decades and across a range of geographical contexts' (Gilmartin and White, 2008: 146). As mentioned previously, these were two of the predominant themes in the data I collected in 2009.

The resources concern underpinning the expectation that immigrants would 'go home' was, unsurprisingly, focused on welfare entitlements. While Barret and Kelly (2010) found that immigrants were indeed severely impacted by the recession, with an annual

[30] The Immigrant Council of Ireland lodged a complaint with *An Garda Síochána* (Irish police) and with the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) about this article which, among other racist comments, described Africans as 'sexually hyperactive indigents' who 'only survive because of help from the outside world'.

rate of job losses of 20 per cent in 2009 (in contrast to 7 per cent for Irish national employees), the Barrett et al (2013) analysis of welfare payments to immigrants from the 2004 accession states found that while there was a surge after the onset of the recession this stabilised, even as numbers of Irish nationals claiming welfare rose. The assessment of the authors is that an increasingly restrictive welfare policy may have 'insulated' Ireland from immigrant welfare demands. Indeed, towards the end of 2009, the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (M.R.C.I) felt compelled to issue a media statement to the effect that the blame for the Irish economic situation did not 'lie in the hands of hard working migrants and their families who have made their homes here' (M.R.C.I., 2009) and Conor Hickey, director of the Crosscare Migrant project, expressed concern that Irish people who had 'rolled out the red carpet for migrants willing to do the jobs they were not willing to do a few years back' were now 'rolling back that red carpet' against a back-drop of rising unemployment and the threat of increased racism (Smyth, 2009). Indeed an ESRI report for the Office of Social Inclusion around that time found that 35 per cent of immigrants had been harassed on the street or on public transport (Nolan and Maitre, 2009) although levels of reporting racially motivated incidents to the authorities remain low (Clarke, 2013).

During the 'boom' years, some constructive political and policy initiatives were put in place to recognise the multi-ethnic reality. The strategic plan of the government's social partnership system, *Toward 2016*, highlighted the integration of immigrants as a key area for action and made specific commitments in the areas of education, provision of English language supports, and workplace regulations (Department of *An Taoiseach*, 2006). A *National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007 to 2012* was launched as part of a framework of initiatives designed to deliver 'culturally competent care' (Health Service Executive, 2008). In 2007, the Office of the Minister for Integration was established, although its budget was cut with the onset of the recession in 2009 and the portfolio ceased to exist following a change of government in the general election of 2011. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) had been established in 1998 and launched the first *National Action Plan Against Racism 2005-2008* (2005). In early 2009, it too was closed due to budget cuts. In November 2011, the Minister of Justice, Equality and Defence, Alan Shatter, confirmed he did not intend to develop a second Action Plan stating that the 2005-2008 Plan was both ambitious and wide-ranging and there had been 'a substantial penetration of anti-racist policies, programmes, activities and awareness raising' (Dail Eireann, 2011).

One such programme was a campaign by *An Garda Síochána* (police) begun in the mid-2000s to recruit from ethnic minorities. Prior to my fieldwork a related controversy had arisen which divided public opinion and was mentioned by some interviewees, namely, whether a Sikh Garda reservist could wear a turban while on duty (Sheahan, 2007). The decision went against the reservist and he left the *Gardaí.* The Garda Commissioner had established the first *Garda Racial, Intercultural and Diversity Office* in 2000, within the Community Relations Section of the force. This office has 'responsibility for the development and monitoring of the implementation of organisational policies and strategies, which deal with racial, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity' (An Gardai Síochána, 2013). The organisation began setting up a national network of Ethnic Liaison Officers in 2002. The Garda Síochána *Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (2009-2012)* has, according to The Integration Centre, been endorsed as representing best practice by a number of bodies including the Equality Authority and the NCCRI (The Integration Centre, 2013). However the same report by The Integration Centre also notes ongoing lack of training and under-recording of racist incidents (which exacerbates under-reporting), not least due to lack of supporting legislation.

Like the intercultural initiatives undertaken by the Department of Education and the Department of Health, other state bodies and a number of Local Authorities such as Dublin City Council have launched initiatives directed towards recognising the needs and rights of immigrants. These initiatives ranged from multi-cultural music and food festivals, through a migrant voter's information campaign, to having the 2006 Census distributed in thirteen languages, although the question on ethnicity proved somewhat controversial (see King O' Riain, 2007). In 2008, Dublin City Council launched a report entitled 'Towards Integration: A City Framework' to communicate the 'vision, principles and a strong message of commitment to integration at city level from state, local government, business and social partners'. Interestingly, the report also addresses what it calls 'The Diversity Dividend' for the capital city (Dublin City Council, 2008).

In addition, through social networks and coalition-building, some immigrant groups were, and are, engaging with the state, the media, and the key actors in the labour market, and beginning to achieve some recognition for their issues. This, in turn, led to the creation of a number of new non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and immigrant-led community and voluntary organisations. In 2008, the NGO Alliance against Racism (NAAR) consisted a network of over forty NGOs working in Ireland on issues such as anti-racism, community development and human rights and, in 2009, the Migrant

Networks Project, under the auspices of the Trinity Immigration Initiative (TII) identified 430 migrant-led associations (see Lentin and Moreo, 2012; Trinity Immigration Initiative). By 2006, there existed almost a dozen media publications and broadcasts targeted at immigrant groups (Oram, 2006). Trades Unions, led by The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), were pro-active in demanding protections for immigrant workers and inviting them to join ranks. All the major faith-based organisations, including the Catholic Church, were active in integration initiatives. [31] Indeed, the activism and vibrancy of the Trades Unions, [32] Churches, major sporting bodies such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), [33] the Football Association of Ireland (FAI), community groups, and the voluntary sector generally, was 'one of the hopeful indicators of how bottom-up integration can be managed' (Mac Éinrí, 2007: 83).

This provides a necessarily brief overview of the political and policy context of my research and the main themes of the media coverage of the period. I have focused in particular on the acts of commission and omission by politicians, government departments, and the media, which are recurrent in my data and which clearly inform and influence the responses of the Irish professionals I interviewed. In addition to the empirical studies already mentioned, it is useful for the reader to have an overview of the findings of other researchers in the field around the same time as myself, and it is to these I turn my attention now.

Empirical Research

The first body of empirical research I bring to the reader's attention is a qualitative study carried out, unusually, among individuals not unlike the people who are the focus of my study. In addition to research among a representative sample of the Irish public and among immigrants on the subject of attitudes to racial diversity, at the end of its three year 'run' in 2005, the organisers of the Irish government's *Know Racism* (anti-racism) campaign commissioned six telephone interviews with senior individuals in a range of sectors including education, health, local government, business, and economics. [34]

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[31] See Ugba (2007), Gray and O'Sullivan Lago (2011), and Passarelli (2012) for further information on immigration and the Pentacostal, Catholic, and Protestant churches in Ireland, respectively.

[32] See Irish Congress of Trades Unions Guidelines (2006)

[33] See *The Inclusive GAA Club* (Gaelic Athletic Association) and the *Intercultural Football Plan* (Football Association of Ireland, 2009)

[34] Since there were only six respondents it is not clear why face-to-face interviews were not undertaken.

These individuals were selected to provide what *The National Action Plan Against Racism* (NAPR) called 'a more informed perspective' (2005: 32). Among the comments made by the interviewees are a number which recur in my data.

In 2005, the senior individuals told telephone interviewers that:

- There exists a significant problem of racial intolerance in Ireland, which affects both immigrants and Travellers and that the problem is at its most acute in relation to asylum-seekers, whose unsatisfactory status needs to be resolved much more quickly.
- The official response to this has so far been inadequate, lacking coherent planning and long-term strategy.
- Widespread public misconceptions persist about the facts of immigration and media reporting on racial issues can be biased, or can be interpreted in a biased way, and tends to focus on immigrants, rather than the Irish, as the root of the racism problem.
- There is a general failure to appreciate the substantial positive contribution being made by immigrants, both economically and socially.
- While the *Know Racism* campaign is well known and has served a useful purpose, much more needs to be done by those in a position to influence the opinions of others (National Action Plan Against Racism, 2005: 32)

My data contain comments similar to the above and to the following statement from one of the telephone interviewees:

> If we fail to address those shortcomings we run a real risk of repeating the mistakes of others [ ] we should perhaps be trying to learn from that situation, that large ghettos of cultural and coloured and religious minorities eventually end up as trouble somewhere or other (National Action Plan Against Racism, 2005: 32).

As mentioned above, another part of the review of the *Know Racism* campaign was a nationwide survey carried out between September 2003 and January 2004 (National Action Plan Against Racism, 2005: 25-28). Below are some of the findings of that element of the research.

It is worth bearing in mind while reading, that Turner (2010) argues that attitudes to immigrants in Ireland in 2002 were among the most liberal in Europe:

- 66 per cent agreed that anyone should be allowed to live in Ireland if they worked and paid their taxes, 19 per cent disagreed.
- 37 per cent agreed that, overall, ethnic groups had benefited the Irish economy, 38 per cent disagreed.
- 40 per cent agreed that ethnic groups made a positive cultural contribution to Irish society, 37 per cent disagreed.
- 62 per cent stated that they had no personal experience of minority groups in Ireland, 36 per cent stated that they had.
    - 47 per cent (of the 36 per cent) had this experience in a social/recreation context, 39 per cent through work and 22 per cent through education.
    - 58 per cent (of the 36 per cent) found their interactions to be positive in varying degrees and 20 per cent found them to be negative in varying degrees.
- 67 per cent stated that they would socialise with someone from a minority group just as easily as someone who was Irish, 17 per cent disagreed.
- 55 per cent agreed that Irish people were very accepting of the different cultural behaviour of minority groups, 26 per cent disagreed.
- 38 per cent agreed that most asylum seekers were genuine, i.e. that they were fleeing persecution, 30 per cent disagreed.
- 54 per cent agreed that *most* asylum seekers were abusing the asylum system and were really economic migrants, 22 per cent disagreed [emphasis added].
- 71 per cent agreed that Ireland had its fair share of asylum seekers and should not take any more, 11 per cent disagreed.
- 80 per cent agreed that the presence of asylum seekers was putting pressure on essential services, such as, housing [35] and health, 8 per cent disagreed (National Action Plan Against Racism, 2005: 25-28).

Again, many of these findings, such as the emphasis placed on economic participation and contribution, the low levels of interaction, and the allusion to the Irish as welcoming (which implicates the immigrant in the lack of interaction), are captured in my data, as are the levels of ambivalence towards asylum seekers.

[35] Direct Provision accommodation was already in place for asylum seekers.

Also in 2005, as part of a European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) project on discrimination in a number of EU countries, the E.S.R.I carried out the first nationally representative survey of immigrant experiences of racism and discrimination (Mc Ginnity et al, 2006). This study, taking place at the height of the 'Celtic Tiger' boom, with all that that entailed, found that the most common form and site of discrimination was that which took place in public, that is, in public spaces or on public transport. This form of harassment was cited by over half of Black South/Central African respondents and 35 per cent of the entire sample. Harassment or insults in the workplace were reported by 32 per cent of work permit holder respondents while 21 per cent of the total surveyed reported some form of discrimination when looking for work (Mc Ginnity et al, 2006: v-vi). Also of note, given the findings of my study, is that 15 per cent reported being denied access to private housing because of their national/ethnic origin and between 10 and 15 per cent reported being badly treated by healthcare or social services.

Interestingly, the NAPR survey (above) also analysed data on Irish Travellers and found that while 25 per cent agreed that Irish Travellers made a positive contribution to Irish society, 48 per cent disagreed. I mention this because, as I explain in Chapters 4 and 5, while it was not my intention to discuss groups other than immigrants, I found almost all interviewees referred to this Irish ethnic minority and in strikingly negative terms, which was also the finding of an important set of studies, and the one I examine next, Mac Gréil's in-depth quantitative, longitudinal study of Irish people's attitudes towards various social groups and minorities, last updated in 2007- 2008 (Mac Gréil, 1978, 1996, 2011). Over three decades, Mac Gréil found that the higher the education level, the lower the level of racial prejudice, despite its 'mixed performance' in relation to attitudes towards members of the Irish lower classes or Irish Travellers where, he writes, 'class issues possibly distort the liberal impulses of educational achievement' (Mac Gréil, 2011: 207).

In 2011, finding again a negative correlation between social class and racial prejudice (which he measures by social distance i.e. willingness to associate with one another), he writes that this 'was anticipated, because of the expected influence of education and occupational status; the people at the lower end of the social class ladder would tend to feel less secure economically and more open to frustration leading to prejudice as a form of psychological aggression' (Mac Gréil, 2011: 209). Yet, in the case of admitting to kinship (i.e. marriage into the family), the least educated and the highest educated were

the two cohorts most in favour in every case' (ibid: 215) and despite education variants there was consensus towards severe prejudice against 'the Romanians' (most likely meaning individuals of Roma ethnic background). Overall he finds professionals are the most tolerant in relation to the racial and ethnic categories examined and the un-skilled and semi-skilled to be the least tolerant.

However, in the 2011 study, he does concede that 'the mixed result (for the education variable) questions the universal tolerance of the more highly educated' (ibid: 138). Mac Gréil uses the term 'selective liberalness' to describe how 'many may convince themselves they are 'colour blind' in their perception without being so in their outlook and behaviour' (ibid: 149). He finds that the Irish 'all-weather liberal' is quite rare and that the liberal attitudes of individuals with better education and higher occupational status are inclined to be positive towards minorities who enjoy 'politically correct' status, which, he says, does not stretch to include Irish Travellers and their economically deprived fellow Irish citizens (ibid: 319). Elements of my data will be seen to concur with Mac Gréil, for example, the severe prejudice his participants expressed towards the Roma, Irish Travellers, and the Irish lower classes. However, my findings challenge the notion of the 'liberal impulses of educational achievement' and the emphasis Mac Gréil places on direct resource competition as an explanation for differential class response.

The ESRI have produced a number of studies on immigrants and immigration in Ireland including one showing the profile of immigrants to Ireland between 1993 and 2003 to be young and well-educated (i.e. to third level) although not all employed in occupations that reflected their high education levels (Barrett et al, 2006). In other words, some experienced lower occupational attainment relative to their Irish peers, with EU-10 immigrants (broadly speaking, immigrants from Eastern Europe) tending to have the lowest occupational attainment (ibid). One possible explanation for inequity in the labour market experience is discrimination. [36] Research by Mc Ginnity et al (2009) shows that non-Irish applicants are three times more likely than Irish nationals to report experiencing discrimination while looking for work. Furthermore, employers are twice as likely to invite for interview a candidate with what they perceive to be an Irish name as an equally qualified candidate perceived to have a non-Irish name. This study is of particular interest

[36] Discrimination is defined broadly as a circumstance whereby a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been, or would be, treated in a comparable situation on any of nine grounds. The Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2007 and the Equal Status Acts, 2000-2004 (in areas outside employment) outlaw discrimination on nine distinct grounds including race; gender; marital status; family status; age; disability; sexual orientation; religious belief; and membership of the Traveller Community. (The Equality Authority, 2011: 5).

to me because the recruitment decision-makers e.g. human resources managers and employers are likely, I suggest, to be members of the professional and managerial social classes.

Still on the issue of labour market discrimination, the main finding of research by Kingston et al (2013: 41) on ethnicity and nationality in the Irish labour market based on QNHS Equality Module in 2010, was that black Africans are over seven times more likely than white Irish individuals to experience discrimination when looking for work and almost seven time more likely to report discrimination in the workplace. Importantly, they find this is the case even when differences in gender, age, and education are controlled. Data collected a year later, in 2011, on anti-racism and interculturalism in the Irish public sector showed that 26 per cent, or one-in-five respondents, witnessed their colleagues make racist remarks about clients or customers in the course of that year, and 7 per cent reported witnessing a client or customer being the subject of racist remarks or behaviour (P.S.E.U., 2012).

Most disturbing, perhaps because it appears to contradict the common-sense notion that the younger generation are more tolerant of difference, is a survey commissioned by the Teachers Union of Ireland among 442 second and third level teachers which found 46 per cent were aware of racist incidents which had occurred in the past month (Teachers Union of Ireland/Behaviour & Attitudes, 2010).

Using data from the *European Social Survey* (ESS) database, [37] a report published by the ESRI/The Integration Centre suggests that Irish attitudes to immigrants have grown increasingly negative since 2006 (Mc Ginnity et al, 2013). In 2002, 6 per cent of Irish nationals said no immigrants from *poor* non-EU countries should be allowed into Ireland [emphasis added]. By 2010, that number had risen to 22 per cent. In comparison with Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and the UK, Ireland displayed some of the most negative attitudes, similar in many aspects to the UK. Accepting, as the report does, that there may be variation in how respondents understand the term 'immigrant', significantly, the report's authors mention that the ESS 'was designed to reduce such differences in interpretation' (Mc Ginnity et al, 2013: 58). The report also finds people with third level education display more liberal attitudes, and are more positive that immigrants are good for Ireland's economy (Mc Ginnity et al, 2013: 72).

[37] The report draws on ESS data from 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010 to look at change in Irish attitudes to immigrants in the period 2002-10.

Respondents with no, or lower, secondary education reported 'the most negative attitudes towards immigrants' contribution to the economy' (ibid). The authors suggest the more liberal attitudes of the well-educated may be due to their 'less vulnerable labour market position' (ibid) although they also cite Kunovick's (2004) argument that attitudinal differences between educationally advantaged and disadvantaged groups are 'washed away' in challenged economic circumstances. Significantly, for the purposes of my study, Mc Ginnity et al (2013) find that attitudes became more negative for all education groups since 2008.

As my fieldwork drew to a close in late 2009, an *Irish Times* commissioned survey of a national quota sample showed 72 per cent of people surveyed wanted to see a reduction in the number of non-Irish immigrants in Ireland. Of this figure, 29 per cent surveyed would like 'most immigrants' to leave (O' Brien, 2009). Given what we now know about how the term 'immigrant' is likely to be understood by at least some of the respondents to this *Irish Times* survey, it is unlikely that immigrants from the UK had any reason for concern on seeing this story nor, for that matter, the international employees of Intel, Google, Pfizer and similar.

Finally, The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) reports on Ireland, covering 2007 and 2011, present evidence of racism across all sectors of Irish society, impacting significantly on the lives of many immigrants (Lynch, 2007; Lynch et al, 2013) in contradistinction to the positive national identity of tolerance and *céad míle fáilte* to all.

This leads me to the final aspect of the context I present, namely, Irish national identity; how it came to be constructed and understood as it is today; and concerns surrounding its diminution. While the Irish professionals I interviewed give prominence to economic benefit/threat arguments when discussing immigration and immigrants, some concerns are also raised relating to the perceived impact on 'the' Irish national identity.

The Construction of Modern Irish Identity

Ireland's history is that of a racialised, white European colony, superseded by the formation of a Republic in the 20th century and with a mono-cultural identity as Catholic, Gaelic, and Nationalist (FitzGerald, 1976; Gibbons, 1994; Hutchinson, 1987; Kiberd, 1995; Lyons, 1979). This national identity is a relatively recent construct and the

homogeneity of this 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) is contested (Kiberd, 1995; Lee, 1989; Lyons, 1979; Murphy, 1975). In addition to the political aspects of the fight for independence from the English coloniser in the 1800s and 1900s, some commentators, such as historian Roy Foster (1989: 435), suggest that 'the emotions focused by cultural revivalism around the turn of the 19th century were fundamentally sectarian and even "racialist"'. Why might that be the case and why should it matter in contemporary Ireland?

Despite, or perhaps even because of, its history of invasion, conversion, colonisation, racialisation, and emigration, the newly independent Republic of Ireland began life in the 1920s with a (rarely acknowledged) legacy of a relatively strong economic, educational, social and political infrastructure intact (Lee, 1989). The existence of these structures added impetus, if anything, to the argument that a national identity needed to be constructed by the new state to distinguish the Irish as Catholic, Gaelic speaking, and Nationalist (Hutchinson, 1987).

The Roman Catholic faith remained predominant, despite the Penal Laws passed by the Protestant Parliament of Ireland which strictly regulated the status of Catholics through most of the 18th century. It was not until 1972 that the Fifth Amendment to the Irish Constitution removed a reference to the 'special position' of the Roman Catholic Church 'as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens' (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012: 86). However, the Irish/Gaelic language speaking population had been decimated by the famine in the mid-1800s and the resultant mass emigration (Foras na Gaeilge, 2013). Recognising the importance of the revival of the Irish language as 'the essential condition for the revival of the national sense of identity' (Lyons, 1979: 43), *An Taoiseach*, W.T Cosgrave said in 1923: 'How are you going to reconstruct this nation?... Must we not look to the Minister for Education for the Gaelicisation of our whole culture to make our nation separate and distinct?' (Lee, 1989: 132). Separate and distinct, that is, from the coloniser, England. As Hall writes: identities 'can function as points of identification and attachment only *because* of their capacity to exclude, to render 'outside'' [emphasis in original] (Hall, 1996c: 5).

Fifty years later, and nearly a decade into the Northern Ireland 'Troubles', the Irish language, as a core element of national identity, was again a topic of intense debate. Garret FitzGerald, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, began to argue that the singular,

mono-cultural vision of 'Irishness' promulgated by the state since the 1920s did not reflect the plurality of cultural identities in Irish society. It excluded, he argued, the Protestant, the Anglo-Irish, and the Ulster-Scots elements, as well as any Catholics who rejected the idea of a Catholic state and others whose urban lives had no sense of belonging to a rural, Gaelic tradition (FitzGerald, 1976). FitzGerald, the son of a southern Catholic father and northern Presbyterian mother (FitzGerald, 1991), was not the only one questioning the 'fact' of Irish identity as Gaelic, Catholic and Nationalist. In 1979, the historian F.S.L. Lyons wrote that fundamental to understanding modern Ireland, including the Northern Ireland conflict, was the connection between culture and anarchy in the form of a 'collision of a variety of cultures within the island' (Lyons, 1979). Arguably, this could be seen as the beginning of a modern-era debate on the subject of pluralism on the island of Ireland.

In 1981, when FitzGerald became *An Taoiseach,* and with the conflict in Northern Ireland continuing, he pursued his pluralist agenda with a so-called 'constitutional crusade' which included seeking to change what he called the 'unhelpful' irredentist Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution which demanded the restoration of the six counties of Northern Ireland and other Articles he felt were 'sectarian' (FitzGerald, 1991: 377). However, within months of taking office his coalition government fell on issues related to the annual budget. When he was returned to office in 1982 he again pursued the pluralist agenda in negotiations which led to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. He did not pursue the constitutional crusade because of what he described as 'the sharp swing to the right in religious [38] affairs as well as political affairs...in the first half of the 1980s had created an environment that was more hostile than that of 1981' (FitzGerald, 1991: 380) to pluralism.

It is not, as one might expect, FitzGerald and his coalition government's opposition to irredentism which is referred to when FitzGerald's pluralist approach is criticised. It is that in 1973 his coalition government removed the requirement for proficiency in the Irish language for entry to some sectors of the public service and for completion of the state Leaving Certificate examination which was evidenced as Fitzgerald's belief that openness towards the other (in this case, the Northern Protestant Unionists) required a disavowal of one's own cultural identity.

[38] A visit by the then Pope to Ireland in 1979 and a divisive abortion referendum in 1983 may have been contributing elements.

But why this divisive public debate about a language not in daily use rather than the claim on the six counties of Northern Ireland? According to Fishman (1999), while no one factor is absolutely necessary for the identification of an ethnic group, a common language is a prime boundary-marker and protector. This is evident in one of the first major surveys on attitudes towards, and use of, the Irish language, carried out in 1975. It found that although Irish was the household language for just 4 per cent of the population and English the dominant language of everyday communication, the Irish language was regarded as having a strong ethno-cultural value as symbolic, and a central element, of Irish national identity (Ó' Riagáin, 1999). Historian John A. Murphy's view was that the majority of the Irish people were happy that a minority, but not themselves, should go on speaking Irish (1976). Murphy argued that the Irish government should manage the country's cultural resources in addition to its economic resources and that the fragile nature of the Irish language called for special protection (1976). He also claimed the impact of the Northern Ireland conflict on southern life was essentially reactionary, as evidenced by the emphasis placed on the construction of religious and cultural homogeneity in the south.

Finlay (2004) contends that what FitzGerald failed to recognise was that not even the intellectuals of the time were convinced of pluralism because it appeared to be posed in opposition to the continuity of a distinctive Irish identity. According to Lee,

> However genuine his [FitzGerald's] aspiration to greater religious tolerance, his pluralism was too anaemic, his vision of Ireland too devoid of any sense of a distinctive national identity to raise mass support (1989: 653).

In the 1990s, the dichotomy between this desire for a 'distinctive national identity' on the one hand, and the pluralism of FitzGerald and others, was addressed by post-colonial theorists such as Kiberd (1995) and Gibbons (1994). They rejected as essentialist, even racist, the notion of a singular Irish identity and argued instead that Irish identity is open-ended and 'fluid' (Gibbons, 1996). To support the proposition that Irish nationalism is heterogeneous, Gibbons highlights, among others, the writer, rebel leader, and signatory of the Proclamation of the Republic in 1916, Thomás Mac Donagh, who distanced Irish national identity from 'any purifying or monocular vision' and 'eschewed racist, sectarian or any 'monologic' forms of identity' (Gibbons, 1994: 28-29). For Mac Donagh 'Irishness' was not a genetic or racial inheritance but something to be constructed as part of 'a concerted cultural effort' (Mulhern, 1998: 154). While Gibbons refutes that cultural

dialogue and 'openness towards the other should somehow require the obliteration of one's own identity' (1994: 24) and argues that national identity evolves and is in a state of constant change and transition, Taylor (1994) and Kymlicka (1995) argue that culture and identity must be protected and 'never lost'.

These divergent approaches (evolving versus protected national identity) are evidenced in the contrast between the interviewees in this study who regard immigration as contributing to the future development, enrichment, and maturation of Ireland's social and cultural life and the interviewees who feel that, in accommodating diversity, Irish identity is, or will be, diminished and placed under threat. However, apart from the Catholic religion, there was little clarity among the professionals I interviewed as to what constituted Irish identity, what elements of Irish identity could potentially be diminished by the presence of diverse cultural minorities, or how this might come about.

In terms of Catholicism and the Irish language as contemporary markers of Irish identity political commentator and journalist, Fintan O'Toole, claimed that being an 'Irish Catholic' was, and remains, a matter more of public identity than private faith (O' Toole, 1998), a suggestion borne out in 2012 by an *Irish Times*/MRBI poll which found that although a total of 89 per cent of respondents were nominally Catholic, 39 per cent (of the 89 per cent) said they either never, or very occasionally, went to Mass and just a third said they attended Mass at least once a week (O' Brien, 2012). In relation to the Irish language, Census 2006 recorded that 4.4 per cent who could speak Irish spoke it on a daily basis (C.S.O., 2007a).

I argue that FitzGerald's early attempts at pluralism failed to resonate at either the popular or elite level because, at the time, Irish social, cultural, and political thinking was dominated by the notion of a (still relatively new) homogenised Irish national identity. It is worth bearing in mind that these debates in the 1970s in 'defence' of a Catholic, Gaelic and Nationalist Republic coincide with the formative school years of most of the participants in my study. At this time, the Irish language was still privileged in schools and necessary for university matriculation and many public sector careers; the fight for Irish freedom dominated the primary school history syllabus; and many primary schools (similar to the one I attended) had framed copies of the 1916 *Proclamation of the Republic* displayed prominently in schools owned, and managed, by the Catholic Church.

My data indicate that popular discourse around national identity has not moved far beyond the early 20th century idealised notion of a homogenised and mono-cultural identity. Rather than diminish cultural identity, arguably the arrival of immigrants of various racial, cultural, and class backgrounds to the Republic is the cause of an entrenchment of notions of Irish identity and a level of ambivalence emerging, not least among the political and intellectual elite. Strikingly, in 2008, the aforementioned FitzGerald, by then an opinion leader in politics and economics and an 'elder statesman', who was so roundly accused in the 1970s of being too open to the other to the detriment of Irish national identity, wrote in his regular column in *The Irish Times*:

> It is clearly important that we encourage and assist immigrants to maintain aspects of their distinctive cultures that they value and that could also add to the variety of our lives. But there is now also considerable pressure that we drop aspects of our inherited culture that may not be shared by various groups of immigrants and in my view that is quite another matter (FitzGerald, 2008).

His comments fit comfortably with transcripts of many of the interviews I was undertaking that same year.

Conclusion

'Unprecedented' and 'historic' are terms frequently used in popular, political, and academic discussions to describe the changes wrought in the latter years of the 20th and early years of the 21st century in Ireland. Perhaps this is an acceptable usage of otherwise overused adjectives, given the shift from net emigration to immigration, and back to emigration, and from the 1980s recession to economic boom and return to recession. And, while all this expansion and contraction is going on, there is a dawning realisation among the majority population that the demographic profile and mono-cultural identity of the Republic of Ireland has changed forever. However, as we have seen, the actual population break-down is not reflected in media and political discourse.

The context provided by this chapter suggests significant social distance exists between certain immigrant groups and the indigenous Irish. This distance is informed by what appears to be low levels of personal and professional interaction and by political and media discourses that support the construction of immigration as an economic, social, and

cultural problem of significance, to be addressed by constitutional, legislative and policy change, as necessary. An attendant consequence is the re-production of social, economic, political, cultural and spatial distance, at an individual, workplace, neighbourhood, and political constituency level. Meanwhile, the Irish lower classes, presumed to live and work nearer to people categorised as immigrants, find their higher level of interaction and proximity used to support the common-sense argument that they are in competition for resources with immigrants and due to their social class and educational attainment, are 'more open to frustration leading to prejudice as a form of psychological aggression' (Mac Gréil, 2011: 209).

This then is the economic, social, and political context that informs and influences the responses of the participants in my research, and the context within which I find members of the Irish professional class professing to have little or no knowledge of immigration as it does not 'impinge' on their lives. Rather, they suggest, it is likely to be an issue for the Irish lower classes as immigration is overwhelmingly (but not entirely) an economic issue, and individuals who have something to contribute, regardless of their background, are not categorised as immigrants and are welcome to contribute to 'Ireland Inc.'. That said these interviewees were, like myself, socialised and racialised into an almost exclusively white, Catholic, Gaelic and Nationalist society in the Republic of Ireland of the 1960s, '70s and '80s as becomes more apparent in the findings presented in Chapter 7.

How this socio-economic context informed and influenced the response of the Irish professionals I interviewed will become apparent in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 which detail the findings and analyses that form the basis of the theoretical contribution but, first, in the next two chapters I explore the body of theory within which this research is positioned and explain the methodology and methods employed.

Chapter 3: The Intersection of Race, Ethnicity and Class: Theoretical Perspectives

> Belonging is about boundaries but it is also about hierarchies which exist both within and across boundaries. Boundaries are shifting and changing; some are more a product of external constraints, like political, legal, national rules relating to membership. Others are inscribed in the body through the stigmata of absence and notions of incapacity/deformity via gender or disability. They may also be inscribed through body style (such as in class relations) or through colour physiognomy and the bodily and personal style/gait associated with ethnic difference (Anthias, 2008: 9).

Introduction

Given the ongoing debate on the role of literature within a grounded theory enquiry (which I discuss in the next chapter), it is important to explain how the literature was used to inform this study. Although I had read around the literature in the field prior to, and early in, the study this was used to help develop 'theoretical sensitivity' as recommended by Barney Glaser, one of the founders of grounded theory (1978: 21). I continued to read while carrying out fieldwork, searching for the theory or theories that would help me to understand the emergent data which was turning out to be much less elucidating that I had anticipated as an early career researcher. I had not, for example, anticipated that Irish professional interviewees might have a different understanding of the term 'immigrant' to that of European and Irish institutions or academia and one which was informed by perceived racial, ethnic, and class difference. As the iterative analysis proceeded, it became necessary to follow many theoretical 'leads' to try to understand what was going on. Some proved fruitful and clarifying; others, while interesting, less so. I think of this as my 'Alice in Wonderland' period as I chased the (elusive) theory that would help make sense of it all. None did in its entirety but many helped significantly and, in time, two bodies of theory helped clarify my thinking, firstly, intersectionality theory, specifically, the intersection of race, ethnicity, and class and secondly, Whiteness Studies, and its focus on invisible and unspoken privilege.

When I started to engage with this body of theory the responses of my interviewees to immigrants and immigration began to make more sense. However, before I delve further into the theoretical basis of this study I outline some general or overall theoretical influences.

Theoretical Influences

I draw on the work of theorists in the USA as well as Europe. Here I follow Goldberg (2009) who, while acknowledging that conceptions of race and racial social arrangements have usefully been studied comparatively in the context of specific national socio-political, economic, legal and cultural conditions, contends that racial concepts and racist practice are relational. That is to say, that while the conceptions and comprehensions as well as institutional arrangements and expressions of exclusion may be situated in a particular context, these are not bounded 'silos,' uninformed or unaffected by what is going on elsewhere in the world. Goldberg's theory of the 'globalisation of the racial' describes how:

> …racial ideas, meanings, exclusionary and repressive practices in one place are influenced, shaped by and fuel those elsewhere. Racial ideas and arrangements circulate, cross borders, shore up existing or prompt new ones… (Goldberg, 2009: 1274).

Such influences include the current US domination of international culture and news (Mc Phail, 2010) and 'the quasi-universalisation of the US folk-concept of race as a result of the worldwide export of US scholarly categories' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999: 48). But these influences are not limited to culture and news. In the Irish context it is argued that Ireland not only imports racist discourses and practices from elsewhere through the British and North American media but also through its long history of Catholic missionary work, past involvement in imperialist projects, including service in the British army and what Mc Veigh calls the 'repatriated racism' of returning emigrants and the Irish diaspora (Mc Veigh and Lentin, 2002: 19).

With reference to the folk-concept of 'race', there are few social scientists who would (publicly) dispute the findings from the Human Genome Project in 2000 that, for scientific purposes and, as the editorial in the prestigious journal *Nature Genetics* put it: there is no biological basis for race (Nature Genetics, 2001).

That said, while historical biological conceptions of race may have receded, they are by no means eliminated (Malik, 2008). By this I mean that while the majority of scientists (but by no means all) may disregard the idea of multiple human races co-existing, the discourse outside the academy does not. Indeed, the concept of race has a long and complex history of shifting meanings 'parasitic on theoretical and social discourses for the meaning it assumes at given historical moments' (Goldberg, 1992: 553). In other words, the findings of the Human Genome Project did not herald the end of racisms. Indeed, currently there are some interesting and heated debates on the implications of race-based bio-medical research (See Duster, 2006; Roberts, 2008).

However, within academia it is generally accepted that race is a social construct rather than an essential category and that the term 'race' or 'racial' group as it is employed today refers to groups who differ in terms of physical, most often phenotypical, attributes such as skin tone and which are accorded social significance of one kind or another depending on the socio-political, economic, legal and cultural conditions pertaining. The concept of physical differences being accorded social significance is the important point here. Physical difference between people is not a social construct but the social significance accorded to a particular skin tone, hair texture or eye shape is a social construction. 'The real debate about race,' writes Malik, 'is not whether there are any differences between populations but about the significance of such differences' (Malik, 2008: 24). As Memmi suggests:

> Differences can exist or not exist. Differences are not in themselves good or bad. One is not racist or anti-racist in pointing out or denying differences, but one is racist in using them against someone to one's own advantage (Memmi, 2000: 52).

However, accepting race as a social construct, a 'floating signifier' as Hall (1996b) argues, does not diminish the real and powerful negative effects of racialised thinking and behaviours. Such thinking and behaviour facilitates the construction of racial categories, racial structures and hierarchical racialised social systems that are inherently racist as Memmi writes:

> …racist thinking always contains a sense of superiority founded upon the hierarchy it establishes between itself and those it racialises as other. It is the hierarchy, though not the superiority, that is real because racism bestows *objective advantages*. As a White person, one

> can be crippled, miserable, or dim-witted and still believe oneself superior to all Black people - or, a European, to all Arabs...[Emphasis in original] (Memmi, 2000: 106).

Bonnet's (2000) history of white identities and the particularity of its local forms, as well as work by Ignatiev (1995) and Roediger (2005) on how European immigrants to North America (including the Irish) manoeuvred themselves politically and socially to become 'white' illustrate that being categorised as 'black', 'white', or 'in-between' matters a great deal, and that such categorisations are contingent and contextual, as are the specific meanings or evaluations and advantages attached. Roediger theorises race as constructed differently across time by people of the same social class and differently, at the same time, by people from different classes (2007 [1991]).

The term 'social construct' is used frequently in the literature on race, ethnicity, and class. Accepting Mitchell's description of such a construct as 'a representation, a set of meanings, a particular way of seeing the world' (2002: 4) I am concerned not to minimise its 'significant implications for material reality' (Ratcliffe, 2004), so I take this opportunity of citing Margaret L. Andersen, who reminds us that race as construct can be very real in its consequences (2003: 33), and Cornel West who points out that while social categories are constructed 'scars and bruises are felt within human bodies' and that 'death is not a construct' (Klor de Alva et al, 1997: 485). I should mention here that given that I understand 'race' as a socially constructed category it is customary that I should use inverted commas when I use the term. However, as can be seen in this thesis, I have not done so. The reason is a stylistic one owing to the frequency of use of the word but also fits with my stated concern not to minimise the power of the concept.

In addition to understanding race to be constructed and contextual, I follow Hall who argues it is misleading to think of racism as 'everywhere the same - either in its forms, its relations to other structures and processes, or its effects' (Hall, 1996a: 435). Just as racial categories take many forms and are both complex and dynamic, it follows that there are many different forms of racisms and the term should be understood in the plural (see Goldberg, 1993; Hall, 1996a). Racism is a 'scavenger ideology' according to Mosse (1985), re-cycling ideas from other sets of ideas and beliefs in other contexts. However Goldberg (2009) argues that whatever relational conditions pertain, once designated and determined, the outcome will be conditions of privilege for some and not others. In other

words, while racial categories may be contexualised, contingent, and place and time specific, the implications of racism(s) are usually not.

Following Hill Collins and Solomos, who link racism to all forms of discrimination, exclusion, domination, and relations of power, I understand racism as an ideology of domination based on beliefs that a 'designated racial group is either biologically, or culturally, inferior and the use of such beliefs can be used both 'to rationalise or prescribe the racial group's treatment in society as well as to explain its social position and accomplishment' (Hill Collins and Solomos, 2010a: 3). In short, racisms are based on the belief that the character and actions of an individual are determined by the racial or ethnic group to which he or she belongs and, crucially, that races not only differ, but some are superior to others and, therefore, privileged.

Although race and ethnicity are two different social and political constructs, in popular discourse (and in my data) ethnic group can be seen to be employed as a 'polite' or socially acceptable term for identifying and labelling difference. I argue this is not based simply on a misinterpretation of the terms and agree with Van der Valk (2003) who argues that the debate on race among scientists engaged in the development of scientific racism was hardly ever exclusively about biological or physical characteristics but almost always interwoven with references to cultural difference. Arguably the term 'ethnic' has become a problematic alternative to 'race' as it still includes (however implicitly) reference to human biological or physical features. For example, Barth (1969) refers to ethnic groups being biologically self-perpetuating or practicing endogamy while Schermerhorn (1970) describes some of the features of an ethnic group as having real or imagined common ancestry and shared phenotypical features. UNESCO did not contribute towards disabusing people of this notion when, in 1969, it rejected the notion of a multiplicity of races and argued instead for the acceptance of a multiplicity of cultures, advocating the adoption of the term 'ethnicity':

> National, religious, geographic, linguistic and cultural groups do not necessarily coincide with racial groups: and the cultural traits of such groups have no demonstrated genetic connection with racial traits. Because serious errors of this kind are habitually committed when the term 'race' is used in popular parlance, it would be better when speaking of human races to drop the term 'race' altogether and speak of ethnic groups (U.N.E.S.C.O., 1969: 31).

The UNESCO approbation of race-related terminology and its endorsement of ethnicity-related terminology, then and now, is no guarantee against ethno-centrism which can be understood as another form of racism. In 1981, Barker theorised a 'new' racism whereby biological/genetic differences were replaced by differences between cultures or nations which, in turn, were represented as homogenous entities, with race becoming coded as culture or ethnicity (Barker, 1981). The anthropologist Stolcke (1995) writing on the new prominence given to cultural difference in anthropological and political discourse in Europe in the 1980s (referred to by some as 'the cultural turn'), uses the term 'cultural fundamentalism'. This is not unlike Gilroy's 'ethnic absolutism', whereby culture comes to be perceived as a 'pseudo-biological property' and is:

> …conceived along ethnically absolute lines, not as something fluid, changing, unstable and dynamic but as a fixed property of social groups rather than a relational field in which they encounter one another (Gilroy, 1993: 24).

Brah uses the term 'ethnicism' to describe the process of defining people in terms of their ethnicity. Like Gilroy she sees this as reducing people to one aspect of their identity and assuming that all members of a particular ethnic group have similar needs:

> Ethnicism, I would suggest, defines the experience of racialised groups primarily in 'culturalist' terms: that is, it posits 'ethnic difference' as the primary modality around which social life is constituted and experienced. Cultural needs are defined largely as independent of other social experiences centred around class, gender, racism or sexuality. This means that a group identified as culturally different is assumed to be internally homogeneous … (Brah, 1992: 129).

In summary then, my understanding of race, racism, ethnicity, and ethnicism, is similar to that of Simon and Piché:

> Socially constructed, culturally shaped, biologically determined and genetically designed: the definitions of race and ethnicity as concepts and categories are far from stable and shared among scientists, policy makers, public opinion and statistics (Simon and Piché, 2011: 1358).

Since I am also interested in the influence, if any, of class position on people's responses to people perceived to be racially or ethnically different, it is necessary to engage with theories of class, a concept no less contested than race or ethnicity. Indeed historically, the construction of races and classes and, relatedly, of racism and classism, are said to have been rooted in the process of nation formation. According to Van der Valk:

> Where the perceived superiority of the white race legitimated the repression and exclusion of other races it also led to the repression and exclusion of those elements within one's own race considered a threat to the quality of life such as the nomadic, the criminal, the anti-social, and the mentally ill (Van der Valk, 2003).

Two distinct schools of class analysis have arisen in recent decades: the first is the precise and somewhat traditional economic resources/employment relations approach to the meaning of class as exemplified by occupational structure (Goldthorpe, 1996), and the second which argues the importance of class 'interests and identities' (Crompton and Scott, 2000: 5). The latter has given rise to approaches which are premised upon the interrelationship of the 'economic' and the 'social' (Crompton, 1998: 119) in addition to rethinking class location as bound up with social identity. This approach acknowledges that, just as race and ethnicity are stratified by class, occupational structure is stratified by race and ethnicity, as well as gender and age. In this theoretical approach, class identity is discussed in terms of a sense of relational social distance within a hierarchy. Crompton (2008) posits three different meanings for class: (i) as being related to the possession of economic and power resources; (ii) as having a cultural dimension in the sense of prestige, status, or lifestyle; and (iii) as groups with actual or potential social and political agency. She concludes that the everyday use of the term is closest to the notion of status or prestige and is bound up with hierarchy and it is this usage which proves most useful in this study.

I am also influenced by the theoretical work of Bourdieu (1984) on class differentiated lifestyles whereby middle class constructions of respectability are partly organised around *not* being working class, thereby pathologising the lower or working classes as lacking in respectability. Skeggs (1997), cited in Tyler (2012), argues that certain markers of class distinction have been defined by the powerful in society to signify the embodiment of differing forms of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. For Skeggs, class identities mediate a constant process of creating distinctions between oneself and others on the grounds of physical appearance, social decorum, education credentials, wealth, and

aesthetic taste, and an important marker of respectability and social standing is approval, legitimisation, and acceptance by the middle and professional classes. Drawing on patterns of social ties and interactions to theorise hierarchies and inequality, Bottero writes that the key issue is not self-conscious claims to class identity, but the classed nature of social and cultural practices (2004: 990) which, she argues, follows Bourdieu's notion that class inequalities are reproduced through the hierarchically differentiated nature of tastes (Bourdieu, 1984).

Significantly, for my purposes, Bottero (2004) posits social hierarchy as a new form of class identity in which the recognition of social divisions - or social distance - is embedded in practice and produced and reproduced every day in mundane actions and inactions including patterns of interaction (Bottero, 2004: 993). 'The people in our social networks,' she writes, 'tend to come from the same social location as ourselves, both for reasons of comfort and practicality we like to associate with "people like us"' (Bottero, 2004: 995). As well as economic and cultural capital then, social capital - which includes access to influential social networks - is also 'inherited' (Bourdieu, 1984). Kinship, friendship, and partnership, but also social division or social distance, all exhibit strong patterns by social class and status. James (2000) argues that peoples' connections tend to come overwhelmingly from a similar social and ethnic background to their own which suggests that strong networks (or social capital) can contribute both to inclusion and exclusion, and therefore to the promotion of racial and ethnic inequality. In the Irish context, Breen and Whelan (1996: 2) write of the infrequency of 'ties of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood that cross the lines of class division'. With hierarchy embedded in our closest personal relationships, and social location and culture structured into everyday social practices, hierarchical practices emerge as normative, unremarkable and, as captured in my data, 'only natural'. There is a 'dark side' to social capital according to Field:

> From the time of Simmel, negative social capital - in the form of racism or religious bigotry - has been widely associated with close ties, or bonding social capital. It has also been associated with a tendency toward particularised trust – that is, a propensity to trust those to whom one is related through kinship or personal acquaintance, or who shares membership of a known common grouping such as a church or association. [ ] At first sight then it seems that bonding social capital (combined with particularised trust) is to blame for social capital's dark side (Field, 2009: 96-97).

Similarly, Knowles argues that mapping the social relationships of who lives, travels, and talks to whom, demonstrates what she calls race-making (others use the term racialisation) which arise from everyday, routine actions, and the spatial contexts in which people spend their time (Knowles, 2010). As Doane argues:

> The significance of racial ideologies and categories is not in their content but in how they affect social interaction and social stratification. Ideologies 'explain' (i.e. legitimate) social relationships while categories reflect placement within a set of relationships. They function to justify social arrangements, mobilise in-group members, and marginalise members of dominated groups (2003: 11).

Watt (2006) also draws on Bourdieu (1984) in describing the importance of class *habitus* and positing that social distinction can take implicit or explicit spatial form as people of varying class backgrounds endeavour to position themselves within a social *habitus* where they can be among people like themselves and, simultaneously, distance themselves from the raced and classed other. In the United States, Wellman describes middle class people not 'objecting much to blacks *like themselves* living 'next door'' (1993: 53) [emphasis in original]. In Sibley's work on geographies of exclusion, even place identities are related to processes of distinction and the way people ascribe identities to others as well as to themselves (Sibley, 1995). While one facet of the identity of a place is its racial and ethnic identity, because, as Pulido argues, 'all places are racialised and race informs all places' (2000: 13), another facet is its class identity: it is a common perception, captured in my data, that post codes can symbolically represent the dominant or sub-ordinant socio-economic identity of an area.

To summarise, my understanding of class is influenced by Crompton (2008) and the idea of class as status or prestige and hierarchy and, influenced by Bordieu's idea of class *habitus*, Bottero's (2004) theorising of social hierarchy as a form of class identity produced and reproduced in everyday actions and interactions.

It is also useful to address how we got from discussing immigrants and immigration in Chapters 1 and 2 to theories of race, ethnicity and class in this chapter. That is due to an early, very important theoretical influence, the work of Balibar on immigration and, specifically, his thoughts on indigenous higher classes and immigrants. In the previous

chapter, we saw that, contrary to the UN definition, majority populations in the EU regard the term 'immigrant' as applicable only to non-EU nationals. As I mentioned at the outset, an early finding of my study is that Irish professionals have an even more selective application of the term. My findings include that 'immigrant' is understood and employed by Irish professionals as a socially acceptable term to illustrate and explain racial, ethnic, and class difference in a constructed social hierarchy which supports Balibar's contention that the term 'immigration' is, in fact, a newly acceptable term for race and racialised discourse:

> ...'immigration' has become, *par-excellence*, the name of race, a new name...functionally equivalent to the old appellation, just as the term 'immigrant' is the chief characteristic which enables individuals to be classified by racist typology (Balibar, 1991b: 217).

Also useful in my analyses is Balibar's argument that the term 'immigrant' constitutes a 'catch-all category, combining ethnic and class criteria, into which foreigners are dumped indiscriminately, though not all foreigners and not only foreigners' (1991b: 221). Balibar is also one of the few theorists I have found who problematises the tolerance and anti-racism of the higher classes by suggesting they are simply 'more skilled in the wiles of the political language-game' (1991b: 223).

Finally, given that the theme of competition for resources (both economic and cultural) between nationals and 'non-nationals', real or perceived, is recurrent in this thesis, I want to refer to Blumer's group conflict theory and the influence it has had on my research. Herbert Blumer was a leading symbolic interactionist and a proponent of methodologies that explore social experiences in all their complexity by building on 'sensitizing concepts' and, as such, he was a major influence on those who founded grounded theory (see Chapter 4, below). Blumer (1958) argued that 'race prejudice' as a form of social conflict exists in the sense of group (collective) rather than individual position. He identified four types of contributory feelings in the dominant group: (i) superiority, (ii) that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien, (iii) that the dominant group has a proprietary claim to certain privileges and advantages and, importantly, (iv) a fear that the subordinate group/race can/will threaten the position of the dominant group. While I accept the importance of focusing on group rather than individual position, I find the usefulness of the theory limited with regard to the implied homogeneity of both the dominant (racial) group and its response, regardless, for example, of social class or ethnicity.

Blumer writes, for example, that:

> The sense of group position refers to the position of group to group, not to that of individual to individual. Thus, vis-à-vis the subordinate racial group the unlettered individual with low status in the dominant racial group has a sense of group position common to that of the elite of his group (1958: 5).

Blalock (1967) another important group conflict theorist addresses my concern, albeit briefly and then only in the appendices of his influential work: *Towards a theory of Minority-Group Relations.* Here he questions to what extent race and class attitudes may be interchangeable and concludes it is 'difficult to separate the two phenomena empirically' (Blalock, 1967: 202). Others, drawing on Blumer to explore group threat as a function of economic conditions/resources and/or relative size of the subordinate group continue, I argue, to conceptualise both the dominant and subordinate group as homogenous in class, ethnicity and other terms (see Esses et al, 2001; Esses and Jackson, 2008; Esses et al, 1998; Quillian, 1995). Esposito and Murphy (1999) critique what they describe as the 'desensitizing' of Blumer's work by quantitative methodologies which result in 'a static depiction of race relations that has nothing to do with the variegated experiential complexities that Blumer claimed underlie all human group life' (1999: 397). Esposito and Murphy argue that, for Blumer, while patterns of behaviour may result in a specific racial order or hierarchy becoming established temporarily, such positional arrangements are contextual and contingent and so perceptions of group position may change over time. Esposito and Murphy also point out that Blumer himself would have critiqued the idea of 'the' economy as an autonomous entity that affects, but is not influenced, by race. Indeed later work by Quillian (2006) writes that work by psychologists on implicit prejudice may 'help sociologists better understand the micro and macro-connections between individual and groups' and that '[i]n contemporary America, most white Americans hold complicated and arguably contradictory views about race' (Quillian, 2006: 322-323). So, while I do not find many of the empirical applications of group threat theory useful because of the lack of attention to class relations and the privilege/restraints of differing social classes within a racial group, I do follow Blumer's endorsement of contextual sensitivity, of exploring the assumptions that people use to organise their lives, and his assertion that group position 'may be firm or soft, acute or dull, continuous or intermittent. In short…the sense of group position is very variable' (Blumer, 1958: 5).

In Chapter 8, I demonstrate that while the white Irish professional class may employ the rhetoric of economic and cultural resource threat, and even the relative size of the immigrant population, they are not referring to *all* immigrants and they are not referring to the same economic resources as their lower class, fellow dominant group members, nor indeed do they necessarily define and count immigrants in the same manner as all their Irish compatriots.

My theoretical influences then include the understanding that while race and ethnicity are constructed, contingent and contextual, and there is no biological basis for either, these concepts continue to be implicated in questions of inclusion and exclusion, even life and death. Class is understood to be relational, tacit, and hierarchical, rather than categorical, explicit, and collective, and social capital is recognised as both inclusionary or bonding for 'people like us' and exclusionary of 'people like them'. Most significantly, I understand race, ethnicity and class as social divisions which influence and intersect one another and persist, despite occasional neo-liberal allusions to the advent of a meritocratic, post-racial society. Do these social divisions persist because they benefit some elements of society economically, or socially, or both? In the following sections I outline historical perspectives on the interrelationship of race and class, and the macro theoretical arguments, before moving on to discuss the contribution of intersectionality perspectives to Whiteness Studies theories of race and class.

The Interrelationship of Race, Ethnicity and Class: Historical Perspectives

In his lecture entitled *Race, The Floating Signifier*, Hall argues that what racial difference signifies is never static or the same (Hall, 1996b) and he cites the discourses of religion, anthropology, and the sciences of biology and genetics as each having contributed to accounts of racial difference over time. The reader gets a sense of these various and contingent discourses in Banton's (1998) review of historical theories of racial relations. Arguing that social scientists need to find a vocabulary that avoids the misconceptions implicit in 16th to 19th century European ideas and theories of race, Banton (1998) writes that, for example, in terms of religious discourse, racial difference has been theorised as being related to biblical narratives such as Noah's curse that his son Ham would be the servant of the servants of his brothers or to God's punishment of mankind for building the tower of Babel. As the European Enlightenment gave way to the positivist vision of the Victorian age, belief in change and progress gave way to ideas of a 'naturally' sanctioned social order. Natural historians began to study and classify specimens of all living forms,

including humans. Theorisations of difference ranged, over time, from environmental influences to variations in morals and values (Banton, 1998). Anthropologists, according to Hall, were among the groups who contributed to the racial discourse that humans were alike 'because we all came from monkeys' but that 'some are closer to monkeys than we [whites] are' [39] (1996b). Hall's comments are also reminiscent of Edward Said's criticism of the way in which western knowledge and ideology have constructed the unknown other as 'less than'. Writing on Said's work on colonial discourse, Young describes orientalism as 'preparing the way for colonialism discursively, ideologically and rhetorically (2000: 268).

Banton records that by the late 1800s and early 1900s, when whites were considered (by whites) to be 'superior to blacks and yellows in political and economic power', theorists of the time tended to attribute this to differential biological inheritance and the modern division of labour as an expression of this biological hierarchy (1998: 6-7). The typology of what was called 'race science' (phrenology, physiognomy, eugenics, etc.) or 'scientific racism' contributed to the rationalisation and justification of the superiority of the white European and the inferiority of the black African as well as the (predominantly white) lower classes of Europe (Solomos and Back, 1996). This 'scientific racism' generated a 'natural' social hierarchy that was used to explain and justify the intellectual and moral superiority of the white ruling classes both in Europe and abroad and provided a rationale which could, in time, be drawn on to justify slavery and colonialism. For me, an important point here is the reference to chronology. Early justifications for slavery and, to some extent, colonisation were grounded in religion (i.e. saving souls for Christianity), economics, and expanding capitalism (i.e. raw materials, markets), not explicitly in racial inferiority (see Banton, 1998). The latter argument, presented in the rhetoric of rationality, would come to the fore later, in the late 18th and early 19th century. Cox (1970), for example, theorises that slavery led to racial oppression and that slavery was developed, pragmatically, to maximise profit for the wealthy and was rationalised ideologically only subsequently, while Du Bois (1972 [1946]) argued that the impoverishment of people of colour became part of the elite white rationality for oppressing them (cited in Hill Collins and Solomos, 2010b: 50).

Whether racialisation informed slavery and colonisation, or vice versa, many theorists propose that where Europeans travelled and colonised, their racial structure travelled too,

[39] The belief that the 'primitive' people of Africa constituted an earlier stage of human development is known as atavism.

and affected, to varying degree, the societies they reached – another manifestation perhaps of Goldberg's 'globalisation of the racial' (2009). With whiteness operating 'as a badge of racial privilege' (Knowles, 2010: 29), attaining cultural 'whiteness' becomes the objective for many of the colonised. Fanon writes about how this is imposed on the colonised:

> Every colonised people - in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality - finds itself face to face with the language of the civilising nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonised is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes white as he renounces his blackness (Fanon, 1986 [1967]: 18).

Most contemporary theorists have taken the perspective that race was (and is) a description of social, not biological or genetic distinctions (Malik, 2008). Indeed Balibar (1991a) argues that the industrial revolution in Europe marked the beginning of the racialisation of the (mostly white) European lower classes:

> For the first time those aspects typical of every procedure of racialisation of a social group right down to our own day are condensed in a single discourse: material and spiritual poverty, criminality, congenital vice (alcoholism, drugs), physical and moral defects, dirtiness, sexual promiscuity and the specific diseases which threaten humanity with 'degeneracy' (Balibar, 1991a: 209).

For other theorists it was following the experience of the French and other revolutions in the late 18th -early 19th century that the elite classes in Europe began to perceive the lower classes as a politically threatening mass. Foucault describes 'the war going on beneath order and peace' (2003: 59) that takes on, from the 17th century, the specific form of a race war which, he argues, is a 'class war':

> We find the basic elements that make war possible and then ensure its continuation, pursuit, and development: ethnic differences, differences between languages, different degrees of force, vigour, energy, and violence; the differences between savagery and barbarism; the conquest and subjugation of one race by another. The social body is basically articulated around two classes (Foucault, 2003: 60).

This racial and ethnic conflict is articulated in nationalist movements across Europe and in policies of colonisation and then, from the early 19th century, Foucault argues a new theme emerges in the discourse which 'tends to erase every trace of racial conflict in order to define itself as a class struggle' (ibid) whereby the discourse refers not to a clash of two races within a society but the splitting of a single race into 'superrace' and 'subrace': the race that holds power and is therefore entitled to define the norm and those who deviate from that norm [...] that pose a threat to the biological heritage' (ibid: 61).

Significantly, Crompton argues that the negative moral evaluations of the lower classes (per Balibar above) are still produced and re-produced in the 21st century (2008: 102). This perspective proved useful in my analyses when data coded to negative comments relating to the Irish lower classes became significant. In other words, people who are perceived to be physically and, more usually, phenotypically different, can be racialised, but so also can groups deemed racially similar but of a different (for which read inferior) class.

Useful as an historical perspective can be, there are, I suggest, complexities inherent in looking back through the centuries for an explanation of concepts we understand today as race and racism. One is of assuming that religious 'explanations' gave way to anthropological ones which, in turn, were replaced by biological or genetic explanations as human intelligence and learning developed because 'an ideology is likely to be a synthesis of ideas, some of which will be familiar for a long period' (Banton, 1998: 36). The second complexity, I suggest, are the shifting political, economic, even technological contexts, within which these discourses and theories emerged (and which they in turn informed) for example, the spread of the European form of capitalism and the colonisation of countries, even continents, by Europeans. One useful perspective, I suggest, is to ask *cui bono*, who benefits from each discourse i.e. who are the privileged in each context.

Ultimately, the argument is about the interaction between racial attitudes and structures of exploitation. To quote Banton:

> One view sees racism as an ideology generated to defend the interests of whites who made great profits from sugar production in the West Indies; this ideology was then developed to serve the interests of the capitalist classes. The main alternative view relates the prejudices of

> whites towards blacks to status distinctions drawn within white society and sees it as starting to increase greatly after the middle of the nineteenth century (1998: 27).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to relate a comprehensive history of the interconnectedness of race, racialisation, capitalism, and colonialism. Suffice to say that each informed a social structure that awarded advantages and privilege to the groups who constructed the social structure, namely white Europeans. In the next section we delve further into the question of whether economic or social relations and divisions were/are to the fore.

The Interrelationship of Race, Ethnicity and Class: Macro Theoretical Perspectives

Race, ethnicity, and class have been analysed and theorised in a variety of ways within the 'fault lines' of structure versus agency which Gabriel and Ben Tovim (1979) and Craib (1984) describe as permeating the entire discipline of sociology. Hall (2002) calls these 'two tendencies' in sociological theory the 'economic' and the 'sociological.' The economic or materialist approach views economic relations and structures as having a determining effect on social divisions with a racial or ethnic character. The sociological approach, on the other hand, theorises race and ethnicity as social or cultural features of a society situated in a particular place and time. Hall writes that adherents to the sociological approach accuse the economic/materialist adherents of reductionism and mono-causality and of ignoring the complexity and range of structures that comprise social formations. He argues that this bifurcation is not just a matter for theoretical debate but has practical implications for the diminution of racism and racialisation. If it is the case that economics structure race and ethnic relations then the economic structures need to be changed, but if race and ethnic relations are not 'reducible' to economic relations then these social and cultural features will not be affected by any such changes. On the other hand, if race and ethnicity are contextual social or cultural features of a society, then eliminating racism and racialisation requires a plurality of approaches encompassing the cultural and ideological, as well as the economic or material. I explore the economic and sociological tendencies in more detail below but first, let me ask, what if structure and agency are implicated in each other?

Introducing the concept of 'structuration', Giddens (1984) theorises structure and agency as inseparable, arguing that social structures are reproduced in the everyday practices of agents or social actors who are knowledgeable about the practices in which they are engaged. As Giddens sees it, while social structures provide the resources for socialisation, these social structures are only realised through the interactions of social actors. Bourdieu too, felt it was crucial not just to see the dichotomy of structure/agency but to see how they were inseparably related (Calhoun, 2012: 327). Bourdieu (1977) and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) theorise agency/structure in terms of *habitus* and field. For Bourdieu, *habitus* is the internalised cognitive structure (embodied knowledge) through which people deal with the social world and is, he argues, both produced by, and produces, society. Members of the same social class will, for example, have the same *habitus* and share an understanding of the world in terms of what one can reasonably expect, for example, from schools, employment, and family life. The field is the network of relations that serves to constrain agents whether individuals or collectivities. It is a domain of social life that has its own rules and practices. For example, the hospital porter and surgeon are both participants in the medical field but they have very different *habitus* or, to put it another way, structures are structuring in the sense that they guide and constrain social action but they are themselves also structured in the sense that they are generated and reproduced by social actors. Possession of the different forms of capital (economic, social, and cultural as we saw above) provides the basic structure for the organisation of fields and the generation of various *habitus* and the practices associated with them, according to Bourdieu (1984). Groups in social positions with high capital volume i.e. a great deal of economic, cultural and social capital overall are most interested in maintaining this (privileged) position.

However, the question is not just who has higher or lower overall capital but how do different groups relate to each other based on the kind of capital they control. Bourdieu uses the concept 'symbolic violence' to describe the ways in which groups may be damaged by how they are labelled or categorised socially. We have seen (in the work of Pulido and Watt above) that all places are classed as well as raced. In this chapter I discuss the claims of Whiteness theorists such as Bonilla-Silva (2006) that whites in the US live in a white *habitus* that both creates and conditions their views, cognitions, even their sense of the aesthetic and, importantly, can foster a sense of *intra-racial solidarity*. Whites also tend to live among people of similar class background so they can be expected to experience a sense of *intra-class solidarity*. However, Hartigan Jr. (1999) found it not to be so straightforward when he carried out an ethnographic study on the

daily lives of whites in Detroit which, he estimated, was then 'perhaps the blackest city' in the US. His core research question was whether, and how, class background influenced understandings of racial identity and difference. What he found was that class profoundly shapes how whites identify racially and that when whites talk about race they constantly invoke or mobilise class distinctions. Indeed he argues that intra-racial distinctions (not solidarity) are a primary medium through which whites think about race. He found 'race' was rarely established in pure forms; rather it was conflated with class distinctions and that whites are differently positioned in relation to the privileges that whiteness is assumed to ensure. I cite this study because, despite the obvious and profound demographic, historical, cultural, and economic differences between Detroit in 1999 and Dublin in 2009, I find parallels in how white Irish professionals understand and respond to racial and class identities and how these are shaped both by *inter-racial* and *intra-racial* distinctions grounded in class-based stratification. As Hartigan Jr. insists:

> What counts as white in many social situations depends on class identity and the terms of racial belonging and difference are importantly inflected by the markings of class (2003: 96).

Interestingly there are resonances here with Foucault's (1999) comments on forms of racism cited in Rasmussen (2011) when, drawing on psychiatry and how it had shifted from its therapeutic function towards protecting society from the abnormal, he describes hetero-referential and auto-referential forms of racism. Hetero-referential forms of racism target the other ('them' outside) while auto-referential forms of racism target the self (us inside) affirming the superior value of the self. In both cases, a stratified social order is established, writes Rasmussen (2011: 38). Internal racism, it appears, is concerned with the reproduction of the population by isolating and excluding the 'abnormal' although whether the internal abnormal 'other' refers to members of other classes or to racial others, or both, is not clear from Rasmussen's analysis.

For my analyses, I found useful Garner's (2007b) theorising of the existence of one border between whites and the racialised other and the second between whites who are dominant and people of varying 'grades of whiteness':

> The relationality of whiteness involves two simultaneous border maintenance processes: one between white and people of colour and the other between white and not-quite-white. All white subjects are located somewhere on this spectrum, which is an outcome of the

> ongoing classificatory process conceptualised as racialisation' (2007b: 175).

In Europe, Hall (2002) is among the theorists who argue that neither the reductionism of economic relations (the structural approach) nor the pluralism of the sociological approach is sufficient and 'that race is as important in class formation and structuration as class is in race structuration' (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992: 71). Hall uses the concept of 'articulation' to show how theorists can combine analysis of race and racism as both structuring relations in society and ideologies shaping both political action and 'common-sense' meanings (Hall, 1980b). In other words, for Hall, race and class are 'separate but connected sets of relations, but with an agnosticism concerning which is primary' (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992: 71). I return to this notion of 'separate but connected' but first I take a more in-depth, but by no means exhaustive, look at the arguments of the structure or economic approach which resonates with some of the historical perspective touched on above.

The Structure/Economic Approach

The structuralist side of the theoretical divide is critiqued as minimising the significance of race and ethnicity arguing, as its proponents do, that poverty, unemployment, and deprivation should be analysed in the same way for blacks as for whites and should be explained in terms of social location rather than race (Wellman, 1993: 6). Although traditional Marxists acknowledge that class conflict can be affected by other forms of social stratification, such as race and ethnicity, they do not view these as having primacy over economic relations (Mc Intosh, 1997: 62). Blauner (1972: 31), cited in Wellman (1993), suggests the underlying theoretical assumption of orthodox Marxism is that race and ethnicity 'are epiphenomena which only modify the form, but not the content, of the overall society and class struggle'.

For some Marxist theorists, race is linked to the inherent effects of the western capitalist economic system and racism is theorised as originating in the needs of capitalism for a flexible labour force and, as such, is associated with European colonialism in the past and global migration in more recent times (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Cox, 1970). Castles and Kosack theorise immigrants as a useful 'reserve army of labour' whose presence helps 'keep wages down and profits up' (1973: 5).

One form of racism then is theorised as resulting from competition between sub-sections of the labour force for available work. Echoing Cox and Du Bois about slavery leading to, or necessitating, racialised ideology when its continuance was under question politically, Sivanandan (1982) describes the relationship between racism and capitalism as essentially instrumentalist and functionalist, that is to say, capitalism requires racism, not for racism's sake, but for the sake of capitalism.

However, by the mid-twentieth century, the prevalent thinking in both the US and Europe had moved away from structuralist/economic explanations towards understanding racism as the ignorance and 'bad' attitudes of individuals. This explanation also drew criticism. In the European context, Fanon called for the abandonment of the 'habit of considering racism as a mental quirk, as a psychological flaw' (Fanon, 1986 [1967]: 77) and in the US, Cox's classic text, *Race, Caste and Class* (1970) was written in response to what some regarded as this (equally) reductive and essentialist turn towards agency. For Cox, racism was the result of the policies and attitudes of leading capitalists which assisted in the (even) greater exploitation of workers by legitimating ideas of 'natural' racial difference and superiority/inferiority.

In Britain, Rex, who is regarded as following in Cox's tradition, theorised race and class as interacting and forming systematic boundaries within classes (Rex, 1979; Rex and Mason, 1986). For Rex, the colonial heritage was responsible for the 'stigmatisation' of a migrant black working class by a white working class who considered them outsiders and competitors for employment and other resources. The structural or class position of these immigrants is, according to Rex, both the expression and effect of racial ideology.

Rejecting the idea that immigrants and the immigrant experience are somehow homogeneous, Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) contribute to the debate by drawing on the work in the US of Omi and Winant (1986) in relation to how racism cuts across class. They use empirical data from the UK in the 1980s to make the case that, while people who immigrate often come from disadvantaged backgrounds, this is not always, or only, the case, and some immigrant groups are more favourably received, and legitimated, than others. Immigrants, they argue, get employment based on their differential skills and class backgrounds and they experience different forms of racialisation and racism. Racialised groups, they argue, cannot be understood as belonging to one class status, nor can immigrants be reduced to a 'fraction' of the working/lower classes. In the previous

chapter we saw that immigrants to Ireland were particularly well-educated, skilled, and working across the full range of occupations (Barrett and Duffy, 2007; Krings et al, 2012; Mc Ginnity et al, 2012; Power and Szlovak, 2012). The popular perception, as we see in my findings, is another matter.

Some US sociologists, such as Feagin, criticise the way in which the theoretical balance tipped, in their view, too far away from structural (economic/materialist) arguments and towards arguments relating to the social construction of race. Feagin writes:

> ...systemic racism is not just about the construction of racial images, attitudes and identities. It is even more centrally about the creation, development, and maintenance of white privilege, economic wealth, and socio-political power over nearly four centuries (2000: 21).

In summary, proponents of structural/materialist theories of race and ethnicity maintain that economic interests are dominant and that political or ideological factors are simply manifestations of these economic interests. Others argue that, in practice, economic interests are defined politically and ideologically, and that racial or ethnic categories cut across class lines as well as dividing classes internally and it is to this argument that I turn next.

The Agency/Sociological Approach

In contrast to the structural/economic arguments, theorists on the agency/sociological side of the debate emphasise the significance of race and ethnicity. In this approach, race, racialisation, and racism, are essential to any analysis of social relations, although Wellman (1993) argues that the 'sociological' side is itself divided internally. He suggests the most prominent approach in the US analyses race as an ideological construction based on misrepresentation, ignorance, or 'false knowledge'. The other side of the sociological argument, the one he suggests is predominant in Europe, connects ideology with social location as well as the discursive strategies and routine practices essential to the construction of social hierarchy (Wellman, 1993).

Some theorists on the agency/sociological side of the theoretical divide theorise race as an autonomous ideological category, intervening only occasionally, if at all, in economic

relations and political practice (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978). Miles's (1989) work is typical of the 'racism as ideology' approach. For him, race is a social and historical construction and racism an ideology, outside of class politics, and capable of being eradicated by the political intervention of central and local government such as multi-cultural education policies and racism awareness training rather than changes to the economic structure (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1979). Gilroy dismisses this suggestion, summarising it as an endorsement of the notion of 'black and white unite and fight' (Gilroy, 2008 [1987]: 53).

Virdee (2010) argues that Stuart Hall's 1980 essay *Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance* shifted the race and class debate away from the labour market and economic or materialistic relations to consider the importance of politics, ideology, and culture. Hall, he suggests, tries to get away from the orthodox 'race versus class' debate in suggesting that, at the level of ideology, race works through class so that it would be more appropriate to re-conceive this relationship as 'the racialisation of class and the classification of race' (Virdee, 2010: 144).

Hall was influenced by Gramsci's concept of hegemony and the emphasis placed on the importance of culture in securing political consent to rule and he understood hegemony as being exercised over society, not only at the economic level, 'but also at the level of political and ideological leadership in civil, intellectual and moral life…' (Hall, 1980b: 331). Hall maintained that one manifestation of the effectiveness of the ruling elites in securing hegemony was the fragmentation of the working class: politically, ideologically, and culturally. The working class, he claims, tends to regard itself as belonging to a separate race such that:

> …the class relations which ascribe it, function as race relations. Race is thus also the modality in which class is 'lived', the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and 'fought through' (Hall, 1980b: 341).

Given Miles's theorisation of race as ideology, outside of class politics, it is not surprising he objects to Hall using race as if it were an autonomous reality. Referring to the quotation above, Miles (1993: 40) cited in Banton (1998: 186) writes that 'without additional clarification, the claim remains vacous and each new approving citation only reinforces the unintelligibility'. Indeed, I have difficulty with Hall's use of the (limiting)

definite article in his suggestion that 'race is thus also *the* modality in which class is lived' [40] and would rather suggest that race is *a* modality in which class is lived (gender and, depending on whether one views ethnicity as more than another name for race, ethnicity being two others). Although he expresses the view that this need not always be the case, Gilroy (2008 [1987]) agrees with Hall that 'race is [thus] also the modality in which class is lived', arguing that race has been an essential element in the history of class and societal formation in Britain. Along with Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992), he expresses the view that there exists a mutual relation and interconnection between class, race, and nationalism, and that race is not, as Miles (1982, 1989) suggests, merely another ideology. Instead Gilroy views race as part of culture and a historically constructed process concerned with 'the manner in which racial meanings, solidarity and identities provide the basis for action' both as an 'alternative to class consciousness at the political level and a factor in the very formation of classes' (Gilroy, 2008 [1987]: 27). Likewise, Wellman, working in the US, argues that the social location of black Americans is neither 'all about class' nor 'all about ideology':

> ...black Americans currently experience inequalities that would not be found if one's class location were more salient than racial designation and if these inequalities were primarily generated by mis-perceptions, misunderstandings or false knowledge (Wellman, 1993: 11).

Indeed, an emerging body of literature has focused on the racism experienced by members of the middle and professional class with non-white backgrounds in the US and UK (Doane and Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Essed, 1991; Feagin and O' Brien, 2003; Feagin and Sikes, 1994; Hill, 2008; Pierce, 2003; Tyler, 2003).

So, while clearly arguing that race matters, Wellman (1993) accepts that class, culture, and economics, are important lenses into the black experience in the US today. He points out that race still counts in very important ways for how one is treated and argues that certain features of the African-American situation are not attributable to class location, or cultures that are dysfunctional, and that a conception of racism is needed that goes beyond prejudice and 'explanations based exclusively on class, moral character, or ideology' (Wellman, 1993: 4). Interestingly, for the purposes of my findings, he points out that, in the US context, it is European Americans (i.e. whites) who benefit most from the existing social arrangement.

[40] Emphasis added

In addition to Wellman, researchers drawing on historical and empirical data and from backgrounds as diverse as labour history, environmental geography, and sociology, demonstrate how critical advantage and disadvantage in the United States continue to be associated with race. For example, skin colour correlates with whether someone goes to prison, gets a mortgage, receives certain health treatments, gets discounts on purchases and memberships of clubs, has good air quality, or equality of pay with peers (see Cose, 1995; Doane and Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Housel, 2009; Johnson and Shapiro, 2003; Lipsitz, 1998; Mc Intosh, 2001 [1988]; Myers, 2003; Pierce, 2003; Pulido, 2000; Roediger, 2007 [1991]; Shapiro, 2004; Wellman, 1993).

Wellman (1993) expresses some disappointment that Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) continue to locate race where Miles does, in politics and ideology, not analysing racial formation in relation to racial advantage and privilege in, for example, labour markets or political participation. He argues that they provide no analysis of the structure of racial advantage and how it is connected to ways in which people talk about race. It is, says Wellman, as if struggles for scarce resources are a thing of the past and now we just need to get the discourse straightened out (Wellman, 1993: 9). Racism, he writes, is the expression of culturally sanctioned beliefs which, regardless of the intentions involved, defend the advantages whites have because of the subordinated position of other racial groups. In other words, the privileging of one group *de facto* results in the disadvantaging of another.

Sivanandan (2001) has theorised xeno-racism as a form of 'old' biological racism that combines the so-called 'natural' fear of strangers (ideology and culture) with the rationale of the utilitarian economic needs of EU member states. Significantly, for the purposes of this study, he posits xeno-racism as a form of racism that is not colour-coded and 'is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white' (2001: 2). For Sivanandan, 'poverty is the new Black', and he asserts that, in discussions of contemporary immigration in Europe 'while the rhetoric of demonisation is racist, the politics of exclusion is economic' (Sivanandan, 2001: 2).

McDowell, who has critically assessed the migration policies of Europe in the 1940s and 2000s, concludes that the European response to poverty, war, famine and inequality, as well as the desire for less fortunate countries of the world to improve their populations' living standards, are 'not based on humanitarian principles but rather on the strict

economic needs of the West' (Mc Dowell, 2009: 33). Similarly, Fekete points to a First World discourse of global migration management which privileges skilled migrants such as information technology and medical professionals to meet its labour market needs while camouflaging its true approach to immigration i.e. the mobilisation against migration from countries deemed overpopulated and economically weak. As she succinctly puts it: '[i]n the era of globalisation the skills pool, not the genes pool, is key' (Fekete, 2001: 29).

Following detailed analyses of my data, I find most compelling the work of theorists who combine insights from both 'sides' of the macro theoretical divide, that is to say, recognise the structural nature of contemporary racial advantage/dis-advantage without reducing race to class, and, at the same time take racial ideology seriously without analysing it independently of social structure. In my work, I find particularly useful the insights provided by: Hartigan Jr. (1999) on intra-racial distinctions related to class; Garner's (2007b, 2009) concept of the two borders to whiteness, one against whites of other (lower) classes and one against members of other races; Sivandan's (2001) xeno-racism; and Fekete (2001) and McDowell's (2009) analysis of global migration management. Also Wellman's (1993) theorisation of racism as culturally acceptable beliefs operationalised to defend a group's social position and/or material advantage introduced me to Whiteness Studies literature which would prove very useful in understanding the responses of my interviewees to immigration in Ireland: not just in terms of what they say, but how, and why, they respond in the way they do.

In this section I have looked at the interrelationship of race and class through the prism of the major theoretical divide of agency versus structure and have shown how theorists such as Hall, Gilroy and Goldberg do not analyse ideology independently of social location, such as issues of power and privilege, but rather locate race in politics and ideology without diminishing the influence of the structural (Gilroy, 1990; Goldberg, 1990; Hall, 1980b). This interrelationship has been theorised via the concept of intersectionality which is the focus of the next section.

Intersectional Social Divisions and Relations

First and foremost, intersectionality theory [41] argues that it is important to study how different social divisions such as race, class and gender interact in individual lives and social practices and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power (Davis, 2008). This avoids a reductionist formulation whereby, for example, racial or ethnic positionality is understood to be determined by class, or class is understood to be determined by race or ethnicity. The opposite or additive formulation is that class, race, and ethnicity, are treated as separate social divisions experienced simultaneously. Intersectional approaches try to move away from both these models by treating each social division as mutually constituted via intersection with the others (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). This approach informs Virdee's theorisation of the 'racialisation of class and the classification of race' (2010: 144) mentioned above, and Anthias's argument that classes are always gendered and racialised and gender is always classed and racialised (2008: 13).

Secondly, while different social divisions such as class, race, and ethnicity, tend to be 'naturalised' and regarded as resulting from some biological destiny linked to genetic intelligence or personal characteristics (Cohen, 1988), it is worth bearing in mind that different cultural traditions and different contexts give rise to different naturalising narratives and that how people are categorised or 'labelled' as a member of a certain class, racial, or ethnic group can have detrimental or positive effects on their life chances. The intersectional approach focuses attention on a wide range of seeming 'universals' and was influential in prompting feminists such as Frankenberg (1993) to critique the seeming normality of 'whiteness' as a construction which assists the privileging of some and the oppression of others, in other words, the classification of races.

Usefully for this study, intersectionality theorists deem it is important to avoid constructing people as belonging to homogenised social groups and attributing to all members of a particular social category 'natural' attributes, whether positive or negative, to either include or exclude, empower or discriminate the other. Here is Yuval-Davis:

> Categorical attributes are often used for the construction of inclusionary/exclusionary boundaries that differentiate between self and other ('us' and 'them') determining what is normal and what is

[41] For a comprehensive discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of intersectionality and its attraction for (not only) feminist theorists, see Davis (2008).

> not, who is entitled to certain resources and who is not. In this way the interlinking grids of differential positionings in terms of class, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, ability, stage in the life cycle and other social divisions, tend to create, in specific historical situations, hierarchies of differential access to a variety of resources – economic, political and cultural (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 199).

Another fundamental insight of intersectionality theory is that the privileges exercised by some groups produce, and reproduce, the social distancing and oppression of others (Ritzer, 2008: 353):

> In social practice, dominants use differences among people to justify oppressive practices by translating difference into models of inferiority/superiority; people are socialised to relate to difference not as a source of diversity, interest, and cultural wealth but evaluatively in terms of "better" or "worse" (Ritzer, 2008: 354).

Bonilla-Silva (2001) uses the phrase 'racialised social systems' to describe societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels, are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories. Typically, races are identified by phenotype or visible difference, but the selection of some human traits to designate a racial group is, he suggests, always socially rather than biologically based. Presenting a materialist interpretation of racism as rooted in the fact that people in racialised societies receive substantially different rewards, Bonilla-Silva (2001) argues that people in super-ordinate positions develop a set of social practices and an ideology to maintain the advantages they receive based on their racial classification, in other words, they develop a structure that will reproduce their systemic advantages or privileges:

> In all racialised social systems the placement of actors in racial categories involves some form of hierarchy that produces definite social relations among the races. The race placed in the superior position tends to receive greater economic remuneration and access to better occupations and prospects in the labour market, occupies a primary position in the political system, is granted higher social estimation (e.g. is viewed as 'smarter' or 'better looking'), often has the licence to draw physical (segregation) as well as social (racial etiquette) boundaries between itself and other races, and receives what

> W.E.B. Du Bois called 'a psychological wage'. The totality of these racialised social relations and practices constitutes the racial structure of a society. [ ] Although all racialised social systems are hierarchical the particular character of the hierarchy and thus, the racial structure, is variable (Bonilla-Silva, 2001: 37).

This last sentence was very illuminating when I began to see a 'pecking order' of social acceptability, which included the white Irish lower classes in a sub-ordinate position to many immigrant groups, emerge from my interview data. However, Bonilla-Silva (2001) also argues that although not all members of the dominant racial group receive the same level of rewards and not all members of the sub-ordinate race/s are at the bottom of the social order, this does not negate the fact that races, as social groups, are in either a super-ordinate or a sub-ordinate position in a social system. We see the influence of intersectionality theory in the following quote from Bonilla-Silva:

> Racialisation occurred in social formations also structured by class and gender. Hence in these societies the racialisation of subjects is fragmented along class and gender lines. [ ] Depending on the character of racialisation in a social order, class interests may take precedence over racial interests as in Brazil, Cuba, and Puerto Rico (Bonilla-Silva, 2001: 38).

I explore the contribution of Whiteness Studies theorists who, like Bonilla-Silva and Wellman, tend toward a materialist interpretation of racial matters and see the racial views of social actors as corresponding to their location in the racial structure i.e. people who benefit from being socially constructed as white tend to hold views in support of the racial status quo. After all, whites are 'racially interested and motivated' writes Hartigan Jr. (2005: 147) echoing Memmi and Fanon. Whether people who benefit from a racially structured society do indeed express prejudicial views towards others is largely irrelevant for the maintenance of white privilege, argues Bonilla-Silva (2006) for, as Mills (1997: 11) writes: '[A]ll whites are beneficiaries of the [Racial] Contract, though some whites are not signatories to it'.

Having looked at the 'classification of race' it is precisely to class interests that I turn now as I discuss the 'racialisation of class' per Virdee (2010: 144), specifically the

racialisation of the lower classes, as this will be useful for interpreting my findings in Chapter 6.

I have referred to racism as a 'scavenger ideology' (Mosse, 1985) which is neither expressed nor experienced the same as it was two centuries ago, yet has a power that comes from its capacity to re-use old ideas and values in other socio-historical and, I argue, socio-economic contexts. Instead of confining racism to explicit behaviours, intentions, and attitudes, some theorists are now conceptualising racism to include the implicit, the unintentional, and the seemingly normal (Brown et al, 2003). Indeed contemporary racism has been theorised as a form of 'racism without racists' which could be described as 'how to talk nasty about minorities without sounding racist' (Bonilla-Silva, 2006: 53). Resonant of Balibar and Malik's argument regarding the racialisation of the lower classes in and around the Industrial and French Revolutions, which I covered above, Garner (2012) argues, for example, that sections of the white British population, including the Polish and the indigenous British lower classes, are racialised, i.e. constructed as another race.

Not alone are the lower classes racialised, a common-sense rhetoric has developed to the effect that the lower classes are more likely than other social classes to be racist in their attitudes and actions. As I have mentioned, resource competition with the immigrant population is a rationale commonly employed, although implicit in this reasoning is the notion that immigrants are predominantly, if not entirely, situated within the lower classes and that little or no such competition faces the higher classes. Bearing in mind the globalised economic and labour market, and the occupational distribution of immigrants and natives in the Irish context, which we saw in Chapter 2, this does not seem plausible today - if it ever did - and yet it is one of the ways the Irish professionals I interviewed distanced themselves from immigrants and the subject of immigration (see Chapter 6).

I argue that one outcome of the common-sense acceptance of the racism of the lower classes is the deflection of attention from the racial discourse of the higher classes towards that of the lower classes. As I have mentioned, Balibar is among a (small) number of theorists who argue that the higher classes are not especially tolerant of the immigrant 'other' but simply better at concealing intolerance or at deflecting attention onto the intolerance of other groups (1991b: 223). This is reminiscent of the argument that tolerance is somehow constituent only of certain personality types or social classes (Adorno, 1982; Wellman, 1993) or as Lasch put it: 'the thinking classes seem to labour

under the delusion that they alone have overcome racial prejudice' (1995: 91). Bearing in mind that this is also the social class to which researchers tend to come from, or belong, may help explain the paucity of contestation of the tolerance and anti-racism of the higher classes as opposed to the lower classes. It is also noteworthy, I think, that the 'resources threat' rationale implies a structural or materialist explanation of racism, and yet, for the higher classes, agency and intellect are deemed pre-eminent.

There are exceptions, however. Addressing the suggestion that the more educated are more tolerant, Jackman and Muha (1984) question whether education fundamentally changes attitudes or simply teaches people to answer sensitive questions in a socially desirable way. Wellman (1993) suggests that middle class whites are trained in what he calls 'the etiquette of liberal education' to subscribe to liberal ideals and verbalise tolerance and he references Hamilton's empirical studies in the US which found that tolerance is not significantly related to social class (Hamilton, 1972: 399-507). Indeed, Lasch writes that any tolerance evidenced is a luxury the middle and professional class can afford because social arrangements to facilitate racial equality 'require sacrifices from the ethnic minorities who share the inner cities with the poor, seldom from the suburban liberals who design and support these policies' (Lasch, 1995: 45). If, or when, the middle and professional classes do voice opposition to social change, they tend to explain themselves in ways that do not explicitly contradict social class egalitarian and liberal ideals (Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak and Van Dijk, 2000). I argue that this may help explain why, in quantitative attitudinal surveys, the middle and professional classes are consistently found to be well disposed towards racial and cultural others.

This includes studies by Scheve and Slaughter (2001), who report that all else being equal, a strong relationship exists between education levels and more favourable attitudes towards further immigration *vis* immigration policy, and Semyonov et al (2006) who find that negative attitudes towards foreigners are more pronounced among the socio-economically vulnerable (i.e. people with low levels of education and the unemployed). Hainmueller and Hiscox (2007), examining attitudes in Europe, argue that more educated respondents are significantly less racist and place greater value on cultural diversity in society. Interestingly, they also report that the more educated are more likely to believe that immigration generates benefits for their economies.

Perhaps in view of these near unanimous assertions, empirical studies which problematise the acceptance of the 'working class racism' and 'middle class tolerance' mantra have received little critical attention. Although not a focus of her analysis, in Essed's (1991) study of everyday racism, the socio-economic milieu in which her black female respondents lived, worked, and experienced racism, both in the Netherlands and the United States, was predominantly professional (Essed, 1991: 65). Wellman's (1993) qualitative research in the US also shows that racial beliefs do not align neatly to social class position and Cole's (1997) empirical research of the attitudes of the working class of Palermo in Italy toward foreign workers found patterns of ambivalence which, he suggests, indicates the need for further research rather than acceptance of 'blanket claims of working class racism' (1997: 73). In the Irish context, Garner argues that distinctions identified between the attitudes of social classes are 'relatively small class-based variations in degrees of hostility' which, he argues, need to be treated with caution (2003: 229).

In contradiction to so-called 'common-sense' in the US, Bonilla–Silva (2006) found that young white working class women are more likely than any other segment of the white population to be racially progressive, while in the UK, Clarke et al (2009) challenge the characterisation of the white English working class as more racist and hostile to immigration than their middle class counterparts since 'the difference between working and middle-class responses is more relative than absolute, and secondly, [that] the traditionally liberal graduates who comprise a chunk of the Labour [party] vote are becoming less liberal on immigration (Clarke et al, 2009: 140). Also, and significantly for my study, Garner notes that different social classes place emphasis on distinct areas of (resource) concern and from different perspectives, so their 'experiences are usually not based on equal standing, but on professional distance and the dominant place in a hierarchical relationship' (Garner, 2012: 452):

> People who feel they are *in* competition speak in a different way from those who feel they are *observers* of the competition and this typically reflects class position. [ ] So the apparently firm attitudinal class distinction emerging from opinion polls is, on closer inspection, rather a question of emphasis and focus [emphasis in original] (Garner, 2012: 454).

Although members of the higher social classes may not be in competition for housing or jobs, Garner points out that only higher social class respondents explicitly refer to

'taxpayer's money' which, he suggests, is an abstract way of talking about resources and, relatedly, that white working class people are just as likely to be othered as immigrants when 'hierarchies of worth' are produced (Garner, 2012: 455). Garner's 'hierarchy of worth' is not based exclusively on an economic hierarchy but is a hierarchy of what he calls a 'moral economy' characterised by work-ethic, fitting in to social norms, and (importantly) contribution to the host state - including paying taxes. Contribution to the 'moral economy', he suggests, is how some people of colour can be deemed to be 'whiter' than other white people. In the US, Williams notes that middle class and professional black people are sometimes described as 'honorary whites' (Williams, 1997: 35).

Hartigan Jr.'s theory of 'intra-racial division' mediated by class is supported in Rhodes's (2011) study of how notions of entitlement to, for example, welfare and social housing, rest on differentiated claims to whiteness i.e. all whites are not 'equally white'. Rhodes found that even an avowedly white, nationalist, anti-immigration party such as BNP makes intra-racial distinctions (as well as the expected inter-racial distinctions) and proactively distances itself from the popular perception that its membership represents, in the main, poor, marginalised, and unemployed whites. Even the BNP, Rhodes finds, makes distinctions as to entitlement and 'belonging' on the basis of class as well as race (Rhodes, 2011).

The intersectional theoretical perspective of the theorists above is at the core of my thesis. Importantly this body of theory argues that claims to whiteness are mediated by class and articulated through assertions of contribution, entitlement and respectability. Since differential claims to whiteness emerge in my data, this is explored further in the next section.

Whiteness

Early theorists of Whiteness include McIntosh (2001 [1988]), Ware (1992), Frankenberg (1993) and Dyer (1997), each of whom, from perspectives ranging from racial privilege through feminist history and ethnography to media criticism, draw attention to the social construction of whiteness and its taken-for-granted invisibility, normativity, privilege and even material value. Whiteness scholars assert that the racial category 'white' is the unexamined and under-researched social norm, implicitly standing for all that is

presumed to be 'right', 'proper', and 'normal'. There is a notable correspondence here, I believe, between Goldberg's 'globalisation of racialisation', referred to above, and what Doane calls the 'universalisation of whiteness':

> A core element in the relationship between the transparency of 'whiteness' and the reproduction of white hegemony is what could be termed the normalisation or 'universalisation' (Gabriel, 1998: 12) of whiteness (Doane, 2003: 11).

Unsurprisingly, Frankenberg (1993) describes white discourse of the 18th to mid-20th century as grounded in biological racism. The social hierarchy of the time was informed by a racial hierarchy of categories deemed superior/inferior. But by the mid-20th century, in the aftermath of World War II, the UNESCO declarations mentioned above, and civil rights activism in Europe and the US, the discourse moved to assert that 'racism was a thing of the past' and that 'modern societies should not take notice of race for any reason' (Feagin and O' Brien, 2010: 60). Over time, declarations of colour-blindness came to be regarded as the epitome of modern, liberal thinking and, as such, politically correct. [42]

Of course, as critics pointed out, being blind to colour also allows one to be blind to racial hierarchies of differential access to power and to continuing white privilege, whether visible or invisible. In *Seeing a Colour Blind Future*, Williams (1997) disparagingly compares colour-blindness to the Japanese proverb 'Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil', while Goldberg suggests that colour-blindness is, if anything, a way of ensuring that white privilege continues and that being blind to people's colour literally means being 'blind to people of colour' (Goldberg, 2002: 223). Bonilla-Silva (2003), Hill (2008), and other Whiteness theorists, have critiqued the notion of colour-blindness as the epitome of anti-racism, regarding it as an invidious new form of racism in that it allows racial discrimination to persist by utilising subtle and covert performances of whiteness which are difficult to research.

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[42] The term 'politically correct' was first used in a positive sense among the radical left to denote someone who steadfastly adhered to the party line. It later became used as an ironic phrase to denote someone whose adherence was excessively (and usually irritatingly) steadfast. In the 1980s political correctness stood for attempts to remove terms from everyday discourse that were considered racially or sexually pejorative. By the 1990s, the phrase, and it abbreviation, 'PC', acquired increasingly pejorative overtones. Fairclough (2003) writes that being called 'politically correct' is commonly an identification that is imposed on people by their cultural political opponents. Hall (1994) cited in Valentine (1998), refers to the media in Britain criticising the anti-discrimination policies of some local authorities as the actions of the politically correct 'looney left'. A widespread allegation was that local authorities were 'getting rid' of Christmas so as to avoid offence to other religious groups. Burkeman (2006), who investigated stories of what he called 'the phoney war on Christmas' found no evidence to support the allegations. For more on the history, development, and complexity of the concept of political correctness see Wellman (1993), Williams (1995), Gabriel (1998), Suhr and Johnson (2003), and Fairclough (2003).

One study of covert performances of whiteness is Hill's (2008) examination of the everyday language of white racism in the US (across a range of social classes) which concludes that racism is not on the wane, but has undergone a number of discursive transformations that have rendered it more subtle or hidden and almost devoid of racial category terminology. This is what Bonilla-Silva is referring to when he talks about 'racism without racists':

> Colour-blind racism's race talk avoids racist terminology and preserves its mythical nonracialism through sematic moves such as "I am not a racist but," "some of my best friends are…," "I am not black, but," […] Thus if a school or neighbourhood is completely white, they can say "It's not a racial thing" or "It's economics not race" […] They can also project the matter onto blacks by saying such things as "They don't want to live with us" or "Blacks are the prejudiced ones" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

What explains the persistence and pervasion of racial discrimination into the 21st century? US Whiteness theorists such as Wellman (1993), Feagin and Sikes (1994), Bonilla-Silva (1997), Hartigan Jr. (1999), Feagin and O'Brien (2003), Brown and Carney et al (2003), Myers (2003), and Feagin (2010), provide a materialist grounding to racism and racialisation because of the constructed racial hierarchies they find, whereby, regardless of class position, whites hold common economic and political interests 'sharply different to the group interests of people of colour' (Feagin and O' Brien, 2010: 57). Essed (1991), Van Dijk (1993), Fekete (2001), Sivanandan (2001), McDowell (2009), and Garner (2012), write in a similar vein in the European context.

Garner (2007b) traces the conceptualisation of whiteness as a set of values and norms as well as a form of cultural capital. Whiteness, he argues, is expressed as a set of racialised cultural characteristics articulated through values resulting in racialisation without race. Respectability, for example, is viewed as the norm for the white 'us' and is discursively created when one group describes the devalued behaviours of another. According to Skeggs (1997) respectability is a particularly loaded idiom, producing intersecting class, racial, and gender, hierarchies. She found white working class women put a lot of effort into performing respectability under the white 'middle-class gaze' (ibid. 93) by wearing the 'right' clothes, behaving 'properly', and keeping a clean home, because 'home and bodies are where respectability is displayed' (ibid. 90). As we have seen, Garner (2012) uses the term 'moral economy of whiteness' to describe the moral-ethical code against

which the behaviour and culture of others is measured by white people. This code of respectability, he suggests, revolves around notions of self-sufficiency, community orientation, civility, and work ethic. The closer one adheres to these (classed) norms and values then, the whiter the shade of white one becomes.

This is not to suggest that the notion of turning the gaze back on groups who, as Anderson puts it, 'define and judge', is new. The critical identification of white hegemony and privilege was discussed by Du Bois as far back as the early 1900s in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1994 [1903]) and in *Black Reconstruction in America* (1978 [1935]). It was Du Bois who wrote of the 'psychological wage enjoyed by even the poorest whites' and his work influenced Ignatiev (1995) and Roediger (1994, 2005, 2007 [1991]) in their materialist accounts of racism in the labour market with reference to early waves of immigration to the US. Even the title of Roediger's (1991) book, *The Wages of Whiteness,* echoes Du Bois. Both Ignatiev and Roediger theorise race and racism as entwined with class formation. With particular reference to Irishness, Ignatiev describes how, after initial periods of co-operation and co-habitation with freed black slaves, the Irish tapped into structures such as the Catholic Church, political institutions, and trades unions, and worked to distance themselves from anyone and anything that might differentiate them from the already established economically and politically dominant white European Americans.

Whiteness then is theorised as normative, invisible, and privileged. Critically, we have seen that whiteness can be mediated by class i.e. whites are not equally normative, invisible, or privileged. Therefore, also useful in my analyses, is the literature on the subaltern white, e.g. people categorised as 'White Trash' [43] in the US and 'Chavs' [44] in the UK (see, inter alia, Doane and Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Garner, 2007b; Hartigan Jr., 2003; Tyler, 2008; Wray and Newitz, 1997).

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[43] Current 'white trash' stereotypes (of violence, laziness, stupidity, promiscuity) can be traced back to a series of studies of the US Eugenics Records Office at the beginning of the 20th century. Researchers sought to demonstrate scientifically that 'large numbers of rural poor whites were 'genetic defectives'. They conducted their studies by locating relatives who were either incarcerated or institutionalised and then tracing their genealogies back to 'a "defective" source, often, but not always, a person of mixed blood' (Wray and Newitz, 1997: 2). The research was used by US conservatives to argue against welfare and charitable supports for poor whites (Wray and Newitz, 1997).

[44] 'Chav' has become 'a ubiquitous term of abuse for the White poor' in England (Tyler, 2008: 17).

As Gabriel suggests,

> The ideology of 'white interests' has been built around and harnessed to ideas of economic security, prosperity, ontological security and a sense of local/or national belonging. Such interests and identities [ ] have been formed in opposition to subaltern white ethnicities as well as those more commonly associated with processes of white racialisation [on both sides of the Atlantic] (Gabriel, 1998: 97).

Echoing Balibar's (1991b: 223) argument that the higher classes are not especially tolerant of the immigrant other but simply better at appearing to espouse political correctness and not 'saying the wrong thing', Rhodes (2011) suggests that deflection onto stereotyped white lower class identities works to limit attention to the racist dynamics of white (middle and upper class) society and what Lipsitz calls 'our possessive investment' in whiteness:

> The problem with white people is not our whiteness but our possessive investment in it. Created by politics, culture and consciousness our possessiveness in whiteness can be altered by those same processes but only if we face the hard fact openly and honestly and admit that whiteness is a matter of interests as well as attitudes, that it has more to do with property than with pigment (Lipsitz, 1998: 233).

Not only do intra-racial and inter-class divisions exist within white racial identities, it appears that the historic 'investment in whiteness' is experiencing some form of deflation, leading to claims by whites that it is white males in the US who are discriminated against nowadays (Mc Kinney, 2004). Despite, or perhaps because of, what Gabriel terms the 'transparency of whiteness' and the 'normalisation of white hegemony' (1998: 12) whites in the UK are said to increasingly feel they are the 'victims of multiculturalism or civil rights' articulating what Back calls a 'self-centred siege mentality' (2010: 446, 448). While welcoming the examination of whiteness as a discourse and practice of power, Back (2010) is concerned by what he sees as a strand of the contemporary anti-racism debate that suggests that young white English people are outnumbered numerically in some schools and need to be offered 'white cultural identities' that are in some way equivalent to the identities of their black peers - even to the point where educational underperformance of the young white lower class is being related to a lack or diminution of cultural 'identity'.

This sense of victimhood, sometimes referred to as 'reverse racism', is regarded by some commentators as an attempt to reverse or reduce the rights gained, for example, for blacks and women in the face of what D'Souza (1991: 214) calls 'a tyranny of the minority' [45] (cited in Lewis, 1995: 101). Lentin uses the discourse of contemporary immigration debates in Australia as an example of white people perceiving themselves to be 'the victims of an onslaught against their lifestyle and culture at the hands of foreign migrants' (2008: 104).

Relatedly, and arguably in response to contemporary immigration to Europe and the US (from outside the EEA and from Mexico and South America respectively), there is a growing popular and political discourse that suggests that it is whites who are being treated unfairly, becoming outnumbered, and losing familiar, historic privileges. This is sometimes expressed as a cultural threat, that is to say as a threat to so-called 'white values' such as law and order and family (Omi and Winant, 1986) and more specifically as the perceived threat of the Islamicisation of Europe (Carr, 2006), exemplified in the myths of local authorities 'banning Christmas'. Despite rebuttals, this myth propagated itself and has been reproduced as 'a fact' in political and popular discourse around the UK and, as I found, in the Republic of Ireland, which is perhaps not surprising given the position of the Catholic Church in post-colonial Irish cultural identity (see Chapter 2). Other formulations of 'reverse racism' include essentialising (certain) groups as 'over-sensitive' and capable of seeing racism in the most innocent actions.

Most prevalent is the assumption that immigrants perceived not to be contributing, yet accessing social welfare resources, present an economic threat in terms of 'us not having enough for our own' (although my data reveal that Irish professionals are not too keen on helping some of 'our own'). Interestingly, Lewis (1995) argues that there are links between the increasingly heated PC debate in the US in the 1990s [46] and the need for the wealthy and powerful to deflect a broad-based anger regarding perceived attacks on the living standards of lower or working class Americans onto people who allegedly enjoyed the advantages of affirmative action in hiring and education in the two preceding decades. A prevalent theme of anti-PC rhetoric is that the inequity of affirmative action in the US is *making* white students racist (Wellman, 1993).

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[45] D'Souza's stance that racism no longer had the power to restrict access to economic, political and social aspirations to minority groups was all the more powerful because he was himself an intellectual of south Asian origin (Gabriel, 1998)

[46] Which began on US college campuses in the 1980s (Williams, 1995).

All of which is symptomatic of what Andersen calls 'white racial angst':

> Assertions about political correctness, the professed decline of 'standards' and the call for traditional values are indications of a profound sense of white racial angst; many now think that being white is a handicap even though the system of privilege remains (Andersen, 2003: 23).

Whiteness then is about maintaining as much economic, political, and cultural privilege as possible i.e. 'it's more to do with property than with pigment' as Lipsitz (cited above) put it. Such maintenance, I argue, is operationalised by performing whiteness, just as the working class women observed by Skeggs (1997) performed respectability through their grooming, tastes, public behaviour, and housekeeping standards. Indeed, performance is central to my argument. Not only is whiteness performative, but following the work of Bonilla-Silva (2003), Hill (2008), and other whiteness theorists, we need to be aware, not just of the public performances of whiteness, but of the more opaque, subtle, and covert performances, even when carried out unconsciously. Further theorisation of the performance of whiteness is the subject of the next section, beginning with an explanation of what I understand by the concepts of social performance and performativity before focusing on Goffman's theories of impression management and dramaturgy.

Performing Whiteness

As human beings, we are never 'just talking'. All speech-acts *do* something. They (almost always) have intent, whether it's to express an emotion, present a fact, deliver a verdict, or all three at once. It is not difficult, therefore, to accept that language 'creates a particular reality' and is thus performative (Madison and Hamera, 2006: xvi). The feminist theorist Judith Butler (1988) reminds us, however, that we are all performers and always performing and that our social performances are stylized repetitions of acts that produce and reproduce the cultural (and other) norms within which we are located. [47] In addition, few, if any, of us are 'self-consciously aware that their enactments are culturally scripted' (Madison and Hamera, 2006: xvii). In this view of performativity, speech acts, gestures, posture, clothes, habits, and specific embodied acts, are performed differently depending on the race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality of the individual, and are

[47] My reflection on my own performance as an interviewer is discussed in the next chapter which covers methodology and methods.

passed from one generation to another becoming 'manifestations of identity and belonging' (Madison and Hamera, 2006: xviii) in a particular *habitus*. This is not to suggest that all social performance is a repetition of hegemonic stylised acts: there can also be subversive stylised acts such as when some interviewees, appearing to chafe against perceived constraints of professional social class norms tell me 'what people like us really think'. Of course, this too, maybe another social performance. Fortunately, it is one I believe that whiteness theorists have already shed light upon.

As already discussed, the data analysis in my study is influenced, in particular, by the work of US based whiteness theorists including Feagin, O'Brien, and Sikes (see Feagin, 2010; Feagin and O' Brien, 2003; Feagin and Sikes, 1994), Houts Picca (2007) and Bonilla-Silva (2001, 2003). They, in turn, draw on the work of Goffman (1990 [1959]) in theorising the performance of whiteness and, notably, the significantly divergent racial performances of whiteness in public and private spaces due, in part, to the perception of social expectation and pressure to demonstrate tolerance of the racial/ethnic other and espouse anti-racism.

Studies of the performance of whiteness and, in particular, covert expressions of racism and classism among the well-educated, middle and professional classes, undoubtedly draw on Goffman's (1990 [1959]) theorisation of dramaturgy and impression management.

According to Goffman, in day-to-day social interaction, people employ, consciously and unconsciously, a range of communicative strategies, verbal and non-verbal, to present themselves to others in particular ways with a view to producing and maintaining the image and status by which she or he wishes to be defined. In other words, and of particular interest in this study, the objective is to create a socially desirable impression, the impression 'which it is in his [sic] interest to convey' (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 16).

Goffman emphasises the idea of individual agency in his studies on face-work or impression management i.e. the ways in which individuals establish their identities during social interaction. However, his work on dramaturgy - the study of how human beings accomplish meaning in their lives - also features some of the classic features of symbolic interactionism (Edgley, 2003) and demonstrates Goffman's intuitive understanding of the

fragility of the 'social face' where interaction rituals and social identities shift from one context to the next (Cohen, 2006a). Edgley writes that:

> Dramaturgy, by its very nature, dignifies the human condition by showing that people can never be construed as simply passive vehicles through which forces of various kinds play themselves out (2003: 145).

Accepting individual agency, and that social identity is contextual, certain performances become institutionalised. The hospital consultant, the nurse, and the porter, both in the hospital setting and beyond, know how they are expected to perform and interact with each other and others such as patients. These roles are accepted as normal and are taken on, in turn, by the newcomer to the role. I suggest that these and other roles are so normalised, that the idea that they are classed, gendered, and raced performances, escapes our attention unless an element of the performance falls outside our expectations, is unusual or, in some way, unacceptable.

For Goffman, social norms, defined as codes of acceptable and moral behaviour, are key to belonging, and being seen to belong to, a particular social group such as, in this study, the Irish professional social class. However, Goffman recognised the discrepancy or conflict between our 'all-too-human selves and our socialised selves' (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 63), in other words, the difference between what people *expect us to do* and what *we may want to do*. This discrepancy may require, from time to time, that the social actor desires to relax, speak 'off script', and/or drop the performance for a time. Building on the theatrical analogy, Goffman theorised this by employing the metaphor of *front* and *backstage* areas of performance:

> …when one's activity occurs in the presence of other persons, some aspects of the activity are expressively accentuated and other aspects, which might discredit the fostered impression are suppressed. It is clear that accentuated facts make their appearance in what I have called the front region; it should be just as clear that there may be another region – a 'back' region or 'backstage' – where the suppressed facts make an appearance. A back region or backstage may be defined as a place relative to a given performance where the impression fostered by the performance is *knowingly contradicted* as a matter of course [emphasis added] (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 114).

Goffman did not eschew the structural character of performances, which he saw as intersecting with the dramaturgical with regards to social distance, in that the clarity and consistency of the presentation that one status group (e.g. social class, ethnic group) is able to maintain before other status groups 'will depend upon the performers' capacity to restrict communicative contact with the audience' (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 234). In other words, the cultural and dramaturgical perspectives intersect with regard to the maintenance of moral standards, values and tastes. For me, this is exemplified by the pristine rooms in the houses of my parent's generation only ever used to entertain strangers or infrequent visitors. In these rooms, the performance of hospitality and respectability was formal and hushed. In the next room, behind closed doors, informal, messy and noisy family life 'carried on as normal' and here a parent could come to prepare the best available refreshments for the visitor perhaps muttering criticisms about the visitors before returning to the 'good room' with a fixed smile.

The cultural values, for example, of a social class 'will determine how the participants are to feel about many matters [...] whether or not there is feeling behind the appearances' (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 234). In other words, at times, members of a particular social class may, as part of their performance, espouse values with which they may not entirely agree and, on occasion, may want and need to be able to restrict communicative contact to settings where the performer can reliably expect that no member of the 'public/audience' will intrude. Backstage is typically out of bounds for the audience, and so when the setting and timing is right, and the company present are peer performers, it is here that 'we may expect reciprocal familiarity to determine the tone of the social intercourse' (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 129). When the professionals I interviewed prefaced a comment with the phrase 'people like us can't say this but...' it was a verbal identifier that we were – metaphorically speaking – backstage and that here comments which were negative about immigrants or racial/ethnic others could be uttered.

The enduring influence of these Goffmanian impression management concepts is reflected in the title of Houts Picca and Feagin's (2007) book on the performance of whiteness, *Two-Faced Racism: Whites in Backstage and Frontstage*, and in the following quote by Feagin:

> [ ] my colleagues and I have found that much blatantly racist thought, commentary, and performance has become concentrated in the social 'backstage' that is, social settings where only whites are present.

> Much less is performed in the social 'frontstage', social settings where there are strangers or people from diverse racial groups present. This is because of pressures to be socially correct ('colour-blind') in frontstage areas such as workplaces and public accommodations (Feagin, 2010: 124).

Goffman's theorisation of a front and backstage in the performance - or non-performance - of socially desirable, classed, raced and gendered roles was of immense assistance in analysing the findings which support my theoretical contribution of Performing Distance i.e. that the main concern of the white Irish professional class in relation to immigration is a desire to perform the professional social class norm of tolerance and anti-racism in public, keeping any dissonant, contradictory performance for the private, backstage area.

In the US, Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) found the responses of white college students to traditional survey questions on racial themes produced more liberal answers than given in in-depth, one-to-one qualitative interviews, where the interviewer was white and similar to themselves. Building on Bonilla-Silva's work, other researchers have shown that despite overt declarations of colour-blindness and/or of racism being a historic artefact or expression of individual ignorance, racist comments and attitudes continue to be expressed covertly in conversations among friends and relatives in what Houts Picca and Feagin (2007) refer to as 'backstage' social settings. Their 2002-3 ethnographic study in the US notes that when whites discussed racial matters out of the public eye, especially with friends or family members, African Americans and other Americans of colour were frequently the targets of hostile and stereotyped commentary. It is worth noting that these researchers intentionally studied the racial performances of well-educated whites specifically because of the common-sense acceptance that the well-educated are more racially liberal and aware. The authors key argument is that whites tend to have 'two faces' when it comes to their racial views, commentaries, and action. They frequently present themselves as innocent of racism and indeed colour-blind in the frontstage 'even as they clearly show their racist framing of the world in their backstage comments, emotions, and actions' (Houts Picca and Feagin, 2007: 13).

> …as whites get older, most know much better how to hide their true racial attitudes in public or 'frontstage' settings, such as with researchers, pollsters, and other strangers (Feagin, 2010: 95).

A contributory factor in the discrepancies between front and backstage discursive performances is the emergence of political correctness, discussed above, and regarded by some whites as an over-zealous attempt to gain acceptance of guidelines on anti-racist language which, it is claimed, directly or indirectly result in the constriction of 'proper and necessary debate' on, for example, the immigration 'issue.' Over the years, in European and American discourse, the charge of 'political correctness' has come to be used as an attack on the principles and policies of multiculturalism and, both implicitly and explicitly, in the defence of whiteness and white values. As Gabriel argues,

> Whiteness has made great play of taboos, speaking the allegedly unspeakable, putting into words what has been in people's hearts. Its alternating tactics of concealment and 'admission' often with different media playing the respective roles of 'good cop'/'bad cop' have worked to great effect in forging its common-sense beliefs (Gabriel, 1998: 96).

This idea of needing to 'speak the unspeakable' may help explain the existence of 'two faced' racism and is reminiscent of Goffman's theorisation of the existence of the 'backstage' as a necessity when a performative discrepancy or conflict arises between what people are *expected to do and say* and what *they may want to do or say*. This is the potential for dissonance that can arise between 'our all-too-human selves and our socialised selves' (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 63). In other words, a perceived need to defend white values (and privileges) can produce a whiteness-under-siege mentality (see Back 2010 above) operationalised in public discourse as concern regarding the diminution of free speech by the 'PC brigade' and by minority groups that are frequently portrayed as 'all too ready to play the "race card"'. One result, it is claimed, is the prevention of 'a proper national debate' on the 'real and important issues related to immigration'. Valentine writes that, most frequently:

> …accusations of political correctness come from those who wish to maintain the privilege to abuse freely in terms that they claim are directly denotative. A defence is mounted for the preservation of established terms of abuse, whose derogatory connotations are concealed beneath an appeal to straight-talking, plain speech and common sense. Those who wish to amend the discriminatory language are themselves abused in terms [ ] that imply lack of straightforwardness, strength and courage [ ] as if we all know the

> truth, but some do not have the guts (or balls) to speak it (Valentine, 1998: 8.9).

This behaviour often entails an explicit call for a national or public debate which implies that the majority's 'unspeakable' or, I would argue, backstage views, are the normative and 'proper' ones. The question remains as to whether reverse racism, critiques of political correctness, and backstage or covert racialised talk, provide or are evidence of altogether new forms of white racism or should be understood as old fashioned biological racism performed in line with contemporary anti-racism and colour-blind mores and values.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the main themes in the intersection of race, ethnicity, and class, drawing on the work of theorists on both sides of the Atlantic following Goldberg's theorisation of the globalisation of the racial. A number of theoretical influences are identified including: a constructivist approach to the concepts of class, race, and ethnicity; an understanding of racism as contingent and contextual; and of immigration as having become, if it was not always, an acceptable term for race and racialised discourse, not least for individuals socialised in 21st century liberalism, tolerance and anti-racism.

Class, race, and ethnicity are theorised within the structure/agency or economic/sociological bifurcation. The structural/economic strand of the argument suggests class structures race for materialistic reasons. The agency/sociological or culture strand of the argument suggests that race is an ideological category intervening little, or not at all, with economic relations. Both strands are critiqued as reductive arguments that essentialise the individual or group as having particular racial, ethnic, and class identities.

Drawing on the intellectual heritage of intersectionality, Whiteness theorists give a materialist grounding to the concepts of racism and racialisation because of what they identify as constructed racial hierarchies and ideologies whereby whites, regardless of class, hold common political and economic interests in opposition to the group interests of non-whites. However, they also propose that whiteness, as a constructed racial category, can be mediated by class. Intra-racial and inter-racial division is reflected in

discourses of norms, values, and respectability. The racialisation of the white lower classes (on both sides of the Atlantic) is presented as an example of the intersection of class and race concerns alongside the suggestion that resource competition may not be the concern solely of the lower classes – rather that the resources of concern to the middle and upper classes may simply be resources of a different nature, such as those that require to be funded by taxes.

Connected to our awareness or lack of awareness of the varying concerns of the white higher classes and following Goffman's dramaturgical approach, whiteness theorists in the US and UK theorise the emergence of a 'backstage' area where discrepant roles, which do not concur with contemporary mores and values of political correctness and anti-racism, can be performed among trusted peers without fear of rejection or correction. The bonding social capital and particularised trust of people regarded as racial, ethnic and class peers is theorised as constructing a culturally acceptable 'backstage' space which explicitly and implicitly acts to protect the social, political, and economic advantage of a group that is racially, culturally, and materially, privileged.

This chapter also suggests that the existence of a culturally and socially acceptable 'backstage' is aided by the common sense discourse that posits racism as a pathology of the lower classes related to resource competition, low levels of education, and social class norms that do not reference contribution and respectability, that is to say, the social class norms and values of the people I categorise as the 'whitest of the white.' In the context of this study I argue that among the people who self-identify as the 'whitest of the white' in class, race and ethnicity terms are members of the white Irish professional social class.

These theoretical influences and perspectives are useful in analysing my findings. In chapters 5, 6, and 7, I demonstrate that the main concern of the Irish professionals I interviewed is to perform, and be seen to perform, the professional social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism. However, dissonance arises when it is perceived that some immigrant groups (including some white Europeans) are not contributing sufficiently, that they do not deserve access to welfare entitlements, and/or are deemed disreputable. On the other hand, some immigrants – mostly professionals like the interviewees - are regarded more highly than some indigenous classed groups. This dissonance between negative perceptions of some immigrants and some fellow-nationals on the one hand, and professional class social norms of tolerance and anti-racism on the other, is managed

through a process I conceptualise as Performing Distance. Distancing is used here in the sense of *pushing away* and excluding, the unacceptable raced and/or classed other, not in the sense of *pulling away*, of retreat or retrenchment. Performing Distance should be understood in the sense of 'what we have, we hold'.

But before I outline my theory of Performing Distance, the next chapter, focusing on methodology and methods, outlines how I approached and undertook this study.

Chapter 4: Methodological Propositions and Methods

> Discussions of research methodology follow theoretical presentations with nearly the same inevitability as night follows day (Wellman, 1993: 63).

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I explained that the conventional format of this thesis belies the multi-directional, two-steps-forward and three-steps-back, reversals, loops, and serendipitous moments of which it is comprised. The sequence of chapters thus far is also potentially misleading. It could appear as though I knew the context of this study would be a period of major socio-economic change. On the contrary, when I was in field in Dublin in 2008 I knew as much or as little about the imminent recession as did the people I was interviewing. That the recession happened in the middle of the fieldwork added an unanticipated layer of complexity to my study. In addition, having read the theory chapter, the reader is already ahead of where I was, even as the data collection, transcription, and data analyses were well under way. While I had been reading around the subject area to facilitate theoretical sensitivity in the field of race and class, it was much later before I would find, for example, the work of the Whiteness Studies theorists. A more accurate representation of this study would be to start the thesis with the context, then explain research methodology and methods selection, return to the context as the recession hit the global financial markets in 2009, and then move to the theoretical issues. That is closer to what actually transpired.

But now that we are 'on the same page', so to speak, in this chapter I describe the ontological, epistemological, and methodological propositions that inform my research as well as the methods undertaken in the conduct of the study and the issues associated with conducting peer research on what many consider a sensitive subject. I capture the challenges I encountered and document my own reflections on the process of conducting a study among my peers.

Ontological, Epistemological, and Methodological Choices

Of the terms with which I struggled while working on this thesis, two stand out: ontology and epistemology. In essence, ontological questions are based on how we view, or what we can know about, the world. If, for example, a 'real' world is assumed, then we can know about 'how things really are'. Of necessity, our epistemology, which focuses on how we can know about the world, is related to our ontological choice. If a 'real' world is assumed, then the researcher can be expected to be objective in his/her approach to 'finding how things really are'. My own worldview, informed by life experience, does not sit comfortably with the assumption of a 'real' world presenting opportunities to find out 'how things really are'. Intellectually and psychologically, I find myself more disposed toward subjective, relative and constructed multiple realities. This then informs my ontological approach and, in turn, my epistemology.

In this chapter, I retrace my path towards the methodology chosen for this research. To begin, I tried to understand why, and how, other researchers know, or appear to know, from the outset, what methodology to select for their research. To my mind, the options were multiple, and yet other researchers seemed to know, even before they started, exactly how the research would proceed and to what end. I also wondered which came first: the research idea or the methodology. Do researchers experienced in one methodology stick with it and find research questions that suit their methodological approach or do they take the pragmatic approach of 'doing what works'? I found the following comment on methodology by Mruck and Mey very helpful:

> As a potentially unlimited number of research questions, and ways to work on them exist, preferences for theories and methods as well as the researchers' interests, competences, skills, and sensibilities, acquired during (professional) socialisation within specific academic contexts and 'schools', for example, play a crucial role in this initial process (2007: 628).

Having reflected on my own competencies, skills, and sensibilities, I would argue that methodological preferences are influenced not only by socialisation within specific academic contexts, as Mruck and Mey (2007) suggest, but also by a person's socialisation and life experience outside the academy in, for example, family and workplace settings. My perception and world-view is inevitably informed by my social position as a white,

middle-aged, Irish woman who moved from a lower middle class farming background in rural Ireland to a city-based, professional class lifestyle. As a communications consultant, I advised clients on strategic communications with opinion leaders, the media, regulatory bodies, and local and national political representatives. In my role as an intermediary with the media and government bodies it was necessary for me to analyse the media and political discourse of the day and be aware of its 'codes' and norms. The so-called 'everyday' with its myriad human interactions and potentialities has always been of interest to me, professionally as well as intellectually. Perhaps it is not surprising then that, in terms of ontology, I gravitated towards hermeneutics and the subjective art of interpretation rather than positivist, objective studies of 'facts'. After all, I had had professional experience of how 'facts', quantitative or otherwise, are selected, constructed, interpreted, and presented in diverse ways to influence media opinion, public attitudes, and even government and European Union policy.

My reading on hermeneutics (the art of interpretation and understanding) led me to explore the pragmatist ideas of James, Dewey, Cooley, and Mead in the early 1900s (Hammersley, 1989). American Pragmatism, I learned, had led to an increased interest amongst academics in the attitudes of people in everyday life and situations, most famously perhaps in C. Wright Mills (1959) classic text *The Sociological Imagination.* Pragmatism assumes that humans are active, creative agents, who have a hand in making and shaping the society they inhabit. Society, in turn, shapes their behaviour. Dewey in particular dismissed the idea of an accessible and unproblematic reality and argued instead that all knowledge is provisional and should be judged in terms of how useful it is for knowing subjects (Bryant, 2009). In other words, there are no once-and-for-all answers or truths, only answers that are more or less useful in a certain context.

Theorists in the pragmatist tradition argue that an individual's thoughts or activity can be understood only by unpicking the reason why that thought and activity arose in the first place. Generally, pragmatists look for the interest theory of value, in other words, that which satisfies an interest or impulse is good (Reynolds, 2003) although they also accept that its usefulness and applicability may be constrained in terms of time, place, and user (Bryant, 2009). Mead, who worked with Dewey, sought to translate the insights of the pragmatist thinkers into a theory and method for the social sciences. In time, he developed a sociological understanding and explanation of human consciousness, selfhood, and behaviour, as products of social processes: specifically interaction and communication (Mead and Morris, 1967 [1934]).

For Mead, individuals are self-aware, able to see themselves from the perspective of others, and to adapt their behaviour according to the situation (Mead and Morris, 1967 [1934]). Mead argued that social interaction creates meaning and that the shaping of society through such shared meaning predominates the effect of society on individuals (Hammersley, 1989). Blumer, a student of Mead, coined the term 'symbolic interactionism' for this approach (Hammersley, 1989) and became a major influence on Erving Goffman and Anselm L. Strauss (later a grounded theorist), both of whom are important influences on my research approach. In their individual ways, they each focused on the social construction and cultural meaning of interpersonal relations including ways of observing social life and re-connecting theory and data (Cohen, 2006b). Through a number of different intellectual perspectives, symbolic interactionists share the following main premises as summarised by Blumer:

> The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings those things have for them...The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he [or she] encounters (1969: 2).

For interactionists, people are conscious and self-reflexive agents whose behaviour is an interplay of social stimuli and responses to those stimuli. This ontological position implies an important element of autonomy in individuals' actions. At the same time, interactionists understand that a variety of social factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, and gender, constrain peoples' interpretations and behaviours (Fine and Sandstrom, 2006). Interactionists presume that peoples' actions are influenced - but not determined - by experiences and events, biology, and social forces. People are purposive creatures who act in, and towards, situations. Following Blumer (1958), interactionists view society as both a fluid and structured process of individuals interacting with each other. Interactionists move away, therefore, from the structuralist perspective that reifies society as existing independently of individuals and dictating actions through the rules, roles, statuses, or structures it imposes. While interactionists acknowledge that individuals are born into a society that frames their actions through patterns of meaning and reward, they emphasise that people can actively shape their identity and behaviours in interacting with others in specific situations. Society and structure, they argue, are both human products (Fine and Sandstrom, 2006).

As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the most influential interactionists is Goffman. In his work on impression management he studied everyday social interactions and the range of communicative strategies and identities people employ in different social contexts to present themselves in particular ways to others (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 16) so as to 'manage the impression' they make on others.

It was while I was reading around interactionism that I came across grounded theory methodology for the first time and began to see how it fitted with my ontological and epistemological position.

Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM)

Symbolic interactionism and grounded theory (GT) have strong compatibilities. Both the theoretical perspective and the method assume a proactive actor or agent, the significance of studying processes and an emphasis on building useful theory from empirical observations. Like symbolic interactionists, grounded theorists assume that people act as individuals and as collectivities. The symbolic interactionist emphasis on meaning and actions complements the question grounded theorists pose in the empirical world: 'What is happening?' (Glaser (1978), cited in Bryant and Charmaz (2007: 21)). In other words, as well as asking 'what is captured in the data?' grounded theorists ask 'what processes are being captured in the data?' In GT, process refers to the patterned actions and interactions of individuals over time which create and sustain social structures (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979: 29).

Grounded theory methodology (GTM) is a qualitative approach to research introduced in the late 1960s by Barney Glaser and Aslem Strauss (1967) largely in reaction to the dominant influence of positivism in academic research at the time. Strauss's influences, as mentioned previously, included pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, while Glaser's training in survey research influences the method's systematic approach (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). Because of, or despite, epistemological differences between the two, GTM is a systematic and comparative approach to constructing theory. It influences all stages of the research, from sampling through analysis to theorisation. Data gathering, analysis, and theory construction proceed concurrently. It is inductive in that it argues from the particular to the general, beginning with a range of individual cases and extrapolating from them to form a conceptual category.

However, Charmaz argues that abduction (or logical inference) also plays a key role, in that GTM combines both the rational and imaginative aspects of research 'the latter by acknowledging the role played by insight and intuition' (2006: 16). 'Grounded theory methods,' she says, 'can provide a route to see beyond the obvious and a path to reach imaginative interpretations' (2006: 18). As I had no hypotheses to work from, the 'open mind' approach of grounded theory appealed straightaway. I am also drawn towards the adherence to the emergence of new theory through research data rather than testing ideas or extant theories (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 2002; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Grounded Theory Methods, I came to believe, could help identify basic social processes that would account for the response of members of the Irish professional social class when discussing immigration and immigrants, thereby advancing new theories.

'Classic' grounded theorists (Glaserians) argue that the researcher should begin with no preconceived problem statement, questions, or interview protocols, and that extensive literature reviews can impede theoretical sensitivity. Some critics have taken this to imply that Glaserians envisage an 'open mind' as an empty mind or 'tabula rasa.' However, reflecting the influence of symbolic interactionism on GTM, Glaser himself says that 'everything is data' and that personal knowledge and experience, past and present, is additional (rather than central) material. He writes that prior understanding can include reading around the subject areas to alert and sensitise one to the wide range of possibilities (Glaser, 1978). While I find persuasive Glaser's contention that theory-driven research can be distorting to what is being researched, in that we are predisposed to find agreement or disagreement in our data, I believe the idea of not engaging with relevant literature before undertaking research is impractical in the current academic and funding environment. In my own case, I could not have undertaken the interviews which scoped out my field of study had I not already been reading around the field of race, ethnicity, immigration, and class, the field within which my research is situated.

Over the years, three variants of grounded theory methods have dominated the literature: the 'classic' approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967); the axial coding model of Strauss and Corbin (2008); and the constructivist version of Charmaz (2006). There are ongoing and often heated debates in the literature as to the virtue of one over another. It appeared I had more choices to make, although some in effect were made for me because of my ontological approach.

Firstly, I felt Strauss and Corbin's axial coding model (which codes for connections between categories) was too restrictive and constraining in terms of coding. Glaser critiqued their model as forcing the data into a particular theoretical direction rather than allowing theory to 'emerge' from the data (Glaser, 1992).

Most importantly for me, because of my constructivist ontology I had to carefully consider adopting Glaser's 'classic' approach, regarded as objectivist grounded theory, assuming as it does, the reality of an external world.

> To find out and interpret what is happening takes the researcher into meanings of action, which may be unstated or assumed. This point speaks to the major divide among grounded theorists implied above: those who treat what they see or hear or record as objective and those who see both research participants' actions and researcher's recordings and reports as constructed. The latter position treats the research process itself as an object of scrutiny and thus embraces contemporary currents in symbolic interactionism (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 21).

Experientially and academically, I am more inclined towards constructivist arguments that there exist multiple realities in the world and that generalisations are always partial, conditional, and situated in time and space. So while adhering to some elements of the 'classic' Glaserian approach, I found persuasive Charmaz's (2006, 2009) arguments and refinements in relation to, for example, the likely effect of literature reviews on theoretical sensitivity (she accepts the need for some prior reading) and her emphasis on reflexivity. Indeed, Pidgeon and Henwood (2004) argue that the use of theoretical sensitivity in GTM necessarily involves the researcher in hermeneutics and constructivist practices rather than abstract, logical and rational ones:

> Hermeneutics and constructivist practices always require the researchers remain aware that knowing always involves seeing or hearing from within particular individually, institutionally, and other socio-culturally embedded perspectives and locations, a point raised by feminist epistemologists… (Pidgeon and Henwood, 2004: 628)

In addition, while constructivist grounded theory utilises classic grounded theory strategies as tools (not as prescriptions) it also acknowledges the researcher's role in interpreting data and creating categories (Mc Callin, 2009; Pidgeon and Henwood, 2004).

Given my social position in this research as a former professional peer of my interviewees, I was already interested in the feminist emphasis on positionality, objectivity, and subjectivity, and the idea 'that everyone brings their own stories, social standing, and cultural background with them to all endeavours - including the process of researching (Rhodes, 1997: 480) or, as Stanley and Wise put it, 'the personhood of the researcher cannot be left out of the research process'(1993: 161). Stanley (1996: 46) proposes a form of 'intellectual autobiography' that makes clear 'the processes by which understanding and conclusions are reached' and that 'positions an experiencing and comprehending subject at the heart of intellectual and research life, a subject whose ontologically-based reasoning processes provide the grounds for knowledge claims'. The literature of feminist theorists such as Haraway (1988), Stanley and Wise (1993), Stanley (1996), and Finch (1984, 1986) influenced my methodological approach from the outset. Similarly, the feminist emphasis on reflexivity is of critical importance for my work as the positionality of both the peer researcher and the researched can influence interview conduct and analysis, and brings, along with its many advantages (to which I refer below), the challenge of ongoing self-reflection (Barnes, 1996; Finlay and Gough, 2003; Gunaratnam, 2003; Stanley, 1996; Stanley and Wise, 1993). Back (2007) suggests self-reflection can both inhibit and pre-empt the need for dialogue and careful listening. The role of autobiographical or experiential knowledge, he advises, is as an interpretive device:

> Subjectivity becomes a means to shuttle across the boundary between the writer and those about whom s/he is writing. It is not about narcissism and self-absorption but common likenesses and, by extension, contrasts (Back, 2007: 159).

Charmaz (2000) argues that grounded theory methods evolve in different ways depending on the perspective of the researcher and that by exploring underlying ontological and epistemological perspectives, researchers can draw attention to the limits of their studies which I do in the concluding chapter.

In summary, my study draws on both classic and constructivist grounded theory methodology. This decision inevitably affected the methods employed to carry out the research which is the subject of the next section.

Methods

The research methods employed in this study reflect grounded theory methodology as discussed above. Interviewing, transcription, initial analysis, and coding for themes and categories ran concurrently from the summer of 2008 to autumn 2010. Throughout this time I drafted memos on emerging themes in the data and used these memos to inform ongoing sampling and interviews. Later I used these memos to develop theoretical categories with a view to generating substantive theory on the intersection of race, ethnicity, and class, specific to my sample and the context within which the research took place. Emergent substantive theory, Lempert (2007) advises, may or may not, lead in time to formal theory or theories.

The Sample

Following grounded theory methods (GTM), sampling was aimed at, or toward, theory construction rather than being representative of the population of this social class (Charmaz, 2006). The selection of prospective interviewees was informed by the social class schema based on employment status and occupational skills devised by Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992), which is in line with current research practice in the Republic of Ireland. Categories (i) and (ii) (higher and lower professionals) of this schema include senior management in the public and private sector, both of which I had access to, and was able to recruit from, due to my former career. All the people I contacted, and subsequently interviewed, were higher or lower professionals.

Platt defines peers as people who 'are one's social equals, share the same background knowledge and sub-cultural understandings and are members of the same groups or communities' (1981: 76). It was in the nature of my previous employment that I would have contact with individuals in senior positions in a wide range of client organisations, public and private, national and multinational, large and small. The relationships were professional in nature but, as we had known each other over a number of years, there was also an element of interpersonal relationship in that we would have socialised at work events and engaged in casual conversation before and after business meetings. This highlights an issue rarely made explicit in methods literature: that in peer research a prior relationship of some kind exists and could normally be expected to exist after the research concludes. As the interviewer of my peers I was/am not anonymous to my interviewees nor could/can I 'leave the field' following data collection. This influenced decisions I

made with regard to accessing interviewees, my behaviour as an interviewer, meeting expectations of trust, and the physical settings or locations of the interviews, all of which I discuss below.

In addition to using employment status and occupational skills to identify Irish professionals, because of the way the request to potential interviewees was framed in accepting, the recipients also self-identified as members of the Irish professional social class (see extract in Table 6 below). It should be noted that interview transcripts contain numerous references to the social capital and lifestyles associated with the professional class. These include allusions to professional social networks, homes in expensive/desirable residential areas, private schools and live-in nannies and domestic help, of which Charles' comment is typical:

> …my extended family and in-laws all have people come in and 'do' for them who are foreign and they have nothing but the height of praise for them…

Interviewees' access to politicians, journalists, and business leaders, also arose spontaneously in conversation. Over the course of the fieldwork, three interviewees offered to introduce me to a number of high-profile individuals they thought I should interview. These were all well-known commentators on political, business, or societal issues. Ivan, for example offered to introduce me to the then *Taoiseach*, Brian Cowen, an old school friend of his, and to a senior business journalist. There are also frequent references to attending college, travelling abroad for work and pleasure, and to the 'quality' media they consumed as opposed to the 'ghastly' populist media such as late night commercial radio chat shows:

> …if one wants to be very snobbish about it, I don't know [anything about immigration]. I don't read the tabloids...I see them occasionally in supermarkets and newsagents and…getting taxis home I hear these ghastly late night radio chat shows…and taxi men, you know, the 'send-them-home' variety...em...I would hope that is, you know, very much of a minority (Alison '08).

The requests were issued by informal personalised email using my college email address to underline the academic and perceived trustworthy 'brand image' of the institution.

Table 6: Extract from email invitation to participate.

… [my] research amongst Irish professionals is in relation to what they think about how immigration into Ireland over the past few years has been handled and how they foresee the future. [ ] I'm not looking for experts in Government policy or even those who are particularly interested in the topic. There is no long questionnaire, just informal conversations with a wide cross-section of men and women from the public and private sector to see what they think.

This mediated communication allowed my peers and me to minimise damage to any existing relationship if someone chose to decline. A phone call or a face-to-face request would have made rejection more difficult for both parties. I also wanted to be in a position to capture how people phrased their non-participation. In the event, everyone I contacted in the course of the study agreed to be interviewed on receipt of the first request.

Finding people who will talk about sensitive issues such as immigration was an early and obvious concern. Finding members of the Irish professional class who would talk openly was, I expected, going to be a particular and ongoing concern. In *Doing Research on Sensitive Topics,* Lee (1993) outlines some reasons given by researchers for eschewing researching 'up' and directing their attention instead towards the relatively powerless rather than the elites, wealthy, or powerful. These include assumptions that such groups do not welcome critical investigation and/or being interviewed by individuals of lower status to themselves so access is problematic, or that people who are literate, articulate, self-aware, and image-conscious are sensitive to how they are portrayed and have the power, resources, and expertise to protect their reputation. Lee (1993) however has suggested that some of these difficulties may be exaggerated and that elite groups may indeed recognise the value of research and may presume that a study will be objective, unbiased, and useful to the formulation of policy. My experience in this study was that the target population sample proved willing to be interviewed and, in some cases, willing to be interviewed twice. It is possible the request for an interview had reinforced someone's self-image as an authoritative individual or opinion leader. Alternatively, as I illustrate in this chapter, perhaps some were bemused by the topic. Perhaps the difficulties in accessing such groups should be put in perspective.

Smith (2006) does so efficiently when, while acknowledging the challenges of access, she also highlights the difficulties faced by researchers accessing respondents who, from a structural perspective, are lacking power, and gives examples of researchers' difficulties in accessing groups ranging from working class lesbians through drug dealers to ethnic neighbourhoods.

In terms of the content of the email invitation, methods and ethics guidelines advise researchers to give a full account of the rationale and purpose of one's study. For example, Fielding advises that if there is an attempt to trick or catch participants out, 'rather than attempting to see why a world view appeals to a particular group, the analysis will never be able to take the members' beliefs seriously' (Fielding, 1993: 149). However, with peers, Platt argues, giving an account of the research must be done in a way that is not intellectually condescending - although she appreciates that it is difficult to do so in a way that does not bias the interview. It can be 'exceedingly embarrassing evidently to have hypotheses that reflect unfavourably on one's respondents' (Platt, 1981: 87). As my study is informed by grounded theory methods I did not have hypotheses to share nor did I explicitly say that I was interested in problematising the common-sense acceptance that our peer group is tolerant of immigrants as described in Chapter 3. I did, however, make clear my interest in the response of the Irish professional social class to immigration into Ireland.

In addition to aiding access, my prior relationship with these professionals allowed, and in some cases necessitated, the proactive exclusion of some individuals. A straightforward reason for excluding some people was that, following GT methods, I wanted to research a diverse range of individuals. My prior knowledge also helped me avoid having more than one interviewee within each sub-group of my professional contacts as I wanted to avoid interviewees who worked/socialised together discussing their interview. I always told interviewees I would not reveal their participation and suggested that in terms of anonymity they should consider doing likewise. It was tacitly understood that Dublin is a relatively small city and the professional social class in Dublin is an even smaller sub-set of the population in the city.

Finally, I avoided family members and social class peers among my closest friends because I did not want to risk issues arising in our personal relationship due to my turning them into the subjects of a study of benefit to me. Taylor (2011) writes informatively of the advantages and challenges of researching among family and intimate friends. These 'exclusion zones' caused an unexpected issue for me in that some of the individuals

excluded hinted at their desire to participate or even proactively offered themselves for interview when they knew I was carrying out interviews. Taylor (2011) also experienced feelings of resentment from some of her friends who felt individuals who were interviewed were somehow either favoured or regarded, by her, as more authoritative. Of course, I can only speculate as to whether the excluded wanted to take part because the topic was of particular interest to them or whether it was merely pique at not being asked.

The first tranche of eight interviews took place in summer 2008. [48] A second tranche consisting of twelve interviews took place in summer 2009. Altogether they comprised ten men and ten women, half of whom worked in the public sector, and half in the private sector. The sample included health, marketing, information technology, engineering and finance professionals. It also included people working for multi-national companies and people who had worked abroad. [49] The age range was 30 to 60. Coincidentally, the economic recession began to unfold after the first tranche of interviews were taking place and, while I was in the field interviewing the second tranche, I decided to request a second interview (now over one year later) from the 'original' eight interviewees. Again, all agreed to participate which provided me with an opportunity to study what effect, if any, the national/international economic situation was having on their responses.

The geographical spread of my interviewees was limited to people living and working in Dublin city and county for logistical reasons and because Dublin has the highest proportion of non-Irish residents including the highest proportion of visibly different immigrants i.e. African and Asian (C.S.O., 2006a). The majority of interviewees were parents of school-going children and some of adult children. Some interviewees were born outside Dublin and some were born in Dublin. With one exception, all were educated to third level and almost half to fourth level (i.e. PhD and Masters). The majority were married heterosexuals while one self-identified as being in a homosexual partnership. See Appendix 2 for anonymised profiles of the interviewees.

Grounded theory methods require theoretical codes emerging from the data analyses to guide sampling, including guiding sampling in search of more, rather than less, atypical cases (Hood, 2007). When a heterosexual interviewee talked about competition between her friends and immigrant women for sexual partners, I interviewed a homosexual man who had a very different experience of the social scene in Dublin.

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[48] This provided the data drawn on in my MPhil dissertation (Byrne, 2008)

[49] Census 2002 records one in three Irish professionals had lived abroad. For more on this see Wickham (2009).

When one person working for a multinational expressed alternative views to those working in national companies, I sought and interviewed a second and so forth. In this way GT influenced sampling.

The Set

Finch (1984) suggests that the place of an interview influences the dynamics between interviewer and interviewee and that it is best to interview wherever the interviewee feels most comfortable for, as Goffman put it, we 'expect coherence among setting, appearance, and manner' (1990 [1959]: 35). Indeed, I found the setting was also important for me, the interviewer. The 'sets' I choose for the interviews were places in keeping with the relationship I had previously had with my interviewees. Some meetings were held in their offices, most of which I would have visited previously. Often, we met in hotels for coffee. Hotels seemed appropriate as settings because they were both private, in that we would not be interrupted, and yet public, which I think suggested that, both for the interviewee and myself, there was nothing to hide. Yet our voices would occasionally drop to a whisper and interviewees would glance over their shoulders to see who was around before they said something that they felt was 'not-PC'. I met for lunch a small number with whom I had a particularly warm or long professional relationship or, more rarely, dinner in restaurants near their place of work. [50]

I should mention that in Van Dijk's study on corporate racial discourse he interviews in the person's office for exactly the reason I did not: as he writes, 'the talk is institutionally grounded. They speak *as* (his emphasis) representatives of their organisations' (1993: 130). My email request for interviews explicitly stated this was not the case. My objective was for the interviewees and myself to be as relaxed as possible: they were not speaking for their institutions or organisations.

That was the case for all except one occasion. I recorded my reflections in my field notes. On that occasion, the interviewee, Helen, suggested we meet at an exclusive private business club of which she was a member. At that time, as well as an initial joining fee, the annual membership fee of this club was 1,250 euro per year. Membership had to be approved by the club members and even then the applicant may have had to go on a waiting list before being allowed full membership. I had not been in the club before, even

[50] In all but one instance, I paid for the refreshments. I had, after all, invited them and was benefitting from the conversation in terms of my research.

as the guest of a member. On arrival, I found I could not enter the building without Helen vouching for me and, although not actually the case, I almost felt I could not leave either. The formality and expense of the setting and service was distracting and I found that during that interview I was much less relaxed and felt somewhat intimidated. The relaxed familiarity of my interviewee on this same 'set' made me feel somewhat self- conscious and I think this affected the dynamic of the interview. I noticed I was less comfortable interrupting or challenging Helen's neo-liberal view of immigration. I raise it as an example of how much impact a power differential - or perceived power differential - can have – including on the interviewer.

Goffman includes dress or 'costume' as one of the elements of 'personal front' or stimuli which function to tell the observer of the performer's social status (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 34). I wore the corporate suits and accessories that were in keeping with my former professional lifestyle and, therefore, the relationship I had had with my interviewees. This corporate outfit also meant I looked similar to, and fitted in with, other professionals in the settings where the interviews took place and so I did not attract attention to my interviewee or myself. Problematising power relations in 'elite' interviews and calling attention to the shifting dynamics of positionality and power in interviewing, Mc Dowell describes how, depending on who she was meeting, she found she presented herself in slightly different ways. She 'played dumb' for older, patriarchal figures, brusquely efficient with a 'fierce' older woman, 'sisterly' with women her own age, and 'superfast, well-informed, and definitely not to be patronised' in front of younger male interviewees (Mc Dowell, 1998: 2138). I did not have such a range of roles to perform but being regarded as a competent researcher was important to me not least because they already knew me and moved in the same networks. Taylor has described her experience of interviewing among her social network and sensing some people's need to 'talk up' the value of their social role and cultural activities and have the researcher acknowledge their opinion as authoritative (2011: 17). Perhaps this cuts both ways and the peer researcher can find him or herself wanting to self-present as positively and authoritatively as possible.

The Interviews

With sensitive topics such as race, ethnicity, and class there is a tendency for interviewees to avoid the issue (Jackman and Muha, 1984) so my methods needed to be designed in such a way as to encourage open and honest responses and yet capture avoidance. Van

Dijk's work on discourse and racism, including elite discourse and racism demonstrates, however, that even with sensitive subjects, informal in-depth interviews yield rich data for qualitative analysis (Van Dijk, 1987, 1993) although he does not go so far as to suggest that socially desirable answers [51] cannot happen in such interviews.

Once the interviews were underway the only interruptions were for clarification, to probe for further information, or to make a comment to relax the interviewee. Interviews ranged in duration from 40 to over 60 minutes excluding informal conversation as we settled to begin and when we wrapped up. In excess of thirty hours of interviews were recorded.

My notes on the topics for discussion were not displayed during the interview but rather were memorised as prompts. The following are the topics which were used in the initial interviews:

- Do you work with colleagues who are immigrants?
- Do you have neighbours who are immigrants?
- Do you socialise together? Do your children?
- Is immigration a topic of conversation at work/home/out with friends? Has it been in the past?
- How, in your view, has the Irish government addressed immigration in the past decade?
- How have the media covered immigration related issues? Does the coverage reflect your interests and experience?

This list of topics for discussion was extended over the period of fieldwork as, again following GTM, topics which emerged from the coding of data already collected were added. For example, in later interviews interviewees were asked if they felt comfortable or uncomfortable discussing topics such as race and ethnicity and, if so, why they felt that was the case. When I noticed 'political correctness' being raised by a number of people in the first tranche of interviews, I began to include it among my interview topics e.g. 'if you are uncomfortable talking about immigration or immigrants why do you think that is?'

[51] The tendency of individuals to present themselves according to the prevailing social norms of behaviour. In other words, to want to 'look good' to the interviewer.

Similarly, when not having to compete for resources with groups they categorised as immigrants emerged as a recurring response, I began to ask interviewees if they had, or expected to have, to compete with immigrants for employment, accommodation, schools and hospitals.

Recording and Transcription

With the interviewees' agreement, I digitally recorded the interviews which allowed me to concentrate on the conversation and keep it as close as possible to normal. Audio recording also allowed verbal and non-verbal communication such as self-correction, hesitation, and changes in tone to be captured in the transcripts (Mueller, 1986) which is important where careful self-presentation is required, such as in talking about minority groups (Van Dijk, 1987). In the transcripts, short hesitations are marked by ellipsis, a noticeable pause is noted as such in the text, and empty square brackets are used to denote where a line or two of the transcript has been omitted due to deviation or repetition. I have not 'cleaned up' or corrected any incorrect or ungrammatical speech. Emphasis placed on certain phrases or words, or added by myself, is indicated by italics. Following Fontana and Frey (2005), paralinguistic communication, including variations in pitch such as whispering, were noted in the transcripts.

According to Van Dijk, where careful self-presentation is required, spontaneous talk can run into production problems e.g. hesitations, corrections and pauses (Van Dijk, 1987). Pierce, who researched the racial attitudes of highly educated middle class professionals in the US, describes how 'articulate men [...] begin to stumble and become inarticulate' when being interviewed (2003: 205). Pierce also came across interviewees who spoke in hushed tones about 'having to be careful' about what they said at work in case they 'might say the wrong thing' (Pierce, 2003: 205). Even naming minorities, Van Dijk suggests, is 'morally and interactionally risky' and therefore 'needs extra care and monitoring, and hence more time and mental processing, which are signalled by "um" and similar 'fillers' (1997: 174). In such cases I sometimes deliberately interjected to let interviewees know they could and should, if they so wished, use the terms in everyday use among our peer group. Here is an example from an interview with Beryl in 2009:

> Amazingly if you go down to the more rural towns and villages you wouldn't see the mix of race and colour, it would be more ethnic I suppose, oh no...that's the same thing... what am I trying to say...

(I/ver)...you mean the immigrants are white?

> Yeah, yeah. The Eastern Europeans are white whereas up here [in Dublin] you see black and white, and coloured, as they call them in South Africa, as well…em…I don't know what the politically correct term here is... So I suppose that is one big difference that people see.

Riesman, writing on matching interviewers with state officials and other elite informants observes:

> On politically touchy topics one may at times need, in interviewing elite members, to be able to get across to them that one understands the sub-cultural shorthands and allusions in which they speak, in order to avoid their using surface politeness as a screen against self-disclosure or self-exploration; there must be more dialectic, more 'leading', more give-and-take, than in the ordinary, hopefully non-directive, interview (Riesman, 1956: 64).

In the case of most interviewees, the words most often sought but used with reluctance, often until I was heard to use them, were 'black' and 'white'. My use seemed to 'give permission' to speakers to relax and talk as we would normally.

Instances of other stylistic, rhetorical and conversation properties of discourses were also captured in the transcripts, for example, the use of linguistic distancing such as the overuse of pronouns and demonstratives rather than using ethnic group names e.g. 'they' or 'these people'. Pierce (2003) also describes noticing a shift from 'I' to 'you' as in 'you can't say certain things.' The shift to the third person subtly operates to remove the speaker from the role of participant to observer as in: 'this is what you all/other people say, not me'. It was implicit in frequent references to the rhetorical 'you know' and use of the personal pronoun 'we' that I was perceived to be a peer. Van Dijk describes these phrases as 'signals of shared knowledge about local situations' (1997: 174). Certainly, they acted as an inclusive (and perhaps complicit) gesture and appear across and throughout the transcripts. Another inclusive phrase, although used less often, is 'people like us' as shown in the following example from Alison in 2009:

> But I'm not going to say it out loud because I think *people like us* are concerned about doing the correct thing but deep down there are prejudices buried in all of us... [emphasis added]

As Tyler (2008: 23) insightfully notes, laughter can also be boundary forming and include as well as exclude. In the following extract, I had asked a regular question about the media preferences of the interviewee, in this case, Gabrielle, a female scientist working in the public sector in 2009:

> *(I/ver)...what papers would you read...tabloids or broadsheets?*
>
> Broadsheet!
>
> [We both laugh at the idea she might have chosen tabloid]
>
> You've labelled me now! Well, occasionally, for work reasons, I do see the tabloids [laughs]. Occasionally I get quoted in the tabloids and then I'm a boffin [laughs again].
>
> *(I/ver) Oh! you're my first boffin![52] [laughing] I must find a guru[53] as well!*
>
> I've never been called a guru, but I'm sure you'll find one!

Our laughter indicated we both knew that, in the event that she or her peers did indeed read tabloid papers, it was not something to which she, or they, would readily admit, as it would be a breach of the social norm or the 'performance' of being a member of the Irish professional social class. Another unspoken, mutual understanding exhibited here is that people who get quoted as experts do not read tabloids and this interviewee was firmly placing herself in the former category i.e. as a scientific 'boffin' or an acknowledged expert in her field. Discussing what she calls 'new ethnicities and old classisities', Tyler says of herself and one of her interviewees:

> ...our laughter poignantly reveals how middle class humour [...] can work to distance, mock and devalue working class culture, as well as secure 'our' shared middle class identities through marking out 'our' difference to the other (2011: 538).

Even with recordings, some information could not be captured such as facial or bodily gestures, so I found it was important to transcribe recordings as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) so that such observed information was captured while my recall was fresh. In addition, physical movements (e.g. gesturing around the room or looking over one's shoulder) and anything of interest mentioned before and after the digital recording was switched on and off was captured in field notes. Kinesic communication, facial or

[52] Slang for scientist.
[53] Facetious term for business leader, mentor, or pundit.

bodily gestures such as shrugs and raised eyebrows, was also noted either in transcription or in field notes. Contemporaneous field notes were also used to record my own experiences and reflections on the interview.

Each recording disk and transcript was given an identifying sequence of letters and numbers and further coded depending on gender, date, and whether the individual worked in the public or private sector. Later, each interviewee was assigned a pseudonym taken from a list of hurricane names. [54]

Coding

I used NVivo, the branded qualitative data analysis software package, to help with storing and coding data, but more usefully I spent long periods, highlighters and coloured pens in hand, reading and re-reading the transcripts and writing memos in order to code and create categories.

I should mention that since, as interviewer, I see myself as participating in the interview beyond 'just asking the questions' I coded my questions, interjections, and non-verbal communication such as laughter. Hak (2003) critiques the lack of attention paid to transcribing and analysing interviewer utterances, including laughter. He attributes a number of functions to interviewer talk. For example 'ums' and 'yeahs' act as 'acknowledgement of receipt' of what the interviewee has said and also communicate nonspecific appreciation or encouragement to the interviewee to continue. Instances where the interviewer initiates laughter (as opposed to the interviewee as we saw above) can also be functional, according to Hak (2003) in communicating non-understanding (in the sense of a request for clarification) or, interestingly, dis-comfort with, or rejection of what is being said. Instances of laughter signalling such discomfort are noted in a number of the transcript extracts in this thesis and discussed, as appropriate, in my analyses.

[54] Hurricanes are named by the World Meteorological Organisation to provide ease of communication between forecasters and the public regarding forecasts and warnings. Since the storms can often last a week or longer and more than one can be occurring in the same area at the same time, a gender-alternating alphabetical list of names, unique to each year, can reduce the confusion. In future, names will no longer be westernised personal names, which was the system pertaining in 2000-2001 and from which the pseudonyms I use are drawn.

Following GTM, the first step was to 'open code' the transcripts. I chose to code the entire content of the interviews for the purposes of completeness but also because I could not know what codes might become important as further data was collected and coded. Open coding simply means coding everything for everything so some data could be captured under a number of codes depending on the content (see Appendix 3 for illustrative screen-pull of early-stage open coding using the NVivo package). I used line-by-line analysis to break up the data and later used invivo codes based on terms and/or phrases from the data as code labels such as 'people like us' rather than a sociologically constructed code such as 'class norms'.

Grounded theory methods recommend allowing the interviewee to take the interview where they will, for example, by using open-ended questions. This worked very well within this study as can be seen from the wide range of topics raised by interviewees including government policies, social norms, sexual competition, emigration, anti-Irish racism, growth of Islam, and a hierarchy of acceptability of immigrants.

Following GTM, as some topics began to be coded frequently I included them in the list of topics for discussion in subsequent interviews to explore their pervasiveness and, again, found consistency in the responses elicited. To illustrate the iterative nature of the interviews and the consistency in the data, the following is an extract from an early interview in 2008. The interviewee, Beryl, is in her early 30s and working in the public health sector. This was part of her response to a question I asked about the subject of immigration being discussed among her family, friends and colleagues.

In time, the interviewees' perception of pressure to be politically correct would become one the topics for discussion.

> I think on paper we're very...we're very PC on paper...yet when it comes to the actual dealings, I think we're only starting out on that road really (Beryl '08).

There follows an extract from an interview that took place over a year later, in 2009, with Jerry, the managing director of a private business. I asked him how it was that our generation is more careful about talking about racial matters than our parents' generation, something which he had mentioned:

> But I don't think we *are* politically correct. Well...we are because...You know I'm in a business where I operate in the sight of the media and I have to be careful what I say and how I say it and all the rest of it but I think that...em...scratch the surface and people are the same as our parents in a way [i.e. use racialised language] [Emphasis in original].

These extracts show two professionals, with differently gendered life and work-life experiences, in different socio-economic contexts (growth and recession) express very similar views on 'political correctness' i.e. that it was a social norm of which they were very aware in the sense of the performance of their social class role. The references coded to 'political correctness' would, in time, become constituent of a category coded as the 'performance of social class norms', explored in detail in Chapter 8. It was the coding of data, following GT methods, that led to the creation of the category of 'professional social class norms' not the literature. This category would, in time, be linked to others that could be seen to be constituent of the in vivo [55] code titled 'people like us can't say that.' As the research project progressed some codes became saturated and potential core categories or 'substantive codes' became apparent (see Table 7 below).

Table 7: Invivo and Substantive Codes.

Invivo Code	**Substantive Code**
'nothing to do with me'	disclaiming
'there's a pecking order'	hierarchising
'not in my neighbourhood'	distancing
'a problem for the lower classes'	deflecting
'we're a small country'	rationalising
'people like us can't say that'	racialising

In time, a core category emerged which captured the main concern of members of the white Irish professional social class in relation to immigrants and how that concern is resolved or processed. [56]

[55] Invivo is used here in the sense of the actual words and phrases used by the participants. The *NVivo* mentioned earlier is the trade name of a data analysis package.
[56] To reiterate, in GT, process refers to the patterned actions and interactions of individuals over time which create and sustain social structures (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979: 29).

The main concern, as discussed in the next chapter, is the desire to perform the social class norm of tolerance and anti-racism. Dissonance arises if it is perceived that some immigrant groups are not respectable and/or contributing sufficiently to deserve access to, for example, welfare and asylum. The interviewees manage the dissonance between negative perceptions of some immigrants and their professional class norms through a process conceptualised as Performing Distance. When the core category/main concern was recognised, open coding drew to a close and selective coding, in other words, coding only for the core category and related sub-categories, continued until saturation.

Preliminary Analysis

Analysis of talk provides insight into people's attitudes (Essed, 1991; Mueller, 1986; Van Dijk, 1987, 1993). Following Van Dijk's (1993) work on interviewing elites (including professionals) my preliminary analyses noted the topics and themes raised, both spontaneous and prompted, along with stories related and arguments made. As I was a peer, I was equipped with knowledge of the cultural norms and discourse nuances of the interviewees, which proved useful in coding (O' Neill Green et al, 2007). In the first instance, per Van Dijk (1987), I analysed the transcripts at a macro-level.

Van Dijk suggests that, depending on the speaker's social context, goals, and values, they will emphasise different dimensions of various topics. Telling stories of personal or group experiences passed on by acquaintances or relayed from the media is often used as a conversational device to support a point or claim. In addition, stories can be told or re-told to distance the individual from certain language or responses, as few people will use blatantly racial language because it conflicts with positive self-presentation.

I found it useful to also note micro-level or strategic features of talk. In a situation or conversation where they wish to express a view which is negative, people will use a range of strategic features of talk to negotiate the thin line between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (Van Dijk, 1987). These include semantic moves of positive self-presentation and negative presentation of the other such as: concession making ('some are very hard-working but...'); contrastive emphasis ('we respect other cultures...they don't respect ours'); and ploys of comparison ('the Irish integrated well when they emigrated'). Strategies of denial ('I'm not a racist but...') and 'transfer' ('I don't mind, it's my neighbours…') can also be employed by interviewees. These semantic moves and the non-verbal data mentioned above were useful, not in terms of analysis *per*

se but as 'signposts' which could be indicative of something of interest in a section of data. While I was not undertaking discourse analysis as was Van Dijk, I found this macro- and micro-analysis and constant moving within, and between, data a useful starting point in familiarising myself with the recurring themes, incidents, and concepts in the interviews, before I considered coding to particular categories, as advised by Glaser and Strauss (1967: 106).

Capturing Nuances

The combination of qualitative peer research with grounded theory methods proved efficacious in identifying useful, if sometimes unanticipated, data. In this section I also show how the methods used in this study helped me as an insider or 'native' to pull back or 'go observationalist' (Labaree, 2002) and not to miss what was for me, because of my positionality, ordinary and everyday talk or as I came to refer to it: 'the bleeding obvious!' On occasion I found I could be surprised by my peers, not necessarily by something I did not know but by something as a 'native' I knew so well that I could overlook it. Following Bulmer (1982), I had to learn to actively question familiarity. In her work on insider research, Taylor (2011) talks of similar experiences and notes the value of self-critique and reflexivity in 'unlearning the familiar' or 'natural' (Taylor, 2011). [57] Grounded theory methods helped me to 'state the obvious' and step back from the data by reflecting on the line detail of the transcripts during numerous readings and re-reading, coding and re-coding. In addition, I found my attention was frequently drawn to data that appeared to me unremarkable by attendees at international conferences and international journal reviewers. This particular incident is an example of where a rich phrase or term is used but I missed its significance until eventually I noticed the numerous references [58] to the term 'Nigerians' cropping up in the interview transcripts and began to ask directly whether Nigerian was a euphemism for the terms 'black' or 'African'. This is Barry talking in 2009:

> I remember when I was renting my place [an investment property] out [ ] my next door neighbour said, 'well, you know, when you are renting, get a good family in, you know...em...[ ] my next door neighbour was dropping hints to make sure...you know...I didn't...he would have also mentioned that so-and-so had...em...Nigerians [lowers voice] and whatever - it was - seemingly there was all these

[57] See also Labaree (2002).
[58] Second most common nationality mentioned after the Polish.

> stories about Nigerians - and why they picked on Nigerians, you know, I wouldn't be able to tell you exactly the reasoning behind it, but it always seemed to be 'oh, if you get Nigerians in, they cause trouble'. Now, how much proof they had either way, if that was the case or not...but there definitely seems to have been…there was a ….
>
> *(I/ver) Or was it [Nigerian] a euphemism for black person?*
>
> Yeah.

I believe the reason I had not noticed this before was that, previously, like my interviewees, I too would probably have regarded the use of 'Nigerian' as a polite, albeit geographically haphazard, nomenclature for black people living in Ireland. As another interviewee, Michael, put it, 'we would 'nearly always refer to them [immigrants] by their nationalities, rather than by their colour, race or creed'. Subsequently, in the literature, I found a comment by White (2002), writing on Irish media representation and racialised identities, to the effect that 'Nigerian' was being used to denote any individual of African descent.

My peer position was also helpful when coding transcripts (O' Neill Green et al, 2007) and enhanced my ability to uncover salient concepts to inform emerging theory. In the next example, Alison was discussing an IKEA recruitment campaign which had stated that they would endeavour to employ local people for their new store in Dublin.

> Well, my husband was being very non-PC - he hasn't been to the IKEA here yet - and when I was going he said 'huh, I wonder are they all going to be 'howyas' working there?' [laughs] But they weren't at all. There were quite a few non-Irish there, which means that IKEA's recruitment was very much, 'well, we want the best person available and the best person available for the job is foreign'.

In unpacking this story it is useful to know that IKEA opened its first store in the Republic of Ireland in July 2009. The site of the store is in an area of relatively high unemployment on the north side of Dublin city. Both Alison and I knew there was no need for her to explain the term 'howya.' A 'howya' is a colloquial pejorative adjective used to both describe and categorise people from certain parts of the city as unemployed or unskilled working class and poorly educated. The term 'howya' is an abbreviated greeting i.e. 'how are you?' and refers to the predominant accent in the lower–class areas

of that part of the north-side of the city. Implicit in Alison's comment is that IKEA, despite looking, could not find suitable (Irish) staff in the local area and so it was necessary for IKEA to employ 'non-Irish'. It would become an emergent theme that, however low were some interviewees' opinions of some of the groups they categorised as immigrants, the Irish lower classes were lower still in their estimation, unwilling or unable to undertake even manual or low skilled jobs. Indeed the racialisation of the Irish lower class was a recurring theme throughout all stages of the research.

Ethics

This research followed the ethical guidelines of the Sociological Association of Ireland. Following Byrne (1997), I regard my ethical responsibilities towards the interviewees as requiring that, in the first instance, I was as open as possible to them about the nature of my research. Second, that I took, and still take, all possible steps to ensure their anonymity, and thirdly, that I am as faithful as possible to the discourse of the interviewees during the process of transcribing, analysing, interpreting, and selecting extracts from, interviews. That said, as Byrne (2007) argues, any analysis is subjective and political; in other words to offer a reading of a text is to reproduce or transform it.

Assessing the Advantages and Challenges of Peer Research

I believe my positionality as a (former) professional class peer and my association with a reputable university was helpful in securing participation from interviewees. Writing on the sociology of the professions, Mac Donald describes the importance of trust and, interestingly, the importance of appearance, manner, and reputation, in securing trust:

> The services that professionals provide are characteristically different from the goods that are sold by the manufacturer or merchant or a retailer in that they are intangible and the purchaser has to take them on trust. [ ] The professional's possession of knowledge and expertise can be warranted by diplomas, certificates and degrees but only up to a point. Thereafter, trust becomes extremely important and must be accorded to those whose outward appearances and manner fits with the socially acceptable standards of repute and respectability (Mac Donald, 1995: 30).

I believe I was trusted, in part, because I was 'one of them' but I could not take this trust for granted especially given the sensitivity of the topic under discussion. I knew it was vitally important to ensure that interviewees trusted, and were confident in, my commitment to their anonymity. I provided assurances that pseudonyms would be used throughout the research process and a copy of the Sociological Association of Ireland Ethical Procedure Guidelines was offered to each respondent to read. Actually, no one bothered to read it and most waved it away without a glance. I think it is relevant that the nature of my previous work meant that I was routinely briefed on business sensitive and business critical information and it was of utmost importance to my professional standing, just as Mac Donald (1995) suggests, that confidences were never breached. The *modus operandi* of my former profession is similar to a journalist's commitment never to reveal his/her source even in the event of legal prosecution.

An unexpected learning in relation to building trust with interviewees was that, following a number of incidents where I interrupted the interviewee to point out that they had just referred to corporate/personal identifying information that I would redact the interviewees responded very positively and became even more relaxed. On reflection, my motivation may have been more to do with protecting an interviewee's identity than adherence to research ethics. For the peer interviewer, getting the required data is not always, or only, the abiding concern. Platt (1981) observed that the high level of empathy she felt with her interviewees (based on shared group membership) made guilt more salient than the potential shame if she failed to get the sought-after data.

Interestingly, the topics of trust and the social class norm of avoiding public discussion on immigration and immigrants arose, unprompted, during interviews and indeed both were raised so frequently I began to code for them. Also, following grounded theory methods of iterative coding, data analysis and gathering, I began to incorporate notions of trust and social norms into my topics for discussion if they did not arise spontaneously. There follows an example of how interviewees talked about the importance of trust. In this instance, as the audio recorder was being set up, Keith told me my email invitation to be interviewed on the subject of immigration had piqued his curiosity because, as he put it:

> Nah, to be honest with you, if you're looking at the higher class…people who are used to…people who are used to not being able to…you can't give out about Travellers, Romanians, or anything like that. Wow! Suddenly expecting people to be absolutely honest and

> reveal their innermost thoughts on these issues…em…it requires some digging I would suspect.

Coincidentally, like a number of others who also expressed bemusement at the idea of talking openly and honestly about their response to immigration and immigrants, Keith went on to give a lengthy and very useful interview and, indeed, offered to introduce me to potential interviewees.

Early in the fieldwork I realised that while interviewing guidelines in the literature privileging an interviewer's detachment and neutrality may work when interviewing strangers, or people one expects never to meet again, such guidelines are largely impractical if there exists a prior relationship and the likelihood of social or professional interaction in the future. Reflecting on the first interviews I carried out, I realise I had difficulty presenting myself as a so-called 'objective' sociologist (Pidgeon and Henwood, 2004; Stanley and Wise, 1993) and interviewees may also have noticed some dissonance. For many, it was the first time we had met since I had left the business world for academia and they were likely to be expecting someone they knew to be outgoing and politically aware. Now, as a researcher, I was asking questions on our peer group's response to aspects of contemporary Irish life and neither commenting nor sharing opinions. I became concerned that some interviewees could misinterpret my student researcher commitment to 'being neutral and objective' as my positioning of myself as an academic who inhabited some 'higher moral plane'. Alternatively they might conclude that my identity had changed irrevocably i.e. that I had 'gone left wing', a common perception of academics and the media. To be categorised as left wing or a 'leftie' was not a compliment among the majority of my peer group. The phrase is associated with 'bleeding hearts', 'do-gooders', the politically correct, and with someone who does not inhabit the 'real world'.

When I reflected on the role-playing and, to use Goffman's term 'impression management', that was going on in every interview, it became clear to me that *all of us* were all performing designated roles. To use Schwartz and Jacobs (1979: 66) term I was 'more than a stranger, but less than a friend' and while this reduced the amount of generic information offered, it also moved the interviews inevitably towards the personal, both for the interviewee and me (Platt, 1981).

As Dingwall (1997: 56) observed:

> The products of an interview are the outcome of a socially situated activity where the responses are passed through the role-playing and impression management of both the interviewer and the respondent.

Like Platt (1981), I also found I was consciously marking my group membership by telling stories and sharing experiences that revealed something of myself, my attitudes, and even my ambivalences on immigration. Indeed, when I was transcribing and coding my own contributions, I was sometimes embarrassed at how much of the response of myself, and my social network, I had revealed.

Feminist sociologists such as Oakley (1981), Stanley (1996), and Stanley and Wise (1993) argue that interviewing should allow interviewers to show their human side, answer questions, and express feelings and that 'the personhood of the researcher cannot be left out of the research process' (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 161). Suggesting that this approach helps to reduce any real or imagined hierarchical differences, Reinharz (1992) argues that methodologically it encourages a greater spectrum of responses and insights into the lives of respondents. Oakley (1981) says of interviewing that there is no intimacy without reciprocity.

> If we proceed from the belief that neutrality is not possible (even assuming that it would be desirable) then taking a stance becomes unavoidable. An increasing number of social scientists have realised that they need to interact as persons with the interviewees [ ] (Fontana and Frey, 2005: 696).

However, Fontana and Frey point out that such openness must also be recognised by researchers as a technique, even a ruse, to obtain better and more comprehensive responses without sharing one's own opinions and evading direct questions. What seems, she says, more like a conversation is still really a 'one-way pseudo-conversation' (Fontana and Frey, 2005: 711) and the interviewer maintains control and, therefore, power.

Following these feminist theorists, in the transcripts from later interviews one can see a more conversational style of interview with interruptions, requests for clarifications, challenges, admissions, and indeed, laughter. Below are some examples of my sharing views and behaviours of my own and my social network. This data was captured as a

result of my coding 'me' as a participant in the interview process. Labaree (2002), writing on the need for the insider to 'go observationalist' argues: '[t]he positionality of insiderness commits researcher participants to showing their place in the setting that they are investigating' (2002: 107). The comments in the extract below arose in a conversation with Keith in 2009 and refer to an experience of mine from 2007, the memory of which continues to embarrass and disturb me. Keith was talking about Irish people refusing to use taxis with foreign drivers:

> …but they also are saying things like people don't want to go into a car with a black person. They want to go with a white person.
>
> *(I/ver) Yeah, I experienced that one night. My sisters refused to take a taxi with a black driver.*
>
> Your sisters refused!
>
> *(I/ver) Yeah, before I had time to realise what they were doing...*
>
> And why? Because they were afraid of what might happen or what could happen? What could happen?!
>
> *(I/ver) There were five of us travelling together so – hey...?*
>
> [I shrugged my shoulders in a gesture that indicated I didn't think anything untoward was likely to happen]
>
> Take ye up to the Phoenix Park in the dark, like?

Despite my embarrassment relating to the incident, I found, like Platt (1981), that this level of intimacy allowed more probing or challenging than might be accepted, or expected, in a less intimate or more unbalanced relationship. I found too that in responding honestly to interviewees' comments and experiences I was tacitly placing myself within the same sphere of experiences and, I hoped, both ameliorating any concern they might have of my being judgemental, but ultimately also improving the quality of the data elicited.

The feminist literature on interviewing methods refers to 'moving the interview towards the personal for both interviewer and interviewee' (Platt, 1981). Peer interviewing, with all its attendant advantages, makes particular demands on both interviewee and interviewer. The researcher choosing these methods must expect to have her/his own thoughts, attitudes, responses, and lifestyle questioned, just as researchers we expect the interviewee to submit to being questioned. There follows an instance when this happened to me in an interview. The interviewee, Alison, is in her late 40s and works in the public sector. She talked at

some length about her (particularly strident) negative response towards the Muslim religion generally, Muslims in Ireland and, in particular, female Irish converts to Islam:

> I don't know how many times it's been on the tip of my tongue to say to [daughter] 'don't you dare ever come in here with a Muslim' [in dramatic voice]. But I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't do it.
>
> *(I/ver) Well, if that's the reality of how you feel...*
>
> Yeah, but at the same time... it's not right... [Continues to speak of her negative response to Muslims]
>
> [Later] But your husband is a Muslim, isn't he? Or is he a Buddhist?
>
> *(I/ver) No, no, he's not, he's interested in all of them [religions] but yeah he's particularly into Islam as a subject of study and general interest.*
>
> I know they *do* preach peace and I admire anybody who can be so…em...accepting of their religious laws. I just find it intriguing that Muslims are so accepting of their religious laws at a time when we have drifted the other way, most probably because of our upbringing. Maybe we're just too much into capitalism, I don't know, or materialism, but I think that Islam has not got it across to the Western world that they *do* preach peace, that they don't preach suicide bombers [sic] and all that… that these guys are beyond the pale...[Emphasis in the original].

Both at the time of the conversation, and when I was transcribing and coding, I was both bemused and amused by Alison's comments about my husband, who I think she may have met for a few minutes once at a social gathering. It may help the reader to know my husband wears a short beard, shaves his head and occasionally wears colourful brimless traditional Pakistani hats (known in various countries as *taqiyah/topi/kufi*). That she thought my husband was a convert to Islam was not irrational, what is of more interest is that Alison was at ease saying to someone she believed to be the wife of an Irish Muslim convert that, for example, anti-Islamic comments were:

> [the] Muslim's own fault in one way because, rightly or wrongly, they are being equated with terrorism and the other thing that people may find a bit frightening is that Muslims are now the third largest

> religious grouping in this country...[ ] something like a third of Muslims in this country are native Irish which means they must be converts.

I can only speculate how I would have felt if indeed my husband was Muslim and imagine I would have been hurt rather than bemused. Such 'moving towards the personal' is one of the challenges presented by the methodology and methods I have chosen for this study.

Field notes were useful to assist in the reflexive process. I recorded my own experiences, ambivalences, and feelings, after each interview. An illustrative instance is one where I left an interview in 2009 feeling vaguely threatened. It was only when the interview was transcribed I began to understand what had transpired. Larry had been talking about the relocation of Dublin people to the surrounding counties from which they commute to work in the capital city yet maintain, amongst other (sub)cultural signifiers, their sporting allegiance to the county of their birth rather than the county where they are living. It could appear he has drifted off topic but closer examination of the transcript when coding indicates a deeper meaning. Interestingly, Larry draws attention to the analogy himself and references the diminution of one group's identity by another:

> Urban spread and the 'Dublinisation' almost of counties that would have traditionally been rural, very much rural viewpoints, and they've become Dublin-centred. And the tensions that that must cause…if you've fellahs from Dublin coming in, going down to the pub, and joining committees, and trying to 'take over the show' as they might see it…I mean it does happen, and it's a broadly similar analogy, so that discussion hasn't taken place either. I don't know are we afraid of causing upset or again…and it's this fear that if you say anything like this you immediately get labelled as somebody who's not 'one of us' and who is dangerous and really…eh…shouldn't be allowed on the airwaves. Because if your PhD, the one that you're outlining, ends up being this way you could end up getting the chop, very, very much so, by left-wing social…sociologists and you could be attacked.

This last reference to my research was not at all clear to me at the time. It was only when I was doing the line-by-line analysis that I noticed the detail. Having examined the transcript many times as one does when coding in GT, I noticed that, preceding this comment, Larry had mentioned the media as having 'a very left-liberal view of immigration' and having 'completely ignored its [immigration] potential to impact on Irish culture' and to 'change things radically' but that such a discussion never really took place in Ireland. He went on to explain that:

> …anybody who tries to raise it [immigration] at all, whether in terms of it being an essential driver for economic growth or to even discuss its potential impact…eh…was almost shot down as being racist. This was something that you couldn't discuss.

Larry had, it appears to me, taken my interest in the topic, and to opening up a discussion among my peers, as potentially detrimental to my academic career prospects because to his mind anything other than a 'left-liberal view of immigration' was likely to 'get shot down' regardless of whether the discussion was on economic, social, or cultural matters. Perhaps, for Larry, it was not so much a threat as a friendly warning that studying what the Irish professional class really think about immigration would not necessarily be 'career enhancing'.

Larry's point was clarified somewhat by comments he made towards the end of the interview. Influenced by GT methods I generally used an open ended question at the end of the interview and found it regularly elicited useful data. Here is an extract from the same interview as our conversation drew to a close.

> *(I/ver) Is there anything that I haven't raised that you thought might get raised in the course of this conversation? Any issue we haven't covered that you think is of relevance?*
>
> No. Em…the only thing I'd have concerns about is how peoples' opinions would be reflected, not in your work, but how it would be taken and used so that you'd have…somebody might decide if, for example, you said the professional classes are…more conservative than we thought they might be, then somebody might use that: 'the professional classes are institutional racists'…which is not the case at all.

We parted amicably and following iterative analysis and reflection, I do think I was being offered advice rather than being warned. I believe Larry felt I did not know the 'can of worms' [59] I was opening and that my 'left-wing' sociology colleagues, like the 'leftie' Irish media, would not appreciate research suggesting the Irish professional class had substantive issues with immigration.

Interestingly, his comment about how 'somebody might use' my research brings to mind Smith's (2006) argument regarding the need to re-think power within the context of the interview space when so-called 'elites' are involved. She argues it is not always the case that 'elite' interviewees exert the power associated with their professional position and, like myself, she has been surprised by the 'level of self-reflection, uncertainty and nervousness' in some of her senior professional interviewees as well as their willingness to share their thoughts (2006: 646).

This extract, and being asked if I was using grounded theory by another interviewee, also serve to illustrate that the majority of my interviewees were informed about the academic research process and also that some were concerned, not alone about individual anonymity, but also about how research outputs can be interpreted, and misinterpreted, by others.

In addition to being familiar with the academic research process to varying degrees, my peer group is also familiar with the norms of our so-called 'interview society' (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997). Interviews are ubiquitous in contemporary life, from news programmes to recruitment processes, speed dating to law enforcement, academic studies to post-match press conferences. From their own graduate and, in most cases, post-graduate experiences of research projects, and indeed throughout their professional lives, people in this social class are familiar with the performativity of interviewer/interviewee roles. In addition, similar to Kvale's elite interviewees, they tend to have secure status so it is both possible and acceptable to challenge their statements and indeed this often leads to new insights (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 147). With experience, I began to view this as an opportunity and increasingly recognised that my interviews involved, as Parry (1998), cited in Smith (2006), put it: 'two consenting adults'. As a result, I believe the interviews from the later fieldwork provide the richest data.

[59] A term used by another interviewee, Emily, in 2008

Given my experience in the field, and following Atkinson and Silverman (1997) and Holstein and Gubrium (1995), I argue that interviewing is not merely, or only, the neutral exchange of 'questions and answers' which, if carried out 'correctly' will reveal 'the reality' or take us closer to 'the truth' of the matter. Interviewing in general, and peer interviewing in particular, I reflect, is a mediated performance as much on the part of the researcher as the researched, and has, in addition to its advantages, its own set of issues, one of which is encouraging people to speak openly even if/when what they are saying is contrary to the social norms of their class which includes tolerance of diversity and anti-racism.

Conclusion

Research textbooks tend to assume implicitly that the interviewee is not the interviewer's peer but a member of different groups and a social inferior (Platt, 1981). Platt's experience of interviewing peers highlights how the peer interview relationship is different to these, more usual, circumstances and the consequences this has for the nature of the interview as a data gathering tool. [60]

Following Holstein and Gubrium (1995), who urge researchers to be reflexive about how their interviews are accomplished, I have illustrated, drawing on my own data, the appropriateness of peer research methods for this study. I argue that the informal in-depth interview method of data gathering, combined with my peer status, succeeded in generating rich data even though the interviewees were familiar with research techniques, aware of the interview process, and aware that social class norms dictate they should self-present as being positively disposed towards immigration and immigrants.

Given that the social position of the interviewees influences how their responses are framed and how they conduct themselves in the interviews (Barnes, 1996) I argue that my positionality and situatedness also proved useful in that I had knowledge of the social class norms and discourse nuances of my interviewees - and they knew this. As Fontana and Frey suggest, the use of language, particularly that of specific terms, helps create a 'sharedness of meanings' in which both interviewer and interviewee 'understand the contextual nature of specific referents' (2005: 713).

[60] For more on the advantages and challenges of researching peers, elites, friends and family, see Labaree (2002), Platt (1981), Smith (2006) and Taylor (2011).

In this chapter I argue that in-depth qualitative peer research, within a framework of grounded theory, provided the optimal methodological tool for developing a substantive theory on the intersection of class, race, and ethnicity, in contemporary Ireland. This is especially the case when the peer group is highly educated, self-aware, and research-aware individuals and the topic is a sensitive one. Although many theorists acknowledge the sensitive nature of the issue under discussion, as indeed did my own interviewees, rich data was generated and some of what they reveal goes against the norms of the professional social class.

Would members of this social class talk to a non-peer, an 'outsider'? I am sure they would. However, whether or not the data would be reliable and whether they would speak so openly, particularly the individuals whose responses diverge from the professional social class norm, is questionable. I would speculate that the non-peer researcher would be treated to the discourse of tolerance from members of a social class Balibar describes as 'skilled in the wiles of the political language game' (1991b: 223).

That said, following Cerroni-Long (1995), I make no claim to having a position that privileged me to see 'the real truth' but rather to present 'a truth'. In the following chapters I unpack the discursive strategies which emerged from the data and discuss what they may tell us about the interaction between members of this social class and immigrants in contemporary Ireland.

Chapter 5. The Substantive Theory of Performing Distance

Introduction

As stated at the outset, my research objective was to develop a substantive theory of how Irish professionals respond to immigration and immigrants. In this short chapter I present an overview of my theory of Performing Distance and the six sub-categories that constitute it: disclaiming, hierarchising, distancing, deflecting, rationalising, and racialising. Each sub-category is discussed in detail in the following three chapters.

This chapter also links the discussion of methodology and methods in the previous chapter and the findings chapters to follow. Following GT methods, it was the coding of data and not the literature, which led to the creation of the sub-categories. As the data analysis progressed, and some codes became saturated, substantive codes became apparent (see Table 8 below). The Performance of Distance was the response I found to be common to all of these substantive codes. The core category to emerge, therefore, was Performing Distance. In other words, I found that the response of Irish professionals to immigration and immigrants is one of Performing Distance both from the subject and the object of immigration, and that the main concern is to perform, and be seen to perform, the professional social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism in public.

Table 8: Core Category: Performing Distance.

In vivo Code	Substantive Code/ Sub-category
'nothing to do with me'	disclaiming
'there's a pecking order'	hierarchising
'not in my neighbourhood'	distancing
'a problem for the lower classes'	deflecting
'we're a small country'	rationalising
'people like us can't say that'	racialising

Core Category: Performing Distance

Performing Distance: The Core Category

The core category to emerge from the data was conceptualised as Performing Distance. Emergence, in this context, does not mean that it simply appeared in the data; rather it emerged as the result of a lengthy iterative, and unpredictable, process involving constantly asking, as Glaser (1978) recommends 'what is happening in this data?' Performing Distance emerged as the core category because it was constantly recurring in the data in one way or another and it has the most explanatory power to integrate the main sub-categories to emerge from the data.

Performing Distance relates to the concern to perform, and be seen to perform, in the public domain, the professional social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism. However, dissonance arises when it is perceived that some immigrant groups are not contributing sufficiently, do not deserve access to entitlements such as welfare payments or asylum, and/or are deemed not respectable. This dissonance between negative perceptions of some immigrants on the one hand, and professional class social norms of tolerance and anti-racism on the other, is managed through the discursive strategy of Performing Distance.

Performing Distance incorporates social, economic, cultural, geographical, spatial and even moral distance. In this study 'distance' is used in the metaphorical sense, as a verb, noun, and adjective. [61] As a verb, it is used to describe the action of actively not paying attention to the topic of immigration. As a noun, it describes the physical or otherwise tangible distance between interviewees and the people they categorise as immigrants and as an adjective it is used to describe the effect of this discursive strategy on interviewees' perceptions of the humanity of the immigrant 'other'.

Performing Distance: The Sub-Categories

The core category of Performing Distance has six constituent sub-categories. Five of these sub-categories relate to discursive performances deemed suitable for the public domain: disclaiming, hierarchising, distancing, deflecting, and rationalising. However, I also found data to support another performance, that of racialising. This latter form of

[61] I am indebted to Professor Agnes Higgins of The School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College, for this insight.

performance is restricted to the private domain. Although presented for the purposes of the thesis as six discrete sub-categories, they are fuzzy and iterative, each shaping and influencing the other.

Disclaiming: 'Nothing to do with me'

Disclaiming refers to the discursive strategy of presenting oneself as knowing little or nothing about immigration to Ireland, including the current politically correct or acceptable terminology one should use. Such disclaimers were in contradistinction to the lengthy interviews given by the same individuals; interviews which included references to political commentary and media coverage, offers of introductions to political, social, and media commentators I should interview, and the comment by one interviewee that immigration had had the biggest socio-economic impact on Ireland 'since the famine'. Disclaiming knowledge was also in contradistinction to the complex, constructed hierarchy of social groups, including immigrants, which emerged as the sub-category, hierarchising.

Hierarchising: 'There's a pecking order'

Hierarchising refers to how indigenous as well as foreign-born population groups in Irish society are categorised and hierarchised as more/less socially 'acceptable' based on their perceived respectability, contribution, and (relatedly) level of entitlement. There was a number of references to a 'pecking order' of immigrant groups which demonstrated a complex intersection of racial, ethnic, and class markers or indicators. The interviewees' own social identity, as well as that of some (but not all) other whites, is both implicitly and explicitly accorded a supra-ordinate position, in other words, outside any hierarchy they construct. Briefly, white Western Europeans, white North Americans, and white South Africans are not categorised as immigrants, not least because of the assumption that these are voluntary or lifestyle motivated individuals from the middle and professional social classes 'who chose to come'. In contrast, white Eastern Europeans are the most referenced immigrant group due, at least in part, to the perception that they are economic migrants, are low skilled and from the lower classes and who 'had to come'. They are, however, positioned at or near the top of the 'hierarchy of acceptability' because of their perceived positive work ethic (contribution). Black professionals of any nationality are also positioned relatively high in the hierarchy due to their social class position (respectability) and attendant perceived economic contribution.

People seeking asylum and the Irish lower classes, are regarded as among the least socially acceptable groups in Irish society. Members of the Irish Traveller and Roma ethnic groups vie for the unenviable position as the 'least acceptable'.

Both implicit and explicit in this discourse is the relational construction of the interviewees' own social identity as supra-ordinate because they are white, ethnically Irish, European, and members of the professional class - so normative indeed as to be invisible directors of a cast of social groups who are both raced and classed. In this cast, black African medical or IT professionals are 'whiter' than white Eastern Europeans because of their perceived class position and economic contribution. For similar reasons Irish Travellers are deemed to be among the least 'white' of all the people living in Ireland.

Echoing the concept of 'racism without racists', as discussed in Chapter 3, an important aspect of the Performance of Distance is that it must not be identified as being informed by racial or ethnic difference. That would be to impute that the categorisation and hierarchisation of other groups was informed by racism or ethnicism which would run contra to the performance of the professional social class norms of liberalism, tolerance and acceptance. Classism is, however, socially and culturally acceptable. In Chapter 6, as well as discussing disclaiming in detail, I argue that the strategy of introducing and reproducing negative stereotypes of the Irish lower classes and Irish Travellers is utilised in the Performance of Distance to ensure that the accusation of racism cannot be made since there are Irish social groups (i.e. 'our own leeches') categorised among the least acceptable in Irish society.

Distancing: 'Not in my neighbourhood'

Distancing describes the interviewees' response when asked about their interaction, socially or professionally, with people they categorise as immigrants, for example, work-colleagues or contacts, neighbours, family networks or friends. Here the emphasis appears to be on constructing homogenous raced and classed identities for their neighbourhoods, work environments, and the schools their children attend, to support their performance of disclaiming knowledge of immigration and the lived experiences of immigrants, emphasising that immigration is 'not an issue' for them.

Deflection: 'A problem for the lower classes'

While the professionals I interviewed were clear that immigration is 'not an issue' for their social class, they were equally adamant that it is an issue for members of the lower social classes and that this is related to resource competition, low levels of education, and poor or no socialisation in the norms and values of tolerance and anti-racism. Thus the 'problem' of immigration is deflected on to the lower social classes who are portrayed as ignorant and 'naturally' intolerant of the other. Constructing other social groups, even entire social classes, as intolerant or racist in this way serves as a relational contrast to one's own imputed tolerance and anti-racism.

Rationalising: 'We're a small country'

When interviewees wish to problematise immigration I found they use the rhetoric of rationality, grounded mainly in terms of economic contribution or threat. Large swathes of the data I collected are given over to economic arguments (pro and contra immigration) with a clear shift in the discourse in 2009 toward the contra arguments and the 'cost to the state'. Both before and during the recession, significantly less talk related to perceived contribution or threat to Irish cultural identity. The performance of rationality is more important in these arguments than the accuracy or inaccuracy of any statements, claims, or even statistics used. In these performances of distance immigration is reduced to the economic and immigrants are essentialised as either economic contributors or 'liabilities' rather than individuals who are members of social and family networks. Interviewees are concerned to present as thoughtful, intelligent, and tolerant while speaking rationally about what they regard as an economic issue that needs to be carefully managed - unlike now when Ireland is allegedly 'a soft touch'. Since irrational arguments are associated with the poorly-educated, intolerant, and 'naturally' racist lower classes, the aim of this performance of distance is to employ, and be seen to employ, rational anti-immigration arguments which cannot be deemed intolerant or racist.

Racialising: 'People like us can't say that'

In addition to the discursive performances above, which are deemed suitable for the public domain, my analysis identified another constituent of the process of Performing Distance, one that is restricted to the private domain and to conversations that happen

among trusted peers, friends, and family members. This is captured in the sixth sub-category of Performing Distance: racialising. Racialising refers to discursive performances by the interviewees addressing negative perceptions and beliefs related to certain social groups. The discourse of these performances incorporates urban myths, stereotypes, biological racism, Islamophobia, and racist tropes such as the sexually predatory black man, the terrorist Muslim, the criminal Roma, the violent Traveller, and the neglectful but fecund black mother. In talking like this, the interviewees take for granted my awareness as a peer that there are certain limited situations and contexts where such performances and talk are acceptable and where the participants, i.e. family members, close friends, and trusted peers are not going to 'break the rules' and challenge intolerant or racist remarks or stories. Significantly, the interviewees' explicitly acknowledge the existence of these divergent public (or 'frontstage') and private (or 'backstage') performances. The backstage 'space' accommodates performances of racial distancing and the relational construction of white Irishness in opposition to the black other. Here too is a socially acceptable 'space' for the production and reproduction of biological racism which persists despite academic, media, and political discourse to the orthodoxy that there is no biological basis for race.

Conclusion

My main argument is that the substantive theory of Performing Distance explains the main concern of these white Irish professionals: to protect their privileged status as super-ordinate (i.e. the whiter than white, the invisible norm). This is achieved by employing discursive strategies to distance themselves socially, economically, culturally, geographically, spatially, morally, and racially, from people they categorise as less acceptable members of society including some, but not all, immigrants, while maintaining for public consumption the performance of professional social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism. In the performance of distance then, white Irish professionals re-produce and protect their privileged position in terms of class, race, and ethnicity, while reifying the classed and raced other as more or less acceptable, more or less problematic.

To illustrate further the substantive theory of Performing Distance and demonstrate how it was constructed, each of the sub-categories introduced above will be explored in the following three chapters.

Chapter 6 provides an in-depth examination and exploration of the first two of the six sub-categories conceptualised as disclaiming and hierarchising. Chapter 7 looks at distancing and deflection and Chapter 8 explores rationalising and, going backstage, racialising. As the purpose of grounded theory methods is to transcend the data and develop abstract ideas and concepts, data is used in these findings chapters as illustrative rather than repetitive and exhaustive although a (strong) temptation existed to include more extracts.

Chapter 6: Disclaiming and Hierarchising

'Modern mastery is the power to divide, classify and allocate'

(Bauman, 1991: 15).

Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of two of the six sub-categories constitutive of Performing Distance which, I argue, describes the discursive strategies employed by white Irish professionals when talking about immigrants and immigration. The two strategies described in this chapter, disclaiming and hierarchising, are deemed appropriate for the public domain by Irish professionals. I use the term 'disclaiming' to describe the performance of knowing little or nothing about the topic at hand, including the 'politically correct' terminology. 'Hierarchising' refers to a constructed 'hierarchy of acceptability' which demonstrates a commonly held categorisation of immigrants that is complex, nuanced, and contingent, and challenges the academic or official understanding of who is an immigrant.

The transcript data in this chapter have been selected from 23 interviews (from an available 28) and presents the voices of 18 individuals from an available 20.

Disclaiming: Immigration is 'nothing to do with me'

Any series of research interviews that regularly begin with the interviewee professing not to know anything about the topic under discussion has to give cause for concern especially when the request for their participation clearly stated the purpose of the interview (see Appendix 1). It was certainly disconcerting when I began to notice a significant number of interviewees who commented that they were unsure why I was talking to them because immigration was 'not an issue' or did not 'impinge' on their lives.

Many of these comments implicitly or explicitly ground the professed lack of knowledge in the speaker's social class position as Edward and Gabrielle explain:

> The only way I would have any contact [with immigrants] at work would be the cleaning staff who are in early in the morning and if you're in early you might say hello to them in the kitchen. [ ] So…but that's just the kind of people [I work with] you know, they're all professional service people...they're bankers or lawyers accountants or whatever (Edward '09).

> It's just…I don't…I come from a certain…social class and most everybody I know is over it [immigration], doesn't really see it, if you know what I mean. They don't see…em… [ ] They literally do not see…what's the word I'm looking for? They don't see national identity…I don't see it…I don't see it as a barrier. It's not an issue. It's not an issue (Gabrielle '09).

Rather than diminish my interest, such comments piqued my curiosity: why were well-educated, politically-aware and media-literate professionals making a point of saying how little they knew about the significant demographic changes Ireland had experienced in the previous years? And if this was the case, why tell me when they had already, without demur, agreed by email to be interviewed? GT methodology prompted me to look more closely at what was happening in these instances, especially since the same interviews would continue for an hour or more. Closer analysis revealed a pattern of inserting into the conversation what I came to call 'disclaimers' and encoded using in vivo code terms as: 'nothing to do with me'. These disclaimers were often noticeable in the transcripts as they would frequently be accompanied by hesitations and pauses, self-correction and self-interruption, whispering, and glancing over shoulders to check if we could be over-heard.

I argue that the objective of the discursive strategy of disclaiming is to impress on the listener that these Irish professionals live, work, and socialise in a largely mono-ethnic *habitus* with little or no interaction with people they categorise as immigrants. Therefore, if they are mis-informed or use non-politically correct terminology it is because their lives are lived at a remove or distance from individuals or groups they categorise as immigrants. In the Irish context, this is perhaps not remarkable given that less than a decade ago Feagin and O'Brien posited that most whites in the US live out their lives in

what they termed a 'white bubble.' This 'white bubble' isolates white European Americans from sustained and intensive contacts even with equal status black African Americans (Feagin and O' Brien, 2003: 25). Indeed the bubble metaphor was used by interviewee Liam to explain why he expected he could be of little help to my research. '[A] lot of people' he said, 'live in almost a sort of semi-bubble and…eh…are not as exposed to it as...other people'. It would later become apparent that the 'other people' he was referring to were the Irish lower classes.

In the absence of everyday contacts and interaction with people categorised as immigrants, it was clear that the interviewees garnered most of their information about immigrants and immigration from the media and from their peers. The importance and influence of the media on attitudes towards immigrants is well researched in Ireland and elsewhere (Breen, 2009; Buchanan et al, 2003; Guerin, 2002; Haynes et al, 2009; Lewis, 2005; Moriarty, 2006b; Valentine and Mc Donald, 2004; White, 2002) and is not a focus of this study. My interest in the data coded to 'media and immigrants' was in what I concluded to be another type of disclaimer to the effect that 'we can't rely on the media to inform us objectively' and/or 'the media don't reflect the reality of the situation'. On the one hand, elements of the media (e.g. certain tabloid newspapers and commercial radio stations) are criticised for attending to what is perceived to be the lower class taste for anti-immigration stories. On the other hand, the more 'politically correct' media (e.g. certain broadsheet newspapers and *Raidió Teilifís Éireann*, the public service broadcaster) are criticised for not facilitating a 'proper' or 'national debate' on what are perceived to be important issues pertaining to immigration. The impact on the country economically, but also culturally, is referenced as not having received sufficient or objective coverage by these media organisations. The presumption is that coverage levels and content is both commercially and ideologically influenced and that none reflect satisfactorily the view of these professionals. Here, Keith and Larry allude to a divergence between what is vocalised in public and in private:

> It depends on what media you're talking about. I mean, the tabloids obviously have the view, the more hysterical view that...em...agitates against [immigrants]. The more…particularly *The Mail* and *The Mirror* and papers like that…they do...they get hysterical because they're appealing to their readership. They say 'well this is what these guys want to hear'...em...playing a little bit on their prejudices and reinforcing prejudices that may exist in relation to [immigrants]

> defrauding the social welfare [system] and double jobbing and 'taking our jobs and our women' [gestures inverted commas] and that kind of stuff. The broadsheets are politically correct in the way that they portray it because they can't be seen to be anything else. [ ] I mean *The Irish Times* can't really reflect what they think people might be saying because it doesn't fit in to their...em...overall way of doing things [ ] and their...leanings. [ ] I mean if you want a balanced debate your best bet is probably *The Irish Times* but I suspect that an editorial saying that it's time for the immigrants to go because we can't afford them is not something that's going to happen today or tomorrow. Even though 90 per cent of the people think so (Keith '09).

> I think the media have adopted a very much left-liberal view of immigration...em...and have completely ignored its potential to impact on...eh...culture. Not saying Irish culture is better than anybody's culture, but just it is going to impact on the culture of this society and it is going to change things radically. But that...that discussion never really took place except in a few...one or two columnists...and nor did the media, I think, in fairness, either, discuss openly the impact...the necessary impact of immigration in terms of economic growth. It was just...anybody who tries to raise it at all, whether in terms of it being an essential driver for economic growth, or to even discuss its potential impact...eh...was almost shot down as being racist. This was something that you couldn't discuss (Larry '09).

In addition to journalists, politicians and senior public servants are social class peers of the interviewees, yet the data coded to 'government and immigrants' indicates further disclaiming. This disclaimer could be summarised as: 'we can't rely on the government to inform us about the reality of immigration'. The following are examples of the response to questions relating to their views on the Irish government response to immigration. A majority perceived politicians and public servants to be reluctant, even afraid, to open the 'can of worms' that is immigration. The most common rationale was that there are no electoral gains to be made in being pro-immigration and politicians are silenced by fear of saying or doing something to upset their political constituency - the indigenous majority. In 2009, Keith was concerned that the government might 'do something that appeases the populist notion of the country' implying anti-immigrant measures.

Note that Keith quickly injects the word 'appeals' instead of 'appeases', perhaps because of the association of the latter word with pacifying or placating someone by acceding to their demands:

> [immigration] makes for difficult political decisions and at some point the government are going to have to do something that appeases…that appeals to the populist notion of the country, and immigrants and…eh…issues like that, are a soft target because they don't have a voice (Keith '09).

Nor was this a response that emerged only when the country had entered recession. Here is Emily in 2008:

> And I think that there's a fear [among politicians]: 'We won't raise this because it's *a can of worms and it'll cause ructions* and people will come down on one side or the other and then it can get quite confused and quite scary. [Later] I wonder do the government or the [government] agencies say: 'If we raise this it'll bring all the wrath down on us from those who are queuing in the hospitals and asking why aren't we spending our money on them... rather than providing more services and supports for immigrant families [emphasis added].

This last comment was made at a time when unemployment remained low and before significant cuts to, for example, the health budget. Re-interviewed during the recession, Emily used the term 'hot potato' to describe how Irish politicians regarded the issue of immigration while Florence, a senior public servant, suggested politicians will do only 'what the voters will tolerate'.

> …civil servants shouldn't really be [ignoring immigration/ immigrants] …because they're the ones that should be delivering this stuff without fear or favour. But only I suppose what the politicians will let them do, which is what the voters will tolerate. [ ] Like, for example, we had the situation when we were doing work on diversity and there were mandarins from the Department of [redacted] that weren't a bit happy about us embracing that. [ ] They were not interested. They weren't open to diversity, they had a very traditionalist view, and there's that underpinning a lot (Florence '09).

Gabrielle and Larry (below) are also senior public servants and they, too, suggest that Irish politicians and the Irish public service are not just disinterested in immigration but actively so, because they view it as not just problematic but potentially detrimental to their political and professional careers:

> My sense from the political...the politician's point of view is they don't care. Because politicians only think about who is going to vote for them and I don't think they really have mobilised themselves to think that they might get a vote from 10 per cent of their constituency because most of that 10 per cent probably aren't even registered. And if they aren't registered - they [the politicians] don't care. And I *also think they're reflecting the general thoughts of their...of the population* [emphasis added] (Gabrielle '09).

> No. The Government won't [do anything proactive about immigration]. Government won't...*Governments generally don't look under stones* unless they have to. They have enough on their plate really, and they never look under a rock and speaking as a civil servant, *civil servants won't look under a rock for fear of what they might find, unless the thing starts to crawl out from the rock itself.* That's just the way of human nature. I think it's 'leave well enough alone, leave it alone'. So I think it may well happen that...there may be - as unemployment becomes an issue - and [inaudible] 'they're taking our jobs'... it may well force it out into the open. But it won't happen otherwise. It won't happen otherwise. The Government won't raise it. It's a non-issue at the moment and I think that's even clear, for example, in the way that they don't want the Ombudsman looking at decisions of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal or any of that stuff. They don't want any asylum decisions to be looked at or investigated. They don't want it touched because it's just... it's just too sensitive [emphasis added] (Larry '09).

This data supports Mac Éinri's claim of an Irish state constructing immigration-related policies with 'a less than positive attitude towards difference and a largely mono-cultural tradition' (Mac Éinrí, 2001: 59).

The interviewees' comments are also borne out in the survey of Irish TDs, referred to in Chapter 2, which revealed that over one third felt that speaking out in support of immigrant rights would negatively affect their own electoral support (Integration Centre, 2012).

As data analysis and coding continued, I could see that there was more going on than individuals affecting ignorance of the subject or taking the opportunity to criticise the media and politicians. It recurred so often in the data that I conclude that disclaiming is a discursive strategy employed by interviewees to support a performance to the effect that they know very little about immigration because it is 'not an issue' for them and it does not 'impinge' on their lives. The Feagin and O'Brien study of elite white men in the US also found that most respondents described themselves as 'more or less bystanders' (2003: 235) in the race debate. In the absence of direct experience or interaction with people they categorise as immigrants they claim to get most of their information from the media, politicians and government bodies, yet they also suggest that this discourse does not reflect what 'people really think' about immigration. Feagin and O'Brien (2003) observe that due to the racial segregation in US neighbourhoods and everyday activities, most whites are left with a white-controlled mass media as their main and, they argue, generally inferior, source of information about the lives of African Americans. The concern of these authors is that reliance on biased media presentation can facilitate and support racial stereotyping. 'Lacking much opportunity for repeated close contact with a wide variety of blacks, whites depend heavily on cultural material, especially media images, for cataloguing blacks' (Feagin and O' Brien, 2003: 27).

Further examples of disclaiming are apparent throughout the findings chapters so I move now to a second strategy I found commonly employed, that of hierarchising, and explore what this discursive strategy tells us about the response of Irish professionals to immigrants and immigration.

Hierarchising: 'There's a pecking order'

If it was disconcerting to have interviewees tell me how little they knew about immigration, it was equally so when I began to notice they had a much more complex, nuanced, and contingent understanding of the term 'immigrant' than that of the United Nations, the Irish Central Statistics Office or, indeed, myself as the researcher.

While meta-analyses of the literature by Quinn et al (2008) indicate that, contrary to the UN definition, majority populations in some countries regard the term 'immigrant' as applicable only to non-EU nationals, my findings suggest the term 'immigrant' has an even more limited and contingent application than Quinn et al posit, even among the well-educated, media-literate and politically-aware. Secondly, this conceptualisation of who can be categorised as an immigrant informs the construction of an equally complex and nuanced 'hierarchy of acceptability' or 'pecking order' of immigrants and other social groups. My findings support Balibar's contention that 'immigration' and 'immigrant' are acceptable terms for race and racialised discourse (1991b: 12-13). But that is not all. My findings also support Hartigan Jr. (1999) to the effect that, interwoven with racialised discourse is the discourse of both intra-racial social class divides and inter-racial social class cohesion.

Following GT iterative methods, when I became aware of the ubiquity of the concept of a hierarchy of acceptability or 'pecking order' of immigrants in the data I began to code for it and to raise it proactively in interviews. Its existence was acknowledged without demur. Here are two examples of that acceptance:

> [There] was an overall acceptance of the need for [immigration] but an acceptance of a need for *certain ones*. I think the Polish were welcomed, but I think the Nigerians weren't. So there was a definite…you know… difference between the types of economic migrant - the definite acceptance of the Filipino nurses - but the questioning of the Romany gypsies… [Emphasis in original]
>
> *(I/ver) Do you think there's an order of acceptability?*
>
> Oh, absolutely, absolutely. Top of the list would be the Polish. People just seem to have accepted them, probably because they look like us. That [they are Catholic] helps as well and they're good drinkers as well [laughs] and their culture is similar and there has to be an acceptance of a culture that's similar rather than a culture that's more alien…so obviously Romany gypsies wouldn't be in the same league. Nigerians would be more preferable to Romany gypsies (Michael '09).

> ...what you'll probably get is...you'll get different classes, and this is...there's no logical basis for this, but I think there will be seen as...eh...degrees of acceptability. So the Filipino nurses who have staffed our nursing homes and hospitals for years, while our own people weren't prepared to do that kind of dirty work I think...em...they'll be seen at a higher level than the asylum-seeking type individuals that came from Africa or those type of countries where they were seeking asylum but really seeking sort of welfare or whatever [emphasis added] (Dean '09).

Following terminology used by Bonilla-Silva (2001) in his work on racial stratification, I have chosen to use the terms 'super-ordinate', 'ordinate' and 'sub-ordinate' to describe the emergent hierarchy. I use the term 'super-ordinate' to describe people who are legally defined as immigrants yet are positioned above and outside 'the pecking order'. That is to say, they are positioned alongside the group constructing the hierarchy: white Irish professionals. This category includes white Western Europeans, European Americans, white Australians and New Zealanders, and white South Africans.

In the 'ordinate' categories are the 'ordinary' immigrants such as the Polish and Eastern Europeans along with professional class black Africans, black Americans, Indians, Filipinos and Pakistanis.

The 'sub-ordinate' categories include the 'least acceptable' immigrants: asylum seekers and refugees; the Roma; and all black people other than the black professionals mentioned above. Interestingly the indigenous lower class Irish and Irish Travellers are also positioned in this category and used as a type of 'benchmark' of how unacceptable are some immigrant categories.

White Irish professionals, as the architects or designers of this hierarchy are the 'un-othered' (Mc Intosh, 2001 [1988]) and do not feature except as the 'unmarked category against which difference is constructed' (Andersen, 2003: 26). As the architects of the hierarchy they can and do remove themselves from the hierarchy of social groups so I call them the supra-ordinate. But they are not the only 'unmarked category' to use Andersen's term.

The Super-Ordinate: 'The French and the Europeans...they don't count'.

We saw in Chapter 2 that, in 2009, half of all immigrants in Ireland were of British and EU nationality (Joyce, 2011: 1). However, their absence from the everyday understanding and use of the term 'immigrant' only became apparent when we discussed levels of interaction in the workplace and local community and I noticed interviewees rarely made reference to western Europeans or North Americans. I found I had to use my background knowledge of their companies, organisations, or residential areas, to prompt them to refer to, for example, English, German, North American, and Australian colleagues. While this exclusion was always rectified by the interviewee, usually with self-deprecating humour, the frequency with which it occurred drew my attention to what Alison called 'different attitudes to different nationalities.' She referred to a 'pecking order' of immigrants which did not encompass 'the French and the Europeans...[as] they don't count' or, as Barry put it, 'didn't fit the picture':

> I suppose when I think of immigrants I…I…I think…em…I think a bit more outside Europe...there was a French guy and there was an Austrian girl in [his workplace] and to a certain extent I suppose…you know…initially when you think …you don't think that they fit that picture immediately (Barry '09).

However, not all Europeans are 'equal' as the next extract demonstrates. It also introduces two of a number of commonly used visual or spatial metaphors namely 'further afield' and 'the most visible'. Here, the term 'further afield' appears to denote places, figurative, and metaphorical, outside the familiar and inclusive-sounding 'existing European community' between which people have always been moving. This 'existing' community (with its intimations of the natural, even primordial) notably does not include the EU 10 (accession states of 2004) whose people, the speaker suggests, were considered solely in terms of the needs of the labour market. No qualification is given as to which geographical or political regions comprise 'further afield' but this is implicit when the interviewee mentions 'the most visible' of these being from Africa. It may not be significant, but the word 'farther' is generally used for physical distance and 'further' for metaphorical, or figurative, distance. New Zealand then, may be 'farther' away than Africa, but it is not 'further' away.

Here is an example from interviewee Frank:

> There's people who have been coming in on an ongoing basis, and going out, just from the existing European community. There's people then who'd be coming in from the Accession States and, obviously, we were one of the first countries to open up completely to…to those. That was looked on very much, I suppose, from a labour market perspective. And then you've people coming in from further afield. I suppose the most visible of those would be the people coming from Africa and most of those, I suppose, you know, or a lot of them would have refugee status…em…so I think there's sort of three distinct groups. [Later] I look at our own workplace…em…there has actually been a couple of Polish secretaries in over the last good few years but most of the other people who are coming in are either English or American or Australian …
>
> *(I/ver) Do we think of them as immigrants?*
>
> No, we don't. This is what I'm saying, in terms of the first wave of people that…okay…I was thinking more maybe of Western Europe, but particularly about other English speaking nations like the [United] States and so on…(Frank '09)

The immigration to Ireland of Western (Old) Europeans, the English, North/European Americans and white (i.e. not indigenous) Australians and white (i.e. not indigenous) New Zealanders is regarded as (literally) unremarkable and, significantly, no mention is made of the purpose of their travels, duration of stay, or of their labour or skills being required.

In contrast, the requirement of the labour market is consistently linked to the immigration of Eastern (New) Europeans and the Accession states are always clearly differentiated from the 'existing European community'. This part of Europe is regarded as being so different that it is noteworthy that Ireland was one of the first to 'open up' its borders to immigrants from there. It would appear 'Old'/Western Europeans need no invitation and can, as might a friend of the family, come and go as they please. 'New'/Eastern Europeans however are essentialised as workers, specifically guest-workers, and as such are expected to be in Ireland only for as long as the labour market requires them.

> If you think of the bunch of Polish lads [ ] who come over, it's almost like you're into the sort of guest worker concept…get them over, do the job, and then they go back to where they came from (Edward '09).

Then there are 'the people coming from Africa' who are distinguishable in that they are 'the most visible' and are in Ireland, it is assumed, as refugees or asylum seekers. The key differentiation appears to be that these people are not among those who come and go freely and without remark, nor were they invited into the country to work, which would imply contribution on their part.

The next extract illustrates how Australia and North America are clearly differentiated from the 'further afield' mentioned by Edward. People from the geographically distant (far away) Australia and America ('though non-EEA) are not categorised as immigrants in contrast to those from the geographically near Eastern Europe (EEA and EU member countries). This differentiation of Eastern and Central Europeans is explored in more detail in this chapter.

> I work with an Australian but I never see her as an immigrant…I see her as a young Australian travelling…but equally if an English person was here, or an American, I don't really see them as an immigrant - even if they were here to stay…
>
> *(I/ver) So who are the immigrants then?*
>
> You're talking about African people, Eastern European people...Eastern and Central European people…I don't know why white Central or Eastern Europeans would be different, but I would see them as immigrants (Gabrielle '09).

Gabrielle brackets Africans and Central/Eastern Europeans together as immigrants, and Australians and Americans as non-immigrants, contradicting Quinn et al (2008) that categorisation as an immigrant is based on, or limited to, an EEA/non-EEA division. All the interviewees spontaneously categorised the Polish and other Eastern Europeans as immigrants. Indeed Polish and Eastern European were the most frequently coded nationalities followed by African/Nigerian. As we see below, most who did so did not notice they categorised Eastern and Western Europeans differently until it became apparent during interviews.

I argue this is related to the intersection of social class status with race and ethnicity in categorisation decisions as the Polish and Eastern Europeans were commonly perceived to work in low income/low skilled jobs in the construction and hospitality sectors. I found that categorisation in the lower social class/es influences one's position on the immigration hierarchy. This category is consistently, and accurately, according to Mühlau (2012), identified with semi-skilled and unskilled employment such as in the construction and hospitality sectors.

For some interviewees, individuals who were deemed less 'alien' (i.e. racialised as white), made lifestyle choices to travel (i.e. classed as middle/professional class), or had Irish diasporic connections (i.e. inherited blood quantum entitling them to Irish citizenship), were positioned outside the immigration hierarchy. The emphasis on the individualistic nature of these travellers is noticeable. They are referred to in the singular as 'the American' or 'an Australian girl'. This is not the case however for people regarded as economic immigrants. These are referred to by collective terms such as 'the Polish' and 'the Eastern Europeans'. People from 'further afield' (usually, but not always, meaning non-white) are rarely referred to as coming to Ireland for employment and most frequently categorised as belonging to an even bigger collective term - asylum seekers or refugees - without reference to any national identity.

In the following extract another common optical reference is made which I came to understand as 'code' for racial difference. 'Further afield' is also used by this interviewee to emphasise that the 'newer Accession States and the newer immigrant populations coming from further afield are more alien to us'.

> I suppose we've always been…we've grown up with those countries [referring to France, Spain, and America]. The newer Accession states and the newer *immigrant populations coming from further afield are more alien* to us. But we never had them in the numbers. [ ] *You don't see that many French people* around - even though my neighbour is [French]. [Smiles as he notices he had forgotten that fact.] So *I can certainly see that there's other nationalities around* but yet...Yes, I don't class them [French, Spanish, Americans] as economic migrants [ ]…*They chose to live here not because they couldn't find work in their own country.* They chose to live here because they wanted to live here, because they may have married an Irish guy on holiday or whatever. And maybe the Americans decide they want to find their

> family home and decide to stay but they are not here because…The world knew…and we advertised 'we're open for business, guys come and join us and stay'. *And we took everyone from the highest to the lowest to try and fill the growth that we had*, so you know…that's how I categorise two differences [emphasis added] (Michael '09).

The French family living next door were not, to Michael's mind, relevant to a conversation on immigration to Ireland because he did not categorise them as immigrants not least because we 'don't see' many French people. There is a juxtaposition of two important categorisation factors here: visible difference (race) and numbers (impact on resources). Critically these Western or 'old' Europeans come to Ireland by choice, in contradistinction to people who have no choice and travel for economic reasons. Interestingly, in her studies on Greek attitudes to immigrants, Xenitidou found that immigration from France, Germany, and America was constructed by Greeks as being a matter of personal choice and love for Greece. Xenitidou found these groups were positioned as comparatively richer than Greeks, including in terms of cultural capital, and as having something to contribute to Greece whilst immigrants from the Balkans wanted only to 'take' (Xenitidou, 2008). The data point to an absence of surveillance of certain white immigrants evidencing what McIntosh refers to as the list of privileges which whites carry with them like a weightless 'knapsack' including moving unnoticed, being 'un-othered,' and being treated as an individual rather than a representative of a group (2001 [1988]: 1).

Immigrants who belong to the lower classes, including the unemployed and the destitute (e.g. asylum seekers) are unlikely to have made 'lifestyle' choices in their transnational moves. Their migration is perceived to be dictated by more vital needs. The question of the authenticity of some immigrants' needs and motives is implied in the abrupt, self-censored, ending to the comment 'they are not here because…' in the extract above. Having read the entire transcript I would speculate that the unspoken comment would have been to the effect that North Americans, for example, do not come to Ireland because it is 'a soft touch' for welfare supports.

Yet another layer of complexity became apparent when references to 'contribution' began to be coded frequently in binary opposition to welfare state 'spongers' as in this extract:

> When you say 'immigrants' we automatically say kind of...em…Nigerians, Romanians [ ] I suppose the common perception

> of what an immigrant is…to us an immigrant is someone who is here not necessarily to go and take a job and contribute to society...em...*but someone who's travelling here in order to be able to sponge off the state*, for want of a better word [emphasis added] (Keith '09).

I return to the theme of 'contribution' again, but the point I make here is that, in relation to the 'hierarchy of acceptability', people in the super-ordinate position are, in fact, outside it altogether and positioned alongside the Irish professional class. We know from Mc Ginnity et al (2013) that western European immigrants in Ireland are both highly educated and paid, so this may be a factor in their positioning. This 'peer-like position', and the unquestioned assumption that they are contributing to the host state, is also held by white North Americans, and white Australians and New Zealanders. These immigrants are, it would appear, also constituent of the 'unexamined norm' (Andersen, 2003) and the Irish professional is 'happy' to have them in the country:

> I think we're happy when it's white Europeans or white Americans. Our attitude is a bit different when it's ...when there's a bit of colour attached (Arthur '08).

Not being categorised as an immigrant has many socio-economic advantages in contemporary Ireland. Firstly, it implies one is accepted as being 'white and lovely just like [us]' as Josephine put it. Secondly, it removes one from the categories that are under 'surveillance'. Myers (2003) suggests that, when one is categorised by whites, every subsequent move is interrogated in order to collect anecdotal data to support hypotheses that they (the whites) are being 'taken over'. Thirdly, it suggests one is 'not a problem' or part of 'the problem of immigration' and is contributing, economically and/or culturally, to the host country. Fourthly, whiteness literature highlights that white people are positioned as individuals while non–whites are undifferentiated. My findings on Western European immigrants support the findings of Mc Ginnity et al (2009) on recruitment in the Irish workplace which found those with 'German sounding' names were the migrants least likely to experience discrimination in the selection process.

Interviewees, both implicitly and explicitly, positioned themselves above and outside any hierarchy or 'pecking order'. I argue this is indicative of self-ascription as pre-eminence, in race, ethnicity, and class terms i.e. 'whiter than white'. In other words, no one 'others' this social group because they are 'normal and 'unmarked' (Hartigan Jr., 2005: 1) and

stand 'for all that is presumed to be right and normal. Whiteness is the location from which others are defined and judged since it is white people who hold the power to do so (Andersen, 2003: 24).

This is not to suggest that interviewees' whiteness as a racialised identity is ever explicitly acknowledged. Similar to white mothers in London interviewed by Byrne (1997), the word 'white' was rarely mentioned in my data, although whiteness was defined implicitly through cultural or class difference, not least when talking about the Europeans who are consistently categorised as immigrants, although at the 'top' of the 'pecking order', which I discuss next.

Ordinate Position (i): 'You can't pick out a Polish person'.

As discussed in Chapter 3, white racial identity is also stratified and terms of racial belonging and difference are inflected by class markings (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, 2003; Garner, 2007b; Hartigan Jr., 1999, 2003). In other words, who is deemed 'white' and what 'shade of white' they are deemed to be is informed by social class identities inscribed on the body in, for example, talk and dress. Barrett and Roediger (1997), writing on the history of immigration in the United States maintain that, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, immigrants from Poland and Eastern and Central Europe were among the immigrants not accepted socially and culturally as 'white'. They found that the native-born and older immigrants placed them above African- and Asian-Americans but also below other 'white' people. These were the 'in-between people' of the US racial hierarchy. 'Inbetween people,' Roediger suggests, 'expresses a positionality somewhere between racism and inclusion, neither securely white nor non-white and carrying an expectation of possible change over time' (2005: 12-13). I argue that, in the contingent hierarchy of immigrants I have found, the Polish and migrants from Eastern and Central Europe occupy a similar 'in-between' position, separating the 'really' white from the 'non-white'. Although they are white EU/EEA nationals, and despite the fact that 'you can't pick out a Polish person' as one interviewee put it, they have not managed to escape the surveillance of Irish professionals in the same way as their Western European counterparts and they are, without doubt, the most frequently coded immigrant population in my data. Without exception, the Polish and other Eastern Europeans and individuals from outside the 'original' or pre-enlargement member states (i.e. 'Old' or Western Europe), but inside the EEA, are categorised as immigrants and perceived to be working in low skilled positions. Overall, these national groups appear to hold a

relatively 'positive' position in the 'hierarchy of acceptable immigrants'. This appears to be informed by their similarity in racial markers (whiteness) and in cultural markers (e.g. perceived to be predominantly Catholic) but also their reputation for working hard 'like the Irish who went to America' as a number of interviewees remarked. The positive regard in which the Polish and Eastern Europeans are held was very apparent before the recession (i.e. in 2008):

> …The Poles have been well assimilated in from the point of view that they're Irish - not that they're Irish - but that they're Catholic and hard-working (Dean '08).

That Irish economic growth needed immigrants to meet the labour market needs was often mentioned. In addition, that Irish professionals could avail of immigrant labour and skills at lower rates of remuneration than Irish workers might accept also made people feel positively disposed towards them. Comments such as the following were commonplace in the data from 2008:

> …you [would] be talking about getting some work done in the house: 'oh, we'll get a bunch of Polish guys in to do that, sure we know they're great value. [ ] You know, a bit of cheap labour - 'yellow packs' [62] - or whatever (Josephine '09).

> Apart from bringing more people into the workforce when there was the requirement, they've also pushed the skill level up. Because most of them have come in [to Ireland] trained, whether they've come from normal…em....correct European countries like Poland or countries hoping to get into the EU, like Moldova …they're all really well trained [emphasis added] (Edward '08).

These examples show the high regard in which the Polish and Eastern Europeans were held. However, these immigrants were also subject to popular surveillance and increased negative comment as the severity of the recession became apparent in 2009. The most common references related to whether or not they were 'going home' now there was a recession (an expectation that was not likely ever to be met as we saw in Chapter 2 (see Gilmartin and White, 2008; Krings et al, 2009)).

[62] Colloquial derogatory term for low skilled and low-paid employees. The term first came into use in the early 1990s when the Tesco supermarket chain used yellow packaging for their own-brand foodstuffs which were popularly regarded as lower quality and less expensive.

If they were staying, many interviewees speculated, it was because they were being favoured for jobs to which the (lower class) Irish were 'more entitled' but would not have accepted in the past, or because, as EU citizens, they could receive relatively generous social welfare payments. There were also stories told of Ryanair flights being taken once a week so people who had returned to their Eastern European country of origin could return to (fraudulently) collect social welfare payments. In the 2009 data there are also comments to the effect that these 'hard workers' have sent all their earnings and savings to their home country and, as such, have not contributed to the host country as much as they could or should have. This is despite the fact that remittances from Irish emigrants of previous generations are one of the tropes used by some interviewees to illustrate what 'good immigrants' the Irish were.

Although their position as the 'most acceptable' or favoured immigrant may be in decline in recessionary times, Polish and Eastern European immigrants remain top of the 'pecking order'. However they are not without competition. This comes in the form of people categorised as racially and ethnically different but similar in social class status to the interviewees.

Ordinate Position (ii): 'We don't consider them immigrants because they're professionals'

While phenotypically different people are always categorised as immigrants, those who are also members of the professional social class are regarded by their Irish class peers as 'unproblematic' immigrants. Noticeably, throughout the data coded to 'immigrant professionals' there are numerous references to the medical profession and 'the black doctors' because, as one interviewee put it: 'we've always had foreign doctors'. What quickly becomes apparent is that the acceptability of professional class immigrants is grounded in notions of contribution and the performance (or expectation of the performance) of other professional social class norms and values.

> ...if your children are in [name of private school] then your local Indian or Pakistani doctor will have...or serious banker or investor or something like that...or surgeon...will have their daughter in [private school] as well and they drive around in a Merc.[63] But they're okay.

[63] Abbreviation for Mercedes: a brand of car regarded as a significant status symbol.

> *We don't consider them to be immigrants because they're professionals. They're not real immigrants really because they are real members of society*. I think we have in our head this idea that an immigrant is somehow a lower person in society because they don't make as valuable a contribution from our scale of judgement to what these guys have to offer [Emphasis in original] (Keith '09).

For groups who are not phenotypically white, professional class status can determine success in, for example, renting or buying a home in Dublin. In the extract that follows, Barry tells how he had been advised by his neighbours not to rent his house to Nigerians, which he understood (correctly) to mean any black person:

> [O]n the other side [of interviewee's house] was a Pakistani doctor from [name of hospital]. Probably earning a very nice salary, doing very well, you know.
>
> *(I/ver) And is it okay if they [new tenants] are doctors?*
>
> Is it more acceptable if the neighbours are doctors? [Smiling]
>
> *(I/ver) Yes, I'm just wondering if that's part of it...it's just difficult to imagine complaining about your neighbour - the doctor.*
>
> We both start to laugh and, over his laughter, Barry says, in a mock outraged tone of voice:
>
> Oh, they're trouble for the neighbourhood, those doctors! Oh, whatever you do, don't rent to a doctor! [We both laugh] (Barry '09)

I suggest our laughter signals that we both knew implicitly that if the prospective tenant was a black professional that 'would not be a problem' for his neighbours, indeed the idea that a black professional would be rejected as a tenant was what triggered our laughter. However, we also both knew that Barry would not have been popular with his neighbours had he rented the house to, for example, a black hospital cleaner and, below, we see that neither would Barry have been popular if he had rented the house to a white Irish hospital cleaner. The following extract helps explain the thought process which informs this intersection of race and class and it is grounded, I argue, in the idea of 'like-minded people' who share values of contribution and respectability or, to use Tyler's (2003) terms, quietude and decorum.

> I'm not sure...I don't know where the Indians and the Pakistanis sit in the pecking order. You see when they come…a lot of them…here...I don't know...but I would imagine a lot of them...they would be better qualified. My brother works in [multinational hi-tech company] and they have an extraordinary range of nationalities there but they're all doing much the same job so there's no question of anybody...you know...[being a problem] (Alison '09).

In the following extracts we see that the social marker of a high level of education and therefore access, or potential access, to professional positions (and the attendant cultural and social capital) can be sufficient to ameliorate potential negativity towards the racially or ethnically different.

> …when announcements are being made [by Google] and they're saying 'we're setting up our European Headquarters in Dublin and we're going to be employing 300 people and 200 of those people are people who are going to be native speakers of x, y and z and they're going to be well-educated' [ ] then people say 'oh, they'll be well-educated, oh, that's okay.' I think that's the thing…I think when people see people coming from other countries 'off the boat' with no education and straight in to social welfare I think a lot of middle class people say 'ah, for crying out loud, how are we going to cope with this?' (Jerry '09)

> I worked in a university, so everyone was an immigrant, if you know what I mean…every other person was foreign. That's a different…and in the university sector that's so common that I don't even think you see them as immigrants, which is a different kind of an attitude as well. You almost assume that everyone…that every second or third or fourth person is…will be from anywhere from India to…and especially in science, so that's not an issue (Gabrielle '09).

One explanation for the exception made for the professional class from 'further afield' is given by Ivan during a discussion on the hypothetical reaction of his neighbours to having a black professional as a neighbour.

> That's okay. Absolutely. Well, the Irish are terrible snobs. You have to remember that, right? We have…we have a huge...we attach a huge amount - and did traditionally - to status…a huge amount of deference. [ ] Professionals, lawyers, solicitors, doctors, priests and so on have always been held in very high esteem.[ ] And the reason for that [ ] historically…the professions are an example of educational success and education is a big thing in Ireland - it's what you did [to improve a family's social status] (Ivan '09).

His comment on snobbery and class mobility taps into notions around Irish middle and professional class norms and values of 'contribution' and 'respectability'.

The distinction of this category by virtue of their social class position is not unique to Ireland. In the United States, Wellman (1993) found that whites did not object to blacks 'like themselves' living next door while Johnson and Shapiro (2003) found middle class American families might not necessarily complain about African-American families moving in but about what was euphemistically termed 'people with different values' as opposed to 'like-minded' people. Garner (2007b: 78) writes that people who are not white can be absorbed into 'honorary whiteness' in particular circumstances or under certain conditions.

Indeed I found comparatively high levels of acceptance for professional class immigrants who are phenotypically different to the white Irish. They are regarded as making a valuable contribution to Ireland and unproblematic. However, interaction levels with these 'honorary whites' both within and outside the work place remains low as discussed in Chapter 7. My data indicates that high levels of acceptance for professional class immigrants is related to perceived contribution and adherence to professional class norms and values rather than social or cultural acceptance. The consistently [64] high position afforded to black professionals by their Irish social class peers supports that.

[64] There was no discernible difference during the recession in contradistinction to the response to Polish and Eastern and Central European immigrants.

Sub-Ordinates (i): 'There's as many Irish leeches…'

Although my research interest was explicitly identified as relating to immigration and immigrants, without exception, interviewees made unprompted, negative references to the Irish lower classes including Irish social welfare recipients. Specifically, the comments include a range of dysphemistic terms such as 'scumbags' [65] and 'leeches'. [66] Others include 'knacker,' a derogatory term for someone who is lower class, roughly equivalent to the British 'chav,' but specifically in the Irish context referring to an Irish Traveller. More generally, the discourse constructs classed stereotypes of a population group that does not contribute to society, not because it cannot, but because it will not. The vehemence of the language used to characterise the lower class and unemployed Irish is exemplified in the following extract. Talking about media references to immigrants defrauding the social welfare system Edward remarked:

> …there's as many Irish leeches as there are [immigrants who abuse the system] and the reason why unemployment doesn't go to zero is because loads of people just don't want to work… [ ] I think it was all nice and rosy while economic conditions were good but if there was a more serious downturn than there is currently I could certainly see much more revolt from, probably, the lower income classes. [ ] And you hear stories of that now, of the ones who are the lazy leeches, I'd call them, of Irish society. The men and women of Ireland who never wanted to work and were happy to make excuses to not get a job and be on the dole or whatever they wanted to do, who are resentful now of the non-nationals, whether they be African, Asian, or Eastern European, going: '[W]ell, the fucker stole my job.' [ ] 'Cos it's…you know…it's an obvious [thing] with the knacker [element of] society [drops voice and twists mouth to speak out of the side]. It's an obvious thing to say: '[W]ell, I would have had that fucking job driving that truck or whatever it was…if that bollocks [67]... he's happy to get paid

[65] A dysphemism or crude term of abuse for a man, associated also with a used condom.
[66] According to Pinker, (2011: 465) the human mind has evolved a defence against contamination by biological agents: the emotion of disgust. Disgust is easily moralised, he suggest, one pole is identified with spirituality, purity, chastity, and cleansing and the other with animality, defilement, carnality, disease and contamination. Humans see disgusting agents as not just physically repellent but also morally contemptible. Many metaphors for a treacherous person use a disease vector as their vehicle—a rat, a louse, a worm, a cockroach.
[67] A dysphemism or crude term of abuse for a man, referring to male genitalia.

four euro an hour because, you know, 'they eat their children' [68] - type crap [emphasis added] (Edward '09).

But why mention this Irish population cohort in an interview on immigration? I argue that describing the Irish lower classes (and Irish Travellers, as we see below) in negative terms is still regarded as socially acceptable and, as 'our own' are phenotypically white, ostensibly there can be no inference of racism. While awareness of professional social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism may somewhat curb the terminology used in relation to certain categories of immigrant such as asylum seekers (and interviewees admitted as much), no such norms of tolerance appear to exist when the subject is Irish people deemed not to be contributing, or contributing insufficiently, to Irish society in general, and the economy in particular. At the time as I was in the field, *The Guardian* journalist, Deborah Orr, writing on the depiction of the British white working class in popular culture (a popular culture Ireland has full access too) suggests that, within the strictures of political correctness, the only group that can still be 'publicly and loudly despised is the white working class' (Orr, 2009).

In the previous section, on Ordinate Position (ii), I presented data to support the argument that racial difference (in that case being black) can be mediated by social class. In this section we see that whiteness can also be mediated by social class position and social class values and norms. Themes of contribution and respectability are central in the literature on so-called 'white trash' in the US (Barrett and Roediger, 1997) and 'chavs' in the United Kingdom (Tyler, 2008) as we saw in Chapter 3. My analysis of this data is informed, in particular, by the work of Hartigan, Jr. (2003) who makes the case that examining intra-racial contests over difference can inform analyses of inter-racial contests. In a study on the racialisation of white American population cohorts such as 'rednecks', 'hillbillies', and 'white trash', Hartigan Jr. noted that while white middle class liberals learn as children not to use epithets with racial connotation in public, they receive different messages from their parents concerning labels for poor whites. He found class divisions were marked by being regarded as either 'respectable' or 'disreputable' and

[68] This phrase is not commonly used though I have heard it used to describe places or communities considered to be 'rough' or 'uncivilised'. The mother of the author, Brendan Behan, is said to have used it to describe the Kimmage area of Dublin when Dublin City Council proposed moving the family there from tenements in inner city Dublin. It was also used in Jonathan Swift's (1729) satirical essay entitled: 'A Modest Proposal For Preventing The Children of Poor People in Ireland From Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and For Making Them Beneficial to The Public' (i.e. they should be eaten as food). Here it is used to suggest the outlandish notions the speaker suspects the lower class to harbour about foreigners.

writes that white anti-racist critiques have targeted discourse that makes assertions of social superiority while the many ways these discourses operate in relation to class identities is largely unacknowledged in the public sphere (Hartigan Jr., 2003).

> By defining extremely racist people as working class or rednecks some whites, especially those in the middle class, try to distance themselves from such people and may thereby hope to excuse their own racist commentaries as 'not racist' (Houts Picca and Feagin, 2007: 107).

I argue that the white Irish professional class racialise and categorise their white co-ethnics, the Irish lower social classes, as disreputable, just as Balibar (1991b) and Crompton (2008) theorise, contributing less to the state than some categories of immigrants and therefore being 'less acceptable' than immigrants perceived to be racially and ethnically different.

However, despite the negative discourse that surrounds this local population group it is not positioned on the lowest rung of the 'pecking order' and it is to the two categories of people living in Ireland who 'vie' for that position that I turn next.

Sub-Ordinates (ii): 'What do you call them, do you call them 'black'?'

I found the terms asylum seeker, refugee, African, Nigerian, and black, used interchangeably by interviewees for people categorised as 'less acceptable' immigrants. Regardless of the terms used, the predominant belief among the interviewees was that the majority making asylum claims are not genuine and use the asylum process as an illegitimate way into Ireland in order to benefit economically either through (illegal) employment or receipt of social welfare. A minority of interviewees referred to fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group, as reasons for involuntary immigration or seeking asylum in Ireland. Extreme poverty was most frequently mentioned as the motivation for seeking asylum although some of the older interviewees, like Gabrielle, made an association between political contexts and the arrival of programme refugees such as the Vietnamese 'Boat People', Chileans and Bosnians.

> ...my impression would have been that they [asylum seekers] come from much more extreme poverty than anyone in Eastern Europe and they probably don't want to go back, you know, if they went to all the effort, and God knows what it took to come, even if they're here completely illegally. I don't know where they've come from...not that everybody in Africa lives in poverty...but if they left they probably were (Gabrielle '09).

Even the few who demonstrate an awareness of the difference in legal status between asylum seekers and refugees also refer to doubts around the legitimacy of asylum seekers. In some cases they voice their own opinions, but more commonly media and political discourse is re-produced. Asylum seekers and refugees were both racialised and stereotyped as deceptive at best and fraudulent at worst, subject to popular scrutiny and positioned 'at the very bottom of the ladder' as Josephine said:

> ...and then there are the asylum seekers who are coming, we'll say, from Africa or China or Asia, places like that, who are actually seeking asylum [ ] you would seem to feel that they are at the *very bottom of the ladder* and are treated...I suppose...less...lenient probably isn't the word...but *there's a lot more scrutiny into their whole reason for being here, how they got here, where they come from*, all that sort of thing. And I suppose there are solid reasons for that, but there definitely seems to be two tiers about how we treat migrants between the economic and the asylum seeker, for sure [emphasis added] (Josephine '09).

However, the frequent use of terms such as asylum seeker/refugee was greatly superseded by the terms 'Nigerian' and 'African' that comprise the second most referenced (and coded) population groups (after the Polish/Eastern Europeans). Analysis revealed an implicit understanding among my peer group that the term 'African', and most specifically 'Nigerian', is code for people who are black, regardless of country or continent of origin negating, for example, the notion of black Irish identity. It was clear from the transcripts that interviewees avoided using the term 'black' and are more comfortable using nationality. Garner's research in the UK also found evidence of people using nationality rather than race and of their linking nationality to colour for example, using 'English' to mean 'white' (2007b: 44).

The following extracts from my data suggest that at least some of the terminological confusion captured is not confusion *per se* but socially acceptable code informed by social class norms of political correctness.

> *(I/ver) If you're having a conversation [at work] would you use the word 'black'?*
>
> Well, we'd nearly…nearly always refer to them [immigrants] by their nationalities, rather than by their colour, race, or creed. You wouldn't, you know. We'd say they were Nigerians or Romanians or the Polish. We wouldn't say 'the gypsies', you know? So we'd always call them by their nationality and, yes, it is…it is a catch-all phrase and, yes, it is unfair because there are so many other… [voice fades]
>
> *(I/ver) I was just wondering because I think some people can't say or won't say the word 'black'...*
>
> Well, yeah, there's a: 'Well, what do you call them?' [Theatrical whisper] That's the thing everybody used to say: 'What do you call them, do you call them 'black'? Would they be offended?' So, yeah, it's a tough one because when we were talking about it back in 2004, 2005, when the queues [at immigration offices] were at their height, I think it was very much anti-Nigerians but not a lot against anyone else. Now maybe their circumstances were different and they were political refugees, but they were earning the right to come in here and getting the benefits of the economic policies as well so there was a kind of double whammy there. They were…obviously they were getting political emancipation and the economic benefits. And obviously the question there was what stopped them from going to Poland or any other EU country at that stage? They were choosing Ireland because we were a softer touch [Later]
>
> *(I/ver) So is Nigerian a euphemism for black?*
>
> Absolutely. Yes. Yeah. Well…because it's just again through anecdotal…and from everyone I've met… most of them are…nearly all of them are from...having said that I do know some Ugandans as well (Michael '09).

Once I began to ask interviewees if Nigerian was some kind of code for black person, everyone I asked agreed that this was the case – without hesitation. Keith even conjectured a connection between 'Nigerian', 'black' and 'Nigger' when I asked if Irish professionals, like himself, would use the word 'Nigerian' instead of black:

> Yeah. Yeah. Nigerian. Yeah. I don't… is it the Nigger - Nigerian connotation? So in our head, the whole kind of black…kind of Nigeria thing…is…eh…we don't get to meet anybody else. I mean...we think…South Africans – they're all white, anyway. They might be bandits or something, but they're all white, but nobody else…I mean we never get to meet Ethiopians, Liberians, or Kenyans or Zimbabweans… (Keith '09).

Interestingly, Arthur, one of the most positively disposed towards immigrants, contrasted the public response towards government-led Programme Refugees and asylum seekers. Here he illustrates a connection in the public perception between abuse of the asylum process ('milking the system'), Africans in general, and Nigerians in particular.

> We had the Hungarians in '56 and the Vietnamese at one stage and…em [ ] Yeah, they were Programme Refugees [ ] I think Programme Refugees like that…em...soften or change peoples' attitudes towards people coming in…em…and I think...I mean there was no 'kick-up' [69] about the Vietnamese when they came in...no reaction to those...but a strong reaction to asylum seekers based on...you know, the fact they were here *milking the system*...and that kind of…is particularly directed…which I find interesting...at Nigerians. And other Africans, mainly West Africans, and *that's purely a colour issue and a culture issue*, I suppose, 'cos the African culture is so pronouncedly different to European cultures. So when the immigrants were coming from Moldova and The Ukraine and, you know, European places like that…we were happy…but the Africans were very different and culturally very different and on a colour basis very different…so you...there's a sense where people do distinguish between Africans and the rest. [ ] So our attitude is...is…it's very hard...*I think we're happy when it's white Europeans, or white Americans, our attitude is...a bit different when its...when there's a bit of colour attached* [emphasis added] (Arthur '08).

[69] Meaning no objection was raised, as in 'no one kicked up about this or that situation'.

In just a few moments Arthur has moved from highlighting the acceptance of programme refugees (legal rationale) to saying asylum seekers are associated with being a drain on state resources (economic rationale) yet quickly going on to explain that this reaction is negative because 'there's a bit of colour attached' (racial rationale).

In Chapter 2, I argue that by including returning Irish emigrants, under-representing intra-EU immigrants, and not differentiating between asylum seekers, refugees, and non-EEA economic immigrants, the cumulative immigration statistics in the public domain are open to interpretation as predominantly consisting of non-EU/EEA immigrants, a large proportion of whom were assumed to be 'not genuine' asylum seekers or 'welfare tourists' i.e. an economic liability on the Irish state rather than making any contribution. My argument is corroborated by the finding that perception of the numbers involved is important as are notions around 'control'. Edward drew a distinction between small numbers of 'genuine' refugees entering the country in a 'structured' manner with oversight from official bodies and the perception of the 'large scale' and 'unstructured operation' that is the asylum process:

> ...in terms of the refugees, you know, sort of...going through the administration process, you know, are they genuine refugees or...or are they not? And if they are, settle them here. [Later] So after Allende was...was...was...eh...in the take-over there [Chile]... assassinated and so on, there was a small cohort of Chilean refugees came to Ireland and settled down in Shannon. To my mind now, at least just sort of chatting to them at school and all the rest of it, they seemed to be fully integrated but once again *you are dealing with sort of very, very small numbers* and I suppose the same has happened in a number of occasions. I know some of the Vietnamese boat people who came over whenever that was - in the '80s? In recent years you probably had people coming from parts of Yugoslavia and...yes, the Bosnian refugees. *Those groups are programme refugees so their arrival is all agreed in advance.* And there's probably...the UN or whoever probably have various criteria that have to be followed and so on. *There's a big difference between that and sort of what you might call the...eh...large scale and sort of unstructured operation that has happened here now* [emphasis added] (Edward '09).

The following, necessarily lengthy, extract also illustrates the significance to the perception of numbers and how this 'unstructured operation' appeared a 'frightening prospect' to one of the younger male interviewees, Michael:

> Well, we worked close to the immigration office [70] on Mount Street so we were well aware of it because at certain times we'd actually see queues of people down Mount Street. And that was a frightening prospect...eh...for me anyway - and for a lot of people. We were saying: 'Jesus, this is getting ridiculous, the amount of people [71] coming in'. So that was an issue, and we did talk about that, and *we all agreed it was probably a bad thing that there were so many*. How were we going to handle this? We just couldn't cope. I remember they were talking about bringing in people from other [public service] offices [ ] to cater for the amount of applicants they were getting. And at that stage I do remember the media were talking about the numbers of applicants per week and I do remember at that point - that rings a bell - they were saying it is getting a bit out of hand. And so yeah, we all said... we all said it was getting a bit out of hand but at the same time we weren't saying 'this is ridiculous'. We were saying: 'this is ridiculous but I'm sure they'll sort it out'. And we faced the commercial reality we needed them but - and this is a big but - if ... I would say if that queue hadn't have been made up mostly of Nigerians and was made up of Polish, we might have had a different agenda. We may have said something different. *But the queue was Nigerians, nearly always Nigerians, and there was a massive amount for them. It just seemed like Mount Street, was, you know...I don't know...the middle of Johannesburg. Loads of them everywhere. And...eh....it certainly made it more obvious and possibly we wouldn't have said it because visually we wouldn't have noticed it.* But...eh...but also I suppose we were probably aware that European citizens had a different agenda to...eh...Nigerians coming here [emphasis added] (Michael '09).

Not that officially sanctioned programme refugees from outside the EEA necessarily receive a *céad míle fáilte* or 'hundred thousand welcomes either' either, as Keith, a

[70] Location of the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner.
[71] The phrase 'the amount of' is used in everyday conversation in Ireland to indicate 'enormous', 'massive', or 'spectacular' numbers.

government official, told me as he explained the difference between the performance of welcome by the Irish and what they/we (really) think:

> The biggest example I remember [ ] was our current *Ceann Comhairle*[72] John O'Donoghue, who was Minister for Justice at the time, was in Farranfore [airport in Kerry] welcoming a group of Kosovans because they were being housed in Kerry at the time and he made the big speech. [ ] Met them off the plane...'you're all very welcome, the community is delighted to host you etc.', and then he said in an aside afterwards 'we won't keep these for very long' [mimics stage whisper] you know? And it was all kind of...you know...it was all...*important from a PC point of view to be seen to be welcoming - but not really.* There was an undercurrent of...it was somehow...temporary? That it was something we had to deal with in a temporary way in order to fulfil our obligations [to the UN] *before we ship these people off to become somebody else's problem.* There was no long-term thinking in relation to how we assimilate these people into society and whether they were really welcome [emphasis added] (Keith '09).

The 'difference in agenda' between European and Nigerian immigrants referred to by Michael (above), was recognised and understood, by even the most positively disposed interviewees, to be legitimate versus illegitimate access to the state and its resources, including Irish passports. Having shown that the terms asylum seeker, refugee, African, Nigerian, and black are used interchangeably, and that Nigerian is regarded as code for all of the other terms, I demonstrate how these terms are associated with illegality and fraudulent asylum/welfare claims. Claudette, someone who was generally positively disposed towards immigration, acknowledged the circumstances that force people to seek asylum yet she appears ambivalent between helping those in need to start contributing to society and not wanting Ireland to be 'a soft system':

> If...If people want to come...if they have a genuine reason, you know, for asylum and, you know, that's laid down by the UN - what's classed as persecution and what isn't. Well then, let's them get assessed quickly and let them start *making a contribution to society* if they really want to make Ireland their home...let's help them do that. I don't want Ireland to be a place of: 'Well everyone comes here because it's

[72] Chairman, or presiding member, of *Dáil Éireann*

> easy, because *we have a soft system'*. I think we should have a system where people who genuinely want to be here... they get assessed...and they work within the community [emphasis added] (Claudette '08).

Other interviewees were not so ambivalent. The following are just two examples from numerous references to 'sponging off' the state, a term also commonly coded in talk relating to the Irish lower classes. While a number of interviewees acknowledged that asylum seekers are not legally permitted to work and must stay in Direct Provision accommodation with small weekly cash allowances, even these made implicit references to their taking advantage or 'living off' a 'soft system' rather than contributing or wanting to contribute to Ireland. Alison's comment in 2009 is representative:

> ...I think the trouble is a lot of people confuse immigrants with refugees and refugees are...when people think of refugees they think of the Nigerians who are sponging and up to every wheeze in town.

As analyses and coding continued I found recurring references to the notion of contribution and, relatedly, entitlement to social supports such as welfare payments and Irish citizenship. The following is an example of one of the most common type of stories associated with asylum seekers, that of 'passport shopping' or 'citizenship tourism' the background to which is outlined in Chapter 2. Arthur, who works in the health sector, began by referring to stories of women from abroad arriving in maternity hospitals in Dublin in the latter stage of pregnancy:

> I happen to know from the CEO in [Dublin maternity hospital] that that was just a daily occurrence, you know, they had people, largely Nigerians, arriving from the UK and going straight to the [hospital] who had never been seen before and they were in the final stages of pregnancy. And that was an almost daily occurrence in the [hospital]. So...and that's just...that's just citizenship tourism, you know...I have absolutely no problem with anybody moving here to come here to work and to live here but I think they should be coming to work but these folk weren't coming here to work. They were coming here to get citizenship and...but I think the Nigerians are probably a particular race and I think they're probably the most discriminated against probably...and not just because of their colour...

> They come with a reputation, you know… [Later] It was just a scam and…eh…that ended. Has it had any ill effects other than on the individuals impacted? I mean these folk weren't put on planes back to Nigeria. They were… [laughs]…they took the kids and they waltzed off to Dublin airport for a flight back to London you know...they wanted to go to London rather than…they didn't want to stay here… [ ] They could go anywhere and they were going to the UK and I'm quite sure that the whole…it was pressure from the UK to change [because of shared border with N. Ireland) rather than any Michael McDowell [73] racism… (Arthur '09)

While Arthur's source was the chief executive officer of a maternity hospital, Keith's comments give a sense of the pervasiveness of 'citizenship tourism' stories that preceded the citizenship referendum referred to in Chapter 2. Interestingly, Keith specifies that the overcrowding to which he refers was in the public maternity wards i.e. not the private maternity wards attended by the privately insured professional class:

> … huge resistance then to these people who came over here and clogged up our maternity hospitals. Ask anybody who's had a baby between 1997 and 2007 what kind of service they got - public service they got - in the Rotunda, Holles Street, or any of the Dublin [maternity] hospitals. [ ] 'And every time I go I have to queue for four hours to get in because the place is full of…kind of...black people with all their kids. They've got hundreds of kids all running around shouting and they don't speak English and the nurse is trying to explain to them...kind of...'where's your file?' And they're [saying] 'File? 'I dunno, I don' 'av file' [mimics female African accent while shrugging his shoulders]. *They arrived in the country yesterday, they're about to have a child, and they clog up the system* and they…' And that's just the way it was, so that…em…frustration or intolerance that expectant mothers had, at a very vulnerable time in their lives, you don't go through that and then just forget about it, to be honest. You go through that and then you come out and you tell everybody you know [emphasis added].

[73] Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2002–07)

Four issues were consistently raised in relation to asylum seekers/refugees. Firstly, it is commonly assumed that all black people in Ireland are African, specifically from Nigeria, and therefore asylum seekers/refugees. This assumption is not unique to Ireland. Lewis (2005) found that any non-white, non-British person, is categorised as an asylum seeker/refugee in the UK and also that the terms are used interchangeably with only a minority knowing the difference in legal status. Secondly, the legitimacy or otherwise of asylum/refugee claims was questioned by everyone I interviewed, implying that the majority of black people in Ireland, other than members in the professional class, are perceived to be 'illegitimate'. Thirdly, the number perceived to be applying for asylum in Ireland, although significant by any definition, was greatly inflated in people's perceptions. In Chapter 2, I argued that the promulgation of cumulative immigration figures, without context, is a contributory factor. This findings support Buchanan et al (2003) who found the UK media also confuse these terms and other types of immigrants and use provocative terminology such as 'illegal refugee' and 'asylum cheat' alongside inaccurate and misleading statistics.

Finally, interviewees reproduced stories about the level of supports and services that asylum seekers/refugees are believed to receive from the state and the pressure this places on a 'small country' given that people in receipt are perceived to make little or no contribution to the state. Interestingly, some of the people who were interviewed twice (i.e. in 2008 and 2009) repeated, almost *verbatim*, stories of 'free' houses, cars, and other supports, provided to asylum seekers/refugees suggesting the repertoire of stories is small but well-rehearsed from regular re-telling. I return to this issue in Chapter 8. In the UK, Lewis found a commonly expressed fear is that asylum seekers and refugees are a drain on resources (in other words 'not contributing') and that the vast majority are not 'genuine' (Lewis, 2005). Certainly given the details contained in the stories reproduced, all black people seem to attract intense popular surveillance for signs of criminality, fraud and welfare abuse (Myers, 2003).

Overall my findings concur with Clarke and Garner (2010) who suggest the asylum seeker remains a contemporary 'folk devil' and that the term's 'current popular and abusive usage seeks to situate its object as simultaneously unwelcome, suspicious, and a drain on the public purse' (Clarke and Garner, 2010: 5). However, my research also shows asylum seekers and refugees are not alone in this unenviable sub-ordinate position at the 'very bottom of the ladder' (Josephine). Interestingly, considering the Hartigan Jr. (1999, 2003) theorisation of the intersection between inter-racial and intra-racial

divisions, I found two white European populations, Irish Travellers and the Roma, positioned at the lowest levels of this constructed 'hierarchy of acceptability'.

Sub-Ordinates (iii): 'That's not a culture, that's a social problem'

Irish Travellers

Since the focus of this study was on immigration, in the same way that there was ostensibly no reason for the interviewees to refer to the Irish lower classes, there was no reason for them to refer to Irish Travellers. Firstly, although they are officially co-ethnics in the eyes of the Irish legislature, even Travellers who assert a separate ethnic identity emphasise their Irish national identity. Secondly, by any measure, they are a very small population group comprising 0.5 per cent of the population in the Republic or 22,369 people (Mac Gréil, 2011). To put that into context, I calculate it would take four times that number to fill the Croke Park Gaelic Games Stadium in Dublin. Interestingly, according to Mac Gréil's (2011) most recent social distance survey, the percentage of Irish people who would deny citizenship to Travellers has almost doubled from 10 per cent in the late 1980s to over 18 per cent in 2007-08.

However, similar to the Irish lower classes, Irish Travellers appear to be used by interviewees to 'calibrate' immigrant 'acceptability' by providing a benchmark for the 'least socially acceptable' or those it was socially acceptable to label 'not socially acceptable'. I got a sense of this 'calibration' model from Keith who was talking as I was getting settled to begin the interview. Explaining that he thought I had taken on a topic on which our peer group would be reticent, he did not reference non-EEA immigrants or asylum seekers, as might be expected given the findings so far in this chapter. Instead, the two exemplar groups he names are Irish Travellers and Romanians: [74]

> Nah, to be honest with you, if you're looking at the higher class…people who are used to…people who are used to not being able to…you can't give out about Travellers, Romanians, or anything like that. Wow! Suddenly expecting people to be absolutely honest and reveal their inner most thoughts on these issues…em…it requires some digging I would suspect.

[74] A common misnomer for Roma. Most interviewees, and the wider population, understand Roma as an abbreviation of Romanian, from whence it is assumed all Roma people originate.

What I found was that tensions and conflict between Irish Travellers and the settled population was used by a number of interviewees to illustrate the problems that could/would arise between people they categorised as immigrants (i.e. not all immigrants) and the indigenous Irish if there was no 'public debate' about concerns related to immigration. This call for 'a national or public debate' was invariably accompanied by the argument that such a debate would, of necessity, have to be unhindered by considerations of 'political correctness'. The implication appears to be that the Traveller 'issue' was handled poorly by a state and society censored by considerations of political correctness and that ultimately this allowed the situation to deteriorate and the norms and values of the settled community to be challenged. A similar situation should not be allowed to happen in relation to the 'outside other'. Here is Ivan, speaking in 2009:

> The other thing as to how we treat immigrants is how we treat our Travelling community. What does that say about us? [ ] It says lots of good things and lots of bad things. It says lots of bad things because in many cases there's lots of issues around that issue, but it says bad things in the inability to debate that as well. To say: 'Well, hang on a second, what's that about?' It's impolite to confront them [Travellers] on [the media] and say: 'But, like, that's not true, you are leaving places in a mess and you are a problem when you get settled into a community in big camps. You do cause problems. So get over that and just fucking admit it, and now let's talk about how we address it'. *And instead they talk about Traveller culture! I don't know what that is!* There's no culture [sotto voce]. It is a community with a huge amount of social problems, lots of them, and the fact that you can't even debate with them is...you know...*As my mother said: 'Traveller culture: drinking, wife beating and incest'.* You know what I mean? [smiles] *That's not a culture, that's a social problem* [Emphasis in original] (Ivan '09).

I was taken aback at the vehemence of the language Ivan used. Over time, I realised that, for Ivan and other interviewees, the immigrant other was less contentious than Ireland's indigenous ethnic minority, the local 'other', Irish Travellers.

Here is Florence, who had taught the children of Travellers in the early years of her career:

> …I'm of the view for a long, long time that we have to have [a] debate regarding Travellers as well. As someone who [ ] was in daily contact with Traveller children, the non-PC issue is destroying the Travellers because no matter what community you are, good behaviour is good behaviour and bad behaviour is bad behaviour. And I spent a lot of my time [in schools] concentrating on the group who were behaving badly, a small group of them, but that behaviour…whether it's you or me or them or immigrants has to be dealt with - strongly - it doesn't matter what community they come from.

However, I also found these same tensions, real and perceived, between the settled community and Travellers were used by a small number of interviewees to support the argument that social conflict was not a new phenomenon associated with inward migration and that the Irish are intolerant at best and racist at worst:

> Yeah, I would say that we don't like the variety of people [living in Ireland now]. I think we're very, very intolerant of other races. If you're visually different and I think that's...I think our Traveller community is evidence of that. We've no tolerance of our own indigenous Travelling…community. So why would we tolerate people who are a different colour, people who behave differently, who have a different cultural background? I don't think we're tolerant at all (Emily '08).

Explaining intolerance towards Travellers, Emily suggests the visually different are not tolerated in Ireland, yet Irish Travellers are phenotypically similar to the settled Irish. She also suggests people who are culturally different are not tolerated, yet language, religion, folklore and many customs, are shared by Travellers and settled people. Whiteness theories suggest that the focus is on difference and point to white racial identity also being stratified: difference being inflected by class markings (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, 2003; Garner, 2007b; Hartigan Jr., 1999, 2003). Perhaps small behavioural differences in dress code, religious practice, and language, inscribed on the body in talk and dress are sufficient markers of social class identity to deem Travellers 'less than white' and position them at the lowest rung of this social pecking order - less acceptable to Irish professionals than 'asylum seeker cheats'. Irish Travellers share this 'least acceptable'

categorisation with the Roma, an ethnic minority who have come to Ireland from a number of European countries and who, like the Travellers, have a nomadic heritage. Or perhaps instead the intolerance of the settled Irish towards the Irish Traveller is rooted in similarity? Valentine (1998: 4.1), writing about how the 'outsider within' is named and evaluated, suggests that certain ethnic groups are an embarrassment to national homogeneity myths. How can Travellers be Irish like us? Valentine (1998) also argues that an ethnic group without the power to challenge prevailing notions that it is a legitimate target for discrimination may find itself freely maligned.

The Roma

The perception of the breadth of cultural difference between the interviewees and the Roma is obvious in this transcript extract from Michael who, coincidentally, expressed a particularly negative response to immigration both before and during the recession, towards Africans in general, and Nigerians in particular:

> And there has to be an acceptance of a culture that's similar [to one's own] rather than a culture that's more alien, so obviously Romany gypsies wouldn't be in the same league [as the Polish]. Nigerians would be more preferable to Romany gypsies! Do you know what I mean? (Michael '09)

My data does indeed show that members of the Roma community are discussed in the most negative terms with frequent references to criminality including begging, trafficking, defrauding the social welfare system and allowing illegal [75] underage marriage and statutory rape of young girls. It is also notable that, throughout my fieldwork, only one interviewee claimed to have had direct experience of any kind of racially motivated incident. I argue that it is neither insignificant nor co-incidental that the incident he recounted involved a Roma woman selling copies of *The Big Issue* [76] magazine in the centre of Dublin city.

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[75] Under Irish legislation

[76] *The Big Issue* is a charity which offers homeless and vulnerable people the opportunity to earn a legitimate income. They produce a weekly magazine which vendors sell to the public keeping half the retail price for themselves.

> I did have a…a very awkward experience a few years ago. Obviously, I won't identify who it was [but it was] a person well-known in this city. On my first meeting with him we were going to lunch. We were walking along the street and we were chatting [ ] and there was somebody on the street selling *The Big Issue*…came into our radar and, in mid-conversation, he screamed at her and told her in no uncertain terms to 'f-home' with herself and her *Big Issue*' and…em... [Embarrassed short laugh] and I was quite shocked 'cos he just continued our conversation as if nothing had happened [ ] Yeah. Yeah, I was quite taken aback.[ ]…and…actually it's quite funny, he complains about 'these bloody foreigners' in Ireland and actually he is married to someone who is not Irish, [she's] from mainland Europe, but not Irish [laugh] (Charles '08).

Note these professional men were meeting for the first time but this did not curtail the action of the protagonist nor make Charles feel anything more than 'awkward'. I argue that it is inconceivable that the same (well-known) businessman would have 'screamed' similar abuse at any other *Big Issue* seller in such a public place. Both men implicitly, I suggest, knew there would be no sanction from other members of the public because the subject of the abuse was a Roma. Nor would, or did, this protagonist fear any form of rebuke from his lunch companion, Charles, or other social class peers who might have witnessed it. Indeed my data indicates the Roma in Ireland are used by some interviewees to grant an *imprimatur* to a form of racism which is 'culturally sanctioned and rational' per Wellman (1993). The example above demonstrates how racial abuse may be culturally sanctioned, including among the professional class. The next example shows the use of the rhetoric of rationality to explain why this is the case. Coincidentally, the speaker is Charles - one year later. As I mentioned previously, Charles was one of the interviewees most positively disposed towards living in a multi-cultural Dublin:

> …bearing in mind that a lot of people would have had a nasty experience with Roma…or allegedly…knocking on your door, stealing stuff, you know. You hear all these anecdotal things so they probably don't do themselves any favours as a little group. [ ] But then you go down town and you see somebody begging and they're Roma or they look like those people and you think 'haven't we got enough problems of our own' [smile]. I suppose the fact that we're an open

> economy…eh…and they are European Union citizens…em… [ ] We will have a seriously difficult 2010 and 2011. [ ] Economically [ ] I think that's where the…that's where it'll test our mettle as to how accepting or otherwise we are when it does literally become a choice of who to let go and who to take on… em…'*am I paying my tax so that Roma person can get the dole'*? And I'm not sure what the answer will be. I suspect it won't be that positive [emphasis added].

Another interviewee, a health care professional, spoke of the incompatibility of Roma customs with Irish law. She referred to a court case that had happened earlier that year during which the judge had criticised the Health Service Executive (HSE) for non-intervention in relation to the case of a sixteen Roma girl who was the mother of three children. Because sixteen was the age of consent in Ireland, the implication was that the girl's husband was guilty of statutory rape and under Irish law he should be arrested:

> [C]ultural diversity, cultural respect…Cultural diversity doesn't necessarily fit into the legal structures that we have at the moment so there's a potential for conflict there, like in that judge's statement. The white elephant in the room was the loaded statement…that was not said but may have been implied [ ] if this was an Irish girl it would have been dealt with differently…or would it have been? [ ] But now definitely in light of that [case]…it's informed our practice [as health care professionals] that we are notifying the Gardaí [in similar cases]. [ ] Whereas now, let's say the Gardaí, if they are aware of…let's say a Roma girl who is 14 and pregnant, are they now automatically going to do a notification to the HSE? And what's interesting as well is that the girls who are under 16, or the girls who are having babies and that are from the different cultures, they're then subsequently claiming [welfare] benefits. Are they begging? Are they doing…what? Where else are they claiming benefits? What other benefits are they claiming? So that is…a cause for tension (sic)… [ ] Yes, it is a cause of tension …'cos you would hear that being spoken about in the professional circles that I would [ ] mingle in, you would hear people say: 'it's a disgrace that this, that, and the other is happening'. That it's ripping off the state (Beryl '09).

The 'white elephant' is the implication that, at best, this Roma girl was treated differently by state bodies such as the HSE and Garda as an expression of respect for her culture or, at worse, through inertia, a young girl was left in an abusive and illegal relationship. In contemporary Irish society where, especially amongst professionals, women tend towards having their first child in their early 30s, the argument that the state must find a way to prevent such pregnancies and early marriages is a rational one against which few would care to argue. One can see why this case and the broader issue is of interest to someone in her profession, yet Beryl continues, seamlessly, to talk about Roma families begging and/or claiming state benefits in a fraudulent manner, something she and her health professional colleagues regard as 'a disgrace.'

I argue that my findings on how such professionals talk about Irish Travellers and Roma reveal not alone a 'hierarchy of acceptable immigrants' but more generally, from the viewpoint of the supra-ordinate, the white Irish professional, 'a hierarchy of acceptability in Irish society'. Thus, although Travellers and Roma are white, European, and small in number (there are estimated to be 3,000 Roma in Ireland) [77] they are racialised, pathologised, and criminalised to the extent they are deemed 'not white'. Both are regarded, not as distinct ethnic groups but rather, as one interviewee suggests, as 'a social problem'.

Conclusion

In this chapter I argue that disclaiming and hierarchising are two discursive strategies employed by white Irish professionals when talking about immigration. Together with four other strategies to be discussed in the next two chapters, disclaiming and hierarchising are part of a process of Performing Distance from people and groups they categorise as immigrants.

As explained in Chapter 5, the concept of Performing Distance incorporates social, economic, cultural, geographical, spatial, and even moral distance. In the performance of disclaiming, discussed in the first half of this chapter, we see 'distance' being used as a verb to describe the action of actively not paying attention to the topic of immigration, that is to say immigration is 'not an issue', 'nothing to do with me'.

[77] Roma was not one of the ethnicity category options in Census 2006. In 2011, Pavee Point, one of the representative bodies for Irish Travellers estimated there were 3,000 Roma in Ireland in 2011 (Fay, 2011: 10).

Disclaiming supports the overall performance of distance to the effect that these professionals profess to know very little, if anything, about immigration because it does not 'impinge' on their professional or personal lives, rather it is recognised as being an issue for other sections of society such as the lower classes. In the absence of regular interaction with individuals they categorise as immigrants, much of the interviewees' information comes from the media which they criticise as promulgating either a pro- or anti-immigration agenda depending on the medium's target audience/market. Nor do the so-called 'liberal' media always reflect the views of these professionals, some of whom find themselves in agreement with commentators who promote the negative impacts of immigration. Other sources of information, such as politicians and public servants, are perceived to be disengaged from, even afraid of, what might 'crawl out from under the rock' of immigration. So, in professing little personal knowledge, and framing sources of information such as the government and the media as unreliable or biased, these Irish professionals can disclaim any significant or particular knowledge of, or information about, contemporary immigration to Ireland.

Belying this lack of engagement or information, a constructed and contingent hierarchy or 'pecking order' emerged from the data which illustrated commonly-held notions of who is, and is not, categorised as an immigrant and which groups of immigrants are deemed more, or less, 'acceptable'. Here we are seeing 'distance' used as an adjective to describe the interviewees' relative construction of immigrants in opposition to themselves, the supra-ordinate, positioned entirely above and beyond any hierarchy they construct. As Bauman writes: '[m]odern mastery is the power to divide, classify, and allocate' (1991: 15). The constructed hierarchy I have found illustrates the differential social, economic, cultural, geographical, spatial, even moral, distance the interviewees feel from the various other population groups.

I argue that among these Irish professionals there exists an understanding of the term 'immigrant' which, while drawing on perceptions of racial and ethnic difference, also distinguishes between people and groups perceived to be in a position to contribute to the host state and those deemed dependent, or potentially dependent, on state resources. Contribution, not alone in the economic but also in the social and cultural sense of the term, is a particularly valued social behaviour for, the thinking goes, without contribution there can be no right to, or expectation of, entitlements such as social welfare payments, local authority housing, public education or health services. Respectability is viewed as the norm for members of the professional class and discursively created when discussing

the devalued behaviours of others. This 'hierarchy of acceptability' supports the Hartigan Jr. (1999) argument that, interwoven with racialised discourse, is the discourse of both intra-racial social class division and inter-racial social class cohesion. Hence black members of the professional class can be granted a level of 'honorary whiteness' (Garner, 2007b) because of the expectation that they share professional class norms and values and Irish Travellers and European Roma are deemed less acceptable than any other group. Garner (2007b) traces the conceptualisation of whiteness in the UK to such a set of values and norms while Skeggs (1997) has argued that respectability is one of the key mechanisms by which people are othered and pathologised. Based on my findings I argue that this contingent 'pecking order' is indicative of the intersection of a number of social divisions including social class, race, and ethnicity.

The unsolicited material on Irish population groups such as the Irish lower classes supports a key argument in the Whiteness literature to the effect that whiteness has two simultaneous borders to maintain. Garner (2007b) talks in terms of one border between whites and the other, and the second between dominant whites and people with varying 'grades of whiteness' while Hartigan Jr. (1999) describes intra-racial divides and inter-racial (or class) cohesion. When levels of social acceptability are expressed in terms of adherence to classed norms and values such as respectability, the only offence one might be accused of is that of social class prejudice which, in this context, is more acceptable than racial or ethnic prejudice. As Krysan (1998) and Devine and Plant (2002) show, the better educated often exhibit a strong social desirability/acceptability orientation in expressing their attitudes towards the other. The strategic advantage I suggest is that one cannot be accused of race-talk when many of the most negative evaluations are directed at some of 'our own leeches' i.e. the Irish lower classes and Irish Travellers. Social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism may disallow disparaging remarks about the phenotypical or cultural difference in the public domain but remarks that categorise a group as being less than respectable, of being 'takers' rather than 'contributors' to society are socially acceptable. This finding supports Bonilla-Silva's (2006) theory of contemporary racism as being 'without race' and Garner's (2009) theory of contemporary Ireland as racialising immigrants and Irish national alike, regardless of their racial and ethnic similarity i.e. exhibiting 'racism without racists'. Classed and racialised groups who do not behave respectably and contribute economically and culturally to society can, without compunction, be pathologised as socially problematic and distanced as being 'not like us.'

Notably, the white Irish professionals who construct this hierarchy of acceptability do not themselves feature except as the 'unmarked category against which difference is constructed' (Andersen, 2003: 26). Nor is the entitlement to determine the position of all others questioned: the 'gaze of whiteness' being 'the unacknowledged norm' (Morrison, 1992: 92). As Feagin suggests:

> Today whites as a group remain at the top of the racial hierarchy and most view that as still appropriate. Important white views, values and framing remain normative, the societal standards to be adopted by children of all backgrounds as they grow up and by all new immigrants (2010: 95-96).

The hierarchy I found and the way it is constructed, supports Blalock (1967), cited in Banton (1998: 136), who holds that individuals always seek to maximise their status and, to this end, avoid being identified with people of low status. I argue that the white Irish professional class employ the discursive strategy of hierarchising to distance themselves, not only from people they categorise as immigrants, but also from the Irish lower classes and Irish Travellers. To be able to position and understand the social relations between different categories, one needs to know the sub-ordinate position as well as the super-ordinate position against which a category is being calibrated and Irish Travellers and the settled Irish lower classes are, to use Tyler's terms, not 'invisible normal whites' (2008: 25) like these Irish professionals but rather 'hyper-visible 'filthy whites'' (ibid. 25). Much of this white racial frame of information consists of stereotyped knowledge, racial understandings, and racial interpretations of events and behaviours (Feagin, 2010). In the absence of interaction it persists as a depository of cultural information passed 'within important networks of relatives, peers, and friends' (Houts Picca and Feagin, 2007: 13) as discussed in Chapter 8.

Given the changing economic context and the nature of the hierarchy I found, one could speculate that non-EU/EEA professionals, positioned high in 'the pecking order' by virtue of their social class status, socio-economic contribution and shared (white) social class norms and values, might be 'elevated' above and beyond the constructed hierarchy to join the supra-ordinate white Irish professionals and the super-ordinate Western European immigrants. However, despite their employment status, perceived contribution to the state and society, and adherence to professional social class norms and values, racially/ethnically different professionals in Ireland remain 'othered' in the sense that they 'cannot purchase the cultural codes to be normal' (Tyler, 2003).

One reason for this, I argue, is the lack of interaction between Irish professionals and people they categorise as immigrants - even immigrant professionals. In the next chapter I present my argument for the existence of two more discursive strategies: that of distancing oneself and one's peers from the everyday lives of immigrants and deflecting the issue of immigration away from the *habitus* of the professional class onto the groups whose lives it is understood to properly impinge: the indigenous lower classes.

Chapter 7: Distancing and Deflecting

This findings chapter provides an in-depth exploration of two more of the six sub-categories constitutive of Performing Distance which, I argue, describes the discursive strategies employed by white Irish professionals when talking about immigrants and immigration. The two strategies described in this chapter, namely distancing and deflecting are, like those in the previous chapter, deemed appropriate for the public domain. I show how interviewees consistently emphasise their distance socially, economically, culturally, geographically, spatially, and even morally, from the lived experience of the people they categorise as immigrants. I found that interviewees, regardless of their positive, negative, or ambivalent disposition towards immigration, distanced themselves with what Houts Picca and Feagin (2007: 61) termed 'studied avoidance' and deflected attention instead onto the groups for whom, they concurred, immigration was an issue: the Irish lower classes.

The transcript data in this chapter have been selected from 19 interviews (from an available 28) and presents the voices of 16 individuals from an available 20.

Distancing: 'Not in my neighbourhood'.

When interviewees commented that they didn't know why I was talking to them since immigration was 'not an issue' or 'didn't impinge' on their lives, grounded theory methods prompted a closer look at what was happening, what their concern was, especially when the subsequent interview continued for an hour or more. Following further analysis I noticed a discursive strategy different to that I call 'disclaiming' (i.e. 'immigration is nothing to do with me'). Time and again it was made clear to me that these Irish professionals live, work, and socialise in a largely mono-ethnic *habitus* where they have little or no contact with people they categorise as 'immigrants', including highly acceptable immigrants of equal social class status. To support my argument I present data relating to the work place, neighbourhood, children's schools, and social life.

Workplace

The social class position of my Irish interviewees is explicitly and implicitly referenced when explaining why, in their places of work, they have little or no interaction with immigrants. As we saw in Chapter 6, people who are categorised as immigrants are perceived as lower class and these Irish professionals have only peripheral interaction with lower class people of any background. Implicit in the explanations of little or no interaction in the workplace is that it is the (assumed) class position of 'immigrants' and not their racial or cultural difference, that excludes them from the work environment of the Irish professional. The following data extracts are typical of such comments:

> Em…I suppose I'm bad [as an interviewee] in the sense that I don't see a huge amount of…immigration [ ] I've never once met a person senior-ish in an Irish company who isn't Irish [ ] (Edward '09).

> It isn't on the radar work-wise because, I suppose, typically you wouldn't…because…I suppose my work for the last four or five years has been in the public sector…em…so none of my colleagues are…immigrants…recent immigrants (Barry '09).

When we see how interviewees respond to questions about competing for current or future positions with people they categorise as immigrants, we get a further indication of how little interaction there is even with immigrants of equal social class position. None of the interviewees had, or expected, to compete for employment with individuals they categorised as immigrants.

> The people in…ABC1s like us aren't affected by this [immigration] as such, you know. [ ] You're not competing with somebody from Poland or…[ ]...it doesn't impinge on my life and won't probably impinge on my life now for the next 20 years - in that nobody is going to be competing for my job who is coming into Ireland… (Jerry '09).

> …it's maybe that it doesn't affect us because we're not having to compete with them [immigrants] but that probably is changing to a certain extent (Barry '09).

> Whether it'll come up within *our* kind of sphere - of professionals - or whether it'll be more, you know, at the working class level, you know, the dole queues, that kind of level, I don't know. I suspect it'll probably be the latter [Emphasis in original] (Josephine '09).

The common assumption appears to be that people categorised as 'real immigrants' are low skilled and so the issue of competition for professional level employment simply does not arise and is unlikely to do so. It is important to bear in mind that in the previous chapter we saw that immigrants who have professional skills are deemed 'not real immigrants'. However it is not simply a question of circulating in a different class *habitus*. Some references were made by interviewees to both overt and covert barriers facing immigrants, particularly people who were deemed 'not white'. Again, these findings concur with the study by Mc Ginnity et al (2009) on discrimination in recruitment processes in Ireland which found candidates with Asian and African names were more likely not to be called for job interviews.

The following excepts illustrate some of these barriers. In the first instance, a financial analyst explains how corporate networks and histories are 'ingrained' suggesting cultural knowledge as reified 'in the DNA or blood of the Irish professional' or, to paraphrase an old office joke: 'you don't have to be Irish to work here, but it helps'.

> We wouldn't have an issue against hiring somebody but...it's just that… [ ] someone who's non-national could come in and have worked here [in the financial sector] a while and, if [financial services] is their background, they'll have an interest in it. [ ] You need to be…well, you need to have spent a good few years in Ireland to be...to have…you know...to know how: 'Yer man there, now he...' It's not like you can learn it…it's ingrained in you…you know? 'Yer man there used to be the Finance Director in [company name], now he's here [another company], and he left that company because of…So there's no way they'll do business with him…' So you come round it in a circuitous way of who knows what and who'd be where... (Edward '08).

Franklin (1991) argues that knowledge about recruitment and promotion within organisations becomes the protected 'property' (or cultural capital) of white professional networks. Further support for Franklin's theory is provided by this interviewee who told a story about his perception of covert promotion barriers in the Irish health sector:

> …my wife worked in [public and private hospital campus in Dublin] and we went to the Consultants Dinner a couple of years. Jesus! The most boring thing on the planet, you know! And she…like the [senior] nun…would say grace before meals and I'm thinking to myself 'hang on, what about the Protestant doctors or the…?' But sure there probably aren't any. There probably aren't any you know…because they're probably not employed. They wouldn't get the job because, you know, because it's a…it's a Catholic institution so there probably aren't…There are [ ] non-Consultant Hospital Doctors or even Consultant Doctors who aren't on permanent contracts who are from…you know…all over the place. But it's a subtle form of racism because it's not overt and it's very hard to prove. [ ] They won't get it [permanent contract] because that's the way they keep people out. So everyone was white [at the Consultants' Annual Dinner] (Jerry '09).

What is interesting about Jerry's observation on promotion and or permanency for non-white health professionals is that the health service was often referenced by interviewees as an example of interculturalism in action as in 'we've always had foreign doctors'. Co-incidentally, around the time I was in the field gathering such stories, an Indian-born journalist, writing in *The Irish Times,* wrote an article which appears to support what Jerry observed when he and other interviewees talked of covert barriers in the workplace:

> There is an understanding that the generous superlatives of "brilliant" and "perfect", which often punctuate the sentences of Irish bosses, are never reflected in their performance appraisals which apparently come with "promotions for Irish only" written in invisible ink. [ ] In appointing and promoting "Irish" candidates, those who indulge in such behaviour believe they are acting in the best interest of the company or their community. Of course, those who stand to benefit from the discrimination choose to be quiet (Rajasekar, 2009).

In his analysis of Irish public authorities' endeavours to promote equal opportunity and integration, Mac Éinri writes that foreign- born persons are all but invisible in a number of public sectors with the partial exception of the health sector (Mac Éinrí, 2007).

When asked about the level of diversity in the public sector organisations where they worked, Alison and Florence (interviewed in 2008 and 2009 respectively) explained there was little or none and gave the following explanations:

> No [there is no diversity]. That's because it's public service, [name of section], because we're required to have Irish [78] [ ] We had interviews recently for librarians and one of the people who got on the panel is actually Polish and I actually said: 'Well, do we not need Irish?' It's a bit like the teachers, they're given a year to learn [Irish]. Irish is not an easy language to learn. But we will have a Pole. Now we do...do we have...No...even at General Operative level...what used to be called Porters. I don't think we have any non-nationals...Have we? No. I don't think we have but that's because of the Irish [language] (Alison '08).

> ...but you see there are barriers. Well, there was a couple of things mitigating against it, you know. On the one hand, the government was proclaiming an equality and diversity policy at national level but at the same time you saw that there was no way that these people could pass the Civil Service exam. Whether because of the Irish [language] but equally because they had a ban on recruitment which meant an organisation like mine that really would have preferred to be a bit more diverse, because it's good for customers, it's good for innovation - very good for innovation- and would be very good for the Civil Service, had all these quasi-barriers. If they were really serious they'd remove those barriers. In a diverse society why would [fluency in] Irish be a requirement now? You know, that speaks volumes (Florence '09).

[78] Although the debate has been going on since the 1950s and before (see Chapter 2), National University of Ireland matriculation and some public sector positions such as primary school teachers and librarians (and, until 2008, the legal profession), require a level of proficiency in the Irish language.

None of my interviewees reported having a co-worker or superior who was black. Two had work colleagues who reported to them who were not white. Indeed, outside of a select few professions such as medicine and technology, black professionals going about their business on the streets of Dublin in 2009, are still regarded as something of a novelty.

> …more and more I'm seeing…this…this is the only way I can say it…is people who are coloured, right? Going to work. The same way I go to work. Sitting beside me on the *Luas* [commuter rail] today, a man and woman, very well dressed, going to work…which you wouldn't have seen…You would have seen [foreign] students, you would have seen doctors, but these [two] were just going to work in …wherever …and that has changed (Charles '09).

> It was fascinating…you find yourself questioning your own prejudices as well in that I went to…eh...a meeting [and] [T]he auditor came in from one of the big four auditing companies…[ ] came in anyway with his junior and…eh…the junior was black from Nigeria or Zaire or Zambia or somewhere like that, you know. 'Jet black' as the mother would say, you know, and I was, of course, like, 'fine, yeah, well, howya...' His name was Elvis actually… his name was Elvis… so you couldn't actually forget, you know! [smiles] But after he'd gone the discussion then was about your man's name, 'Jaysus, Elvis, it's funny, you know'. There was nothing about the fact that he was from wherever he was from …em…and…eh...But I did find myself questioning my own prejudices wondering where did he come from, how long is he here blah, blah, blah, blah, that kind of thing. Not questioning whether or not he was good enough for the job, 'cos obviously if he's there and he's working with this guy who is a Partner in this prestigious…you know…accountancy firm he obviously is good enough for the job. So there's no question about that. But...I started kicking myself then for asking myself these questions. If he was white and he was from the States or from Australia or wherever, I would never ask myself those questions [emphasis in original] (Jerry '09).

Another example of the 'novelty factor' attached to black professionals in everyday life refers to Rotimi Adebari. In 2007, Mr Adebari was the first black person to hold a Mayoral position in the Republic. Previously Mr Adebari has been a town councillor and businessman. The following story was related to me in 2009 by Keith, who worked in the political sphere:

> [When] Rotimi Adebari [was elected] the first black Lord Mayor of Portlaoise, the *Ceann Comhairle* had him up [to the Dail] to welcome him up etcetera, etcetera. And he [had been] an independent [town councillor]. And Rotimi Adebari said…When he came, he was welcomed by the *Ceann Comhairle* and you know, speech for the media and all sorts…and Rotimi stood up and the first thing he said was: 'Listen, I'm really pleased to be here, because I came to the gates of Leinster House two years ago because I wanted to come in and have a look at the parliament building and they wouldn't let me in'. The Ushers at the gate took one look at him and said: 'Nah, you're not coming in'.
>
> *(I/ver) Because he was black?*
>
> [Nods] And he was a county councillor at the time [ ] He was a county councillor. He wasn't Lord Mayor at that time, he was a councillor, and they wouldn't… they wouldn't let him in. But that mind-set is out there: 'This is a black bloke in a suit, who is he?' [This last is spoken in a higher pitched tone, mimicking the ushers' alleged surprise at a 'black bloke in a suit']

Accepting the very different socio-historical context, my findings support empirical studies in the US by Houts Picca and Feagin (2007) that suggest that most white Americans can carry out their daily activities at work in such a way as to have little or no regular, equal-status, contact with African Americans or other people of colour and they make the argument that '[I]nteracting with someone in a subordinate social position, such as a servant or labourer, is quite different from interacting with someone of equal or greater education, occupation, and income' (Houts Picca and Feagin, 2007: 241).

Indeed, there exists a significant body of literature emanating from the US which examines blacks' experiences of not being entirely accepted as peers by the middle class and professional whites they encounter in their professional and daily lives (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Cose, 1995; Feagin and Sikes, 1994; Franklin, 1991; Williams, 1997).

Bonilla-Silva (2001) suggests that racialisation provides the rules for perceiving and dealing with the other in a racialised society and suggests that is why white people still have trouble dealing with black professionals. Fieldwork amongst white elites in the US by Feagin and O'Brien (2003) came across the recurring trope of African Americans being consigned to, or deemed appropriate for, work that serviced whites. This is an example, the authors argue, of an image which is rooted deeply and subtly in a sense of the privileged white position in the racial hierarchy. It is also one I came across, in the sense that people who are categorised as immigrants by Irish professionals are predominantly associated with work it was understood that Irish people would not do or at least would not want to do during the 'Celtic Tiger' years. As Dean said to me in 2008: 'everyone [in Ireland] is so well off that we don't mind if the foreign nationals come in and work in our cafes [ ] or clean our cars and stuff like that'.

Neighbourhood

Distancing is also evident in the way it is made clear that these Irish professionals do not live in the same residential areas as the groups they categorise as immigrants. This is also explained in terms of the perceived class position and wealth of the individuals they categorise as immigrants. As Ivan said: 'they weren't moving to Foxrock [79] and that's just reality, isn't it?'

> There's not many... [ ] in the [name] area because they're older red brick houses and more settled [ ] so I think it's probably socially or economically harder I think - economically - because of the price of houses there...for a non-national to own a house [ ] (Edward '08).

> I just don't know whether people were aware...people like the professional classes [ ] people living in particular parts of Ireland or parts of Dublin would have been entirely unaware of the level of immigration that had occurred because it just wouldn't impact on them. [ ] I wouldn't see an immigrant from one day of the week to the next and my children wouldn't. So, I mean, to a large extent it has happened under the middle class radar (Larry '09).

[79] Affluent residential suburb of Dublin.

> I suppose a lot of them are living in rented accommodation, you know, most of them would be. And I suppose a lot of that rented accommodation would be in, I suppose, the slightly less well-off areas of the neighbourhood… so you know… [ ] Where I am I cannot say that I would know that there's any family of colour in the whole estate. Either renting or having bought a house. So in our immediate...estate of 150 or 200 houses – no (Josephine '09).

When coding extracts such as the above I was struck by the sense of physical and spatial as well as socio-economic distance between Irish social classes. There were many references made, implicitly and explicitly, to the fact that any social unrest between immigrant and indigenous groups would happen 'in other places' i.e. not in the neighbourhoods or spaces routinely occupied by members of the professional class. Areas mentioned, often by specific area or post-codes, were invariably areas perceived as being lower class with high levels of population diversity such as Dublin 15, and Finglas and Blanchardstown, north-side suburbs of the city (Ní Chonaill, 2007). Note again the word 'impinge' is used and that the term 'ghetto' appears in these extracts:

> Dublin 15 probably has had probably more…em…immigrants have ended up either out in Dublin 15 for lots of reasons… and a lot of the properties out there probably have been rented out. So that's where it has impinged most and probably, most directly, you know (Barry '09).

> …just look along the North Circular [Road] for example…[ ] and it's almost all black people that I see wandering around there or…em…probably some Muslims and people that are Algerian…they're darker skinned, they're not pink Irish fellahs. They're not 'pink people' as we were told we were [on holiday] in South Africa and I just don't like …and some of them are in social housing…being housed by the state and I just don't think that's right, I don't think it's good…They're...it's like...sorry but…ghetto is the word I'd use.. They are being ghettoised. [ ] But it's that lack of integration…I don't like… I fear…any sort of ghettoisation. It just bothers me. Once you put people in an area it brings the area down in terms of people saying: 'Oh, you know, I wouldn't go and live in that area' and then if there's any deprived people there they just sink lower. It reinforces…it's a downward spiral (Emily '09).

People categorised as immigrants but who are living in neighbourhoods popular with Irish professionals are categorised as belonging to the professional class and so, as we saw in Chapter 6, are deemed to be 'not a problem' because 'there's little or no difference':

> Just thinking now as I go along our row of houses…the end house was bought about a year ago and they're a Muslim family but…eh…he's a…I think he's a psychiatrist so you're looking at…em…the medical profession again. I just sort of say 'hello' to the kids but you know they…they're fully integrated now. I don't know whether he goes over to…Clonskeagh [80] to the school or not…but they're out…they're hanging around with the kids on the estate. One of them is a mad soccer player. He's always wearing his Manchester jersey. He's…he's just friendly…fully integrated with the other kids. Moving along, there's a couple a few doors up, they've been there donkey years [81] now. The wife, she's a west-Indian, once again actually they're both doctors [smiles]. [ ] I suppose it's almost…em...I don't know…maybe it's more…they're just no…it's normal now. They're there… [ ] They've been there a while, yeah, and aside from different shadings of skin colour, you know, there's little or no difference, you know [emphasis added].

One interviewee mentioned that her area was 'mixed' and, unprompted, expressed the exceptionality of her case in the sense that it was not an area of the city associated with professionals but of rental properties popular with young people and students. She contrasted her area with another part of the city more closely associated with professionals and speculated on how residents of such an area would respond to having the same population diversity as her neighbourhood:

> I suppose living in Rathmines, which is pretty diverse anyway, I kind of…don't even…I know this sounds funny…it doesn't… [ ]. I suppose it depends…How I see it…I mean, living in Blackrock you'd go 'whoa, how did that happen!? (Helen '09)

[80] The mosque and adjacent Islamic Cultural Centre in Clonskeagh, Dublin.
[81] Colloquialism for a long period of time.

In another interview, when the talk turned to the likely response to immigrants buying property on the exclusive Shrewsbury Road [82] in Dublin, Iris speculated that regardless of the individual's wealth they would not be accepted as 'one of us'. Tyler's (2003) ethnography of English village life found that while the families of Asian professionals could afford to buy some of the most expensive homes in the village, they continued to be regarded as 'abnormal'. The reasons included that they did not fit into the middle class locals' notions of respectability and normality such as men going to the pub and women being members of local charity organisations. Tyler concluded that Asian families' economic capital could not buy the necessary cultural capital required to fit-in. While some non-English residents' professional status may obviate a degree of hostility, they cannot own the cultural codes required to function 'normally'. A similar situation pertains in the US according to Williams (1997), Hartigan Jr. (1999), hooks (2000) and Feagin and O'Brien (2003). Franklin (1991) writes that blacks are frequently believed to be allied to a self-perpetuating black underclass and, in his research in the US, he found few middle/upper class whites who believed there were many hardworking blacks capable of financing entrance into 'their' white neighbourhoods. He also found that signs of class success for some blacks are not sufficient to empower the individual in normal social situations and relations. For these individuals, their skin colour is linked to a common-sense lower class status of blacks. Delivering the Reith Lectures for the BBC in 1997, Patricia Williams, professor of law at Columbia University, told how she learned that the value of her own newly purchased home in an area which had only ever seen prices rise would start to fall as soon as she, a black woman, moved in (Williams, 1997).

Schools

Given the lack of diversity in residential areas it is not surprising that interviewees who had children of primary and/or secondary school age reported little diversity in their children's schools. Again both the explicit and implicit explanation is that diversity is a phenomenon located in lower class areas.

> Dublin is semi-segregated in a sense. I was struck by this. I can remember being down …eh…last summer at my oldest child's sports day. I think there was…one or two Chinese fellas. There was a Dutch [Surinamese] fella. There's two Italians who are at least second

[82] One of Dublin's most expensive residential areas.

> generation. [ ] One African fellah whose mother was the Nigerian Ambassador, you know so… [laughs]. And that was the extent of it and I was just struck by it…I was going…you know, it's very, very homogeneous. [Later] I would imagine if you went out to a [inaudible] school out in Blanchardstown [83] or somewhere like that, you'd find a completely different picture (Frank '09).

When exploring the schools attended by the children of these professionals, the exception to the rule of largely homogeneous school populations are the private fee-paying schools attended by the children of a number of interviewees. Here again the social class background of the student population is perceived to explain sufficiently why this heterogeneity creates 'no problems':

> [Daughter] goes to [school] where 40 per cent of the children are non-national, of every description, but it's a fee-paying school. They're people who are in various companies, there's embassy kids, there's returned Irish people...so they're of a…particular level. And there's no problems (sic) (Alison '08).

> My daughter…one of her best friends is first… [or] second generation Pakistani…but her father is a consultant in a hospital so...it's not the same thing (Larry '09).

It should also be noted, however, that one interviewee, Emily, related a number of stories concerning bullying and discrimination among students at private schools including the following example involving 'mixed race' Irish citizen children:

> …my friend has a son and a daughter and they're mixed race…their father is Iranian and she's Irish and [ ] in his private school he's been through…he would be quite aware of being different. [Later] [Name of acquaintance]…she's in the same situation, married to an Algerian and her daughter's in a real crisis now about her final year in school. She wanted to move out of the school she was in. She has no friends.

[83] Generally regarded as a lower class area, indeed some might call it a deprived suburb of the city. For more on the population diversity of Blanchardstown see Ní Chonaill (2007).

> She wasn't accepted. She was different and she's been miserable in her school for the last five years [ ]...this youngster has been, you know, *really suffering because of her difference*. Which is...and this is in one of the better schools in Dublin! [ ] And these are children that have gone all their lives to these schools now...*these haven't been dropped in from anywhere now. They've been born and raised in this country* [emphasis added] (Emily '09).

Emily was the only interviewee to allude to such negative issues in 'the better schools of Dublin' but if the stories she told relating to these and two other students reflect the lived experiences of Irish students who are phenotypically different, they are both a cause for concern and another reason to problematise the tolerance and anti-racism of the professional class.

Unusually, one father remarked that it was a disappointment to him that his son would not be 'exposed' to peers of other ethnic backgrounds when he started in his primary school, a fee paying school. It was, he said, 'a straight-up' school or, in other words, a 'normal' school with a 'normal' student population:

> 'Cos he's in nursery and the nursery for the most part...there's one or two kids who, let's say, aren't ethnic Irish, let's say... [ ] But again it [private primary school] won't be that different 'cos it's going to be...it's a very 'straight-up' school, you know, there's going to be no difference really. He won't be exposed to that, which is annoying in a way, but there's nothing you can do about it. [ ] ...and we wish there was a more...more diverse ethnic spread in the school, you know, but there probably won't be, you know...that's the reality (Jerry '09).

Byrne (1997) came across similar comments in her study on race, class, and gender among middle class mothers in London. Some of her interviewees made explicit reference to the value of socialisation opportunities in multi-ethnic environments which the parents regarded as helpful in building positive social capital for their children's future lives and careers.

Social Life

Two out of the twenty interviewees socialised regularly with individuals who they categorised as immigrants. This is not surprising given the homogeneity of their workplaces and neighbourhoods nor is it something which many interviewees had ever reflected upon and, when they did, social class position was again most likely to be given in explanation as Gabrielle's response suggests. She automatically thinks of her house cleaner when asked about socialising with immigrants:

> Obviously my cleaner is there every other week or whatever…em…but I didn't...I didn't have close friends who were immigrants…there's no reason why I didn't meet them. There was no reason to meet them… [voice trails away].

Beryl, the youngest person interviewed, explained that there were no immigrants in her social circle because there had been none throughout her education (up to and including fourth level) in the late 1990s – early 2000s. It is important to note however that Beryl was one of the two interviewees who had black co-workers and clients. Also notably, she works in the public health sector which is statistically, and anecdotally, one of the country's most diverse sectors:

> …it was always people from college that I hung out with and there was never any mix, there was no racial...no racial mix, it was quite different. And my friends have married and there's been no inter-racial, or no inter-country marriage even, or anything different. Like, when we were in college, it was pre-diversity.

Beryl explained that homogeneous social networks were not just the norm for her but the norm in the social scene in Dublin in 2008. To illustrate this point she described what appears to be segregated socialising in a Dublin city centre nightclub. The events described took place to the best of her recollection in the mid-2000s:

> …we were downstairs where it was… the people who were on the guest list and it was, like, all white. You went upstairs and there were no white people to be seen, it was all black. So between the floors there was...I had gone upstairs to get a drink from the bar...

In a rare reference by an interviewee to socialising regularly with a professional class peer who is black African, we catch a glimpse of the experience of individuals who are, in the eyes of most of their Irish social class peers, for all their shared values and contribution to Ireland, not quite 'people like us'. Implicitly, by referring to Polish and Chinese people, Helen indicates that it is her acquaintance's skin colour which gets 'a different reaction'. The following is from my interview with her in 2009:

> …well I suppose I'm struck by…one of [boyfriend's] colleagues is a doctor [gives details of his work] I think he's from Ghana. A brilliant doctor, but I am conscious that when we go out with him that he does get a different reaction than, say, probably a Polish or a Chinese person would get. But that's the only real experience I've had of it so I don't feel that qualified to talk about it…But it's not a negative reaction, it's just...kind of…much more…Yes...he would be much more self-conscious, I think.[ ]
>
> *(I/ver) Has he ever told you of any bad experiences?*
>
> No, he hasn't. Now he's very comfortable with his group from work and everything and I think they would treat him absolutely as…as a peer. I've never seen anything like that. I suppose you feel people noticing it more but you can't quantify it or…

Along with Helen, the only other exception to the mono-cultural social scene described by Beryl and others, was Arthur who also works in the Irish public health service and had heard anecdotes about low levels of interaction between the Irish and, in particular, phenotypically different immigrants. He found this a source of some amusement when we talked in 2008:

> I would socialise in [names of gay bars]. It's like…loads of foreigners. Lots of Chinese, lots of Asians, lots of Eastern Europeans...So everywhere you turn there are lots of foreigners [ ] and you don't see...you don't get a negative attitude [ ] In my own experience in the gay social scene: it's the more the merrier! [laughs]. It doesn't arise on the gay scene.

In addition to low levels of social interaction, there was an almost total absence of references to sexual/family relationships between people categorised as 'immigrants' and

the family and social networks of these Irish professionals. Just one interviewee, Iris, referred to an inter-racial marriage within the family network. Late into interview, she told how her sister was married to an African working in the United States. The couple were expecting their first child at the time of the interview and Iris expressed her delight that her (Irish professional class) family had welcomed, without any difficulty, she remarked, 'the idea of a black grandchild'. Smiling, she went on to say, unprompted, that the fact that her brother-in-law was a professional in a prestigious international company was a significant factor in this familial acceptance. In contrast, Keith's parents had strenuously objected in the past to his sister's relationship with an Iranian. In this case, the professional status of the boyfriend was not enough to secure his welcome into the family. His cultural difference could not be ameliorated by his professional status:

> My sister turned up at home with an Iranian once...em…she worked in a hospital and he was a doctor and it didn't matter… it didn't matter if he was an astronaut or something…he was an Iranian.

Although there may have been any number of reasons the fledgling relationship did not continue, Keith was convinced that the skin colour of the boyfriend was problematic for his father, who he mentioned, like many of his generation, would talk about 'darkies' and who had also objected to the marriage between Keith's friend and a native American girl. In fact, the father had phoned the Irish man's mother to ask how she 'could have let that happen'.

The distances, social and physical, evidenced in these findings encompass the workplace, schoolroom, and neighbourhood, as well as friend and family networks. Interviewees repeatedly clarified that the substantial immigration 'doesn't impinge' on their everyday lives and that they have low levels of every day interaction with individuals they categorise as immigrants. In many of the transcripts, addresses or place names are operationalised as a 'shorthand' or code for classed areas in what Rhodes (2011) called a 'geography of roughness'. This 'geography of roughness' illustrates the boundaries of the intra-racial divide to which Hartigan Jr. (1999, 2003) refers and which, I argue, is indicative of the racialisation of the lower classes. It also points to the taken-for-granted way in which immigrants are both racialised *and* classed.

These findings support Bonilla-Silva's (2001) theorisation of a 'white *habitus*' i.e. the social and residential isolation of whites which, he claims, informs white racial tastes and perceptions and limits the likelihood of friendships. But I believe it is also important to acknowledge the role of class difference in these outcomes. In the Irish context, Breen and Whelan (1996) refer to the infrequency of ties of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood that cross the lines of class division. Such racial and class isolation is not incidental and involuntary nor, I argue, are the many comments about not knowing any 'real immigrants'. My findings support what Houts Picca and Feagin refer to as whites 'studied avoidance' (2007: 61) of racial issues wherever possible, often to the extent of proclaiming colour-blindness (as some interviewees do), avoiding people of colour and even avoiding the places associated with non-whites. However, as well as consensus on who is not impinged upon by immigration to Ireland, there was also consensus on whose lives it does impact. Frequently my attention was deflected towards people for whom, interviewees believe, immigration was, and is, an 'issue,' namely the Irish lower classes. It is to evidence of such deflection that I now turn.

Deflecting: 'A problem for the lower classes'

In this section I show how interviewees perceive the people they categorise as immigrants to be members of the lower classes and situated alongside indigenous 'people that have no power'. [84] Implicit in this categorisation is that the speakers are themselves people with power including, as we saw in the previous chapter, the power to 'divide, classify and allocate' (Bauman, 1991: 15). My findings also capture the expectation that, if it hadn't already done so, immigration would inevitably spark racially motivated behaviour among people 'down lower' due to resource competition and because such conflict was 'natural' among the lower classes. Indeed a number of interviewees expressed surprise that such conflict was not, to their knowledge, more generally in evidence.

> Well, I suppose, I would have expected now that… Given that unemployment is now going through the roof you would have probably…not expected…but thought that there was a risk that there would be a backlash…em…against immigrants…and I haven't really, you know, seen or heard any real indication about that and I'm not sure what the reason is…is it that a lot of them have left? Or is it that,

[84] Jerry '09

> you know, there is a certain level of intolerance in this country to it that hasn't manifested itself yet...but...you or I haven't seen...like, apart from up in the North, remember that thing up in the North? That thing with the Romanis [85] just there about a few weeks ago. But I haven't really heard, you know, of any kind of incidents of abuse or heightened levels of abuse against immigrants just in the last few months (Barry '09).

A perceived correlation between resource conflict, the lower classes, and 'natural' racism, emerged as a common-sense understanding. Note that resource conflict was evident in the pre-recession data gathered in 2008 although to a lesser extent than in the 2009 data.

> ...not to be...putting it into social classes again...but I think those in the upper- and middle-economic groups...it [immigration] probably won't bother them 'cos they're not affected by it. But people who are in the lower incomes will probably start feeling ...'Well, shag it, I'm not getting this job or I'm not getting that job because of that [immigrant]'. And those issues may come to the fore and you may start seeing...you know...[long pause]. Whereas, I think racism and things like that haven't really reared their head much in Ireland. You might start to see the...well...the indigenous...I hate calling them that...but the indigenous white population start saying: 'Well, fuck it, I haven't got that job because your man from whatever country is willing to work for 10 cent cheaper than me' (Edward '08).

> So yes, in 15 to 20 years, if you're asking me could we have a BNP or something like that. Quite possibly, quite, quite, possibly. And I would see it developing in, you know, the poorer areas, you know, of the lower socio-economic groups (Claudette '09).

I also found that the perception of the racism of the lower classes was not just the common-sense perception of individuals.

[85] In June 2009, a number of Roma families in Northern Ireland were forced to leave their homes after racist attacks that are being blamed on rightwing elements of the loyalist community.

The following extract is illustrative of an institutional perception of lower class racism in the mid-2000s which, the speaker admits, was not grounded in previous experience.

> Ah, we did have some issues...em...in relation to some of the Zimbabwean engineers we recruited via South Africa in that when it came to sending them out on their own to parts of the city where...we decided not to...send them on their own.
>
> *(I/ver) Was that [decision] based on a socio-economic profile of parts of the city?*
>
> Yes. Yeah…and maybe it was totally prejudicial against both parties but it was decided that it would be unfair to send them on their own... [into] working class [areas] yeah. [ ] Yeah., maybe we were being too politically correct in that they didn't go...maybe we were making assumptions that they would be...targeted. But we didn't have any evidence that they were going to be targeted (Charles '08).

Interviews carried out in 2009, when the recession, if not its extent, was established knowledge, were even more likely to contain references to the likelihood of inter-racial conflict between immigrants and the Irish lower classes. The following extract is taken from an interview which took place in the reception/coffee dock area of a well-known hotel populated at the time by (mostly) men, all of whom were white, in business suits, and engaged in formal or informal conversation. Larry is clear where racial tensions do and will happen and it is not and will not be in the middle and professional class *habitus*:

> I think…you've to be careful really. I mean…eh…I think…in a way we're lucky…the huge influx…it hasn't had a huge impact in a lot of people's lives because unfortunately a lot of it has been ghettoised. So to a large extent, for a lot of people around this room, it never happened. Look around the room, yeah [smiles]. [ ] To a large extent, for 50 or 60 per cent of the population, it never happened. Now, the economic crisis may impact on people at the lower end of the economic scale and it might become a problem and you may have racial tensions if that starts.

I found this rhetoric of inter-racial, intra-class, conflict reproduced as common-sense to the extent that my interviewees implied it was only a matter of time before it became apparent and that such conflict and fear of the phenotypically different other is 'natural', even primordial, as Josephine, speaking in 2009 put it:

> [W]e have that 21st century aspiration, but I probably still think that you can't come away from that actual primal fear that we have of other people and of other people that don't look like us. I mean [notable hesitation] *those differences are there, you know, which go back eons, you know, and that's a primal thing and automatically people had this fear against people they didn't know* - [the] unknowns. And these people to us are unknowns…We don't know what they…they…they come in and they speak a different language. They have different cultures. They have different ways of doing things. And that creates a fear, however subliminal, in all of us that this is going to affect me somehow and even if it just comes down to the fact that the Special Needs teacher being absent from the class [to provide assistance for immigrant children] is going to affect my child's education…it...it's introducing that element of fear [emphasis added].

So inevitable was conflict between the Irish lower classes and immigrants that some interviewees expressed surprise at not having heard/seen more reportage about increased racial tensions and incidents and speculated that the media were perhaps not covering such incidents or that it was 'happening under their radar' which implies another form of 'studied avoidance', this time by journalists. The most common speculation was that the public was not being told 'the whole story' (i.e. the 'truth' about immigration) lest it incite the lower classes as, it is claimed, has happened in other countries. Toxteth in the UK, and Marseilles in France, are the most frequently cited examples of 'what could happen' although both are misrepresented as examples of inter-racial, intra-class riots. Notice Edward's reference to racism being the 'natural' reaction of 'wasters', a derogatory colloquial term for someone who is perceived to be unproductive, not contributing to society.

> …you would…[long pause] *you don't hear much about it, again because they're keep...it's not being reported*...but a bigger rise in

> racism…you would expect to see sort of: 'Jesus I've no fucking job now and there's that fucking black bastard there and he got my job,' and attacks on that basis. So you've seen a bit of it but you haven't seen that much and you would expect that to come through to a degree… [I] would expect that it's happening and it's not being reported. And if I'm wrong in that assumption I would expect it to grow, as a *natural* reaction of …what I would call *the wasters*, the ones who don't want …the ones who don't want them living in Ireland. [It's] *under the radar and not being covered by the media*. But I would have thought it would be covered by the media if it is [happening], 'cos it's a good…it's a good media story in that sense. So maybe it just hasn't happened *yet* – and I hope it doesn't happen. Jesus, I would love if it didn't happen, but it just seems to happen in *every* society, you know, whether it's with black people in America through the '60s and '70s and '80s or whatever…you know or in the UK with all the Asians, the Indians and Pakistanis… [emphasis added] (Edward '09).

> I live off [road in south inner city] and it's full of multi-ethnic and inner-city people and I haven't seen any incidents as such but *I'm sure incidents happen all the time* but…em…[ ] But there haven't been…from what I can gather…unless the Guards are hiding the statistics or unless nothing has happened that's overly dramatic. We haven't had a Toxteth or we haven't had a Marseilles, as such, where things have got out of hand, there's been riots (sic) and all kinds of stuff. We haven't had that but maybe that's to come... [Later] I think it will. I think it'll always remain an issue [emphasis added] (Jerry '09).

Conclusion

This chapter evidences the 'whiteness' of the day-to-day lives of the Irish professionals I interviewed, and their families, as they live, socialise, are educated, and work, in a predominantly, and in some cases entirely, white professional class *habitus*.

I have demonstrated the low level of interaction with people they categorise as 'real' immigrants and therefore why they perceive immigration as 'not an issue' for them. We have also seen how the interviewees deflect talk about immigration and immigrants onto people for whom they perceive immigration is an issue i.e. 'people that have no power,' namely the lower classes.

Firstly, my findings support Feagin and O'Brien's argument that white people's views of non-whites are often 'made from a distance either in time or space' (2003: 26) and Kobayashi and Peake's contention that white peoples' 'constructions are unfettered by everyday interactions' (2000: 394). Second, the findings in this chapter illustrate that, for the majority of these Irish professionals, racism and intolerance is regarded as a problem contained within the lower class *habitus*, not least because the social class norms of the lower classes appear not to involve or require the performance of tolerance and anti-racism.

I argue that the perceived tolerance and anti-racism of the professional social class captured in large scale quantitative studies such as the ones mentioned in Chapter 2 stems in part from the fact that immigration is, by their own admission, 'not an issue' for this social class. The lives of these professionals involve little, if any, interaction even with work-colleagues categorised as 'real immigrants'. When they do interact in any depth, the immigrants are of the same social class as themselves and 'of a... particular level [so] there's no problem'. That members of the Irish professional class self-identify in surveys as tolerant of immigrants and immigration is, I argue, perhaps not surprising. It is easy to tolerate people with whom we rarely interact.

Feagin and O'Brien (2003) suggest that low levels of interaction result in a certain ignorance of people of other cultural backgrounds yet most academic and public discourse creates expectations of high levels of tolerance and anti-racism among professionals. The answer to this contradiction I believe lies in the fact that the discourse of tolerance and anti-racism is designed for public consumption. As I show in Chapter 8, private conversations take a different form. In the next chapter I show how these interviewees rationalise racialisation and 'classism' by referencing normative notions of respectability, contribution, and entitlement. The rhetoric of rationality allows the expression of some concerns around immigration to Ireland while remaining nominally within socially acceptable boundaries of public discourse. I also show how race talk is produced and reproduced amongst trusted peers and how it is used to support peer bonding. However, crucially, this type of talk is confined to the private sphere.

Chapter 8: Rationalising and Racialising

This chapter explores the final two of the six sub-categories constitutive of the substantive theory of Performing Distance which, I argue, describes the discursive strategies employed by white Irish professionals when talking about immigrants and immigration. Similar to those described in the previous two chapters, one of the strategies described in this chapter, rationalising, is deemed appropriate for the public domain. I found that when interviewees wanted to problematise immigration, or at least certain aspects of immigration and certain types of immigrant, they employed rational arguments or, rather the rhetoric of rationality, grounded mainly in economic arguments but also in a perceived threat to Irish cultural identity. Such arguments can be used without concern in the public domain. However, the sixth and final strategy I discuss, racialising, is restricted to the private domain and conversations among trusted peers. Racialising refers to discourse which draws on racial terms and stereotypes. Of particular interest and importance is that the interviewees themselves delineate the (limited) situations and contexts where this kind of talk is permissible. Significantly, the interviewee's acknowledgement of the existence of divergent public (frontstage) and private (backstage) performances is captured in the data.

This chapter is divided into three sections: firstly I discuss the 'rational' arguments related to immigration that are acceptable in the frontstage area. These are sub-divided into arguments related to economic and cultural benefit and threat. In the second section, I show how interviewees explicitly acknowledge the existence of public and private performance spaces; and finally, I provide examples of racialising discourse from 'backstage'.

The transcript data in this chapter have been selected from 24 interviews (from an available 28) and presents the voices of 17 individuals from an available 20.

Rationalising: 'we're a small country…'

Rationalising the economic benefit presented by immigration

Given the socio-economic context of this study, i.e. a period of unprecedented economic growth and rapid descent into recession, it is perhaps not surprising that economic arguments (for and against immigration) were predominant in the data collected. As Michael said in 2009: '[t]he one thing I think of is that immigration is usually to do with economics'. The so-called 'economic migrants' are perceived to be transient, flexible workers, travelling as single units rather than as part of a family. These are recognised as an important economic resource for the country, although one to be managed and controlled, which supports Lentin's (2004) argument that immigrants are primarily seen as 'economic commodities' rather than as social beings.

> …most of us tend to look at it [immigration] from an economic or labour market perspective, you know…they clock in, they're part of our world now, and they clock out and off they go, you know [voice trails away] (Larry '09).

There is a marked difference between the arguments presented in interviews before, and during, the recession. In 2008, without exception, interviewees acknowledged the contribution of immigrants to Ireland's economic growth. The talk was in terms of benefits to the country or 'Ireland Inc.' as some called it. The following are two examples of how the economic contribution of immigrants was recognised. Although Claudette does not say it directly, the 'we' to whom she refers appears to be similar to 'Ireland Inc.'

> I'd say we've managed [immigration] pretty well…em...we've controlled the flow when we needed to through the permit system, quite well, which has managed the numbers that we've had, so we have the right number of people for the right number of jobs (Claudette '08).

> [I] don't think Ireland would be economically where it is today if it hadn't been for immigration because they did what…what the Irish or other immigrants did for the US fifty years ago, they took the shitty, low-paid jobs (Edward '08).

These are the 'good' immigrants at the apex of the 'pecking order' or hierarchy of acceptability, largely Polish and Eastern European, who are 'not quite as white' as Western Europeans and whose entry and exit to the country is under surveillance in a way their fellow Europeans such as the French and British are not. Looking to describe the racial position of white immigrants in the US in the late 19th and early 20th century, Roediger chose the term 'inbetween people' to express 'a positionality somewhere between racism and inclusion, neither securely white nor non-white' (2005: 12-13). As evidenced in the data collected in 2008 and discussed in Chapter 6, every interviewee, without exception, mentioned the work ethos and competitive pay rates of the Polish and Eastern European arrivals. These immigrants were also seen to have contributed to the host country in the sense of working harder and longer than their Irish counterparts. These were the main but not the only reasons this category was positioned as the most acceptable type of immigrant. In addition, it was acknowledged that these workers contributed to the state by paying taxes and spending money within the economy. For some interviewees working in the private sector, immigrants not alone contributed to the country's economy in terms of their labour, taxes, and consumption of goods and services, they also created new and lucrative markets, and new retail opportunities for consumer goods, services, and accommodation:

> …the Chinese and the Polish communities in Ireland were huge in terms of target market for us [in the] last 2 to 3 years, yeah, huge (Helen '09).

Alongside this contribution to the state, they were not bothersome to their employers [86] as Keith explained:

> [t]hey came from an environment where renting houses was the norm and they were able to pay really high rents because most of them worked in the construction industry. And the anecdotal stories that you hear from people are: 'well, you know, Irish people were let go in order to facilitate people from Poland and elsewhere around Europe

[86] For a discussion on why few immigrant employees lodge complaints against employers see Allen (2007).

> who'd work for less and longer and were more appreciative of the job. They caused no problems, they weren't members of trades unions and they'd no issues.' So the construction industry loved these guys and was hugely welcoming. Ireland as a society was less so.

As Keith intimates, there is a down-side to this amenability – for the immigrants. A significant number of interviewees, both in 2008 and 2009, referred to media coverage of immigrant workers being exploited by Irish employers in relation to their employment terms and conditions including, in some cases, the provision of sub-standard food and accommodation (M.R.C.I., 2006a).

> And that's prevalent across industries like farming…eh...like vegetable picking, all of that sort of stuff, where, in order to beat the minimum wage they forced the migrant workers to set themselves up as self-employed contractors who could then charge 5 euro an hour rather than the 8 or 9 euro [national legal] minimum wage (Dean '08).

> I heard somebody [talking] recently… [ ] about being in Latvia and [a Latvian] said: 'oh, you're from Ireland'. And [the Irish person] was expecting the traditional 'oh, we love Ireland,' kind of thing and was told: 'oh, yeah, you're Irish' [mimics dismissive tone of voice]. Because it turned out a lot of Latvians are over here picking mushrooms [87] and living in sheds...so that has maybe a negative effect on [the] people of Latvia, I don't know (Charles '08).

The vulnerability of these 'most acceptable' of immigrants is clearly illustrated when Florence, a senior public servant with responsibility for some Irish labour market policies, talked about the Moldovan [88] immigrants working in her partner's business.

[87] For more on this issue see The Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland (2006b) and on the exploitation of migrant women in Irish middle class homes see Carey (2010)
[88] Moldova is in Eastern Europe but not a member of the EU or EEA in 2008-09.

It is also, I argue, an illustration of the intersection of race and class in the categorisation and racialisation of whites of a 'different class':

> …my partner has a lot of dealings with immigrants. He's in the property sector and he had some living in one of his properties and he was almost a mediator for them - they're Moldovan - a mediator for them to work for other people. [ ] …they were fantastic workers and they were multi-skilled in terms of being handy-men. Like, they were carpenters, painters, brickies, gardeners - whatever - they did the lot. I suppose the big theme around any discussion we'd have had, or any interaction on all of that was that they were very flexible, very skilled, very hard workers, and that they beat the Irish hands down all the time in all those departments [and] in all those areas. And they were very willing, they were almost…it was…*he was almost running a feudal system* [smiles], do you know what I mean? It was just amazing [smiles]. Like, he'd great time for them now, and great respect for them. They're fantastically entrepreneurial and they're doing really well but it's just…eh…they call him Mister [first name] and me Miss [first name] [laughs] and it's really…it's really funny! But just - there's a lot of respect - but at the same time I think underneath all that *there's a sense that they're a different…class really*, let's say. Do you know? In the sense that they're working for him and *they're very much in his gift* and…do you know? [voice trails off] [emphasis added] (Florence '09).

As she spoke I noticed Florence become somewhat embarrassed by what she had said about the obvious power her partner had over these Moldovan men as their employer, agent, and landlord, and, on the recording, her voice trails away to silence. I noticed this in a number of interviews when comments more suited to the private/backstage domain were being made. Florence tried to ameliorate what she had said by explaining that all had worked out for the best and that the men were 'established now.' Yet Moldovan tradesmen would not have been, and still are not, eligible for employment permits in Ireland (Department of Enterprise Trade and Innovation, 2010) so it is most likely the men were working illegally which would have added to the precariousness of their situation and their dependence on Florence's partner.

Many interviewees benefitted even more directly and closer to home from the contribution of immigrant workers. There were many references to Polish, Romanian, Moldovian, and Chinese domestic workers and child/elder carers being employed by the interviewees and their peers. The following comment by Charles in 2009 is indicative:

> …my extended family and in-laws all have people come in and 'do' for them who are foreign and they have nothing but the height of praise for them…

This was also the case in 2009 when the recession had begun to impact. Invariably these domestic employees were described in very positive terms although it is useful to note that obtaining employment permits for Romanians, Moldovians, and Chinese to take on domestic positions would not have been possible given the terms of work permits (Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation, 2012). This next extract is one example of the glowing (if also somewhat patronising or diminutive) terms used to refer to these adult women:

> …and the little girl who comes in from Romania, who does my house for me, like, she's changed my life for me, she's my jewel, you know? She's a pleasure in my life… (Emily '08)

Interviewing white male elites in the US (Feagin and O' Brien, 2003) also found frequent use of 'nice', friendly' and 'wonderful' when they talked about interpersonal contacts they had with African Americans. Feagin and O'Brien (2003) suggest this is an over-compensation for the fact that such contacts were few and far between. I have a sense the same might be the case in Ireland although it may simply be that these Irish professionals were delighted to have such relatively inexpensive help in their private and family lives. That said, in 2010, the Migrants Rights Centre of Ireland (M.R.C.I.) reported that the second largest percentage of complaints made to the Centre came from the domestic work sector (M.R.C.I., 2012).

Interestingly, in 2009, a number of interviewees referred not (or not alone) to the immorality and illegality of exploiting immigrants, but rather expressed their concern that the discrimination and exploitation suffered by some immigrants might damage the economic or corporate reputation of 'Ireland Inc.' and, with it, the prospects of a new generation of post-boom Irish emigrants.

In other words, the exploitation of immigrants in Ireland was financialised and expressed as a potential economic and reputation loss for Ireland.

> …we were extraordinarily happy to take these people in…em…when we needed them. And, in a lot of cases we took them in and may not have treated them that well and that certainly is the feedback that's coming back from countries that…em…you know, the Irish are now looking to move to. [ ] I know [of a case] where Irish truck drivers went to Poland…em…and…eh...had to leave their job within a day otherwise they would've been lynched…em…and it was because of the way that the Polish workers were perceived to have been treated in Ireland by the Irish people. So…I think we've probably done ourselves a little bit of *reputational* damage. [ ] There certainly is a sense that…em…Ireland as a country was happy to…em…make use - and possibly abuse - foreign nationals when we needed them [emphasis added] (Dean '09).

> You'd be afraid that the press and the foreign press would have a few stories about how Ireland has made it difficult for foreign nationals to live in Ireland and in an effort to try and save money we've tried to push them out even though we were happy to welcome them in. So from a foreign direct investment [perspective] I think it'd be very short termist (sic) to try and put that out [through the media] (Edward '09).

> …or [if] the social change [from growth to recession] happens so fast that there's a…a need to scapegoat certain groups…Then I think we'll find it difficult in five years' time, when the economy does recover, to attract people again that we may need. And I also think that people from Ireland might…might…em…be treated more harshly in countries that they go to (Helen '09).

In summary, while there was widespread acknowledgment of the economic benefit of immigration, some interviewees were concerned that the economic benefits garnered might have come at a cost to the immigrants (in terms of exploitation) and that this, in time, could be detrimental to Ireland's economic recovery e.g. negatively affecting

foreign inward investment and the welcome that the latest generation of Irish emigrants (their children's generation) could expect abroad.

Rationalising the cultural benefit of immigration

Both before and during the recession, of the few interviewees who referred to Irish culture at all, it is true to say many saw Ireland's new population diversity as a positive development and a contribution to Ireland's cultural life. That said, the talk was not of intercultural or mutual learning and benefit and was, not unlike the economic context above, largely about what immigrants could contribute to 'our culture'. Irish culture was never explicitly defined by the interviewees but reference was made to Gaelic sport, the Irish language, and Catholicism. Here is a selection of comments on the cultural benefit of immigration to Ireland:

> So the mix has changed and changed permanently and I regard that as a very good thing because I think it enriches the culture...I just think it's changed forever and that's good (Arthur '08).

> I think we've grown up a bit as a country. A lot of that is down to the fact that in the classrooms there's a lot of kids of different nationalities now and they're coming to the birthday parties and they're going to the football matches and they're doing all the stuff that everyone else is [doing] and *people are seeing them as people*. And I think that's quite positive, yeah [emphasis added] (Charles '09).

> It's probably going to be quite interesting when it's had time to bed in. Whereas now it's just a bit like 'oh yeah, they're here, but this is Ireland' and whatever. Whereas if you look at America, which is such a melting pot, you have integration and fusion and… [ ] Em…I had a lovely moment on a bus once coming back from an IBEC [89] meeting. It was maybe the day before St Patrick's Day or whatever and the kids were getting off school and there were two little black African boys there. They were coming home from school with their green painted

[89] The Irish Business and Employers' Confederation.

> shamrocks and their mothers...[ ]...the boys were teaching their mothers how to say '*Lá Fhéile Pádraig*' [90] in Irish and they had their little...so I just thought...now do you know...they were just so...and the women were encouraging them: 'oh lovely, speak Irish,' you know, that kind of...and it was *really* nice. And I just thought, you know what, those who stay, you know, they're going to embrace it, you know, it's probably going to be...they're probably going to be better at being Irish than we are [smiles] [Emphasis in original] (Gabrielle '09).

This last sentence reminds me of primary school history classes when, after a brief introduction to one of the (many) invasions of Ireland such as that of the Vikings and Normans, we would be told how the invaders quickly grew so fond of Ireland they *chose* to stay and became 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'. Coincidentally, the cliché was originally coined in the 19th century as a criticism of the erosion of the English identity of some of the colonisers in Ireland (The Oxford Companion to Irish History, 2007).

There were some brief references, as one might expect, to the advent of ethnic restaurants, food, and clothes shops, 'African' hairdressers, and festivals such as the Dun Laoghaire World Music Festival and Chinese New Year (promoted by the Dublin City Council Integration Office).

Rationalising the economic threat presented by immigration

Despite the many comments on the contribution of immigrants to Irish economic growth, interviewees were not unconditionally supportive of a more diverse population, even interviewees whose lifestyles and businesses had benefited as a result of immigration. This conditionality was more apparent in the 2009 data and it is then that we see emerge some of the more common rationales used to express concerns over immigration. Rather than the theme of immigrant contribution to 'Ireland Inc.', what is of concern here is *entitlement* and the perceived negative impact on the state's resources, most specifically, social protection payments, from the presence in the state of people who are not 'our own'.

[90] Meaning 'The Festival Day of St. Patrick' in Irish.

These arguments are presented as rational and socially acceptable in the public domain and within social class norms, yet they draw on crisis racism (Balibar, 1991b) themes of 'too many', 'too much' and 'not fair'. Examples include Claudette in 2009 saying: 'we're not a big country so, you know…and I think we're just storing trouble up for ourselves in years to come' and Michael, also in 2009: 'there's an underlying economic reality that we all have to face - that the country can't support a…a…never-ending influx of economic migrants'. Even interviewees, like Florence, who consistently acknowledged the economic contribution of immigrants, expressed concern:

> This [immigration] is one way of opening us up to the world and getting us to be much more mature and much more global *but* also preserving what's important and what's good about ourselves and I really do believe that equal societies are better societies, diverse societies are better societies, and they're also richer societies ultimately. I really believe that. And even in business I think we should be…open up an awful lot more to diversity *but at the same time there has to be controls and that's the flip side of it* because I can't go into any country in the world and expect the world…and equally that can't happen here either [emphasis added].

In the data from 2009, the comparisons between Polish and Eastern European immigrants in Ireland and Irish emigrants of previous generations were becoming contrapuntal. This next extract is an example of this shift and of the thinking process that informs notions of 'good' and 'bad' immigrants. Note the internal contradiction that infers the Irish who went to America in the past were 'good' immigrants because they went to *stay* in America while in contemporary Ireland the immigrants who returned to their home country or moved on to another country are the 'good' immigrants. People who stayed in Ireland once the recession hit appear to have metamorphosed into 'bad' immigrants who are not contributing to Irish society, are sending their money back to their country of origin and/or staying on in Ireland to collect social welfare.

> …we [Irish] worked in America. We built the railways and we joined the police forces and we worked in construction so we never…we always…we were honest about it. We went there to set up a life and *contribute to society* and we don't see these immigrants as doing that…because [Irish] people didn't go to America to earn enough

> money to come back. They went to America to earn enough money to live. The Poles came here, and the Eastern Europeans came here, to earn money and they sent the money back but [they planned] to go back eventually and they always saw themselves as being temporary residents. And *we looked at them as being temporary residents*. And then it became less than temporary and then, when times went bad, some of them - the good ones - went back to Poland and went back to work again. The ones who...well...they didn't feel like it and had some roots here and enjoyed it here and saw what the social welfare had to offer them, they stayed, and we're in a space now that we're left with the...we don't have the good immigrants here now anymore. *We've got the bad immigrants*, if you can say that! Because we've only the people here who won't go back [emphasis added] (Keith '09).

By 2009, the favourable comparisons of hard working Irish and Polish/Eastern European immigrants had become contradistinctions between Irish emigrants and people coming to Ireland. [91] What behaviours constitute a 'good' immigrant is relative, it seems. In boom times a 'good' immigrant was one who travelled abroad to work, paid taxes, and lived quietly. A 'bad' immigrant was one who did not contribute and yet made demands for entitlements in cash (social protection payments) or kind (hospital beds). The description of a 'bad' immigrant remains consistent over 2008 and 2009 however it is expanded to include immigrants who have 'not gone home'. An implicit, and sometimes explicit, expectation in some of the popular and political discourse on immigration has been that the economic downturn in Ireland would result in the majority of immigrants 'going home,' an expectation which has not been realised (Krings et al, 2009) through the decades and geographical contexts (Gilmartin and White, 2008: 146). It appears that by 2009, the term 'economic migrant' i.e. people who 'filled the jobs when we needed them' had become a derogatory term. An increasing number of immigrant groups were being consigned to the 'bad' immigrant category with the exception of professional class immigrants (who are not 'real immigrants really because they are real members of society' as we saw in Chapter 6) because, for example, they are perceived to have made individual lifestyle or kinship choices to move to Ireland and are regarded as significant

[91] See King for a discussion on the changing metaphors of Irish migration from the 1800s to 2000s whereby he finds 'paradoxically mixed metaphors for migratory self-selection, conveying the impression that 'back then' it was the most enterprising who left, whereas now it is always the least enterprising who would come' (1998: 52).

net socio-economic contributors in the sense of paying tax and having disposable incomes.

While the majority of interviewees rationalised that the Polish and Eastern Europeans had not 'gone home' as expected [92] because of social welfare entitlements, very few mentioned lifestyle choices or family commitments as possible considerations. Larry was one of the few to acknowledge that many immigrants had settled and started, or were maintaining, families in Ireland but even some of the most 'acceptable' of immigrants (e.g. the Polish) renowned in the past for their hard work and contribution to Ireland's economy, were now regarded as 'guest workers' who would/should return to their country of origin or at least move on:

> I think the national debate would be very, very important because it's like an awful lot of things in Irish society we just let it lie there, you know, or it's *swept under the carpet*. There probably is a whole range of issues…if you think of the bunch of Polish lads or the bunch of Filipino (sic) nurses who come over…it's…you're almost like…you're in to the sort of *guest worker* concept…get them over, do the job and then they go back to where they came from and that suits both parties but, you know, quite a lot of them have settled down here with their…with their families and there's going to be more of that just with free movement [within the EU] and all the rest of it so…you know. The extent to which they are integrated, you know, so they *positively contribute* to society and in turn society looks positively on, and contributes to, their lives is very important [emphasis added] (Larry '09).

Filipina/o nurses, actively recruited by the Irish health service, and who had bought houses and settled their families in Ireland should not be exempt from deportation if/when they lost their jobs suggested Michael:

> …an economic migrant could be classed [the same] as a person from Ireland buying an apartment in Bulgaria. It's a property abroad. They're [an economic migrant] still not an Irish citizen [and] the Irish person is not a Bulgarian citizen [ ]…it may be classed as their primary residence while they're in the [Irish] state, while the work

[92] See Krings et al (2009) for more information on Polish immigration in Ireland.

> permit lasts, but technically they're still not a citizen and if the work permit expires [the house] should revert to an asset and can still be held on to, as an asset. But if they're deported back to their own country after the work permit expires, it should be classed as an asset. It could be rented out, as a property investment and…maybe…I don't know (Michael '09).

Larry's reference to the necessity for a national debate to reveal the immigration problematic that has been hidden 'under the carpet' is discussed in more detail in this chapter. His comment echoes the finding in Chapter 6 where the absence of a national debate was seen by some interviewees to be at the root of the Irish Traveller 'problem' too.

As discussed in Chapter 7, none of the interviewees expressed concerns relating to immigrants 'taking our jobs' because these interviewees do not expect to have to compete for employment with individuals they categorise as immigrants. However, in 2009, some interviewees expressed concern over their children's employment prospects and the likelihood that the younger Irish generation would have to emigrate. Here is Alison, the mother of teenage children:

> …one area where I have heard people talk about it [immigration] is [ ] some of our friends' daughters have qualified as nurses and can't get jobs and the reaction is usually 'but look at all the foreign nurses [ ] why are we still employing them when there's people coming out of nursing colleges here and the state has paid for them through the nursing colleges and they can't get jobs?' (Alison '09).

For the majority of interviewees in 2009, the economic contribution of immigrants was no longer a focus of attention and their contribution to both 'Ireland Inc.' and to Irish culture was occluded. Instead, the comments referred increasingly to concerns relating to the cost of immigrants' entitlements. A very common concern was that 'we' are going to have to pay more taxes to cover 'their' entitlements. Many interviewees expressed the view that people who are not Irish citizens [93] (i.e. one of us) should not be entitled to welfare supports because of the untenable cost and burden. No one referred to the direct

[93] As discussed in Chapter 2, since 2004, automatic entitlement to Irish citizenship is based on descent rather than place of birth.

and indirect taxes (including pay related social insurance contributions (PRSI)) paid by immigrants working in Ireland which form the basis of any social protection entitlements. The following extracts give a sense of the depth of negative feeling on this issue:

> There's a policy of 'we have no f--king policy so [laughs] so come in' and you come in and you get treated the same way as an Irish citizen, by and large, you know, whether it's in terms of health or whatever it might be (Edward '09).

> I'd say at some point in the future they'll [the Irish Government] have to determine what is the cost of all of these new…eh…new Irish and the cost of the social welfare. It's probably one of these *hot political topics* that no one will ever want to talk about or produce figures on... [emphasis added] (Dean '09).

> I do the same. I go: 'it's going to be a burden' and, I think, up to two years ago that was a burden we could cope with, but I think if it's seen as a burden for the next five years it'll be…people will…it might then become an issue (Jerry '09).

> I mean if we have...if we spent…I think it's 180 million euros a year that we spend on funding child benefit for children that don't live in this country [ ] [The Minister for Integration] Conor Linehan will say: 'well, we've obligations as Europeans blah, blah, blah, blah'. So that'll be the Government policy, but the Irish people as a grouping, I suggest, would say, 'well, *why don't we look after our own*... [ ] And that would be a simple question that you could ask a hundred thousand people and, well, if the choice was: 'who would you spend the money on, the bonus for the social welfare [recipients] or foreign peoples' kids who have no relationship with this country, have never lived in this country, or are living elsewhere?' Why are we supporting them? (Keith '09).

Michael uses the example of the Polish migrant rather than French or Italian or German and is not alone in believing that people arriving into Ireland can access welfare/social protection supports with ease, which is not the case even for returning Irish emigrants who do not meet the Habitual Residency criteria. Also, similar to other interviewees, Michael frames his rationale as 'we can't' rather than 'we won't' provide welfare supports to those in need:

> ...one thing that irks me in [Irish] Government policy is...and this would have to be an EU policy [in the future]...I think there would have to be some sort of parity of social welfare especially for economic migrants as opposed to citizens of a particular country. So if a person from Poland is travelling to Ireland to get the benefits of being in Ireland not because they want to actually be a citizen but they want to get the fiscal rewards, then I think there's something wrong with that, you know. Yeah, because at the end of the day, *we're paying the taxes to...hopefully to cater for our own citizens* and if... It would do two things. It would certainly focus the mind of anyone that wants to come for economic purposes to actually try and work, and try and get a job, and it will also give a level playing field to all countries so when they [immigrants] do want to travel there's no country going *to suffer* on the back of that [as Ireland is currently] [emphasis added] (Michael '09).

In Chapter 6 we saw evidence of widespread suspicion in relation to 'genuine' versus 'non-genuine' asylum seekers. In the following extracts, we see that the cost associated with Direct Provision for asylum seekers, [94] who cannot legally work, is questioned and the provision of asylum financialised. It is this cost, rather than the entitlement to social welfare of Eastern Europeans that becomes prioritised as a cause for concern.

[94] The system of Direct Provision, which was officially introduced by the Irish Government in 2000, requires people seeking asylum or leave to remain to live in state-designated accommodation centres. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work or study and are dependent on the allowance of €19.10 per week (adults) and €9.60 (children). Ireland is one of only two of the 27 EU members states which have opted out of the EU 'Reception Directive' which provides for minimum conditions for asylum seekers, including the right to work after waiting for a year for a decision (Irish Refugee Council, 2012)

Here is Dean speaking before the recession:

> ...it's something less to be proud of...how...how…we've treated those [asylum seekers] because we've bundled them into Butlins [95] and places like that. We've left them there for a long time, we haven't dealt with their cases speedily enough…em...and you know *there's been a cost related to that that the economy has had to carry. We were probably all so well off that we didn't notice it in our taxes* but in terms of who's likely to leave...the asylum seekers will stay as long as they're allowed to stay. The *genuine migrant worker*…em...who was coming to earn a living will probably move on to the next big construction project such as the [London 2012] Olympics and stuff like that. So what you'll actually be left with - and I suppose this is down to where there's a lack of policies - what you're left with is that the *good* workers will have left and we'll be left with migrants who either can't work or don't want to work or were here purely for the social welfare system. [Emphasis in original] (Dean '08).

By 2009, Beryl has noticed the cost and entitlement to welfare becoming a topic of conversation among her (healthcare professional) peers:

> I don't think the tensions are as much around the Eastern Europeans or the Russians…because I think that's because they came over and they worked. [ ] I think there was always more tensions about the fact that the refugees, the asylum seekers, are over [here] *living off our state*. [ ] Ah…certainly the topic of welfare is something that is coming up that I would hear more and more talk about.
>
> *(I/ver) Welfare for whom?*
>
> For everybody. Who should be getting it, who shouldn't be getting it, *who is entitled to it, who's not entitled*, who's entitled to medical cards, who's entitled to rent allowance, who's entitled to….whatever…do you know? So…it's like, who's entitled to what, and should they be entitled to it or…do you know? [emphasis added] (Beryl '09).

[95] A former Butlins holiday camp in Mosney, Co. Meath was opened as a Direct Provision accommodation facility in December 2000 (Haughey, 2001b). It is generally referred to simply as Mosney or, among an older generation who knew it as a holiday camp, as Butlins.

While it would be misleading to suggest there was no discussion of an economic downside in 2008, the cost of supporting asylum seekers, refugees, and the immigrant unemployed dominated discussion in 2009. More material was coded to 'economic arguments' than any other code (see Appendix 3). I argue the negativity was exacerbated by the cumulative figures promulgated by politicians and the media and reproduced by opinion leaders. In contrast, the same (low) levels of concern related to cultural threat are evident across the two years.

Rationalising the threat to Irish culture posed by immigration

As mentioned above, there was much less material coded to culture than to the economy. While there was, as we have seen, some data coded to the potential cultural contribution of immigration, much more was coded (both before and during the recession) to the effect that accommodating immigrants' expressions of cultural identity would diminish Irish culture. The comments are not unlike the criticism levelled at FitzGerald's pluralist vision of Ireland in the 1950s *vis* openness to the other necessitating a disavowal of one's own identity (as discussed in Chapter 2) or indeed the connection between culture and anarchy in Ireland as suggested by Lyons (1979). Note the dismissive references to political correctness and the underlying theme that it is not that 'we won't' but that 'we can't' accommodate other people's difference i.e. it is not practical or rational to expect 'us', the Irish, to do so. The irritant that is 'political correctness' can be seen in some of the following extracts:

> But I think [ ] the Government is trying to be very PC [politically correct] about it, very correct...to such an extent that maybe they're *bending over backwards*. [ ] Because what is happening is we're trying to accommodate all these peoples' differences and while it may be desirable, it's not necessarily practical. Because at the end of the day people who come here, if they want to live here and work here, they have to have English…em...whether they like it or not. And the children who don't speak English at school are helped. There's a lot of help given to them and, you know, the Chinese and all those come here to learn English and, you know, that's fine. But the whole thing about...I can't think of specific examples…*but the whole thing about changing the way we do things...to accommodate other peoples' differences*…those people are coming to Ireland…they're not

necessarily...they shouldn't necessarily expect...to bring their own customs. They can bring their own customs and celebrate their customs but at the end of the day they are living in Ireland [emphasis added] (Alison '08).

These are the issues that need to be looked at and debated openly. [ ] I don't know how right I am...but I think there needs to be more debate in today's society. You know, yes, *we have to respect each other's culture* but at the end of the day people have an identity and I think the Irish are losing their identity as well, a little bit, and I think we've forgotten that. [ ] But…eh…the population of Ireland has grown an awful lot and I think that's why it's important that we remember our culture because other countries have their cultures. They hold on to their cultures, they hold on to their religions, and I think it's really important that they have that, that they hold on to that, but it shouldn't be *imposed on the Irish*. That's a fear I have. [Later] There's certain things you're not hearing about in the media…em…like one of my big objections was...why was the crib taken out of St James's hospital every Christmas for the last few years? Why wasn't that publicised? Because that's not fair to our religion, *we're born and bred in this country*. I mean, St James's was a Catholic hospital. [Later] That's a fear I have...[ ] it should be debated and it should be talked about ...and it's about respect and that people know about each other's religions and that...and know about each other's cultures...and respect...*but that we're respected back as well.* I think there has to be a balance there [emphasis added] (Beryl '08).

A year later, in 2009, Beryl would reiterate this point including repeating, almost verbatim, this story of the hospital crib [96] suggesting that in the intervening months she had not come across a new or better anecdote to support her argument regarding the 'imposition' of other faith groups on Irish Catholicism. As we saw in Chapter 2, Beryl's crib story is very similar to the 'Winterval' stories that circulated widely in the UK but which turned out to be unsubstantiated (Burkeman, 2006).

[96] See also Gabriel (1998) on 'PC madhouse' and the 'banning' of Christmas in Birmingham, UK. Garner (2007b) suggests Christmas is not so much about religious practice but a festival that epitomises something British.

Another recurring theme was that while the Irish were making an effort to be welcoming, 'the immigrants' were not trying sufficiently hard to integrate into Irish culture and norms of behaviour. Having had to undertake diversity training in the health service area where she works, Beryl questioned what efforts immigrants were making to learn what was, or was not, culturally acceptable in Ireland:

> …we were all sent on cultural diversity training…em...in work, years ago, learning about religions and cultures. As I said, this is something that's coming up more and more in our work. We were learning about working with people from all different cultural groups and countries. [ ] What are the accepted practices? What's the accepted norm? And you look at those norms…but do they fit into *our* legal framework? So when people come over, what is culturally acceptable in certain countries does not fit into our legal framework…and that's very hard for people to actually deal with when they come over. So what is the education of people coming in to our culture, into the *Irish* culture, into the *Irish* legislation, do you know? [Emphasis in original] (Beryl '09)

Ivan, among the more positively disposed towards immigrants, reflected the feelings of a number of interviewees' when he claimed that however welcoming the Irish might have felt towards increased cultural diversity it was all too much and had happened too quickly:

> …you see there is an adjustment that people have to make if you're going from a *very, very* mono-cultural…to a kind of diverse… [ ] So to a diverse cultural community from a mono-cultural community is a difficult [change] for people to make [Emphasis in original] (Ivan '09).

> So people like [the then Minister for Integration] Conor Linehan have sat down and they have an integrated immigration or community approach to the way we deal with all these things. But...em...it's one thing to have an integrated strategy or plan, it's another thing completely to change the culture. [Later] …because the difficulty is, *the more that we learn about them, the more we find out how different*

> *they are to us and the...the more we dislike them* [emphasis added] (Keith '09).

The interviewees who made reference to cultural issues most frequently did so in relation to concerns regarding the diminution of the Catholic religion, for many an important constituent of Irish identity as we have seen. Most specifically, the threat was Muslim immigrants and Irish converts to Islam. It was the only faith-based threat mentioned. No one suggested immigration would diminish the Irish language or level of skill of Gaelic games. On the contrary, there were references to the (pleasant) surprise of hearing a black or Filipino schoolchild speaking Irish and the great addition the children of immigrants would make to national sports such as Gaelic hurling. In contrast, the talk in relation to religion is replete with the terminology of fear, violence, and subterfuge, utilising terms such as 'taking over', 'seeping', 'undercover' and 'underground', similar to that discussed in Cohen's (2008 [1972]) *Folk Devils.* That the adherents of the Muslim faith are associated with fear and violence is, Alison thinks, a rational response to the threat they pose:

> ...it's the Muslims' own fault in one way because, rightly or wrongly, they are being equated with terrorism. And the other thing that people may find a bit frightening is that Muslims are now the third largest religious grouping in this country...[ ] Oh, they are, and they're set *to take over* the Protestants. They reckon they'll *overtake* the Protestants in the next ten years...[ ] and I only saw this in the paper the other day...something like a third of Muslims in this country are native Irish which means they must be *converts*...[emphasis added] (Alison '08).

While Alison's comment that the Muslim faith group is the third largest in the Republic is factually correct, it does not reflect the vastly pre-dominant position of Catholicism with 87 per cent of people living in the Republic identifying as Catholic, 3 per cent as Protestant, and 1 per cent as Muslim (Quinn, 2010a). In his book on casual discourse and 'white fright', Myers (2003) argues that people categorised by whites as not being white are put under surveillance so that anecdotal data can be collected to suggest that whites are being 'taken over'.

Both Alison and Beryl appear convinced that political correctness and fear of 'the race card' are contributing to the ignorance of the Irish public to the threat posed to this element of national identity and that the media are complicit in maintaining this level of ignorance:

> …we're not hearing about the nitty gritty. Now, who was it was on the *Late Late Show* or some other show one night? And everyone said he was absolutely crazy, he is absolutely insane. He was saying that in France...em...that the Muslim community was going *to take over* [ ] the Muslim community *are taking over*...You know, you need to look at that, and it is amazing when you see that very slowly things are *changing in the underground* [sic] in Ireland…and they're not being reported on... [ ] But I think there's a lot of *changes in the undercurrents that'll seep up*... [emphasis added] (Beryl '08).

Alison and Beryl's fear of the Islamicisation of Christian Ireland is similar to the notion of 'Eurabia', a term used initially by some conservative intellectuals and the European far right to describe the contemporary cultural and political subjugation by Islam of a Europe blinded by doctrines of multiculturalism, political correctness and a cowed media (Carr, 2006). Critics of the 'Eurabia' discourse suggest belief in the existence of this 'reverse Crusade' is no longer limited to a marginal fascist fringe but has passed into more mainstream political discourse from conservative US think tanks to UK tabloid journalists and neo-fascist groups (ibid).

During the data analyses I noticed conversations related to cultural contribution and/or entitlement were most likely to segue into talk that would not be deemed appropriate to the public domain. For example, an increasing level of irritation is palpable in the following comment from Florence (someone I would have placed on the 'pro-diversity' end of the spectrum) as she describes the themes of any discussion on immigration among her network of peers:

> There's *too many* of them now… [ ] The big theme would be that *they're all over the place*! When you go out for a meal, they're all there. And the other big theme is 'it's all very fine, but Janey Mac, you know, you [the immigrant] can't speak English.' [ ] So there'd be those kind of themes and yet a willingness to support them as well and knowing that they were good for the economy…but yet a kind of

> sense as well of ...well, a kind of annoyance really, a kind of impatience with the whole thing you know? [Later] So I think that we've a long way to go, you know, we're very new to this, we're very new to this cultural change, of immigrants coming to Ireland, working here, being integrated in the society and all of that. I think...even those of us who are open to it, we're still very new to it [emphasis added] (Florence '09).

Comments about the perceived incompetence of immigrants, especially immigrants working in the (low-paid) hospitality and retail sectors were very common in the data, yet no-one related this to poor recruitment procedures or training standards. Rather the implication was that these immigrant employees were lazy and unprofessional at best or deliberately obtuse and unintelligent at worst. What is striking here is the dramatic shift from the 2008 theme of the hard-working, compliant immigrant in the workplace. In some of this talk I found an anti-immigration argument that used the rationale of the perceived cultural impact on a financialised 'Ireland Inc.' or 'Brand Ireland.' Iris, a young woman who worked for global consumer brands, referred to the image of thatched cottages and red haired children as promoted abroad by *Failte Ireland* [97] and pointed out that these cultural references were so out of date as to be unrecognisable to her and her peers. She said she felt sorry for Americans who came to Ireland with such images in their minds and found themselves served in hotels and bars 'by non-Irish' but 'that is the reality' she concluded. Michael put it more directly than most when he referred to 'the front face' of Ireland having been changed to the detriment of Irish cultural identity and that major economic sector: tourism:

> You go to the pub - they didn't know how to pull a pint of Guinness. You go to a restaurant - they didn't know what a Full Irish [breakfast] was. So the whole image of Ireland changed overnight, because the *front face of Ireland changed* and people...personally, I would have said, yes, it had a damaging effect on Ireland...Yes. *Ireland as a brand suffered* because of that [emphasis added] (Michael '09)

This section has illustrated the most common arguments employed in relation to immigration, both pro and contra. They focus on economic and, to a lesser extent, cultural implications.

[97] The National Tourism Development Authority

The underlying themes are that of the perceived contribution and, therefore, entitlements of people categorised as immigrants. Importantly, in terms of my substantive theory of distancing, the interviewees consistently argue that it is not that 'we won't' accept population diversity and multiculturalism but that on pragmatic and rational grounds 'we can't'. Immigration into Ireland, despite its acknowledged economic benefit in the decade of the Celtic Tiger, was too much, too fast, and has the potential to be too costly and too impactful for a small island. These arguments are presented in the rhetoric of rationality, which I argue, is part of a performance aimed to insulate, and thereby distance, the speaker from any accusation of racialisation, racism, or xenophobia.

For these interviewees, as we saw in the previous chapter, racism is understood to be the refuge of the ignorant and un-educated lower classes in contrast to economic and cultural arguments which are informed by 'fact' and reflection. To some extent they are reflective of what Piliawsky (1984) called 'respectable racism' – a denial of the existence of racism by using code words of liberalism such as merit (for which read entitlement) and effort (for which read contribution). These are arguments that can (and are) discussed in the public domain without fear of censure despite the fact that some of these arguments are not rational or based on fact, though they may employ the rhetoric of rationality. How can this be the case?

Haidt (2012: 93) suggests that people usually hold positions on issues for intuitive reasons and seek out evidence to support the positions they already hold rather than the other way around and that we 'should not expect individuals to produce good, open-minded, truth-seeking reasoning, particularly when self-interest or reputational concerns are in play'. What particularly interests me is that Haidt (2012) argues that if peers or people who have common bonds or shared fate employ their reasoning powers to disconfirm existing claims, then previously held positions can be changed. The commonality in the rhetoric of 'rational arguments' seen above suggests that there are few, if any, within these individuals' peer groups who ever challenge the *status quo* discourse. That there is little, if any, challenge to these rationalisations suggests they can be discussed in the public domain. However, as data analysis continued, I noticed explicit references to what could be said in public (frontstage) as opposed to that which belonged in the private (backstage) domain. In the following section I present data to support the key finding that members of the Irish professional class are concerned about how and when they present or perform the social class norm of tolerance and welcome or *céad míle fáilte* to the other.

Acknowledging the Existence of a 'Backstage'

A pivotal point in this study came when I coded data which established that the interviewees were aware of the performance of tolerance expected of them in relation to immigrants, that this performance was necessary to differentiate their social class position from the lower classes, and that the performance did not necessarily conform to their disposition or that of their peers. Balibar's critique of 'the tendency to magnify popular racism while letting pass the strategies of denial of 'cultivated' individuals more skilled in the wiles of the political language-game' (1991b: 223) resonated with me when Jerry said, in response to a question about whether or not the Irish professional class are more positively disposed towards immigrants than other groups in Irish society:

> No. I think they're [the Irish professional class] exactly the same as everyone else [laughs]. The only thing about it is the people are smarter to hide it, smart enough to be able to hide it in a way and that's what I think…I think people…no matter what demographic they are, or what part of the country they are, they're as racist as anybody else and they're just… you know…better at being able to cover their tracks as such…to not let on that they are racist, you know.

Jerry's comment appears to support Balibar's argument about the capacity for racism of ''cultivated' individuals'. But I still wanted to find out how these professionals could 'cover their tracks', to use Jerry's words. In time I would find in the data that, occasionally, when comments were made which were understood by the speaker to be 'politically in-correct', interviewees would openly acknowledge the existence of a divide between the public and private domain and the type of discourse and performance that is permissible in each according to the class norms and values of 'people like us'. Frequently, this dichotomy was raised in response to my question as to whether or not immigration was a topic of conversation among themselves and their peers and was often flagged in the transcripts by whispering or referring to the third person plural e.g. 'they say…' or '[other] people say'.

On other occasions, when comments or arguments were self-identified as being politically incorrect or contrary to professional class norms and values, two high profile figures namely Michael McDowell, Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2002–07) at the time of the Citizenship Referendum of 2004) and Kevin Myers (a

controversial journalist whose articles on immigration were the subject of a number of complaints [98]) were sometimes evoked. While both men are regarded as politically right wing and had a history of making negative statements in relation to immigrants and immigration (Coulter, 2008; R.T.E., 2005) some interviewees commented that however 'un-PC', they were, they vocalised 'what everyone was thinking' but would not say 'out loud'. I understood 'everyone' to mean themselves and their social class peers. These comments were made with varying levels of dissonance at the notion of being aligned with either man's political position yet also with evident respect that McDowell and Myers were not 'silenced' by political correctness, the 'race card', or professional class norms of tolerance and anti-racism.

This comment from Arthur is an example of the dissonance these controversial individuals generated:

> If McDowell was in favour of it, I probably voted against. But to be honest…my reasons for it…at the same time…to be honest…I always admired him standing up and saying things and I often didn't disagree with what he was saying, really.

The following extract from an interview with Florence in 2009 incorporates many of these themes, and refers explicitly to what could be said about immigration 'behind the scenes':

> I think the public policy, and the stated policy of the government, is to embrace diversity and to get us all to embrace diversity and set up a Minister for Integration and do all that. But I think that *behind the scenes* there is another policy in action. I mean the kind of policy that's really worried about *too many immigrants* coming into Ireland, the kind of policy that's *worried about too many refugees* coming into Ireland, and setting in [place] these very hard, tight measures to just…curtail and…control that. [ ] *Which is all reasonable* but it's almost as if it's not *politically correct* to say that. I think Michael McDowell was very conscious of that. I could see that in everything that Michael McDowell was doing. He was never going to succumb, we'll say, to the hard cases and the humanitarian cases that came

[98] The Press Council upheld a complaint by The Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) regarding an Irish Independent article written by Kevin Myers on July 10, 2008 entitled 'Africa is giving nothing to anyone except Aids' (Coulter, 2008) .

> before him, because he was saying 'we are not going to be the kind of …the *open place for everybody to come here as refugees*. We are not going to become… so you can understand that. But that's a side of it that's not articulated as strongly as maybe it should be, because I mean, there's value, there's validity in that argument and it creates a *lot of fear* in people [emphasis added].

Florence went on to explain how both McDowell and Myers reflected 'what a lot of people think' and the negative views some people 'harbour' towards immigrants. Terms such as 'harbour' and 'lip service' are redolent of both secrecy and deceit. In referring to families who employ domestic employees she is indicating, consciously or not, her own peer group, which is the class most likely to be able to afford to employ domestic help:

> I think they're reflecting what people think. What a lot of people think, who are not eh…who don't really buy into the fact that a diverse society is a better society. I think there's a *lot of lip service paid to that* but I think that in their hearts [smiles] a lot of people think differently. Even…eh…you just know they do because…whether its whoever they have cleaning their house…or the way… a whole lot of people were treated by…you know…in domestic employment and all that…they were treated very badly so we do know that, despite this ideal that's there *publicly* and that's articulated, and that's in the discourse publicly, and that is how people speak and think…that there is *another view that people kind of harbour and their actions and their actual personal views can be quite different* you know [emphasis added] (Florence '09)

These backstage utterances indicate that the idea that the Irish generally, and the professional class in particular, were welcoming to immigrants was broadly understood to be a myth. Further evidence that, for many interviewees, the private thoughts of the professional class are at variance with how they present in the public domain is provided by Keith and Ivan:

> The stories about immigrants and the way people really feel…We swap stories at dinner parties and in our posh bars on a Friday night amongst…if you want to call them the professional class…and say 'isn't it [immigration] an awful thing'… But if anyone was ever asked

> formally they would say 'oh no, Ireland is very welcoming, you know, as a society, as a community, we value everybody equally and we welcome the diversity that immigration brings etc. etc.' And it's not necessarily always the case…I suspect. And again there's no qualitative evidence to...to prove that but it's just a…a feeling that I have, it's an inkling. [Later] …we were welcoming in some ways, you know. [ ] But long term we knew that they weren't really ours and we didn't really have a plan to be able to deal with them [emphasis added] (Keith '09).

> …there was this cultural kind of ethos around Ireland being welcoming and that kind of self-regard we have for ourselves which really doesn't stand up. That's just a vanity, that's just a conceit, you know (Ivan '09).

Finding and coding this data, and more like it, was an important point in this study. These interviewees (and others coded) acknowledge that they and their peers knowingly perform the social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism in public. Positive responses towards immigrants and immigration are performed in the public domain. Any negative comments are confined to the private domain, the dinner party with friends and the 'posh bar' with work colleagues on a Friday night. Indicating the divide between this performance on the frontstage and the private or backstage area are references such as 'paying lip service', 'hold your tongue', 'deep down', 'buried,' 'scratch the surface,' don't 'rock the boat' or 'rock the applecart (sic)' in addition to siege and military metaphors such as 'to harbour' and putting one's 'head above the parapet'.

Bearing in mind that following GT methods, coding, analysis and interviewing were going on simultaneously and finding this a most interesting and fruitful topic, I began to ask interviewees if they felt their responses were censored in any way and, if this was the case, by whom did they feel censored.

> I think the media would be very much in what one might call the leftie liberal wing...in that they would be pressing the PC agenda…em…and that. *I don't think they would articulate the kind of concerns that people might have* [ ] Yeah. As in *The Irish Times*...and I think if

> somebody...and there was an instance of it…and I can't remember what it was...but something...happened and somebody stuck their *head above the parapet* a bit and [ ] and they got 'ate, bate, and spat out' [99] for saying it and yet, talk to anybody, and they're all saying '*yeah, well, I agree with that'*... [this last in a mumbled low voice to indicate the need not be overheard]. [ ] But I'm not going to say it out loud because I think *people like us* are concerned about *doing the correct thing.* But *deep down* there are prejudices *buried* in all of us [emphasis added] (Alison '08).

I argue that such recurring phrases such as 'doing the proper thing' and 'doing the correct thing' are explicit references to the social desirability, and indeed necessity, of performing according to social class norms of tolerance, welcome and anti-racism.

These norms also include the social desirability of not being overheard to make negative comments relating to immigrants and immigration. This means that occasionally, as can be seen annotated in the transcript extracts, voice levels are dropped to a whisper. Houts Picca and Feagin (2007) describe this as 'race whispering,' a voice lowering phenomenon which repeatedly appears when racial topics are being mentioned among whites.

> You would like to think that…em…eh…we would have moved to [ ] a 'PC world' because we wanted to, not because we felt it was the right thing to do and that... *I would hope that in five years' time people would be honest enough to tell you what they really felt about it rather than saying 'well, this is what I should be saying'* [emphasis added].

(I/ver) Who is imposing the PC-ness do you think?

> [it's] not a single individual, it is this view…the media, pressure groups…eh...*the societal ideal of what proper behaviour is for the professional classes* is that [it] is someone who is understanding of all sorts, welcoming, understanding… [Later] We're not even having the debate about it now [ ] we're *paying lip service*, in some respects, to this PC thing… [emphasis added] (Keith '09).

[99] An Irish idiom, 'ate, bate, and spat out,' means 'to eat, beat and spit out' i.e. destroyed.

Jerry was one of a significant number of interviewees who spoke about the overt racist discourse of previous Irish generations including our parent's generation. Since our generation were already adults before Ireland became a country of net immigration for the first time, I asked him how it was that our generation did not use racial terms or epithets similar to previous generations. His answer, from 2009, alluded to a necessary performance of political correctness in public i.e. above the surface:

> I don't think we are [politically correct]. Well, we are because, you know, I'm in a business where I operate in the [sight of] the media and *I have to be careful what I say and how I say it* and all the rest of it, but I think that…em…*scratch the surface* and people are the same as our parents in a way [emphasis added].

Another rationale used by interviewees to explain their sense of being censored or silenced about raising concerns relating to immigration such as the economic and cultural threats illustrated in this chapter is that of having the 'race card' played against them. Beryl recounted two stories from her own experience which, she felt, demonstrated the difficulties and even dangers of interaction with black people who, she implies, are overly sensitive and aggressive.

In the first instance, she makes a clear admission that the performance of 'political correctness' is just that, a superficial performance of being 'PC on paper'. In the second, she uses non-verbal cues to communicate her sense of an imminent violent threat she felt while socialising with a friend:

> I had a situation in work where I didn't stand up for a girl - and I didn't stand up for anyone else in this particular situation - I did the classic sit-on-the-fence 'say nothing, do nothing.' And…em…she accused me of being racist because I did that. Because I sat on the fence…I've had friends who have been accused of being racist and it does kind of sour...it really does and, you know, it makes you very, very careful as to your interactions, you're that bit more wary, and yes, you do learn, you know, about them, you want to respect…but you're overly cautious of being classed as racist. And I think part of that is we're so

> scared of being classed as racist...yet they…I think some of the communities are very willing to flag the racist card (sic) [ ] I think on paper we're very...we're very PC on paper...yet when it comes to the actual dealings, I think we're only starting out on that road really... [later in the interview] …myself and a friend were out in Cork. [We are] both single and [ ] we just wanted to have fun together when…em…two black men came up and started talking to us and they just wouldn't leave us…and we kind of…we didn't...we wanted to say, very politely, 'look, we're together, we just want to have a chat,' and they challenged us as to why we wanted them to leave…us alone…which is quite [gestures 'in your face']. 'Why do you ask us to leave? Why won't you talk to us? Is there something wrong with us? Are you racist?' Do you know? It comes very quickly [claps hands sharply]. They boil it down [to race]...It got to the point where we actually just left...we got up and walked away because we didn't...we didn't know how to handle it…you know, they were so forceful and that was...it was an unfortunate experience to have. And of course then we went to the nightclub and of course they were again [laughs] [ ] Yeah, the same two guys, so we ended up leaving there as well… (Beryl '08).

In response to a question on whether immigration was a topic of conversation she and her peers would be comfortable discussing Josephine immediately said it would not and she talked of the fear of being 'tarred' as a racist 'if you say anything':

> No! Because I think people are afraid that they'll come across as sounding racist or neo-Nazi or whatever if they say *anything* that might be viewed as non-PC. Even if it comes down to saying 'well no, if you live here you have to…' Some people might be of the attitudes that 'now, hold on a second…' [mimics cautioning tone of voice]. Do you know what I mean? You don't know how people are going to take it up. So I actually don't think people are comfortable talking about it at all, no. [Later] Oh, I think people are afraid to comment because, as I said, you're going to come across as racist or whatever and nobody wants to be - well unless they're part of the BNP or whoever - wants

> to be tarred with that brush. It's not PC to be seen to hold views like that [emphasis in original] (Josephine '09).

Michael's assessment was that only a 'loo lah' [100] would break the social class norms of tolerance and 'rock the boat' but he also indicates that such action would be permissible without fear of sanction if one that was 'among very good friends'.

> Because we were brought up as a good Catholic nation to be respectful of others and to *hold our tongue* and not to ever *rock the applecart* (sic)...and obviously you'll get the odd 'loo lah' *who'll break the rules* but the majority of the people will follow those rules. And I don't think that people will *break those rules*, that cycle. [Later] To be honest with you, we didn't really often talk about it in that kind of circle. It wouldn't come up in a pub, it wouldn't come up at dinner parties, it wouldn't. [ ] No. It wasn't discussed because you have to be *extremely careful about who you talk to people about ...eh...black people*. And you don't want to be categorised as an ignoramus, a fascist...eh...you know...a racist...and you don't want to be someone who is labelled as that, so you wouldn't bring it up in company [ ] especially if you point the finger at a nationality and the nationality, obviously, that I'm [referring to] would be the Nigerians because the Polish seem to have been more accepted. I'm not talking about [their being accepted by] me, but as a nation [the Irish]. It would be more...you'd have to be more sensitive about it. The more you mention a black person potentially you are on *hot coals*. So, yeah, it wasn't talked about and it wouldn't be number one on my agenda to bring it up at dinner tables [ ] ...unless you're...unless you're among very good friends [emphasis added] (Michael '09).

Larry went one step further and said immigration could only be discussed within the 'comfort zone' of the family domain and that Irish society is very unforgiving of people who say something different to the consensus, although he appears unsure as to what exactly is this 'consensus'.

[100] Colloquialism for someone popularly deemed to have mental health issues.

Having worked through this data I am of the opinion that Larry's confusion is related to the apparent divergence between a public consensus of tolerance and private concerns relating to immigration:

> No. No. It would be within families I would see that people would have that…comfort zone... [ ] Ah yeah, I think people within families would raise opinions and the older people - of which I wouldn't consider myself to be one – [smiles] would make the standard [comment]: 'I woke up and there was an Asian doctor looking down me,' that kind of attitude, you know? [Later] 'The black doctor', yeah, that'll die out if it hasn't already. But within families people might occasionally say, 'Jesus, is it just me or am I completely at odds with what *RTE* and *The Irish Times* are telling me?' Do you know? And I think within the family...
>
> *(I/ver) They have expressed concerns [about immigration]?*
>
> Not concerns, but an 'I don't necessarily think the same'. It's not a concern, but an 'I don't necessarily buy into that consensus' - whatever that consensus might have been - and I don't know…I think that Irish society is very unforgiving for anybody who…maybe I'm just being paranoid…who raises those…*maybe the professional classes are afraid to raise those opinions* in general. And I'm not saying [it's about saying] critical things but just…different [emphasis added].

Similarly to Larry, Keith uses the terms 'honest' and 'courage' to describe an Irish politician who made a controversial and negative speech relating to supports provided for asylum seekers prior to an election. Keith suggests here that political correctness is intrinsically dishonest and a façade. I find his slip-of-the-tongue when he refers to politicians needing to have '*the courage of somebody else's convictions'* to speak publicly against immigrants and immigration both intriguing and amusing.

> So there are very few people…brave is not the word I think…maybe honest...but with *the courage of somebody else's convictions* [sic] to come out and say that kind of thing because other people will say: 'ah, we have to... to be PC about this, you can't say that'. I mean, there are things that you can't say [emphasis added].

In concluding this section, I argue that this data (and more) coded to 'political correctness', demonstrates a common understanding among these members of the Irish professional class of the existence of two very different spaces or domains when the topic under discussion is immigration. I have given examples of the explanations offered for the existence of this dichotomy and have shown that some of these professionals feel irritated due to what they perceive as censorship by political correctness in general and their own social class norms and values in particular.

In the final section of this chapter, I present examples of the comments on immigration immigrants that can safely be discussed in this private 'backstage' area. My peer status, prior contact, perhaps just my white Irishness, provided me with a symbolic 'access all areas' badge to this 'private' backstage area and its talk.

Racialising: 'People like us can't say that…'

In Chapter 6, I argued that interviewees disclaimed having much or any knowledge about immigration to Ireland; yet there existed commonly-held notions of who could be categorised as an immigrant and a socially constructed hierarchy of immigrant 'acceptability' that drew on racial, ethnic, and class markers. In Chapter 7 we saw the low level of interaction the interviewees had with people they categorised as immigrants: they repeatedly said that the presence of immigrants was 'not an issue' and did not 'impinge' on their lives but was an issue for groups without power, that is to say, the Irish lower classes. In this chapter, I show how, for some interviewees, political correctness, in addition to social class norms, is commonly understood to censor public expression of what are regarded by many as rational economic and cultural concerns about immigration that reflect what 'everyone is thinking'.

I term the sixth and final sub-category of the discursive strategy of Performing Distance racialising and this relates to the use of racialising discourse while in the private domain. In this section I show that, away from the public domain and the strictures of class norms and political correctness many of the stereotypes and tropes of biological racism such as miscegenation, male sexual predation, female promiscuity, violence, disease, and criminality are part of the discourse in the Irish professional *habitus*. This is not to suggest that all interviewees engaged in racialised discourse but all were aware of its existence and the 'appropriate' domain for its expression: backstage. This extract from

Beryl contains a number of the recurrent themes and tropes and also a number of cues as to the distance in race and class terms between Beryl and the people about whom she speaks:

> I think it very much depends on where you grew up. Em...and I don't even know if it's from a socio-economic point of view but…em…one of the things I hear is that girls…who, say, are in their 20s are...they want to have babies with black men because the little black babies are 'just so cute!' That's something that you hear now. I haven't heard that in the country[side] so much, but certainly up in Dublin and I hate generalising but in the lower socio-economic groups...and that's something I would have heard through my work as well. And definitely you would see it and certainly you would look and wonder are some of these guys with the girls for visas? Or what's the motivation? You question more...you look at people's motivation and another thing is - certainly from Africa - is HIV. A serious thing. Like, people coming over…you just…you don't…because it's so prevalent in countries like Ethiopia. And we don't think about it so much. And the younger generation…I wonder do they think about it? I think they are. I hope they are. But you just don't know if they are aware…and they should be, especially when they're wanting the *cute little black babies* [laughs and emphasises last four words] (Beryl '08).

Here we have the youngest interviewee, a public health professional, suggesting that black men are taking sexual advantage of (specifically) lower class young white girls and getting them pregnant with the aim of 'getting a visa' even though it's clear from other interview extracts that Beryl was familiar with, and in favour of, the change in legislation that followed the Citizenship Referendum in 2004. These relationships and the motivations behind them should be surveilled and questioned, she suggests, because even if these men are not having children to secure permission to stay, there's the prevalence of diseases such as HIV in Africa to consider – not something 'we' in Ireland have had to think about, she says. The overall sense is of naïve young girls being preyed upon by sexually experienced, and possibly diseased, adult men.

Continuing on the theme of unequal and undesirable relationships, Alison, the mother of a teenage girl, remarked unprompted, both in 2008 and 2009, how very concerned she would be if her daughter married a Muslim.

She explained her concern as being related to the kidnapping of children from their Western mothers by Muslim fathers. One point of reference for her was an acrimonious divorce she had heard about from friends, involving an Irish-Iraqi professional couple, the outcome of which, the Irish woman's friends feared, would be the kidnapping by the father of their young son. In turn, these fears, Alison explained, were informed by her having read the book, *Not without my Daughter*: [101]

> ...some woman wrote a book about her son... or daughter being snatched and taken off and married off somewhere...in the Middle East...she was only 13 or 14...[ ] I can't remember...was it 'Not without my Daughter'? So I don't know how many times it's been on the tip of my tongue to say to [daughter] 'don't you dare ever come in here with a Muslim' [in dramatic voice]. But I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't do it (Alison '08).

From the frequent negative, often vehement, comments made by Alison regarding Muslims, it would be difficult to imagine her teenage daughter is unaware of her mother's views. Such inter-generational passing of prejudices and fears within families (Houts Picca and Feagin, 2007) was referred to by a number of interviewees. While the next two extracts are from women, such 'common sense' knowledge of the implications of inter-marriage and 'miscegenation' were not solely channelled through the female line, as we see below:

> [My parent's generation] would consider black people as sub-normal... [ ] and I know my Dad...it was a case of 'Jaysus if you ever bring a black fellah home to me you can go and take a hike' and all that sort of thing (Josephine '09).

> I grew up in the country[side] and I remember going to London years ago [1990s] and being warned to 'watch out for those black fellahs' and it wasn't done because the people [giving the warning] had any experience of living in another country, never mind a multi-cultural society, but they had this prejudice in their mind (Claudette '09).

[101] Subsequently I researched the book and found it and a film of the same name have been criticised as both flawed and reliant on stereotypes of demonic, misogynistic, primitive Muslims (James, 1991). The book tells the story of how, in 1984 'a Michigan housewife Betty Mahmoody accompanied her husband to his native Iran for a two-week vacation. To her horror, she found herself and her four year old daughter, Mahtob, virtual prisoners of a man rededicated to his Shiite Muslim faith, in a land where women are near-slaves and Americans are despised' (Google Books Review).

The comments above refer to consensual relationships, but I also found references to the stereotype of the violent, dangerous, and sexually predatory black male. In the following instance, Keith tried to impress on me that the inter-generational communication of fear of the black male was primordial, biological, and 'natural' by alluding to the adrenal rush to fight or flight that, he suggested, I would feel if I met two black men as I walked home at night:

> Well, it [the stereotype of the black man] *was always negative.* You see…em…to be honest…I mean the…our association in our head from the time we were young children [was] if you were bold on the bus and there was a black person on the bus [your parent/guardian would threaten you with] 'I'm gonna tell the man now' and 'oooohh' [mimics child's fearful reaction to black man]. To be honest. And this kind of pejorative attitude that we would have…eh…we never lose it. And again it comes back…we learn all these things at our mothers and fathers feet, [we learn] not to say 'well, yeah, listen to me' [mimics conspiratorial tone] [ ]…'well, *black people* [dramatic whisper]…well…em…' [makes facial gesture to suggest distrust, suspicion] And...em…if you were afraid... There will come a point in your life when you're walking home at night and you see two black people walking towards you. Would…would you cross the street? [directed at interviewer]. And again if you saw two Irish people...two Irish guys wearing…two young fellahs wearing Dublin [Gaelic football] jerseys that are walking down the street towards you would you feel safe? Or safer than if you saw two black guys walking towards you down Parnell Street at night? I mean…I suspect that the majority of people would say they would feel more safe with the two Dublin guys. The two Dublin guys could be out of their heads on drink and drugs or anything and…em…the two black guys could be in suits, they could be doctors coming from the Rotunda Hospital. Both guys walking in the same direction and, just in your head, it's… eh…the fight or flight…the surge of adrenaline and… eh… and that kind of stuff and, yeah, I can understand it… [Emphasis in original] (Keith '09).

I think Keith made an informed guess that my upbringing and life experience was likely to be similar to his own and that I would recognise the childhood story of the 'bogey man/black man' and he tried have me agree that, in the circumstances described, I would tap into some primordial or natural racial knowledge and be wary or even afraid of the black protagonists in his story. Nor was Keith the only person to allude to primordial, 'natural', inter-racial fears. Josephine too drew a connection between primordial fears of unknown and unknowable others and a sense of threat to 'our' language, 'our' culture, and 'our' ways:

> Well, I think it's kind of, you know, we have that 21st century aspiration…but I probably still think that you can't come away from that actual primal fear that we have of other people and of other people that don't look like us. I mean [hesitation] those differences are there, you know, which go back eons, you know, and that's a primal thing and automatically people had this fear against (sic) people they didn't know, unknowns. And these people [immigrants] to us are unknowns…we don't know what (sic) they…they…they come in, and they speak a different language. They have different cultures. They have different ways of doing things and that creates a fear, however subliminal, in all of us that this is going to affect me somehow …

The rationale that being fearful or wary of the other is natural or primordial (both contested concepts in themselves) was used to normalise or explain situations or actions which could otherwise be interpreted as racially motivated i.e. absence of social contacts and integration (Bonilla-Silva et al, 2003). A further implication, of course, is that nothing needs, or indeed can, be done to alter the *status quo* of nature.

The discourse of fear and being 'taken-over' by the other is again apparent in an extract that evidences the conflation of terms such as refugee and illegal immigrant (discussed in Chapter 6). Here, a conglomeration of people of various backgrounds and legal statuses are associated with a list of longstanding societal problems that are perceived to 'come with' immigration. Also implicit in the extract is the idea that the naïve 'welcoming Irish' have been taken advantage of and that 'we' have opened a 'can of worms' for our troubles. 'Can of worms' was used as a metaphor for immigration by other interviewees also (below).

> We forget people who are seeking asylum are seeking asylum for a reason albeit not everyone is...legit [laughs]. And with it has gone the trafficking of children, the trafficking of women, prostitution… There's *endless stuff* that goes with it as well… Em…I think that in opening our arms - and Ireland has been very fortunate that the world has welcomed us into their countries – [and] by welcoming people into our own country as well we certainly have *opened up a can of worms* that I don't think we were prepared to deal with. And certainly we're trying to deal with it... [ ] I think the country was *bombarded* and before we knew what had happened there was a whole new race and culture of people in, from every race and culture and province and creed...and you name it, that was there, and certainly that has *shook the country to its core.* I don't think the country was prepared for what came and that was very evident in the referendum three years ago [emphasis added].

(I/ver) The Citizenship one?

> Yeah, that definitely changed things *dramatically*. I think that was very telling because the number of people coming into the country actually dropped within 24 hours. [ ] Because they couldn't get in. Certainly it reduced dramatically because at one point there was actually 10,000 people coming into Ireland every month, officially and unofficially. Now that actually went down...that was about 4 or 5 years ago, before the referendum...then after the referendum you don't really hear about it…at all. About people coming in...as much. [Emphasis in original] (Beryl '08)

All of the interviewees were supportive of the outcome of the Citizenship Referendum in 2004 and indeed, grateful to the then Minister for Justice and Law Reform, Michael McDowell, for what they saw as his prescience in stopping a 'bombardment'. Whenever the 2004 Citizenship Referendum was recalled by an interviewee, it was associated sooner or later with stories of 'citizenship tourism' and what Luibheid (2004) theorises as 'childbearing against the state.' Note the negative connotation and even onomatopoeia of words like 'bubble,' 'clogging,' 'boil,' and phrases such as 'hot coals,' 'hot potato,' and

'hot topic' in the following data extracts. Again, the terms illegal immigrants and refugees/asylum seekers are conflated. Here is Keith, who was employed in the political sector:

> Actually I think it's [immigration] been on the agenda and *bubbling away* for the last ten years since the refugees time, the illegal immigrants. They came and had their kids here and then they automatically…the whole family became citizens. We had a referendum which was…was it 87 per cent I think was the result in the referendum, was it? In the referendum that Michael McDowell came and said 'well, listen are these people entitled to be citizens, the child itself might be a citizen but are the family entitled to be citizens? No!' And that was...that was a huge thing...that was 2002/2003. So that was in the early part of the Celtic Tiger here and people started to have money then and they had huge resistance then to these people who came over here and they *clogged* up our maternity hospitals. [ ] I actually think the system was geared up to handle X number of births a year but now every hospital was handling whatever it was - 10,000 extra births - and they all happened to be Nigerians or something like that. Another statistic, and you'd think I'd remember this but …eh...there was a report done… a statistical analysis of the immigrants from Africa in....after the first five or six years [of inward immigration] and *I have it in my head 80 per cent of them were in the final stages of pregnancy. 80 per cent of the females were in the final stages of pregnancy when they arrived*! [emphasis added] (Keith '09).

The linking, by Minister McDowell, of the various immigration statuses such as we see here in the discourse of well-educated, media-literate people, and the construction of the problem as one of fairness and good administration was, Garner (2007b) argues, key to the presentation of the referendum on citizenship as a neutral, rational, non-racist process, and not the desire to 'make it more difficult for particular, racialised groups of people to stay in Ireland and access resources' (Garner, 2007b: 133). Arthur (above) in fact uses the neologism from the political discourse of the time: 'citizenship tourism'. Such talk of 'citizenship tourism' was often accompanied by references, implicit and explicit, to promiscuous (i.e. not respectable) immigrant women, particularly, but not only, black women. The alleged promiscuity of immigrant women was only ever raised by female

interviewees, which may have been related to my positionality as a female peer interviewer. Here is Alison's story:

> One of the people [at coffee break at work in an exclusively Irish office] started telling a story about her sister who lives in Lucan, in what I would imagine is...well, her sister works for [well known company] so it'd be…eh...
>
> *(I/ver) A middle class estate?*
>
> Yeah. [ ] in this instance it's a woman, who's apparently a stunner[102], in her early thirties who has five children...the local speculation - and not a man in sight…*and* she's pregnant again - and the speculation is the children are all by different fathers. But the HSE are paying for everything. She has a seven-seater [car] which the HSE pay for to transport the kids. The landlord, who this sister knows, gets 120 euro a month, and the rest, which is 1,100 euro a month rent, is paid for by the HSE. They've had people in [visiting] her trying to train her in household management. The local school has been…em...the eldest child is in this woman's son's class and he's…he's never in school on time and the school were getting so concerned...so they contacted the HSE. So [now] the HSE is paying somebody to call for that child every morning to get him to school on time...! [Emphasis in original] (Alison '08).

> [In a named Dublin city nightclub] I was quite shocked by the provocative nature of the black girls, the way they were dressed. They wore very tight, very skimpy clothes, certainly an awful lot of skin…being revealing (sic). It was like watching a rap artist's video, it really was! (Beryl '08).

As I mentioned above, it is not only or always black women who are a perceived to be sexually available. Beryl also commented on Polish women:

> The most important thing [for a Polish woman] in a marriage is that you dress to please your man, you put whatever he wants on the table, and whenever he wants to have sex you do it [ ] Well if the Irish guys

[102] Colloquial term for a noticeably beautiful or sexually attractive woman.

> are finding girls [like that] who are willing to sleep with them...[ ] you can imagine the fallout from that, even if it's one or two girls from another country are after a guy and people start talking in the pub that 'she's after that fellah and I'm trying to be a good girl and have my modesty and she's putting out [103] for him' and then the word travels...you can see where the tensions arise...(Beryl '08)

In these interview extracts we see how white racial framing shapes how some white Irish professionals view and categorise the immigrant other i.e. as everything that they themselves are not: predatory males, promiscuous or sexually available females, lazy and careless parents, unsettled/nomadic and dependent on welfare in a state to which they do not contribute.

In summary, the immigrant other is not respectable, not contributing, and therefore not deserving and while comments can be made in relation to contribution (economic and cultural) and entitlement (economic and cultural) in the public domain using the rhetoric of rational argument, stories around respectability or disrepute tend to be told in the private or backstage domain. I argue that this is because such discourse and storytelling is based on racial beliefs that a designated group is genetically, biologically, or culturally inferior and that such beliefs can be used both 'to rationalise or prescribe the racial group's treatment in society as well as to explain its social position and accomplishment' (Hill Collins and Solomos, 2010a: 3). I argue that the reason for stories of respectability coming to the fore when the conditions of the private domain or backstage area are met is that these stories and arguments reproduce centuries-old racist constructions and stereotypes. The story of the two men who approached Beryl and her friend in the bar on a night out might not be a story worth re-telling if the 'forceful' protagonists were white. However, it could become a story about threatening black males who force their attentions on women and 'play the race card' when rejected. Similarly, bearing in mind the cumulative birth figures attributed to non-EEA/African/black children born in Dublin's maternity hospitals in the years before the Citizenship (discussed in Chapter 2) I suggest that if the same number of women waiting to be attended in the maternity hospital were clearly identifiable as white Western Europeans, it would have focused on the lack of funding of the Irish health service even national embarrassment in front of our European 'neighbours'.

[103] Colloquial term for not being 'respectably' dressed and displaying sexual availability.

Houts Picca argues:

> Common racial stereotypes of people of colour generally resist evidence, no matter how substantial, because of the entrenched character of the stereotypes and their deep embeddedness in the white racial framing (2007: 247).

Many of the racialised stories/themes drawn on in this section refer to discussions with, or the presence of, a close friend or family member. Underpinning the privacy and trust of the backstage context, I argue that these re-produced, repeated, racialised stories are passed on from one generation to the next, from one sibling to another, and from one peer network to the next, re-producing white racial framing (Houts Picca and Feagin, 2007). And, with globalised communications these stories become transnational, denoting Goldberg's 'globalisation of the racial' (2009). For example, the story Keith told of being threatened by his parents with abduction by the 'black man' if he did not behave as a child in Dublin was one Houts Picca and Feagin used to explain contemporary inter-generational white racial framing in the United States:

> Thus, human beings gain most of their racial frame's understandings, images, and emotions from imbibing and testing those of parents and other important adults as well as from peers, the media, and written accounts handed down over the generations. They do this learning mostly within important networks of relatives, peers, and friends (2007: 13).

Conclusion

In this chapter I present a range of 'rational' arguments employed by interviewees to express the benefits of, and threats posed by, immigration to Ireland. A discourse of contribution, entitlement, and respectability informs what is, and is not, acceptable immigration and who are, and are not, acceptable immigrants. That this discourse appears to be rooted in social class norms and values of contribution (economic and cultural) and entitlement (access to welfare and cultural expression) rather than biological racism makes it socially acceptable in public/front stage performances. Negative evaluations of groups of immigrants can be presented as rational, dispassionate discourse grounded in notions of contribution and entitlement to Ireland's economic and cultural resources. Informed by 'facts' and figures, these discursive performances cannot then be proscribed

as racist or xenophobic. They are facts, after all. In this way, many white professionals can develop ways of explaining their opposition to change that does not explicitly contradict egalitarian and abstract liberal ideals (Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak and Van Dijk, 2000) producing what Bonilla-Silva calls 'the reasonable racist' (2001: 141) and what Piliawsky (1984) terms respectable racism i.e. the denial of racism by using the terminology of liberalism such as merit (entitlement) and effort (contribution).

Social desirability and the need to be seen to act within the social norms of the professional social class are important to this group. In the second section, I show that the Goffmanian concept of a secure 'backstage' is explicitly acknowledged and conceptualised as both a social and physical space within which 'people like us' can express 'what they really felt about it' [104] without pressure to perform social class norms of tolerance and political correctness. Backstage confidantes comprise trusted intimate and kinship networks. When they think individuals around them will not censure them for acting or speaking in racist ways, many still feel free to speak in a traditionally racist fashion according to Devine and Plant (2002). People who challenge such behaviours backstage, or get caught expressing racist views in the frontstage, are the ones who have 'broken the rules', rather than people who express racist beliefs or responses. This may explain why so many well-informed whites are likely to report standing by when other whites engage in discrimination or traditional racial talk (Feagin and O' Brien, 2003). Backstage is where 'real' concerns about threats can be expressed and circulated. It is also where stories of directly or indirectly surveilled behaviours (Myers, 2003) of people categorised as immigrants can be shared and critically analysed. It should be remembered that the behaviours, real or perceived, of one individual is regularly ascribed to all other members of the same racial or ethnic origin in a way that these professionals would find objectionable if applied to themselves. 'Other people are raced,' writes Dyer (1997: 1), 'we are just people'.

My findings demonstrate that interviewees perceived the peer interview context as a safe space and, therefore, a backstage domain. Acknowledgement of the existence of a backstage discourse was widespread and explicit. There clearly exists common knowledge and understanding of the social class norms and values which necessitate such a front/backstage split and of the social 'penalties' for breaching performance rules. Individuals who do so are labelled either 'brave' for saying 'what everyone else is thinking', a social suicide, or a crazy 'loo lah', to quote my interviewee, Michael. It is not

[104] Keith '09

my intention to suggest that all interviewees revealed, or even held, negative attitudes (or indeed entirely positive ones) towards immigrants and immigration. Nor do I suggest that this is an exhaustive collection of the backstage discourse and performance of members of this social class in this time and place. What I do demonstrate is that, in this peer interview setting, some professionals used racialised discourse outside the socially acceptable norms of this class in particular and of contemporary western society more generally. In all cases, the (rare) direct experiences, (many) stories told and re-told, and the third-party anecdotes used are presented as rational and 'common-sense'. The commonality of the negative stereotypes presented, from black men to Roma women, is evidence that these are not individually generated stereotypes but constructed and reinforced within the social reference groups to which the speaker belongs. This is indicated by frequent references to 'we', 'us', 'our' and 'you know' which is also indicative of the performance of social bonding (see Billig (1995) cited in Clary-Lemon (2010)). At the very least, it indicates a level of trust and expectation that the speaker will not be challenged or rejected. Contradictions, requests for clarifications, challenges or objections, are not expected in the backstage domain. Indeed Krysan (1998) found, in her study of well-educated whites, that the more private the setting, the more negative the racial attitudes expressed. And while none of the interviewees admitted to a racist or discriminatory action, stories were told of situations where people stood back and did not interject in order, it would appear, to 'protect' the performance of the protagonist. Racist comments, argues Feagin (2010), can even be used to create social bonds with other whites.

I argue that my front and backstage findings show that these well-educated Irish professionals are not especially tolerant of the immigrant 'other' but are socialised and 'skilled in the wiles of the political language-game' (Balibar, 1991a: 223) and educated to answer sensitive questions in a socially desirable way (Jackman and Muha, 1984). This supports the arguments of Wellman (1993), Houts Picca and Feagin (2007), Bonilla-Silva et al (2003) and other Whiteness theorists, that middle and professional class whites are trained to subscribe, and be seen to subscribe to liberal ideals and verbalise tolerance. However, the social class norm is not, I argue, one of tolerance of diversity and difference. The social class norm is to know when, and where, is the dividing line between the back- and frontstage areas and adhere to it.

Finally, at no point are the dominance, privilege, and norms of the Irish professional questioned. And yet the racial views of the backstage are rooted deeply in a sense of the

privileged white position in the racial hierarchy (Feagin and O' Brien, 2003) a position that most whites collude tacitly not to question (Houts Picca and Feagin, 2007).

I conclude these findings chapters back where I began, in Chapter 1, with a reminder that I did not go 'fishing for racists' (Wellman, 1993), in the sense of labelling individual people. Following grounded theory methods, as I did, the existence of a 'backstage' and the kind of racialised talk that can go on there was raised, in the first instance by the interviewees, not as a result of me testing hypotheses. Most importantly, the existence and etiquette, so to speak, of the 'backstage' was commonly known and understood even, I realised, by me. While I understand racism as a collective phenomenon I also find compelling Memmi's admonition:

> We risk behaving in a racist manner each time we believe ourselves threatened in our privileges, in our wellbeing, or in our security. We conduct ourselves like racists when we try to reconstruct a state of parity that we believe has been or might soon be lost. [ ] And the onus rests on us not to succumb, to exorcise the fear, to analyse what is most often an illusory danger, and to defend ourselves by means other than a destructive confabulation or mythification of the other (Memmi, 2000: 23-25).

Chapter 9: Conclusion

> What counts as white in many social situations depends on class identity and the terms of racial belonging and difference are importantly inflected by the markings of class (Hartigan Jr., 2003: 96).

Introduction

At the outset, I make reference to *céad míle fáilte,* a hundred thousand welcomes, a traditional greeting in the Irish language, and ask if, in contemporary Ireland, such an effusive welcome is indeed extended to the stranger described by Simmel, in this instance, the immigrant 'who comes today and stays tomorrow'.

Having argued that Performing Distance describes the main concern and response of members of the Irish professional class in relation to immigrants and immigration, I conclude that there do indeed exist a hundred thousand welcomes, only rather than being indicative of effusiveness, they indicate variety, in that the welcome the individual immigrants receive varies depending on their perceived racial, ethnic, and social class identity. Nationality and religion are also contributory factors, as is the economic and political context. The welcome extended then, if any, is more complex, nuanced, and contingent, than popular discourse and some of the literature discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 would suggest, although recent work by Whiteness theorists, and others working on the intersection of race/ethnicity and class, has proved useful in the analyses that inform my theory of Performing Distance.

In this, the final chapter, I review the relationship between this study and the original research objective. I also explore the relationship between the substantive theory of Performing Distance and the wider literature and discuss the theoretical and methodological contribution of this work as well as the quality of my findings. I identify the limitations of this study, and discuss the implications of the theory for researchers. Finally, I suggest further research that could usefully follow from these findings.

Performing Distance: Theoretical Contribution

The declared objective or aim of this study is to develop a substantive theory of how Irish professionals respond to immigrants and immigration. Among my early findings was that the heterogeneity of the immigration into Ireland since the 1990s has not been reflected in political or media discourse. Instead, as we saw in Chapter 2, immigration has been represented as a large, homogenous body of people, many of whom are perceived as unable or unwilling to be net contributors economically, socially, and culturally, to the host country, and are instead perceived to be 'welfare tourists' funded by the increasing taxation of Irish citizens or, more pointedly in this case, the Irish middle and professional class taxpayer. This goes some way toward explaining the very negative responses expressed in surveys and media coverage both before and during the current recession. However, immigrants who are gainfully employed, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, are deemed more or less acceptable. The higher their perceived economic contribution and social class status, the more acceptable is their presence. Meanwhile, alongside low/non-contributing immigrants are 'our own leeches,' the Irish equivalent of 'white trash', namely the indigenous Irish who are also deemed unable or unwilling to contribute to Irish society.

In addition to perceptions and misperceptions of legal status and net economic contribution, social class status also features in the categorisation of immigrants and the relative positioning of these categories in a constructed 'hierarchy of acceptability'. My findings show that professional class status combined with whiteness can 'elevate' one above and beyond the taxonomy of immigration in contemporary Ireland and that people with professional class status, regardless of racial and ethnic background, are the most acceptable immigrants since they are deemed net contributors to the state and are understood to have come to Ireland because of individual choice or lifestyle decisions rather than need. The 'not quite white' lower skilled Polish and Eastern Europeans, who were invited in the economic boom years to contribute their labour, taxes, and consumption, are less welcome post-boom regardless of their (legal) entitlement to welfare supports. Least acceptable, and regarded as net liabilities in every sense, are asylum seekers and 'illegal' economic immigrants, but also the indigenous lower classes, who are, to varying degrees, racialised and subjected to a 'rhetoric of demonisation', although 'the politics of exclusion is economic' (Sivanandan, 2001: 2).

In addition to supporting Sivanandan's theory of an emergent xeno-racism in Europe (see below), my findings support Hall's argument that '[r]ace is thus also the modality in which class is 'lived', the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and "fought through"' (Hall, 1980b: 341). My findings also concur with McDowell's (2009) assessment that the contemporary migration policies of Europe are based more on the economic needs of the West, and with Fekete (see Fekete, 2001; 2006), who describes the discourse of global migration management as privileging the migration of skilled migrants to the exclusion of others. Well-educated and highly employable, with much to contribute to the host country, such immigrants are unlikely to become a drain on (or be entitled to) welfare resources and are therefore deemed 'acceptable' to the extent that Irish professionals like Keith, one of my interviewees, do not consider them 'real immigrants really because they are real members of society'.

My findings evidence the emergence of a new form of racism in Ireland whereby only individuals and groups perceived to be net contributors to the country, and specifically its economy, are deemed acceptable, and perceptions of capacity for contribution take precedence. My argument, that economic contribution is the new 'white' in Ireland, draws on the concept of xeno-racism which Sivanandan theorises as a form of 'old' racism that combines the so-called 'natural' fear of the other with the rationale of utilitarian economic needs. Xeno-racism is a form of racism that is not colour coded and can be 'meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are White' (Sivanandan, 2001: 2). I find resonances between xeno-racism and discussions in the Whiteness literature (on both sides of the Atlantic) to the effect that whiteness has two simultaneous borders to maintain. Garner (2007b) describes one border between whites and the other and a second between dominant whites and people of 'grades of whiteness', depending on their perceived participation in 'the moral economy of whiteness', while Hartigan Jr. (1999) describes inter-racial and intra-racial divides and inter-racial (or intra-class) cohesion. I find this literature analytically useful in examining the complex, constructed 'hierarchy of acceptability' which emerges in my research.

My findings also support Whiteness Studies theorists discussed in Chapter 3 including the work of Wellman, Bonilla-Silva, Feagin, O'Brien, Doane, Houts Picca, Lipsitz, Hill, Tyler, and Myers, who give a materialist grounding to racism and racialisation based on their findings of constructed racial hierarchies whereby whites hold in common (privileged) political and economic interests that are at variance with 'the group interests

of people of colour' (Feagin and O' Brien, 2010: 57). However, not all whites are equally privileged since one's 'whiteness' can be mediated by class. Themes of contribution and respectability are central in the literature on the so-called 'white trash' in the US (Barrett and Roediger, 1997) and white working class 'chavs' in Britain (Tyler, 2008). Writing on how class mediates the racialisation process and the history of racialising nominally white groups in Britain, Garner (2012) found that while there are areas of inter-class consensus about immigration adding to the pressure on public services and welfare, people place emphases on distinct areas of concern informed by their class perspective. Drawing on empirical work, he points out that only middle class respondents explicitly refer to the demands the welfare state places on 'taxpayer's money', which is in effect another way of talking about resource competition only in this case the resource is one's taxable income. White lower classes are therefore, he argues, just as likely to be othered as immigrants when 'hierarchies of worth' are characterised by work-ethic, social norms and perceived economic contribution.

Developing these and Sivanandan's argument that 'poverty is the new Black' (2001: 1), my findings and analyses demonstrate that in the context of contemporary Ireland the professional class view contribution, most particularly economic contribution, as the new 'white' or at least 'whitener'. I conclude that among the Irish professional social class, there exists a selective and contingent understanding of the term 'immigrant', grounded in political economy, white privilege, and class status. Twenty one years after McVeigh (1992) wrote of the changing nature of racism in Ireland, I argue that xeno-racism is emergent in neo-liberal European states such as Ireland where economic contribution is the new 'white'.

My findings and the substantive theory of Performing Distance confirm the need to problematise the common-sense acceptance of a correlation between social class and tolerance of the other. Certainly, as we have seen in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, the main concern for members of the Irish professional class in relation to the groups they categorise as immigrants is the desire to perform, in the public domain, the professional social class norm of tolerance and anti-racism. Dissonance arises however when, or if, they perceive that some immigrants are not contributing sufficiently to deserve access to entitlements such as welfare payments or even asylum (an international entitlement under the Geneva Conventions). I argue that the dissonance between negative perceptions of some immigrants on the one hand, and professional social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism on the other, is managed through a process I conceptualise as Performing

Distance whereby 'distance' is achieved by pushing away the other (raced or classed) while holding on to and re-producing the racial, ethnic and class privilege of the supra-ordinate.

I also suggest that, far from being passive agents in the process, members of the white professional class are actively involved in constructing discourses and practices that produce and maintain: (i) mythical and actual distance (social, economic, spatial, geographic etc.) between themselves and the people they categorise as immigrant; and (ii) knowledge of the backstage area and of the divergent performance acceptable there. Together these discourses form and shape the next generation of professionals to perform in similar ways. The theory of Performing Distance also challenges the common-sense notion that members of the professional class respond to immigrants and immigration by in-action in the sense of 'doing nothing' because 'it's not an issue' and 'doesn't impinge' on their lives. In questioning the presumption of tolerance (a term problematised in Chapter 1) and anti-racism, Performing Distance brings to light the professionals' practices and discursive strategies that have become naturalised, taken for granted, and in the Irish context, invisible.

By offering a description of 'distancing' and how it is performed by members of this social class, this thesis could be construed as offering a defence of it. If so, the defence is not meant to be an apologia, but rather an analysis of white Irish professionals as rational actors motivated by a desire to protect and reproduce their social status as the supra-ordinate (the invisible, the 'whiter-than-white') and the attendant social, economic, and political privileges. The people I interviewed are not irrational or ineffectual actors expressing personal biases and/or ignorant prejudice. Instead, Performing Distance is conceived as the action of an individual (agency) informed by social processes (structure) which are contingent and contextual.

It is not suggested that Performing Distance is a discursive strategy employed with conscious intent, rather as a result of the interviewees' socialisation not just into a predominantly white, Catholic, Gaelic, nationalist Irish society, but also into privileged professional social class norms and values of respectability, contribution, and entitlement. Nor is it to say that the Irish professional class is entirely passive in the processes of distancing the other. These discursive practices contribute to the production and reproduction of the social class knowledge of the existence of private or backstage

discourses that, of itself, subvert the social class norm of public performance of tolerance and anti-racism. Interestingly, during the course of the interviews a number of participants became conscious that some of their comments are incongruent with the social norms and values expected of their social class. For some, this was a cause for reflection. Others justified their 'non-pc' comments as a reaction against these very same social class norms and/or the perceived censoring power of political correctness. What was needed, most suggested, was a 'proper' national debate, implying that many of their peers, and a significant number of Irish people, are also concerned about some aspects of contemporary immigration.

Clearly the substantive theory of Performing Distance is influenced theoretically by Goffman's work on dramaturgy and impression management but I would argue it also builds on this work since it demonstrates that social actors' engagement with, and understanding of, the 'front' and 'backstage' does not necessitate or require a physical/spatial movement i.e. out of a public space and in to a private one. It is the psycho-social 'site' of the interaction which shifts as the interviews proceeded and peer-to-peer trust was (re)established. The interviewees and I were 'hidden in plain view' so to speak in public spaces such as hotel lobbies and the expected 'coherence among setting, appearance and manner' (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 35) of a meeting of professionals was maintained. It was, I suggest, my status as a trusted peer which 'constructed', or allowed to be constructed, a metaphorical 'backstage' in the space occupied by our raced and classed bodies. Or, to use the evocative phrase coined by anthropologist Hanna Papanek in her work on the Muslim veil, our raced and class positionality provided 'portable seclusion' (Papanek, 1982) where people could be their 'all-too-human selves' (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 63) and vocalise what they 'really think' because, as the interviewee Alison put it, 'people like us are concerned about doing the correct thing but deep down there are prejudices buried in all of us...'

Finally, returning to the question of whether or not this research has fulfilled its overall research objective or aim, I argue that Performing Distance does indeed address this question and offers insights into the discursive strategies that professionals use in responding to immigrants and immigration.

Performing Distance: Methodological Contribution

My experience of interviewing peers highlights some of the challenges and opportunities of peer interviewing as a method of collecting data, even on sensitive subjects.

Platt defines peers as people who 'are one's social equals, share the same background knowledge and sub-cultural understandings and are members of the same groups or communities' (1981: 76). As we saw in Chapter 4, this brings with it clear advantages in terms of access to potential participants, and knowledge of discursive nuances, however it also highlights some issues rarely made explicit in the methods literature, for example, that in peer research a prior relationship of some kind exists and could normally be expected to exist after the research concludes. I was not anonymous to my interviewees nor could I 'leave the field' when I got the data. This influenced decisions with regards to my behaviour as an interviewer, creating and meeting expectations of trust, and the setting of the interviews. I realised that while interviewing guidelines in the literature privileging an interviewer's detachment and neutrality may work when interviewing strangers or individuals one expects never to meet again, such guidelines are largely impractical (and possibly detrimental) if there exists a prior relationship and the likelihood of interaction in the future. As a researcher I was asking questions on my peer group's response to aspects of contemporary Irish life and, although following grounded theory and empirical researchers in the field such as Van Dijk (1987), by endeavouring to keep the interviews as close as possible to informal conversations, I found I was neither commenting nor sharing opinions as I endeavoured to perform the role of the 'neutral and objective' researcher. In time I became concerned that some interviewees could misinterpret this performance as my positioning myself as an academic who inhabited some 'higher moral plane'. Whether I liked it or not, undertaking peer research positioned me as 'more than a stranger, but less than a friend' (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979: 66), and while it reduced the amount of generic information offered, importantly this meant moving the interviews towards the personal for both the interviewee and the interviewer, which is not without its challenges. Following Platt (1981), I began to consciously emphasise my group membership by telling stories and sharing experiences that revealed something of me, my own responses, and even my ambivalence, on immigration, and found, as Oakley (1981) says of interviewing, that there is no intimacy without reciprocity. Feminist sociologists such as Oakley (1981), Stanley (1996), and Stanley and Wise (1993) argue that interviewers should show their humanity, answer questions, and express feelings.

This approach helps to reduce real or imagined hierarchical differences and, Reinharz (1992) argues, it encourages a greater spectrum of responses and insights. At first, I shied away from what I perceived as this lack of 'neutrality', but in time I found, similar to Platt (1981), that this level of intimacy allowed more in-depth questioning than might be accepted or expected in a less intimate or equal relationship.

Hollway and Jefferson (2013: 49) theorise data as a co-production of the interviewer and interviewee and view both as 'defended subjects' (ibid: 17) that, in the case of my study, consistently use specific negative discourses on immigration and immigrants to serve a defensive function. They contend that, for the interviewee, such comments legitimate, and therefore mitigate, any negative, non-PC, counter-normative comments. The subject of the defence is the interviewee's own self. For Hollway and Jefferson, threats to the self (both real and perceived) create anxiety and anxiety precipitates defence. Interviewees, they argue, will employ both rational and irrational discourses as protection against conscious or unconscious anxiety, thereby supporting self-identity (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013: 21) as, in this instance, a 'proper' member of the Irish professional class. This type of discourse is often preceded, in reality or metaphorically, by comments such as 'people are genuinely afraid, so it's understandable that…' calling to mind what Wetherell (2003: 21) calls 'a wonderfully efficient rhetoric [ ] obscuring power relations'. Such comments will sound familiar following my analysis of the discursive strategy of rationalising in the previous chapter.

For the interviewer, the theory of 'defended subjects' emphasises the importance of reflection since the response of the interviewer to the interviewee's comments is reflected back to the interviewee as part of ongoing 'unconscious intersubjective dynamics' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013: 159) which, depending on how they are interpreted, may result in more/less anxiety-defence responses. In Chapter 4 (above) I describe coding myself, including my laughter and its effect on the interviewee (per Hak (2003)) although the presumption remains that the ideal and, indeed, norm is to obtain answers that are not 'disturbed' or influenced by the interviewer's behaviour, verbal or non-verbal. 'Data collection', write Van den Berg et al (2003: 4) 'is a misleading metaphor, misleading in that it neglects the constructed nature of the data'. Such critiques are not intended to diminish the usefulness of qualitative interview. As Wetherell (2003: 13) suggests, interviews can still identify the routine cultural resources people have 'for telling their patch of the world' particularly where there is homogeneity and repetition and clear patterns emerge. However, Wetherell does challenge the qualitative interviewer by saying

that it may be more productive – and even more ethical than 'friendly interviewing' (ibid: 28) - for the interviewer to express their own opinions and, on occasion, challenge and even argue with participants, rather than appear, for example, complicit or agreeable to racist statements, although Wetherell admits this could 'violate the implicit contract and expectations of those being interviewed' (ibid: 28).

As I discuss in Chapter 4, as my confidence as an interviewer grew I found I became more comfortable with a conversational style of interview with the attendant interruptions, requests for clarifications, challenges, admissions of ambivalence, and indeed, shared laughter (the significance of the latter is also discussed in Chapter 4). It should also be remembered that my peer group, like many others, was familiar with the norms of the so-called 'interview society'(Atkinson and Silverman, 1997) and, like Kvale and Brinkmann's elite interviewees, they were mature professionals who tend to have secure status so it is both possible and acceptable to challenge their statements and indeed this often leads to new insights (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 147). Such a dynamic engagement, albeit with challenges to the privacy of the interviewer, and in the absence of *ad hominem* can, I argue, contribute to Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) 'defended subject' becoming less defensive and more reflective, and, possibly, result in richer data.

An unexpected finding in relation to building trust with interviewees was that, proactively identifying something as material to be redacted to ensure anonymity generated a more relaxed and rich discussion. In other words interviewees relaxed when they knew I was 'watching out' for them. On reflection, my motivation to protect my interviewees' identities was as much to do with protecting my own status and relationships as with adherence to research ethics. For the peer interviewer, getting the required data is not always or only the abiding concern. Platt (1981) notes that the high level of empathy she felt with her peer interviewees made guilt more salient than the potential shame if she failed to elicit the required data.

Does any of that matter? Would members of this social class talk to a non-peer interviewer? I am sure they would. However, whether or not the data would be reliable i.e. whether they would speak openly, particularly when the responses were about to diverge from the class norm, is arguable.

I speculate that perhaps the non-peer researcher might be treated to the normative social class discourse of tolerance and anti-racism from members of a social class Balibar

describes as 'skilled in the wiles of the political language game' (1991: 223). In other words, would anyone other than a trusted racial, ethnic and class peer be allowed 'backstage'?

Finally, I cannot claim to have carried out peer research and subsequently distance myself from any findings I may be discomfited by. So, when I present this work in conferences and workshops I make a point to use the inclusive 'we' (e.g. 'we tend to say this/that') when presenting my findings, and I try to avoid the pronoun 'they' as is usual in these situations. I find it disingenuous to decide, when it suits me, to describe these interviewees as my peers and when not. Can they be my peers when I claim ease of access and openness but not my peers when they discursively distance themselves from other population groups? I believe that doing so would feel too much like I was 'performing distance' myself.

Limitations

While the substantive theory of Performing Distance reveals latent or covert patterns of behaviour operationalised through the discursive strategies of the professional class, like all research and certainly studies produced under the time and resource constraints of a PhD researcher, the implications and recommendations that follow should be read in the context of the following contextual limitations.

The 'pecking order' or 'hierarchy of acceptable immigrants' described in Chapter 6 is contextual and contingent and, as Anthias et al (1992), Baker (1981), Gilroy (2008 [1987]), Hall (1980a) and Miller (1987) have written, the relationship between economic and cultural capital is both dynamic and uneasy. Society is 'not to be understood in terms of a simple hierarchy, but as a continual struggle over the hierarchy of hierarchies' (Miller, 1987: 152). Who gets 'othered' is locally and temporally contingent (Clarke and Garner, 2010). This study is based in Dublin, in the raced and classed places frequented by, and domicile to, the Irish professional class, before and during the current recession. Fieldwork undertaken in other places and contexts may be significantly different.

It is also worth bearing in mind that many of the negative issues raised in relation to social tensions between immigrants and the Irish lower classes were informed by secondary information, stories, or hearsay, highlighting what Clarke and Garner call the 'virtual character' of the discourse (2010: 7).

The study focused on members of the professional social class so the theory of Performing Distance cannot be generalised to other social class groups without further empirical investigation. It would be interesting however to base some assumptions on the theory of Performing Distance and replicate the study among other Irish and (non-Irish) social classes, in particular immigrant members of the professional social class in Ireland. The latter study would be of particular interest because it would help ascertain the veracity of the performances of distance discussed in this study by social class peers.

All the participants were white Irish. Given Ireland's unusual, if not unique, socio-economic and political history, immigration and emigration 'turning points', and the context of economic boom and recession within which this study took place, what is meaningful to the people interviewed, and the discursive strategies employed, may not be similar for white people of the same class and age cohort in other European countries or the United States. That said, my findings are remarkably similar to empirical work carried out by Hartigan Jr. (1999) in Detroit, a city profoundly different to Dublin and at the time of the study 'perhaps the blackest city' in the US. He too found that class profoundly shapes how whites identify racially and that when whites talk about race they constantly invoke or mobilise class distinctions, and he argues that intra-racial distinctions are a primary medium through which whites think about race and he found race was rarely established in pure forms; rather it was conflated with class distinctions. My findings demonstrate parallels in how white Irish professionals understand racial and ethnic identities and how these are shaped both by inter-racial and intra-racial distinctions grounded in class-based stratification. Other findings, similar to mine, from studies undertaken outside Ireland are referenced as appropriate in the findings chapters (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

It should also be noted that while females and the younger interviewees of both genders appeared to be more predisposed to use racialised discourse, the sample was too small to draw any conclusions – although the latter finding supports Mac Gréil's survey finding to

the effect that there was 'an element of social class prejudice as well as above-average intolerance among the young and more highly educated respondents (2011: 287).

Given that the substantive theory of Performing Distance relates to impression management by the interviewees, the study cannot purport to be an exhaustive revelation of the interviewees' response to immigrants and immigration. In coding and analyses it must be accepted that some sophisticated performances of distancing may have been overlooked and/or that the presence of a researcher (even a peer) could have influenced, in one direction or another, the responses of what are, evidently, research-aware individuals used to the interview process. Just as in a Goffmanian world of masks behind masks there can be no presupposition of a 'real self' lying behind an ultimate façade waiting to be 'revealed' (Valentine 1998). Interviewees perform, as indeed, do interviewers.

The findings emerge from discourse by middle aged Irish interviewees at a moment in time. It is possible that people socialised and educated in earlier and later decades would respond/perform differently. It is also possible that people who have experienced other forms of societal exclusion or discrimination may have significantly different responses. In this study, Arthur, a gay and women's rights activist in his personal and professional life, was among the most positively disposed towards a multi-ethnic Ireland.

Some of the data collected related to the reported behaviour of the interviewees and/or people in their professional and personal networks towards people they categorise as immigrants. However in the absence of direct observation/evidence of the interviewees' daily lives, it is possible, even likely, that the interviewees and their colleagues, family, and friends behave differently in everyday interactions. Bear in mind, no interviewees identified themselves with direct racialised action or thinking so we cannot say what, if any, element of projection might exist in some of these stories or observations.

Finally, deciding when theoretical saturation is reached is an inexact science. Although I believe it was reached in this study, there is the possibility that had I continued collecting data I might have encountered a significant number of interviewees employing discursive strategies at variance to the strategies which inform the theory of Performing Distancing.

Implications

Based on my review of the literature, before and during this research, this is the first qualitative study of its kind to explore how Irish professionals respond to immigrants and immigration and, I argue, the findings and theory of Performing Distance have implications for consideration by researchers including:

- First and foremost, the common-sense notion that members of the professional class, by virtue of their high levels of education and social class norms and values are more tolerant of diversity than are members of other social classes needs to be problematised, challenged, critiqued, and investigated by academics and researchers internationally.

- Secondly, researchers who draw from existing data should endeavour to ensure that their analyses focus on, and critically interrogate differences in social class responses. In this thesis I cited Wellman's (1993) US research showing that racial beliefs do not align neatly to social class position. In addition, Cole's (1997) research of the attitudes of the working class of Palermo toward migrant workers indicates the need for further research rather than acceptance of 'blanket claims of working class racism' (1997: 73). In the Irish context, Garner argues that distinctions identified between the social classes are 'relatively small class-based variations in degrees of hostility' which need to be treated with caution (2003: 229). And in the UK, Clarke and Garner (2009) challenge the characterisation of the white English working class as more racist and hostile to immigration than their middle class counterparts since 'the difference between working and middle-class responses is more relative than absolute, and secondly, [that] the traditionally liberal graduates who comprise a chunk of the Labour [party] vote are becoming less liberal on immigration (Clarke et al, 2009: 140).

  At a minimum, and where possible, secondary analyses should carry a 'disclaimer' or 'health warning' to the effect that there may be some element of social class normative performance being captured in the data i.e. respondents providing socially acceptable and 'class acceptable' answers.

- Thirdly, there is the issue of researchers and respondents talking at cross-purposes. Early in the thesis I show there exists at least two institutional definitions of the term 'immigrant' (e.g. the UN and Census) and, from the interview data, there emerges a range of (additional) ways in which the term is understood by these educated and informed interviewees. A key learning is that it is critically important that what is being researched is the concept as it is used and understood by the interviewee or respondent, not the 'official' UN or Census definition. Grounded theory, influenced from the outset by Blumer and other symbolic interactionists, advocates that the concepts and explanations invoked in studies should emerge from the ground up, so to speak. Esposito and Murphy (1999) advocate cultural immersion and Blumer's concept of 'sympathetic introspection' and critique studies that employ cognitive categories based on prior findings or generally accepted theories and definitions rather than those employed and understood by individuals in their everyday lives. They endorse instead 'guiding research by the principle of sympathetic introspection, [which] at a minimum, requires the instruments be designed to communicate with individuals, variables be socially confirmed, analyses reflect the social logic in place and findings be subject to critique by those who are studied' (Esposito and Murphy, 1999: 406). Research should, in other words, be directed at what people actually do or say and the categories they use rather than what the academy define as the relevant social categories. It should also be borne in mind that these categories are contextual and contingent and so the need to be aware of usage is ongoing. This may go some way towards counteracting another implication for researchers which is that anti-immigrant attitudes may not be revealed (see final implication below) in quantitative studies.

- A fourth implication of the findings that ground the theory of Performing Distance is, I argue, in relation to existing quantitative findings that show that the professional social class self-identify as tolerant of immigrants and immigration when surveyed. In the light of the theory of Performing Distance this is unsurprising. In addition to knowing the normative, culturally and socially acceptable responses to questions related to immigration, it is relatively easy to express tolerance and welcome for people with whom one's life rarely intersects and with whom one does not expect to compete for social or economic resources. More importantly 'people like us' know the expected and accepted social class norms of tolerance and can respond 'appropriately' whether in focus groups or with a quantitative researcher or pollster.

- Last, but by no means least, my findings have implications for wider society. In this thesis we have seen Balibar's criticism of the tendency to focus and research lower class racism 'while letting pass the strategies of denial of 'cultivated' individuals more skilled in the wiles of the political language-game' (1991b: 223) while Van Dijk (1993), Bonilla-Silva (2006) and Hill (2008), among others, have drawn attention to the potent admixture of power and prejudice. In Ireland, Mac Éinri describes a state constructing immigration-related policies with 'a less than positive attitude towards difference and a largely mono-cultural tradition' (2001: 59). It is important to remember therefore that the senior people employed by, advising, and informing, the institutions of the Irish state with policy-making responsibilities are the economic, cultural and social peers of the people I interviewed. Without diverting into the field of social psychology, and bearing in mind new studies on the role of emotion in politics (see Further Research below), it is reasonable to assume some effect of the concern of the Irish professional for social, economic and cultural distance from (certain) immigrants and negative perceptions of immigration in general or certain immigrant groups in particular, on the everyday interactions and decision making of senior public servants, legislators, and politicians, at national and local level. Nor is it only public policy and political decisions which are likely to be influenced by personal dispositions. In the private sector, control over work-place policies and decision-making, including recruitment practices, as well as access to, and influence within powerful social networks such as the media, lies within this peer-group. I return to Blumer and his work on race relations:

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> '...the major influence in public discussion is exercised by individuals and groups who have the public ear and who are felt to have standing, prestige, authority and power. Intellectual and social elites, public figures of prominence, and leaders of powerful organisations are likely to be key figures in the formation of the sense of group position and in the characterisation of the subordinate group' (Blumer, 1958: 6).

Quality Measures

Validity and reliability are inappropriate measures of quality for grounded theory research because as concepts they have become loaded and associated with ontological realism and epistemological positivism (Smith and Sparkes, 2009). Glaser (1978; 1998) suggest four quality measures appropriate to the GT research approach namely: fit, workability, modifiability, and relevance. It is these I employ below.

Fit

Firstly, grounded theory, by virtue of its methodology, is said to possess 'fit' if categories and sub-categories are carefully derived from the data, relate to the incidents and phenomena they represent, and are not derived from preconceived ideas, hypotheses or biases of the researcher. The aim was to find categories that best reflected the coded data rather than creating codes speculatively and then 'finding' data to fit the category. The constant and repeated checking of categories against data as they were collected and coded helped in this regard, as did being able to modify the data collection process (the interviews) iteratively.

Secondly, the aim of GT is to transcend the data and present a substantive theory that fits and explains a latent pattern of behaviour (i.e. addresses the 'what is happening?' question). To accomplish this, categories were conceptualised and abstracted from, and across, 20 individuals, and over 30 hours of interviews. The range of interviewees' voices/data that appears is noted at the outset of each findings chapter. Thus the substantive theory of Performing Distance describes a process or response informed by all the interviewees' accounts, not just some.

Thirdly, in Chapter 4, I note that some interviewees offered (unsolicited) to introduce me to people they thought I would find useful to interview, such as the head of an institute which promotes the place of marriage and (the Catholic) religion in Irish society, and various journalists and politicians. In addition, a number of interviewees emailed me, after the interview, attaching or directing me to media coverage they thought I would find useful. Despite my remaining 'in the field' and contactable, no interviewee contacted me to express concern at what they had, or had not, said in the interview nor did anyone ask

to see the transcripts. Indeed, I have met a small number of them casually since the interviews took place and only one or two asked how the research was progressing.

That said, although the theory of Performing Distance fits and reflects the data, it remains my selection, interpretation, and representation of interviewees' comments and as such represents just one way the data could have been interpreted and conceptualised.

Workability

Workability describes whether or not the theory explains the relevant behaviour and offers analytical explanations for the problems and processes being examined. In other words, the theory should account for how the main concerns of interviewees are resolved. I argue that the main concern of members of the Irish professional class in relation to discussing immigrants and immigration is to perform in public the social class norm of tolerance of difference and anti-racism and that this is achieved by *disclaiming* knowledge of the subject, *distancing* themselves from the lived experience of people they categorise as immigrants, *creating a hierarchy* of acceptable immigrants based not on racial markers but on classed norms and values such as contribution, entitlement, and respectability, *deflecting* the issue of racism onto the lower classes, and drawing on a *rhetoric of rationality* to give substance to their concerns *vis a vis* perceived economic and/or cultural impacts. Performing Distance also helps explain how performances are modified to allow expression of dissonant (and covert) opinions and beliefs when among trusted peers and family i.e. backstage.

Modifiability

Grounded theory should be modifiable, in other words it should be open to development, finesse, or expansion when new relevant research emerges. The substantive theory of Performing Distance is capable of being modified as and when, for example, new data emerge on the discursive strategies of people responding to immigration or immigrants or adapted to study the response of another population sample to other sensitive subjects such as mental health issues or sexuality. Interestingly, I noted that a number of male interviewees commented that talking in the public domain about someone's phenotypical difference is similar (i.e. as taboo) as discussing someone's homosexuality in public.

Relevance

In brief, a grounded theory is relevant if it deals with the actual or real concerns of the participants and provides insights into what was previously unexamined, taken-for-granted or, alternatively, covert knowledge, behaviours, or practices. Here, my positionality as peer interviewer was both a hindrance and a help. On the one hand, I knew the backstage/frontstage dichotomy existed but this was, I later realised, unquestioned and unspoken knowledge. However, my attention was caught by serendipitous comments made by colleagues in Trinity College, journal reviewers, and conference attendees, expressing surprise at the rich data being gathered. Regularly I would be asked: 'how did you get them to talk like that?' 'It was easy', I would reply, 'they know me' and then I would endeavour to get their attention back to data I deemed much more interesting. Reflecting on these comments over time, I came to understand that there was something significant in these questions and my response. The interviewees knew me or had done so previously. I was a peer and I intuitively 'knew' the 'rules'/discursive norms of frontstage/backstage (as I reflect in the epilogue). There are things that can be said in some contexts and not in others and, while the research interview is a performance in the public domain, the unstructured conversational nature and my peer status meant it could also be construed as a conversation between trusted peers in the private domain. The interviewees knew they were unlikely to say something I had not heard before. And, on reflection, so did I. Critically, I was so familiar with some elements of the performance of distance, I could have missed them. Familiarity breeds contempt they say, and, indeed, perhaps there are some I have missed.

Further Research

Following from the previous section on the fit, workability, modifiability and relevance of this study, I believe the theory of Performing Distance suggests a wide range of further research, including, but not limited to, the following:

In their response to the issue of immigration and immigrants, the discourse of these professionals, as evidenced in the transcript extracts throughout this thesis, and specifically in the previous chapter, contains negative emotive terms such as: 'fear', 'bad', 'threat', 'flood', 'influx', 'bombard', 'taking over', 'seeping', 'clogged', 'burden', 'suffer', 'out of control', 'undercover', 'underground', 'under the carpet, 'from under rocks', 'can of worms', 'bubbling away', 'bogeyman' and 'unfair'. There are also fearful

references to disease, predatory males, promiscuous females, and 'bogus' immigrants, specifically asylum seekers. Although it is beyond the remit of this thesis, recent work in the field of social psychology has begun to explore the link between human emotions and cultural and social processes. Reminiscent of group conflict theory (see Chapter 3), it is argued that collective/group identities require both positive emotions toward fellow insiders ('us'), shared emotions about outsiders ('them') and, frequently, negative emotions towards some threat (real or perceived) or opponent (Jasper, 2006). Jasper argues that while it is assumed shared structural positions (economic, cultural and political) make it more likely a group will have shared experiences and develop a shared collective identity, it is rarely acknowledged that shared emotions such as love, hate, fear, envy, and jealously, arise with these positions and experiences. Clarke (2006) relates the emotion of envy to racism and the perception of the dominant (racial/ethnic) group that others (outsiders) are in possession of, or attempting to possess (sneak or steal) something what is rightfully 'ours' e.g. employment, cultural expression, or way of life - even if the outsider has little by way of economic, social or cultural capital. Ahmed (2001: 12) uses the example of UK Conservative politicians in recent years using words like 'flood', 'swamped', and 'bogus', to mobilise fear- and hate-filled associations between asylum seekers and threat, loss or being over-whelmed. She argues that in creating the idea that 'we' cannot know the 'bogus' from the 'genuine', the constant and intrusive surveillance of all others/'intruders' is necessary. 'The figure of the bogus asylum seeker may evoke the figure of the "bogeyman", a figure who stalks the nation and haunts its capacity to secure its borders' (Ahmed, 2004: 123). Analysis of official documents promoting 'community cohesion' as the new framework for managing 'race relations' in Britain by Fortier suggests that, while recognised as inevitable and valuable, diversity is also seen as a 'disturbing sign of change and a potential threat to stability, peaceful cohabitation, cohesion or safe living' (Fortier, 2010: 24). In the same vein, Hoggett et al (2013: 568) examine the role of emotions in the framing of contemporary welfare policies and what they call 'welfare chauvinism', the idea that principles of social solidarity should apply exclusively to 'natives'.

From this necessarily brief discussion I believe it is clear that it would be useful and interesting to explore my raw data (un-coded) with a view to seeing what role emotion(s) play in the discursive response of members of this politically aware and influential collective identity to immigrants and immigration.

Informed by my findings, in other words knowing now what I did not know then, it would also be very interesting to replicate this study, with peer researchers, among

members of the professional class on a larger scale and on a comparative basis with other European cities and on a comparative basis with immigrant professionals in each city.

The study can also usefully be replicated, as peer research, among the Irish lower classes to ascertain the utility of the theory of Performing Distance in another social class *habitus*. Such work would contribute towards testing my substantive theory for applicability and relevance to studying the main concern of other social class groups in discussing immigration. If Performing Distance is sufficiently robust theoretically, then the discursive strategies of Disclaiming, Hierarchising, Distancing, Deflecting, Rationalising and Racialising, should continue to be useful even, and assuming, the subject matter of the discourse, arguments, stories, rationale and defences are somewhat different e.g. the schools may be racially/ethnically mixed but the parent groups at the school gates may not be integrating, or certain streets/apartment blocks in particular suburbs may be regarded as the domain of particular classed/ raced groups. The same, I suggest, would be the case for population cohorts outside Dublin (see below).

Just over one in three of all members of the professional class work in Dublin (county) according to the Census 2011 (C.S.O., 2011) so it is reasonable to generalise that the professionals I interviewed have a somewhat similar range of concerns to their class peers outside Dublin when talking about immigrants and immigration. However, it would still be useful to replicate this study because of the contextual differences i.e. duration and severity of the current recession, continuing outward emigration (which is significantly impacting the western and southern regions), and the uneven dispersal of immigrant groups throughout the regions both involuntary, e.g. there is direct provision hostel in Galway city centre, and voluntary, e.g. the significant Brazilian population in South Galway and Pakistani population in County Mayo.

Certain topics, such as the perception of promiscuous immigrant women, were raised exclusively by female interviewees, which may/may not be related to my positionality as a female peer interviewer. It was beyond the scope of this study but in replicating/developing this research it may be useful to have both male and female interviewers.

Conclusion

As I write this last section on further research I am very conscious that the substantive theory of Performing Distance is a beginning, a starting point. While my study contributes to the theoretical and methodological literature on the intersection of class, race and ethnicity, and immigration studies, my findings are not, by any definition, the conclusion of anything, rather a beginning. Performing Distance indicates something of what is happening for this influential social class in Ireland and it also raises many questions: Why do a racially, ethnically, politically and socio-economically secure group feel a need to distance themselves from the fact of a multi-ethnic Ireland? What makes one group of immigrants more or less acceptable than another and what are the implications for the way immigration, integration and other socio-economic policies are formulated? How and why do Irish people persist in constructing a mythical identity of the exceptional (and welcomed) Irish emigrant in contradistinction to the immigrant to Ireland? Why are emotive terms employed in making ostensibly rational economic and cultural assessments of the impact of immigration? How and why has 'tolerance' of the other come to be understood as normative - and performative - for some social classes and not others, when it appears the performance demands a high level of strategic awareness and conscious engagement from the performers? And what are the implications of all of this for social scientists in Ireland and internationally?

Epilogue:

Following Stage Directions

Frontstage

It is 2007. A Saturday night in November. Five women are on a weekend break in Ireland. After dinner, two taxis are booked by mobile phone to take the women the short journey to their hotel. At the agreed time and place, the first taxi arrives, followed almost immediately by the second. Cue the usual confusion of five happy women on a night out checking that everyone has everything and who will travel with whom in each taxi. One of the women, the youngest, is momentarily confused to see no one is getting into the first taxi. She notices the driver is black and, hoping that this is not the reason for the delay in someone getting in, she quickly checks that the taxi is unsuitable for some other reason. She tells the women standing nearest that the car is from the company they had booked and that the car and driver have all the usual identification one would expect. No one pays attention and no one gets into the car. Almost immediately another taxi pulls in, having been hailed on the street by one of the women. Two women get into each car. The youngest woman hesitates a split second, and then follows. The black taxi driver remains in his cab at the kerb. From beginning to end the whole incident takes less than two minutes. On the short journey to the hotel, the women are silent. The youngest one realises that the moment she saw the driver was black she knew, deep down, that was the reason that the others wouldn't travel in that taxi. She had heard the warnings passed on in the past. 'You just don't know what'd happen with those black fellahs!' But when she hadn't immediately gone along with them, surely they wouldn't have been so…obvious? Would they not be embarrassed that other people saw them do that? It was a busy street.

Backstage

Back in the hotel, the women sit together over a 'night cap'. The phone of the woman who had booked the taxis rings. It is the taxi despatcher enquiring what the problem was, why the group had not taken one of the taxis they had booked. The woman on the mobile phone has no idea how to respond. No-one makes eye contact with her or each other. 'Wrong number!' she rushes, and hangs up. The youngest woman knows now. There can be no doubt. And anyway, the silence between them since the incident is eloquent. She is embarrassed and angry with the others, but mostly angry with herself. She wants to say: 'that was wrong'. 'What you did was wrong, it was racist' and 'those stories are nasty bullshit'. She wants to say: 'what we did was racist'.

She can't find the words. She is tongue-tied. She is a professional communicator. She has a degree. She has just begun an MPhil in Race and Ethnicity.

She says nothing. She knows the unspoken rules.

She doesn't want to be the 'loo lah' who ruined the night out.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Example of Full Length Email Request to Potential Interviewees.

Dear [name],

A lot has changed since we were last in touch. You have moved to [name of company] and, back in 2007, I took a year out from [name of company] to do a Masters in Trinity. Anyway, that was the original plan...Along the way I was delighted to be offered a PhD position in the School of Social Sciences and so, M.Phil accomplished, I now find myself six months into my research for a PhD.

My area of interest is peer research amongst Irish professionals in relation to what they think about how immigration into Ireland over the past few years has been handled and how they foresee the future [given the rapidly changing global and national economic situation]. I'm not looking for experts in Government policy or even those who are particularly interested in the topic. There is no long questionnaire, just informal conversations with a wide cross-section of men and women from the public and private sector to see what they think.

I'm sure you can see where this is going! I'd really appreciate if you would be one of my private sector interviewees sometime over this summer.

From past experience the conversations/interviews take around an hour and can easily be done over coffee/lunch/drink after work (my treat) in a venue that's convenient for you. I record the interviews on a mini-disk so I don't have to (madly) scribble notes. And, of course, as is usual in this type of research, no names or identifying information are ever used, so people can talk freely. I should also add that my interest is in Irish professionals, from all walks of life, not the organisations for which they work, so in no sense would you be speaking on behalf of [name of company] (which would not appear in any notes either.)

So, if you can give me an hour of your time in the coming weeks or months, I would very much appreciate it.

With kind regards and best wishes,

Martina Byrne
PhD Candidate,
Trinity College Dublin

Appendix 2: Interviewee Profile.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Public or Private Sector (Pub/Pri)	Education	Sector	Interviewed
Arthur	M	50-60	Pub.	4th	Health	'08 &'09
Charles	M	50-60	Pub.	4th	Local Government	'08 &'09
Beryl	F	30-40	Pub.	4th	Health	'08 &'09
Alison	F	40-50	Pub.	3rd	Culture/the Arts	'08 &'09
Dean	M	40-50	Pri.	4th	Energy	'08 &'09
Edward	M	50-60	Pri.	4th	Finance	'08 &'09
Claudette	F	30-40	Pri.	3rd	Corporate Services	'08 &'09
Emily	F	50-60	Pri.	2nd	Owner/Manager Services sector	'08 &'09
Barry	M	40-50	Pub.	4th	Innovation	'09
Florence	F	40-50	Pub.	4th	Economics	'09
Frank	M	40-50	Pri.	4th	Food Industry	'09
Gabrielle	F	30-40	Pub.	4th	Life Sciences	'09
Helen	F	40-50	Pri.	3rd	Tele-communications	'09
Iris	F	30-40	Pri.	3rd	Food Industry	'09
Josephine	F	40-50	Pub.	4th	Information Technology	'09
Ivan	M	50-60	Pri.	3rd	Marketing	'09
Jerry	M	40-50	Pri.	3rd	Publishing	'09
Keith	M	40-50	Pub.	3rd	National Government	'09
Larry	M	50-60	Pub.	3rd	Regulatory	'09
Michael	M	30-40	Pri.	3rd	Design	'09

Appendix 3: Illustrative NVivo Screen-Pull of Early-Stage Coding.

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Abstract

Performing Distance: The Response of Irish Professionals to Immigrants and Immigration.

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Literature on immigration in Ireland has focused on analyses of rates and flows, the impact of labour migration, and immigrants' experiences of racism and integration. Empirical work on the response of the host population to immigration is dominated by studies on people occupying the lower levels of socio-economic attainment. There have been no in-depth qualitative studies of the Irish professional class in this respect until now. This study seeks to generate a substantive theory of how members of this class respond to immigrants and immigration. This requires examining how Irish professionals conceptualise contemporary immigration, eliciting the factors that influence how they respond to immigrants and immigration, and exploring their main concerns in such discussions. My research contributes not alone to the literature on the intersection of race, ethnicity, and class, but also to the literature on a small, yet influential, section of the Irish population whose relative advantages include workplace decision making, political power, and access to influential social networks such as the media. I employ grounded theory methodology, with its emphasis on the emergence of new theory through data rather than testing ideas or existing theories. The interviewees were formerly my professional class peers. Fieldwork was conducted in 2008 and 2009, a period of socio-economic change in Ireland, substantial even by historic and international comparison.

Based on my findings, I argue that the main concern of the Irish professional class, when discussing immigration, is to perform, and be seen to perform, the professional social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism. Dissonance between negative perceptions of some immigrants and some fellow-nationals on the one hand, and class norms of tolerance and anti-racism on the other, is managed through a process I conceptualise as Performing Distance, which, I argue, is operationalised through a range of discursive strategies deemed suitable for the public domain or 'frontstage': disclaiming, hierarchising, distancing, deflecting, and rationalising. Critically, the performance of racialising discourse is confined to the private domain or 'backstage' among trusted friends and family.

Theoretically, this study is informed by intersectionality which Whiteness theorists draw on to give a materialist grounding to the concepts of racism and racialisation because of what they identify as constructed racial hierarchies and ideologies whereby whites, regardless of class, hold common interests in opposition to the group interests of non-whites. Importantly, however, they also propose that whiteness, as a constructed racial category, can be mediated by class and that intra-racial and inter-racial division is reflected in a discourse of norms, values, and respectability. Following Goffman's dramaturgical approach, Whiteness Studies also theorises the emergence of a 'backstage' area where performances which do not concur with contemporary mores and values of political correctness, tolerance, and anti-racism, can be performed among trusted peers without fear of rejection or correction. Such intra-racial and inter-racial divisions are reflected in the discursive strategies that constitute the process of Performing Distance and, I argue, describe the response of the Irish professional class to immigrants and immigration.

The substantive theory of Performing Distance has implications for consideration by researchers. Firstly, the common-sense notion that, by virtue of their high levels of education and social class norms and values, members of the professional class are more tolerant and anti-racist than are members of other social classes can be usefully critiqued. Secondly, having demonstrated the existence of a number of interpretations of the term 'immigrant', it is important that what is being researched is the concept as it is used and understood by the respondent. The third implication is that respondents who are aware of the accepted social class norms of tolerance and anti-racism can respond, and perform, 'appropriately' in research studies.