Ireland: The Land of A Hundred Thousand Welcomes?

Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland: An Examination of the Ideological Mechanisms of Exclusion.

By

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the regulations for the attainment of the Degree of Masters of Arts in Sociology.

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August 1999

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank: Dr. Michel Peillon, my research supervisor, for his advice, guidance and patience; all the lecturers in the Department of Sociology and Maureen Redmond for their continuing help and support throughout the academic year; all of those in The Vietnamese Irish Centre, and The Islamic Centre who were kind enough to give up some of their time and be interviewed by me; to those working in Comhlaimh who put me in contact with Jean; to Jean who spent over an hour talking with me about his experiences; my parents, without whose constant encouragement, love and support this thesis would not have been possible; and to all my classmates for a most enjoyable year.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the memory of Assumpta Gilsenan (1978-1999) whose friendship I will always treasure. 'This, I say, is what is broken by no chances, what no interval of time or space can sever or destroy, and what even death itself cannot part'. (John Cassian).

Extract from *The Devil's General*:

"... just imagine your line of ancestry, from the birth of Christ on. There was a Roman commander, a dark type, brown like a ripe olive, he had taught a blond girl latin. And then a Jewish spice dealer came into the family, he was a serious person, who became a Christian before his marriage and founded the house's Catholic tradition. And then came a Greek doctor, or a Gaelic legionary, a Grisonian landsknecht, a Swedish horseman, a Napoleonic soldier, a deserted Cossack, A Black forest miner, a wandering miller's boy from the Allase, a fat mariner from Holland, a Magyar, a pandour, a Viennese officer, a French actor, a Bohemian musician – all lived on the Rhine, brawled boozed, and sang and begot children there – and – Goethe, he was from the same pot, and Beethoven, and Gutenberg, and Mathias Grunewald, and – oh, whatever – just look in the encyclopaedia. They were the best, my dear! The world's best! And why? Because that's where the people intermixed. Intermixed, like the waters from the sources, streams and rivers, so, that they run together to a great, living torrent."

(Carl Zuckmayer) (Welsch: 1999: 199)

"Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light."

(T.W. Adorno) (Munnus 1995: 409)

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"Seeing 'the entire world as a foreign land' makes possible originality of vision. Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and the plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is contrapuntal." (Edward Said). (Morley et al. 1995: 84)

Comprehensive and reliable statistics on refugees in Europe are difficult to assemble. It is estimated, however, that between 1987 and 1997 that the number of refugees world-wide increased from 8 – 15 million. This means on average that every 21 seconds a refugee is created. In 1938, the American journalist Dorothy Thompson wrote that: "A whole nation of people, although they come from many nations, wanders the world, homeless except for refuges which may at any moment prove to be temporary." (Marrus 1985: 3). Unfortunately, these words are still applicable today. Few can deny that there is now a refugee crisis. Vaughan Robinson in his article *The Changing Nature and European Perceptions of Europe's Refugee Problem* outlines that the 1980s marked a distinct period in the shift from refugees being accepted in pre-planned quotas to them arriving spontaneously. The spread of cheap air travel, progress of the mass media in the third world and the chain effect of previous labour migrations served to empower the refugees. The realisation in some countries that Third World Refugees could no longer be kept at arm's-length was such a profound shock that it brought about a complete rethink of refugee admission policy. As Scheinman (1983) remarked 'the age of innocence is over'. In response to the 'compassion-fatigue' and increasing

levels of racism in the electorate, European governments began to redefine the discourse. Refugees were increasingly described as economic migrants, and distinctions were drawn in the media between 'genuine' and 'bogus' refugees. Legislation moved towards the harmonisation of refugee and immigration policies and the media and governments began to play the 'numbers game'. (Robinson 1996: 415).

The 1990s brought further change. The rapid and unexpected melting of the Cold War, and the global law and order deficit that followed, changed the perceived source of the refugees. East-West migration took on much greater salience. Significant numbers of refugees were now seeking asylum from the explosive birth of ethnic nationalism in the East and the attendant process of ethnic sorting, personified by the Yugoslavian civil war. Although, these new asylum seekers were European, circumstances were no more positive for them than they had been for the previous wave of spontaneous refugees from the Third World. This was the case as Western Europe had been plunged into a deep recession by the close of the 1980s. An atmosphere bordering on hysteria was ebbing its way into European discourse on refugees.

Race and ethnic groups, like nations, are imagined communities. People are socially defined as belonging to particular groups, either in terms of definitions employed by others, or definitions which members of particular ethnic groups develop for themselves. Essentially, they are ideological entities. According to Wieviorka, these ideologies can be used as powerful tools in the to exclusion others. Wieviorka defines an ideology as:

A generalised principle of the imaginary perception of difference, a somato-biological representation of the Other, which runs not only across the whole political stage, or possibly through the whole state, but also through a variety of social relations, daily life, language and the press – including apparently the most commonplace material it covers, which informs not only doctrines and opinions but also concrete acts of discrimination, segregation or violence.

(1995: 31)

According to Hannah Arendt the danger here lies in the fact that:

"an ideology differs from a simple in that it claims to possess either the key to history, or the solution for all the 'riddles of the universe', or the intimate knowledge of the hidden universal laws which are supposed to rule nature and man."

(Wieviorka 1995: 26)

The objective differences in the social situation of different ethnic and racial groups as they are defined in society can be studied. Much of the recent work on social exclusion has been done in this vein.

On another level, emphasis may also be placed on social identities. As identities based on race and ethnicity are not simply imposed it is more accurate to speak of racialised groups. What it is all essentially about is the representation of difference. Sites of difference are also sites of power, a power too whereby the dominated come to see and experience themselves as 'Other'. In the environment of a refugee crisis on hand, it does not come as any surprise that questions about immigration and race have inherited a new importance and are at the core of public debate. (Bulmer 1998: 822) Whereas it was still relatively common until the 1980s to treat questions about racism, ethnicity and nationalism as relatively marginal to the agenda of both social scientists and policy-makers, it is no exaggeration to say today that these issues have moved right to the centre of the public arena.

Inarguably, the terms of both official and popular discourses about race and racism are in a constant state of flux. Recent changes in European societies highlight this fact best. We have witnessed both the development of a 'new' racism(s), and the emergence of intense political debate about what kinds of policies should be pursued to deal with such issues as immigration and the political and social rights of migrants. The language of contemporary racism contains a certain flexibility of what is meant by race, as well as an emphasis on defending one's nation as opposed to attacking others as such. These blended ingredients tend to create arguments in favour of cultural difference along with negative images which portray the 'Other' as a threat. There is room to manoeuvre in the argument that modernity's infatuation with identity is an outcome of the concerns about where minorities in societies such as our own actually belong. Herder wrote that:

> *Everything which is still the same as my nature, which can be assimilated therein, I envy, strive towards, make my own; beyond this, kind nature has armed me with insensibility, coldness and blindness; it can even become contempt and disgust."*
>
> (Welsch 1999: 195)

He places an emphasis both on the own, and exclusion of foreign. The traditional concept of culture is a concept of inner homogenisation and outer separation at the same time. It is now accepted that assimilation is no longer a viable option. Sociologists have been telling us for over the past two decades that modern lives are to be understood 'as migration through different social worlds and as successive realisation of a number of possible identities', and that we all as Bell put it have 'multiple attachments and identities' – 'cross-cutting identities'. (Welsch 1999: 198). Nietsche hoped that the future culture of Europe would be one of intermixing, and the future person a polycultural

nomad. He spoke strongly against the relapse to 'nationalism', 'fatherlandishness' or 'soil addiction'. He asked:

> *What value could it have, now that everything points to a larger and common interests, to goad these ragged self-ish feelings? ... And that in a situation where spiritual dependence and denationalisation leap to the eye, and the actual value and meaning of today's culture lies in mutual fusion and fertilization of one another.* (Welsch 1999: 202)

In order to understand the present situation in relation to refugees in Ireland, it is necessary to place it in the wider European context. It is only recently that Ireland has become affected by the economic, demographic and political forces which have been impacting on most of Europe since the end of World War II. Ireland, for the first time, witnessed a sharp increase in the number of applications for asylum in the 1990s. It grew from 32 in 1992 to 4,626 in 1998. Previously, "the centre of the Irish experience of being modern" was of outward emigration. The Irish Diaspora contributed fruitfully to building up the host societies that admitted Irish immigrants. Since 1987 Irish people have enjoyed the right to move freely, work and settle in any of the member states of the European Union. Today, Ireland is listed as the 17th wealthiest country in the world. The question now becomes if the 'land of a thousand welcomes' is outstretching its arms to the refugees and asylum seekers that have come knocking at its door? More importantly, what kind of hospitality is this country rendering to those refugees and asylum seekers that now live among us?

A recent survey carried out in Ireland has indicated that the level of support for refugees is decreasing. My aim in this thesis is to concentrate on the ideological mechanisms that are used as methods of excluding these

migrants from mainstream Irish society. I will be paying particular attention to the modern discourses of racism, nationalism and the imagined concept of 'Other', and of all they construe. Essentially, what I intend to portray is that these ideologies are all social constructs of difference that have been created by the mind.

Chapter 2: Migration and the 'Gardening' State

While numbers on their own make a compelling argument for the existence of a sea-change in the global refugee crisis since the 1970s, other points reinforce this argument. As cited in the introduction, Robinson (1993) notes how changes in international communications have made it easier both for potential emigrants to acquire information about possible refuges and for those distant from refugee crises to learn about the horrors experienced by the participants. Improvements in international mass transport have also made it much easier and cheaper for potential migrants to realise their ambitions. Marrus (1985) singled out another contextual factor that has profound implications for refugees, namely the development of the welfare state from the 1950s onwards. In earlier eras, refugee crises were short-lived, since refugees rarely survived one winter when separated from their traditional means of subsistence. These days, refugees can be sustained over long term by the state welfare provision and in the intervention of the huge number of humanitarian bodies such as UNHCR and UNICEF. Finally, refugee migrations now take place within a world order increasingly dominated by xenophobic considerations and tainted by unemployment and sluggish economic growth, all of which change the climate of public opinion towards refugees and the admission of refugees (Boyle et al. 1998: 184).

According to Bauman, modernity is in part driven by a powerful striving for classificatory and social order, hence uneasiness with ambiguities

and ambivalences which disturb and destabilise neat boundaries and borders. Underlying this there exists a fear of chaos which is generated paradoxically by an awareness of diversity and the possibility of transformation. Rattansi believes that Bauman's point needs to be supplemented further. She asserts that modernity is characterised by a duality, in which rapid and incessant change and the fragmentation that ensues from the power of market forces are also accompanied by constant projects which attempt the conservation and indeed invention of traditions. This duality yields important insights into understanding processes by which particular segments of the population – for example, diasporic communities – fall foul of one side of the duality of modernity: its drive for cultural assimilation. For Rattansi, modernity's ambivalence is generated not by occupying the first term of the binary between 'order' and 'chaos', but by inhabiting the two simultaneously. In other words, that there is a striving for order while at the same time there is an excitement, exhilaration and anxiety produced by rapid change at the hands of modernity.

Drawing upon Bauman and Foucault, it can be seen that modernity's striving for social and intellectual order has become intertwined with three distinctly modern projects: the *nation-state*, the *'gardening' state*, and the *disciplinary society* (Rattansi *et al.* 1994: 25). Nation-states have been driven by cultural assimilationism; a form of strong cultural ordering which is of profound significance in understanding the formation of Western Racism. The gardening metaphor not only refers to the desire to find technical solutions to all problems, but also draws attention to what Foucault refers to as bio-politics and the 'management of populations'. The metaphor portrays a society that

embarks on a project of 'weeding out' and 'decontamination'. Finally, the concept of the disciplinary society draws on Foucault's analysis of the modern social as a network of power/knowledge configurations that both produce and regulate a modern form of individualisation which produces a new bio-power. Thus, those striving for stable classificatory systems, articulated with the modern projects of constructing disciplined, managed, healthy nations has consistently involved the weeding out of contaminated 'Others' who appear to disturb the social order, or who fall foul of either cultural or ethnic boundaries. (Ibid)

The aim of Castles in his book *The Age of Migration* is to link two bodies of theory that are often dealt with separately: theories on migration and settlement, and theories of ethnic minorities and their position in society. He begins by looking at the concept of the migrationary process and then goes on to examine theories of ethnicity and racism. In turn he relates this to the process of ethnic minority formation which he links to concepts of nation, state and citizenship. At one extreme in the host society there is openness to settlement, granting of citizenship and gradual acceptance of cultural diversity may allow the formation of ethnic communities which can be seen as part of a multicultural society. At the other extreme, however, denial of the reality of settlement, refusal of citizenship and rights to settlers, the rejection of cultural diversity may lead to the formation of ethnic communities. Here the immigrants are excluded and marginalised, so that they live on the fringes of a society that is determined to preserve myths of a static culture and a homogeneous identity. Critics of immigration portray ethnic minorities as a

threat to the economic well-being, public order and national identity. Ironically, these ethnic minorities may well be the creation of the very people who fear them (Castles 1993: 26).

An ethnic minority is a product of both 'other-definition' and self-definition. Other definition means ascription of undesirable characteristics and assignment to inferior social positions by the dominant groups. Self-definition refers to the consciousness of group members belonging together on the basis of shared cultural and social characteristics. Some minorities are mainly constructed through the process of exclusion (which may be referred to as *racism*). Others are mainly constituted on the basis of cultural and historical consciousness (or *ethnic identity*) among their members. Racism, for Castles, may be defined as the process whereby society categorises other groups as different or inferior, on the basis of phenotypic or cultural markers. This process involves the use of economic, social or political power, and generally serves its purpose to legitimise exploitation or exclusion. It has its basis on socially constructed markers of difference.

Zolberg argues that while migration has its roots in economic forces, so the refugee movements have theirs in political forces, particularly in the emergence of nation states in multi-ethnic empires. Refugees, as Boyle writes, on arriving to their new host country are particularly vulnerable to the process of labelling. Groups arriving tend to be given a single *label* or identity ('refugee') even though this might conceal a range of identities: political refugees versus environmental refugees, or the imposed label versus how the

refugee see themselves. Perhaps more importantly though, labels frequently become stereotypes, which carry with then assumed needs and prescriptions. These labels are given either by organisations, governments or academics. Which label a group receives, may well lead to their real world or academic fate. Boyle illustrates his point by pointing out that those accorded with the prized label of 'Convention refugee' can expect the protection and assistance of the government and the attention of a growing body of academic researchers and media reporters. Those assigned other labels can expect much less (Boyle *et al.* 1998: 206).

Dominant groups tend to see migrant cultures as primordial, static and regressive. Cultural assimilation and abandonment of the language of origin is seen as the precondition for integration and upward mobility. Those who do not assimilate 'have only themselves to blame' for their marginalised position (Castles 1993: 33). At the same time, increasing global economic and cultural integration is leading to a simultaneous homogenisation and fragmentation of culture. As multi-national companies take over and repackage the artefacts of local cultures it becomes possible to consume all types of cultural products everywhere, but at the same time they lose their meaning as symbols of group identity. The recreation of ethnic identities, which is 'characteristic of postmodern identity', is a part of this process. Culture is becoming increasingly politicised in most countries of immigration. As ideas of racial superiority lose their ideological strength, exclusionary practices against minorities increasingly focus on issues of cultural difference.

There is, writes Yasmin Alibhai, 'a respectable xenophobia mushrooming all over the continent (Morley *et al* 1995: 82). If we are seeing argues Morley, the emergence of postmodern geographies, then these developments are one manifestation. Mass immigration, displaced persons, refugees, exiles are a testament to the global-nexus. The question that naturally follows is that of internal colonialisation. "There's a bit of apartheid happening right here among us - in our *democracy*", protests Gunter Wallraff. How might these nomad identities fit into an ideal of 'unity in diversity'? (Morley *et al.* 1995: 77). What we are essentially doing here is questioning our relationship to others – other cultures, other experiences and other people. This in turn leads us to ask how our historical relation to Others has been transformed into an ontological relation to the Other. The European ideal is about an economic area where all barriers have been removed. What Morley is suggesting is that there are also cultural and psychic barriers which pose as obstacles to European unity. The question is whether it is possible to create a kind of communication and community that can acknowledge difference, with the possibility of using this difference as a resource rather than fearing it as a threat.

It is also possible for a society to feel threatened by the 'other' that is within. The threat does not necessarily have to come in from the outside so the speak. MacGreil in his book *Prejudice in Ireland Revisited* labels the Travelling People in Ireland as 'Ireland's Apartheid' (1996: 323). The Travelling People make up around one per cent of the total population in Ireland. MacGreil finds it difficult to comprehend how our attitudes to fellow

citizens could be so negative. Judging by the results of social distance scores from a 1988-89 National Sample, only one in every seven would welcome a Traveller into the family through marriage, while a further 59% would not welcome Travellers as next-door neighbours. Moreover, 10% would go so far as to deny Travellers Irish citizenship (MacGreil 1996: 327). By comparing the results of the 1988-89 sample to those found in the 1972-73 sample, MacGreil states that if the rate of deterioration continues as it has been doing for the last sixteen years, the Travelling People could end up not as a "lower caste" but as an "out caste". (MacGreil 1996: 328)

Dymphna McLoughlin in her article *Ethnicity and Irish Travellers: Reflections on Ni Shuinear,* points out the fact that not all venom in Irish society is reserved for the Travelling Community. Religious minorities, she asserts, have at certain times felt barely tolerated. This is an aspect of our history that has scarcely been documented. Moreover,

> *The never-ending intolerance of our society can daily be seen in the treatment of "undesirables", drug addicts, persons recovering from mental illness, the homeless. Because they are powerless, poor, disorganised and inarticulate, the infringements on their human rights and civil liberties rarely merits public comment.*
>
> (O'Siochain 1989: 83)

A report drawn up by the European Communities on racism and xenophobia in 1991 refers to the findings in another report conducted by Harmony, an anti-racist group in Ireland. It found that Ireland has a very small number of immigrants and refugees, and racist sentiments tend to be directed toward the native Traveller community. It stated that in any event such attitudes are very rarely expressed in public discourse and almost never within

the political mainstream (1991: 31). The report went on to highlight that although the number of known cases of racial harassment or violence is small compared to other countries, this is precisely because of the insignificant foreign population. It goes on to point out that the number of cases that the report does mention are indicative of some racism and xenophobia which could reach more dangerous levels if there were more groups of foreigners. (A Report drawn on behalf of the Committee of Inquiry into Racism and Xenophobia on the Findings of the Committee of Inquiry 1991: 65).

Chapter 3: Racism

Maire Nic Suibne in her article *Fortress Ireland* describes Dublin as "a vibrant showcase of modern cool, home of an estimated thousand rock bands, and Roddy Doyle, Booker Prize winner and chronicler of the tough but colourful lives of the urban poor." (The Gaurdian Weekender Oct 3 1998). There is, however, a different image of another section of society that has been little regarded: the immigrant community. Ireland has yet, she claims, to face up to the fact that it is one of the fundamentally racist countries in the European Union. If you are "white, well turn out and have spending money it is a very welcoming place." For many refugees and asylum seekers it is less than a place of welcomes, but is rather a place of fear and threats. A Garda spokesperson told her that the force saw no need to record racist attacks as such, but the Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland has been keeping its own account. Their spokesperson is quoted as saying, "Things are getting increasingly worse. There have been 17 serious attacks, including stabbings in the last two months. Verbal threats and harassment are happening daily. The level of xenophobia is rising, yet I have never heard anyone in the government condemn racism in public. I am very pessimistic."

Fascists groups such as Reclaim Dublin and their propaganda that "blacks bring drugs and prostitution" are common to so many cities of Western Europe. Posters' carrying messages, such as 'Niggers Out' or 'Lots of Help for Bogus Refugees ... Little Help for Our Irish', are at times seen littering the streets of Dublin. Granted support for such groups is still of yet minuscule in

level. What Nic Suibne finds most disturbing here is the attitudes of the intelligentsia, the prosperous and the educated. The feeble excuse she sees them as offering is that 'this country is too small'

Michel Wieviorka opens his book *The Arena of Racism* with a quote from the scientist Albert Jacquard; "though there are no *races*, racism does exist." (Wieviorka 1995: 1). Racism now appears in all its nakedness and must be understood in terms of other conceptual categories rather than those of biology or genetics. Most historians of the idea of racism see it as having developed most prodigiously in the nineteenth century, with that centuries combination of colonialism, scientific and industrial development, urbanisation, immigration, population movements and, at the same time, of individualisation and the upsurge of nationalism's. European racism was formed, even before it received its present name, out of the encounter with the Other – most often a dominated Other – and out of the invention, against the background of the rise of nationalisms, of modern anti-Semitism – an invention in which a considerable amount of thinkers were implicated and which Guillaune Marr put a name to in 1893 (Wieviorka 1995: 5).

Emile Durkheim wrote that 'when society is suffering, it feels the need to find someone to whom it can attribute the evil, someone to whom it can be avenged for its disappointment.'(Wieviorka 1995: 7) The theory suggests a scapegoating mechanism that targets a human group defined by a representation which has nothing, or very little, to do with its objective characteristics. This theory is of interest in relation to the vast amount of

interrelated work which stresses the importance of focusing on the racializing group, rather than in terms of groups defined by race, whose prejudices and behaviour can be understood without reference to the lived experience of contact. It is Weber and de Tocqueville, however, that provide the basic elements of a sociology of racism in refusing to see race as an explanatory principle of social relations. For Weber, there is race only if there is race consciousness, anchored in communal identity, which can lead to action, or conversely, to fear of the other kind. This race consciousness is not attributable to hereditary differences but to a *habitus*. Everett C. Hughes wrote that 'the true unit of race and ethnic relations is not the single ethnic group, but the *situation*, embracing all of the diverse groups who live in the community or region' (Wieviorka 1995: 14).

In the view of Robert E. Park, race relations are a feature of the modern world which arose as a consequence of Europe reaching out. Most importantly, were the resulting great upheavals among its populations. Thus Park says, 'It is obvious that race relations and all that they imply are generally, and on the whole, the products of migration and conquest.' (Haralambos 1995: 667). He believed that this 'race relations' phase would not last forever, but rather represented a last phase in the forward march of modernity before social groups began to define themselves in truly social terms. According to Park, race relations are the relations that exist 'between peoples distinguished by marks of racial decent ... and by so doing determine in each case the individuals conception of himself as well as his status in the community' (Wieviorka: 1995: 13). Wieviorka, in his critique of Park, states that by not

questioning the notion of race that he based his sociology on a category, while under-estimating that category was to a great extent social and historical in construct. Furthermore, he seemed to be unaware of the mechanisms that produced racism, where it was based not necessarily on concrete relations or lived experience but on representations and fantasies, on an imaginary register which does not always bear much relation to the objective characteristics to which it purports to refer.

Dumont theorises racism in terms of an ideology, or more particularly, as a modern ideology, 'a system of values and ideas characteristic of modern societies' (Wieviorka 1995: 28). It is based on the opposition between individualism and holism. In holistic societies, based on a principle of hierarchy, the individual is subordinate to the group, which confers a status to him. In contrast, the functioning of individualistic societies is to be explained by starting out from the individual, defined by his juridical equality with every other individual, not by his place or a predetermined status. The problem is that the new individualistic way of life has still to triumph. In that thinking, racism is not just an 'illness' of modernity, but is also an illness of the transition to modernity. It is one of the modalities of holism which still possesses sufficient strength, in spite of – and indeed, because of – its being in crisis and permits a more or less voluntaristic attempt to turn back the clock. One may, however, reject his anti-modern pessimism and contest the idea that the birth of racism as an ideology is due either to the emergence of modernity entirely or to the crisis of holism itself (Wieviorka 1995: 30).

Miles argues that the presence of the discourse of 'race' is a precondition for the identification of the concept of racism. The fact that only certain physical characteristics are signified to define races in specific circumstances indicates that we are investigating not a given, natural division of the world's population, but the application of historical and culturally specific meanings to the totality of human physiological variation. This, according to Miles, the use of the word 'race' to label the groups so distinguished by such features is an aspect of the social construction of reality: 'races' are socially imagined rather than biological entities. As 'race' and 'race relations' are ideological notions that are used both to construct and negotiate social relations, the concepts that are employed to analyse that social process should reflect that fact consistently. Only then, Miles claims, will we have a scientific language that allows the deconstruction of the idea of 'race' rather than a language which reifies, and thereby legitimises, it (Miles 1989: 73). The first key concept is 'racialisation'. Racialisation refers to those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities. The concept therefore refers to a process of categorisation, a representational process of defining an Other somatically.

The second key concept is racism, which should be used to refer exclusively to an entirely ideological phenomenon. The inflation in the meaning of the concept has resulted in it not only being used to refer to ideologies but also to a very wide range of practices and processes. Miles points out, however, that there is no necessary co-relation between cognition

and action. The ideology of racism has a number of additional characteristics. First because it presumes a process of racialisation, it has a dialectual character in so far as the representation of the Other serves simultaneously to refract a representation of the Self. If the Other is a naturally constituted collectivity, then so the Self must be. Racism is therefore a representational form which, by designating discrete human collectivities, necessarily functions as an ideology of inclusion and exclusion. Unlike the process of racialisation, however, the negative characteristics of the Other mirror the positive characteristics of the Self. Racism therefore presupposes a process of racialisation but is differentiated from that process by its explicitly negative evaluative component. Also, racism may take the form of a relatively coherent theory, exhibiting a logical structure and adducing evidence in its support, but it also appears in a less coherent assembly of stereotypes, images, attributions and explanations which are constructed and employed to negotiate everyday life. Finally, an emphasis on racism as entirely a false doctrine fails to appreciate that one of the conditions of the existence of ideologies is that they can successfully make 'sense of the world', and for those that use them it may offer an explanation for the way the world is experienced to work (Miles 1989: 80).

Miles is further interested in the production and reproduction of meanings, a focus that leads to a particular emphasis upon systems of communication in order to understand the reproduction of racism (Miles 1989: 97). As an ideology, however, it is necessary to delineate the complexity of its reproduction. This means avoiding any assumption of simple, historical duplication. Ideologies are never only received but are constructed and

reconstructed by people responding to their material and cultural circumstances in order to comprehend, represent and act in relation to those circumstances. Ideological reproduction is therefore a transaction between historical legacy and individual and collective attempts to make sense of the world. New circumstances can be expected to stimulate the formation of new representations. It is too often, however, assumed that the *expression* of racism's synonymous with the communication of racism, in which the audience necessarily comprehends and accepts the ideology that has been presented at present. It does not automatically follow that the expression of racism in a newspaper will result in its readers articulating a racist message. This does not allow for the anti-racist voice. Secondly, the effects of its expression will always be linked to the extant economic and political relations well as other ideologies. It should always be remembered that those that articulate it and those who are its object are located in a wider, complex web of social relations. Racism and related exclusionary practices have their own specificity and give rise to their own particular, exclusive experiences. For example, in capitalist societies which are unable to provide sufficient and adequate housing for their populations, some mechanism of inclusion/exclusion is necessary to allocate people to housing of poor quality and racism in one among a number of such mechanisms (Miles 1989: 134). On another level, Miles maintains that it is necessary to clarify the concept of 'exclusionary practice'. First, the concept of exclusionary practice only refers to a concrete act or process and does not presuppose the nature of the determination, the specification of which requires independent investigation. Secondly, it refers to both intentional actions and unintended consequences

which create patterns of inequality. Thirdly, that there is a dialectal relationship between inclusion and exclusion (Miles 1989: 78).

Observing the growing racist tendencies in most countries that appear to be affecting most European countries leads us to a central question: is there a certain unity in contemporary European racism? Wieviorka argues, however, that European integration, in so far as it exists, and the growth of racism are in fact two distinct phenomenon and it would be artificial to try and connect them too directly. The most usual frame of for any research about racism and race relations remains national. As the companion of modernity triumphant racism is universalist, denouncing, crushing and despising different identities. Secondly, linked to processes of downward social mobility, or exclusion, racism is an expression, as well as the refusal, of a situation in which the actor positively values modernity. Thirdly, another line of argument appeals to identity or to tradition, which are opposed to modernity. The nation, religion and the community then act as markers of identity but are without any reference to modernity. In what he terms 'the era of destruction', Wieviorka outlines that all European countries today are experiencing a huge transformation which he defines as, *'une grande mutation'*. The middle classes no longer have to define themselves by reference to class conflicts, and they tend to oscillate between, unrestrained individualism and, on the other hand, populism or national populism, the latter being particularly strong among those who experience downward social mobility or social exclusion. Those who are 'out', or fear to be, have a feeling of injustice and loss of previous social identity. They think that the government and politicians are responsible for

their situation, and may develop popular discourses and attitudes in which anti-immigrant or ethnic minorities' racism can take place (Rattansi 1994: 179).

On a level footing, the decline of the working-class movement has entailed the collapse of 'old' hopes and meanings, and so a search for 'new' ways of projecting the self into the future by reference to the past (Rattansi 1994: 209). A second element of deconstruction, deals with the state and its public institutions, which encounter increasing difficulties in trying to respect egalitarian principles, or in acting as welfare states. Everywhere in Europe the number of unemployed has grown and there is an increasing feeling of insecurity which is attributed, to a large extent, to immigrants. The immigrants perceived in racist terms are accused not only of taking advantage of social institutions and using them to their own ends, but of benefiting from too much attention form the state. A third aspect of the recent evolution concerns the national issue which becomes nodal and, is less and less linked to ideas such as progress, reason or democracy. National identity is increasingly loaded with xenophobia and racism. This tendency gains impetus with the emergence of other groups that are defined, or that define themselves, as communities whether religious, ethnic, national or regional. Wieviorka points out, however, that although community identities do not necessarily mean racism, racism as Etienne explains, is always a 'virtuality' (Rattansi 1994: 181). When reason, progress and development become increasingly divorced form nation, identity and subjectivity, racism may easily develop.

Some sociologists, relying on American studies, oppose the old 'fragrant' racism to the new 'subtle' racism. Others, however, emphasise the distinction between two kinds of racism. The first kind considers the Other as an inferior being. The second type sees the Other as being fundamentally different and as having no place in society. This 'Other' is a danger, an invader, who should in the least be kept at some distance, expelled or possible destroyed. The point is that for many scholars the new racism is, sometimes also referred to as cultural racism, is the main one in the contemporary world. It must not, however, warns Wieviorka, take the place of a general theory of racism. Indeed, cultural or differential perspectives are not new in the study of racism. Moreover, in most experiences of racism, the two logics coexist with various versions of the association of cultural differentialism and social inegalitarianism. Furthermore, downward social mobility and economic crisis lead to exasperation and have an important dimension that appeals for an unequal treatment of migrants.

Rather than viewing the concept of racism as a single, one-dimensional ideology, or recognising many different *racisms*, each historically specific to a particular conjuncture, Miles instead prefers the analytical distinction between an *inegalitarian* and a *differentialist* racism. He argues that recent debate on racism has focused on *naming*, rather than *explaining* racism. For example, the attempt within the European Union to harmonise visa policies, are collectively identified as evidence for a new European form of racism. But nothing is actually explained by this form of labelling. It tells us nothing, for example, about the reasons that many North African refugees are attacked in Dublin. It

may be that the presence of some people is signified as illegitimate by the Irish State or by some Irish citizens. They may mistakenly believed that Ireland is a European nation-state which is the 'home' of people who are exclusively Christian, and who share somatic characteristics that can be described as 'white'. If this is the case, then we can talk legitimately of a *racist construct of the idea of Europe*. Its origin, however, requires careful explanation. Also, the existence of such an ideology does not explain the racially motivated attacks. He argues that perhaps what is novel about contemporary forms of racism is not the proliferation of racist movements, but is rather an intensification of ideological and political struggles around the expression of racism that often claims not to be a racism. What is clear is that racism is taking on new forms in the present political environment and there is widespread confusion about the boundaries of national identity, and the role of cultural, religious and linguistic differences.

Chi Aniagolu is a black African who lives in Ireland. In his article, 'Being Black in Ireland' he theorises that racism exists at many levels in Irish society, and that it may be constructed differently here than elsewhere. Aniagolu outlines that many people in Ireland today argue that it is a country free from the plague of racism. He, on the other hand, claims that this is in fact a racist notion itself as it suggests that it is the presence of foreigners or black people here that brings racism out. There is a reluctance of racial minorities here to acknowledge the existence of racism, as they are reluctant to threaten anti-imperialist alliances by challenging instances of Irish racism. It is true because of the relatively small numbers of 'foreign' minorities in Ireland, most

blacks here do face less racism than their counterparts elsewhere in Europe. Again, as a result, there is a tendency to dismiss racism here as insignificant or non-existent. Furthermore, most minorities do not settle in Ireland permanently. They therefore do not interact with Irish society at a level that may be perceived as threatening by the rest of society (Aniagolu 1997: 45). Unfortunately, as of yet few studies have been conducted on the issue of Irish racism.

Due to being colonised by the British, the Irish shared many of the stereotypes of the colonial power. These stereotypes were often repatriated back to Ireland where they informed public opinion on the issue of race. Fanon theorises the reason as to why the Irish would internalise and reproduce racist attitudes in the colonial world, and implicate themselves in the same system of racial degradation that degraded them. He suggests that in an attempt to find an identity amidst the negative stereotyping, they begin by imitating their oppressors in an attempt to be like them and therefore escape the wrath of the coloniser (Aniagolu 1995: 47). This, he warns can result in the emergence of a strong nationalism and a complete rejection of the coloniser's civilisation. The danger posed is that nationalist culture can reproduce the racist prejudices and system of exploitation that exist in the colonial situation. Here the ex-colonised develop a strong sense of 'us' and 'them' – the latter does not simply apply to the coloniser but also includes other so-called 'inferior races'. These groups do not fit into a racialised ideal set up to glorify an imagined past. According to Aniagolu, racism in Ireland can be seen in a certain way as a process tied up with the development of national identity. A constant re-

evaluation of concepts of 'Irishness' can often lead to the exclusion of 'the other' from constructs of Irish society.

Another reason Aniagolu gives for the development of racism in Ireland is industrialisation. As a country begins to identify with more technologically advanced nations so to involves the adaptation of new habits, new cultural traits and indeed, new behavioural patterns. The Irish still define themselves by standards which designate as 'backward' all those nations which do not fall within the parameters it uses to define a developed nation. Hence, this for him explains racist attitudes in Ireland directed at the Travelling community (Aniagolu 1995: 49).

Television, while allowing Irish viewers to become multicultural, allows racism to come to Ireland. Opinions and attitudes towards minorities are generally formed through media contact, not through contact with actual people. (Ibid. p. 50) Moreover, the media's portrayal of the Third World, if not starving souls living in sheer impoverished conditions, is of ecological disasters and war. These images, which are constantly infiltrating into the minds of the Irish population, are always:

> *"juxtaposed in turn against constructs of benevolent white, preferably Irish, experts, whose cleanliness, intelligence and professionalism is used in such a way as to provide stark contrasts with the rowdiness, filth, ignorance and chaos that are constructed around black people."* (Aniagolu 1995: 49)

It is not surprising then that it is difficult for Irish people to perceive of black people in Ireland as their equals when they encounter them on the streets.

Finally, Aniagolu writes that the majority of Black Africans that come to Ireland are Catholics. One of the reasons that they chose to come to Ireland was the fact that they had had previous contact with missionaries in Africa before they left and expected a similar degree of cordiality when they got there. On the contrary, however, the levels of racism that exists here shocked them. Many believe that if their numbers were to increase significantly that anti-black racism would become even more of a pressing problem.

Chapter 4: Europe, Its Nation-states and the Concept of Other

"Immigrants cannot simply be incorporated into society as individuals."

(Solomos 1998: 831)

The core of the problem of the racism question is, for Delanty, that the idea of Europe has not formed the basis of a collective identity committed to democratic norms and cultural tolerance. It is instead the institutionalisation of a cultural idea in a polity organised principally around economic reasons in which the dominant concept of European identity pursued is that of the state model. Much of the new wave of racism, he continues, is not really about a hostility to foreigners but is indicative of a deeper malaise. Outbursts of xenophobia are systems of what Durkheim called 'anomie', the breakdown of social cohesion and solidarity. This is also symptomatic of what Habermas has called the 'colonialisation of the life world' by impersonal structures that are no longer under the control of social actors and have the effect of eroding the value systems. In the absence of a post-national collective identity, national identity will be strengthened simply because Europeanism is both devoid of tradition and life-world contexts and consequently appeals to populist sentiment. The 'geographical entity' which is being called Europe is simply too large and abstract to be imagined in any meaningful sense. Consequently, Europe is being imagined as a memory less bureaucratic macrocosm to protect life-worlds organised around patterns of consumption and welfare, and with nationalism providing the necessary emotional substitution (Delanty 1995:

132). Today then, Europe has engendered a contradiction: on one side exists the antinomy of political, economic and military integration, but on the other, social and cultural fragmentation.

According to Lyotard, "Unification for Europe also means the unification of its hatreds." (Delanty 1995: 149). The old question of race and national identity, have re-emerged in European countries, and the idea of European unity has taken a renewed significance with the spectre of mass emigration from Eastern Europe and, above all, from the Third World. Europeans, however, are neither racially or ethnically homogeneous, despite what they like to think of themselves. Ireland differs in this respect in being one of the most homogeneous societies in Western Europe with a population that is 95% white and Catholic. During the past few years, with the increasing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers entering the country the immigrant has become the new imagined enemy, the outsider, the Other. It is Delanty argues the racism of the wealthy and speaks in the name of preserving welfare, jobs, prosperity and the cultural norms associated with the so-called western life-style. Welfare needs racism to restrict rights and wealth for the privileged who in order to do so have rediscovered the uses of nationalism. The 'new soft racism' crystallises on the question of the inassimibility of non-European immigrants and focuses not so much on race, but rather, on national identities and cultural boundaries (Delanty 1995: 154).

On a national level, the demise of the nation-state has long since been prophesied but it still remains the most pertinent form of collective identity

nowadays. The nation as the only source of political power is accepted as an uncontested principle that guides the development of social and political life. Not only does the organisation of the world in nation-states seem 'natural' but the whole perception by each individual of the surrounding world is based on the distinction between the ingroup, namely the nation, and the foreigners, those belonging to other communities, the 'others' (Triandafyllidou 1998: 593). In the predominant perception of the world order, the nation-state is the given basis of identity and culture, the 'natural' place to live and belong. Eastmond in her paper 'Nationalist Discourses and the Construction of Difference', sets out to examine how the construction of difference is part of a demarcating and legitimating of boundaries between groups, which is central in all ethnic-nationalist thought. Her aim is to explore such processes in the interaction between the refugees studied, in this case in Sweden, and the host society. Nationalist sentiments and rhetoric's are becoming increasingly salient not only as a force in generating conflicts and refugees but also in shaping the policies of acceptance and accommodation of refugees in increasingly restrictive receiving societies. They therefore form important ideological frameworks in which refugees are to reconstitute their lives and identities, and influence the orientations of both refugees and hosts to integration and repatriation. In "the nationalist scheme of classification, they constitute an aberration". (Eastmond 1998: 172). Secondly, her study is concerned with the social meanings construed around 'national consciousness'. From this perspective, refugees are seen as subjects making sense of their past, and the exigencies of their present, rather than as passive victims simply going through the stages of adaptation or assimilation. Triandafyllidou argues that

the identity of a nation is defined and/or re-defined through the influence of 'significant others', for example, other ethnic groups that are perceived to threaten the nation, its distinctiveness or authenticity. The framework used highlights the double-edged nature of national identity that is both inclusive and exclusive.

Anthony Smith defines nationalism as 'a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, a public culture, a common economy and legal rights and duties for all members' (Ibid: p. 595). In addition, O'Connor focuses on the irrational and psychological bond that binds fellow nationals together. This psychological bond is most often referred to as 'a sense of belonging'. Under nationalist doctrine, individuals who are nationless cannot fully realise themselves and, furthermore, in a world of nations they are social and political outcasts. Karl Deutch (1966) defined membership of a nation community as consisting of an ability to communicate more effectively with fellow nationals than with outsiders (Ibid: p. 598). That members share more with one another than they share with foreigners necessarily involves a concept of otherness. Thus, for a nation to exist there must be some outgroup against which the unity and homogeneity of the group is tested. As national identity is does not have an absolute relationship, Triandafyllidou states that this argument is misleading. National identity expresses a feeling of belonging that has a relative value. Fellow nationals are not simply very close or close enough to one another; they are *closer* to one another than they are to outsiders. So, on the one hand, national identity is inward-looking. On the other, it implies difference that

presupposes the existence of 'others', rendering both commonality and difference as meaningful. The outcome arising from this is that national identity has no meaning *per se* but only becomes meaningful when contrasted to others.

A 'significant other' need not be stronger or have more resources than the ingroup. One type of significant other relevant to this study, are immigrants. The relationship between the nation and the internal significant other forms part of an identity politics within the state, with the latter disrupting the cultural and political order. A different language, religion or mores they are perceived as threatening to 'contaminate' the ethnic or cultural purity of the nation. In times of crisis, through the confrontation with the significant other the identity of the ingroup is transformed in ways that make it relevant under a new set of circumstances and/or respond better to the emotive or material needs of the members of the nation. It both functions as a reinforcement of the members' sense of belonging and as a 'distraction' from the real causes of the crisis (Ibid. p. 602). In attempting to grapple with this intellectual situation sociologists could gain little from the classical sociological tradition. Marxism seemed to regard ethnicity as a 'false consciousness', which would be replaced in due course by a consciousness of shared and opposed interests. Durkheim (1933) was more concerned with the contrast between traditional and modern society, understanding the latter in terms of 'organic solidarity'. (Guibernau 1997: 2). Weber sought to conceptualise it in contrast to the notions of class, status and party. One factor, which must be taken into account, is the difference between the ethnicity

claimed by people themselves and that attributed to them by others. In either case the perception of ethnicity will not rest upon some scientific sociological truth but on subjective interpretation.

So a nation is not just a political entity but is something which produces meanings – a system of cultural representation. People are not only legal citizens of a nation but participate in the idea of the nation which influences and organises our actions and our conceptions of our selves. As Benedict Anderson (1991) has argued, national identity is an 'imagined community' which points to the mental processes involved in nationalist discourse. Members of even the smallest nations can never know all of the members of their nation, yet in the minds of each lies the image of their communion (Kellas 1991: 46) Why should people distrust and dislike foreigners, and 'prefer their own kind'? (Kellas 1991: 8). It evokes the extension of the family ties to humanity as a whole. Are there any scientific reasons as to why people should respond to such an appeal? The theories of 'inclusive fitness' and kin selection' can be brought to bear on human behaviour too. 'Group selection, on the other hand, would appeal to relate more directly to ethnicity and nationalism, if ethnic groups and nations are the groups involved. This theory would support the view that human nature includes instincts that are related to ethnocentrism and nationalistic behaviour. For most sociologists, however, such ideas are anathema, since they seem to deny human freedom to escape from nationalist and racist prejudices and behaviour. There are no theoretical grounds, for supposing that we cannot identify ourselves with humanity as a whole.

Collective identity is based on the selective process of memory, so that a given group recognises itself through a common past. The defence of a given cultural collectivity easily slips into the most hackneyed nationalism, or even racism, and the nationalist affirmation of the superiority of one group over another. Ann Phoenix recognises that:

> *While the growth of identity politics has been seen by some as challenging homogeneity and providing space for marginal groups to assert the legacy and importance of their respective voices and experiences, it has often failed to move beyond a notion of difference structured in polarizing binarisms and an uncritical appeal to a discourse of authenticity.*
>
> (Bulmer 1998: 828)

The relationship between identity, difference and culture needs to relocated within a broader conceptualisation of democracy. Primary to such a struggle is rethinking difference in relation to wider questions of membership, community and social responsibility. In essence we need to get away from the idea that solidarity can only be forged when we all think alike (Bulmer 1998: 832). As Schopenhauer aptly put it:

> *"The cheapest form of pride is national pride; for the man affected therewith betrays a want of individual qualities of which he may be proud, since he would not otherwise resort to that which he shares with so many millions".* (McMahan 1997: 121).

Although the notion of citizenship has not had a continuous impact on the development of the social sciences, the global refugee problem which has created a new crisis of stateless persons has raised once more the complicated relationship between nationalism, political identity and citizenship participation. Citizenship as an issue has become increasingly prominent because of the traditional boundaries of the nation-state in Europe and elsewhere have been profoundly challenged by global developments in the organisation of modern societies. When citizenship is so closely embedded

with nationalist discourses it too can function as an ideological mechanism of exclusion. Turner defines citizenship as a 'set of practices (judicial, political, economical and cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society, and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups'. (1992: 2). Citizenship as social membership is central to the tradition of the question of sociology, but it is interesting that citizenship has not been treated entirely successfully by classical sociology. Marxist theory criticised the idea of bourgeois social rights and challenged the liberal theory of the free and independent citizen enjoying universal privileges. Marxists have developed an alternative perspective, namely a theory of civil society (Turner 1992: 3). This notion was further developed by Gramsci and in contemporary Marxism and continues to provide a sociology of non-economic social relations. It continues to have a profound influence in theoretical debates where citizenship and civil society are often set apart and contrasted as alternative modes of analysis. It is Turner intention, however, to avoid this opposition. He does so by defining citizenship as a set of practices which define the nature of social membership. Secondly, he points out that while citizenship was underdeveloped as a concept in classical sociology, it is nonetheless implicitly present in contemporary sociological analysis which could not avoid the changing nature of social membership in the process of modernisation.

Durkheim suggested that citizenship could function as a basis of secular solidarity (Turner 1992: 4). He perceived that the framework of secular political commitment could either be set within the context of a national

conception of social identity or citizenship might develop as the moral framework of some larger social identities such as humanity itself. This problem is central to the whole modern problem of global identities. Ferdinard Toennies made the distinction between community (*Gemeinshaft*) and association (*Gesellshaft*) in relation to the nature of social membership and of the character of citizenship identity (Turner 1992: 5). This distinction is highly appropriate to societies that are no longer grounded in community relations.

In Parsons theory, modernity is the differentiation of society into autonomous sectors plus the evolution of configuration of values which permits a general commitment of the individual to society but on the basis of universalistic standards. This is in line with the work of Weber and Toennies in defining modernisation as a transition from status to contract. Citizenship, in a nutshell, stands in opposition to the particularistic forms of commitment to society. T.H. Marshall working within a liberal framework theoretical framework of citizenship set out to reconcile the formal framework of political democracy with the social consequence of capitalism as an economic system. He came up the theory that the welfare state would limit the negative impact of class differences on individual life-chances, thereby enhancing the individuals commitment to the system (Turner 1992: 6). The globalisation of the world system has put new strains on the institutions of citizenship insofar as traditional forms of citizenship are grounded in the nation-state. Furthermore, different social groups may experience the rate of social change in very different ways and within different sequential order. Marshall did not provide a causal explanation of how citizenship expands.

Finally, Turner points out that stateless people fall outside of the paradigm or institutions generated by the state. Radical critics of modernisation theory have condemned the modernisation paradigm for its ethnocentrism, its evolutionary assumptions and its apparent inability to deal with the continuity of tradition, or the possibility of de-modernisation. Under the bland moral shield of universalism various types of particularity must be subordinated. By this rationale, a postmodern critique of citizenship as modernisation is indeed possible. It is also essential to avoid the equation of citizenship with sameness. In a world which is increasingly global, citizenship will have to develop to embrace both the globalisation of social relations and the increasing differentiation of social systems (Turner 1992: 15). Therefore, the future of citizenship must be extracted from the fist of the nation state.

It is not surprising with the amount of displaced persons in the world today that nation-states, including Ireland, are imposing new restrictions on immigration and that a certain disillusionment with democracy is finding a new voice in racism and xenophobia. The danger now is that citizenship is being reduced to a national chauvinism of the advanced nations. In this regression, citizens are 'consumers, recipients of welfare, tourists'. (Delanty 1995: 162). Instead of being a means to protect refugees and asylum seekers, it is becoming a means for protecting the majority from the outsider. According to Delanty, citizenship has become a synonym for nationality and a legitimation of nationalist xenophobia. Delanty puts forward a notion of post-national citizenship as being an alternative to the narrow notion of nationality. The

essence of this type of citizenship is that citizenship is not, determined by birth or nationality, but rather, by residence. Unlike nationality, citizenship should not be embodied in the national culture of the state. As long as citizenship remains linked to nationality, the conviction will remain that citizenship laws are there to protect the unity and cohesion of the dominant culture from foreign cultures. Minorities have the right to define themselves rather than having their identity defined for them by the dominant ideology. A post-national identity would therefore involve a commitment to cultural pluralism which would be relevant 'to Muslims as well as Christians and other world religions, atheists, east and west Europeans, black and white, women as well as men'. (Delanty 1995: 163).

In his article on 'Is multiculturalism the solution', Wieviorka asserts that the problem is how to broaden democracy in order to avoid in one and the same time the tyranny of the majority. He defines multiculturalism as:

> *the acknowledgement and promotion of cultural pluralism as a feature of many societies ... multiculturalism celebrates and seeks to protect cultural variety, for example, minority languages. At the same time it focuses on the often unequal relationship of minority and mainstream cultures.*
>
> (Bulmer 1998: 881)

It refers to the need for a democracy to take into consideration cultural differences, some of which exist in less than stable communities but nonetheless deserve to be recognised. Ireland is still one of the most homogeneous societies in Western Europe but during the 1990s it has undergone some major social changes due to the arrival of a large amount of refugees and asylum seekers from a myriad of different backgrounds. What becomes important is the attitude of the host country, in this case it being

Ireland, to the arrival of immigrants who bring with them their traditions and cultures of origin and who do not necessarily discard them. Secondly, groups whose experience embodies a long-standing culture ensure to keep the culture alive despite the disintegration affected by money, and more generally, modern economic life. Thirdly, Wieviorka points out that there is a much greater tendency in our societies for cultural fragmentation than the trend to homogenisation, as a result of the impact of globalisation of the economy or of the internationalisation of mass culture under American hegemony. In the contemporary world, cultural difference is the outcome of permanent invention, in which identities are transformed and recomposed, and in which there is no principle of definite stability. The development of these phenomena is such that it is indicative of the entry to a new age, a surmodernity so to speak, in which our societies produce varied forms of traditions and, more generally, of cultural identities. (Bulmer 1998: 891)

There is nothing new about stressing the individualism of modern society. On the one hand, may exist the individuals desire to participate as fully as possible in modernity. On the other, to the fact that they may each desire to be constituted as a subject, free to define their choices without being subject to predetermined norms and roles. Subjects are reluctant to be over-dependent and cannot accept being uniquely what the group orders them to be, or indeed the identity assigned to them. Multiculturalism, as a response to the challenges posed by the existence of cultural difference, cannot avoid the theme of the specific subject, which is a source of preoccupation and vexation for collective subjectivities.

There are three other approaches that characterise discussions concerning the space which should be granted to cultural difference in our societies. The first is that of assimilation. This concept is based on the idea that the universalism of universal rights is the best response to possible discrimination – usually to some extent naturalized by a reference to race. This approach, however, perceived is as being narrow-minded, and to some extent closed to the outside world in order to enable their accession to the universal values of the nation and of citizenship. The second approach is tolerance. This is highly flexible, more pragmatic and less ideological than the latter approach. The final approach is that of communitarianism – where there is a coexistence of communities within the same political space, so long as fairly strict rules are adhered to. (Bulmer 1998: 895) Although Wieviorka does prefer the multiculturalist approach, he is also aware that it carries many limitations. Not all cultural particularisms are amenable to a multiculturalist or indeed wish to be shaped by it. In the words of Amy Guttman,

> *Mutual respect requires a widespread willingness and ability to articulate our disagreement, to defend them before people with whom we disagree, to discern the difference between respectable and disrespectable disagreement, and to be open to changing our own minds when faced with well-reasoned criticism. The moral promise of multi-culturalism depends on the exercise of these deliberate virtues.*
>
> (Bulmer 1998: 902)

This confirms the idea that the preconditions for multiculturalism are such that the problem is almost resolved before having been posed. Furthermore, a by recognising differences a multi-cultural policy is, ironically, in danger of being non-operational. Recognition may result in entrenching elements which, in its

absence, would tend to be changed and transformed, thus promoting reproduction rather than production and invention.

All too often, the problems of social difference are discussed without consideration been given to the social question. Recognition, self-esteem and respect are problems which are much less acute for the well-off groups, or even for the socially mixed groups, than they are for, moreover, because they are socially deprived, have difficulty in asserting themselves and in constituting themselves culturally. This is why the call for cultural difference is most often heard bellowing from within the middle-classes and elites, possibly extended to the various combinations which this leads to may go as far as providing an ideology which thoroughly dispises those that are unlucky enough to be able to be 'different' or of mixed race, a new form of cosmopolitanism which itself liable to sustain in return the racism (Bulmer 1998: 904). What could cultural recognition mean for people who are subject to intense exploitation in employment, or are relegated to urban poor areas? If multiculturalism is restricted to a policy of cultural recognition, does it not come after the fight against racial and social discrimination? If it is limited to culture alone there is a danger that it will either appear as a policy in service of groups which are already well situated socially, or as a policy which is unsuited to the specific economic and social difficulties of the groups for whom cultural recognition is not necessarily a priority. It is as Marx once commented: 'He who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definitions of reality'. (Bowker 1976: 29)

The recognition of cultural differences in their permanent state of renewal, along with an acceptance of responsibility for inequalities and social exclusion, calls for policies promoting the exchanges and communication in which the minorities and unexpected viewpoints can be heard and calmly analysed. It is by no means acceptable for cultures to be rejected or relegated to the private sphere, when they are in no way a challenge to democracy, rights or reason. On the other hand, given the ceaseless ebbs and flows in the permutations of modern identities, phenomena characterised by mobility and flexibility, multiculturalism, because it is based on a quite different representation of cultural difference, is more of a risk than a satisfactory response. It is preferable, Wieviorka argues, to invent another vocabulary, or return to more classical categories, which focus on the subject and democracy. The problem becomes to promote a policy of the subject (Bulmer 1998: 907). This is why the term multiculturalism, although useful in the formation of decisive discussions, is now exhausted, if not dated.

In a critique of Wieviorka's article, Martiniello is generally in agreement with his hypothesis. He does, however, single out some of the shortcomings he sees with the work. His main problem is that class politics seem to have almost completely disappeared. Martiniello feels that we should not jump to the conclusion that all the conflicts at the end of the century are based on and explained by ethnicity, culture and identity. Secondly, he maintains that Martiniello stresses the necessity of enlarging the debate on multiculturalism to other notions such as democracy and the subject. The risk with this is that old the problems dealing with the relationship between

structure and agency and the autonomy of the individual might resurface. Finally, Wieviorka distinguishes three levels of multiculturalism: the demographic level, the ideological and the political level. This distinction according to Martimiello is incomplete. A forth level, being the social practice, would deal with how the individual and groups when confronted with cultural and identity diversity manage or not in the social interaction with each other. Also, a clarification of the gaps between the various levels is needed. (Bulmer 1998: 914)

Chapter 5: Methodology

Interviews are so extensively used by sociologists that Benny and Hughes (1956) have referred to modern sociology as 'the science of the interview'(Burgess 1993: 101). For the purpose of my study, I have chosen to use qualitative interviewing to generate the data required. The term 'qualitative interviewing' is usually used to refer to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing. Burgess calls them 'conversations with a purpose'. (1993: 102). Ackroyd and Hughes describe them as "encounters between a researcher and a respondent in which the latter is asked a series of questions relevant to the subject of the research. The respondents answers constitute the raw data analysed at a later point in time by the researcher". (May 1995: 91). According to May, they can yield rich sources of data on people's experiences, opinions, aspirations and feelings. Generally, these types of interviews are relatively informal with the appearance of a conversation or discussion rather than a question and answer format. Secondly, there is a thematic, topic-centred or narrative approach, for example, where the interviewer does not have a structured list of questions before her. Thirdly, exists the assumption that data are generated via the interaction, because either the interviewee(s), or the interaction itself are the data sources. (Mason 1996: 38) Qualitative interviews may involve on to one interactions, or larger groups.

The questions in semi-structured interviews are normally specified, but the interviewer is more free to probe beyond the answers in a manner which

would often seem prejudicial to the aims of standardisation and comparability. The ability to probe becomes reduced as the interview becomes more structured. Qualitative information about the topic can then be recorded by the interviewer who can seek both clarification and elaboration on the answers given. These types of interviews are said to allow the respondents to answer more on their own terms. In its literal sense, the standardised method is assumed to elicit information untainted by the context of the interview. (Mason 1996: 93) In the absence of a predesigned set and sequence of questions, it is important for researchers to be able to 'think on their feet' during the interview. It is important to ensure that the interview does generate relevant data. A qualitative interviewer has to be ready to make on the spot decisions about the content and sequence of the interview as it progresses. At any one time the interviewer needs to be:

> *listening to what the interviewee(s) is or are currently saying and trying to interpret what they mean; trying to work out whether what they are saying has any bearing on 'what you really want to know; trying to think in new and creative ways about 'what you really want to know; trying to pick up on any changes in your interviewees' demeanour and interpret these".*
> (Mason 1996: 45)

It is also necessary for the interviewer to oneself what it is that turns such interviews into data, rather than just chats or conversations. In particular how can the interviewer be sure that he/she is not just simply inventing the data, or getting 'it wrong' (Mason 1996: 52). It is very important to record as fully as possible the route by which final interpretations came to be made. This involves questioning one's own assumptions. However objective you try to be in your records, you are continually making judgements about what to write down or record, what you have observed, heard and experienced and what you think it means.

The sources I used, for the most part, in this study were the people themselves, the asylum seekers and refugees, who may or may not be, subject to the mechanisms of ideological exclusion as were examined in the previous chapters. In my attempt to make to set up interviews with refugees in this country, I contacted various N.G.O bodies. Although I was painfully aware the majority of these people have fled from exceptionally traumatic situations, I was not prepared for the cast iron curtain that seemed to be placed between the refugee populations, and I. It is ironic, that while researching the ideological mechanisms of exclusion that face refugees in this country, that I had great difficulty in reaching them.

The first subject I interviewed was Sarah, a woman in her fifties who has been working with the Vietnamese Community for several years. In 1979 the first group of Vietnamese refugees, who were first known as the 'Boat People', were admitted into Ireland as Programme Refugees. Since then, under various government decisions, relatives have continued to arrive. The total Vietnamese programme refugee community in Ireland at 31st December 1997 is 602, of whom 155 were born in Ireland (Refugee Agency 1997: 15). Sarah is employed full-time in the Vietnamese Irish Centre in Dublin City and deals on a daily basis with any problem members of the Vietnamese community might be facing. It is fundamentally a resource centre for the Vietnamese and a place where they can gather together to socialise, even if only for a chat. It was also pointed out to me that the centre can in fact be used by members of any nationality if they are in need of advice. On the first occasion that I visited the

centre there were no Vietnamese people there. This was the case as they only come in at random times which depend on their hours at work. The following week I was unfortunate again as the centre was empty with the exception of the workers there.

In the absence of any Vietnamese people being there I asked Sarah if I could interview her. During the interview a Vietnamese woman arrived but declined to be interviewed telling me that she had already been interviewed on two previous occasions. Nevertheless, the woman stayed for the duration of the interview and throughout it was nodding in agreement with what Sarah had to say.

The second interview I carried out was with Jean (name changed). Jean is a 32-year-old Nigerian asylum seeker who arrived here eight months ago shortly after the arrival of his wife and three-year-old daughter. I made contact with him through the organisation Comhlaimh.

Finally, after many phone conversations with the receptionist in an Islamic Centre in Dublin during which a trust was built up, he arranged for me to meet with himself and five other asylum seekers on a given date. At the centre I carried out both a group interview with four members, and a one on one interview. Four of the respondents were married and were living with their families here. The fifth respondent was single.

Unfortunately, I emerged very dissatisfied from the interview with the five Islamic men. While I was conducting the interview I was very aware of

the probability of data distortion. To begin with, the receptionist who I had originally made contact with told me that they would prefer if I did not record the interview. I respected their wishes. Virtually from the moment the interview started the respondents would speak among themselves in Arabic which I did not understand. From the tone of their voices, however, I was under the impression that they were less than satisfied with the questions that I was putting to them. I continued to reassure them that if they were uncomfortable for any reason with a question that they were under no obligation to answer it. They told me that there was no problem. After approximately five minutes from the start of the interview, one of the respondents just got up and left without offering any excuse. The remaining respondents dodged questions throughout the interview and simply gave me the answer that they all had different opinions on the matters. At different points they seemed to become very defensive. Taking this into account and the fact that I had to take notes during the interview did not make for a comfortable and free flowing interview.

It soon became apparent that I could not take all of the information they were offering me at face value. When I questioned apparent distortions of the truth they again became somewhat defensive. One such example is when we were talking about how refugees can socialise with the Irish population. One of the men told me that since they were unable to socialise with the Irish in a pub setting that the best way was through sport. When I asked him what types of sport, he replied 'golf or tennis'. The youngest respondent, however, seemed to be far more open in his answers than the others were.

Another drawback was the fact that many of the interviewees' perceived my research as an opportunity to express their anxieties about the legal problems that they faced in this country. Although this is entirely understandable it was not what my research topic was about. The semi-structured formula of interviewing, however, gave me the space and opportunity to swing the interviews back around as much as possible to what I deemed as being relevant to my work.

Burgess outlines that it is impossible to control the relationship between the researcher and the researched but that it is vital to develop the trust and confidence of those with whom the interviews are used (Burgess 1993: 103). This element of trust did not appear to be present during my interview with the Islamic asylum seekers. They still seemed to be slightly unsure about what my intentions were with the information that they would give to me. They did, however, invite me back if I wanted to interview women at a future date.

Before each interview began I explained who I was, and gave an indication of the questions and themes I would be concentrating on. I pointed out that the interview was informal in content and told them that if they felt uncomfortable with any of my questions that they did not have to answer. I also indicated that I would like to tape-record the interview so that I would have an accurate account of what they said, that it would save me from transcribing throughout the interview and that I could focus more intently on the conversation. All of the interviewees were happy to have the interviews

recorded with the exception of the men in the Islamic Centre. During this interview I had to transcribe the conversations as best I could. Unfortunately, it did to a certain extent interfere with the ebb and flow of the conversation as I was trying to record what they said, while at the same time remaining fully interactive in the conversation. In an attempt to compensate for the unrecorded interviews, I immediately jotted down all that was fresh in my mind after the interview.

It is my opinion that semi-structured interviews were the best method of generating data – for reasons already outlined - despite the limitations that it incurred. I also chose semi-structured interviews over structured interviews, as I would not have had access to a sufficient number of subjects to render survey research viable. Secondly, structured interviews depend on the interviewer being similar to the target group, who in turn, need to share a similar culture in order that the interpretation of the questions and the dynamics of the interview do not vary to a great extent (May 1995: 92).

Due to my dissatisfaction with some of the interviews I thought it necessary to add another dimension to the data already. In also to do so I decided to partake in documentary analysis. Firstly, after writing to a number of organisations, that deals with asylum seekers and refugees, looking for information I received a large amount of literature in return. Secondly, newspaper articles from 'The Irish Times', and 'The Irish Independent' from the period of 1998 – 1999 provide data on surveys and so forth that have already been carried out on the Irish population in relation to asylum seekers

and refugees in contemporary Irish society. These articles were available in The Corporation Library in the Iliac Centre in Dublin City.

According to May, researchers examine the factors surrounding the process of a documents production, as well as its social content. What people decide to record is itself informed by decisions which, in turn, relate to the social, political and economic environments of which they are a part:

> *fields of learning, as much as the works of even the most eccentric artist, are constrained and acted upon by society, by cultural traditions, by worldly circumstance, and by stabilising influences like schools, libraries, and governments ... both learned and imaginative writings are never free, but are limited in their imagery, assumptions, and intentions.*
> (May 1995: 139)

It is not assumed that documents are neutral artefacts which independently report social reality. For Giddens (1984) and Habermas (1987) documents are now viewed as mediums through which social power is expressed. (May 1995: 140) Approaching the documents in such a way tell us a great deal about the societies in which the people read. In terms of social research documents do not stand on their own, and need to be placed within a theoretical framework of reference in order to be understood. For this purpose we use content analysis. The flexibility of this method is regarded as a prime advantage. It enables the researcher to consider not only the ways in which meaning is constructed, but also the ways in which new meanings are developed and employed.

Criticisms of documentary research tend to stem from how they are used, as opposed to their use in the first place. It is important to view the document in relation to its potential bias. Semioticians, for example, examine the text itself in terms of meaning 'content', without a consideration of Scott's

'intended' and 'received' components of meanings (May 1995: 150). This approach stands in stark contrast to others which regard the intention and purposes of the author as an important part of their analysis.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Documentary Analysis

"I see a tenancy to victimise the victim. The asylum seekers are held responsible for the position in which they been put by the authorities."

(Michael Bouteiller, Lord Mayor of Lubeck)

In a survey published by the *Irish Independent* in early August 1998, the data generated seemed to indicate that recent stories of arrivals of illegal immigrants have hardened the attitudes of the Irish population and stirred up deep opposition to asylum seekers. Sixty-five per cent of those surveyed believed that refugees were 'seeking better economic conditions rather than fleeing oppression', although sixty-one per cent felt that they should be allowed to work. A further 70 per cent thought that a limit was needed on the number of political refugees arriving. The survey found that most of the answers given by the respondents were influenced by the notion that only Irish nationals should enjoy Ireland's newfound wealth. One woman commented, 'At the moment they live in luxury. Irish taxes should go to Irish poor." The findings of the poll which were published on the same morning that Garda authorities announced three overnight attacks on foreign visitors have fuelled concern among those that believe that Ireland is moving towards widespread xenophobia.

For a study entitled, 'Asylum Seekers and Prejudice in Ireland', carried out by The Pilgrim Association (1998) two hundred randomly selected

telephone subscribers were questioned throughout Ireland. The primary aim of the study was to examine public attitude to asylum seekers by focusing on the issue of their entitlement to reside in Ireland on the basis of fleeing persecution in their own countries. Many of the findings in this report are somewhat disturbing. In the absence of any meaningful contact with asylum seekers seventy per cent of the population had concluded that most of them are trying to deceive the government. According to the report, if this is representative of Irish society in general then it indicates a very high level of racial prejudice. The report outlines that some of the responsibility for this result must rest with the media that plays a major role in forming the opinions of the public. Moreover, and possibly the most disturbing factor of all, is that a third of those interviewed formed their opinion on what they saw on the streets. This tends indicate that colour or appearance alone has played a big factor in forming their opinion.

As was the case in the *Irish Independent* survey, in which many spoke in favour of the right to work. The reason given for this was the shortage of labour in a booming economy. The survey team rarely heard the traditional argument, that foreigners take Irish jobs. Many simply felt that they should not be dependent on the state and should provide for themselves (The Pilgrim Foundation 1999: 43). David McWilliams, a former Central Bank economist, argues that as Ireland moves into the new millennium we have plenty of capital but not enough people. He continues by saying that Europe's least populated State cannot sustain Europe's fastest growing land prices for long unless there is a significant increase in the population. The EMU "gives us both the reason

and the means to absorb new immigrants. In the opening years of the new millennium we should seize this opportunity with both hands (McWilliams, February 8, 1999, The Irish Times). An *Irish Times* poll printed in April of this year indicates that eighty per cent of asylum seekers of a representative sample in a new UCD study had some form of a third-level qualification. Over three quarters of these felt that they were financially worse off in Ireland than they were in their own countries.

Fifty nine per cent, in The Pilgrim study, said that they believed that the government's immigration policy was influenced by racism. Only a small number of these believed that actual members of the government were racist. On the other hand, the finding that nearly sixty per cent of those polled believed that the government would either act out of fear of racism or find it politically advantageous to appear to be racist in its immigration policy is a poor reflection of the state of Irish democracy.

In 1998, out of roughly 11,000 people who have sought refuge in Ireland over the preceding four years less than 4,500 of them still remained in the country. From figures released by the Department of Justice only a small proportion of these left because their applications for asylum appeals were refused or because they were deported. Another study, commissioned also in 1998 by The Pilgrim Foundation, entitled 'The Experiences and the Characteristics of Asylum Seekers in Ireland' set out to examine what caused them to leave. Of the 157 asylum seekers questioned 66% would not advice a fellow country person to seek asylum in Ireland. They believed that the main

reasons for people leaving were racism (36%), inability to work (33%) and bureaucratic delay and harassment (16%). As much as 78% of them had personally experienced racially motivated verbal or physical attacks. 95% of Africans but only 14% of Eastern Europeans had experienced racial abuse. One out of every five Africans had been physically assaulted and a quarter of those, were women. The skin colour of those asylum seekers from Africa makes it more likely that they will be subjected to racism, particularly on a random basis (The Pilgrim Foundation 1999: 13).

In an *Irish Times* article entitled, 'Welcome to Dublin, unless you're black' it quotes the *Rough Guide to Ireland,* as saying that this country that is "shamefully intolerant of minority group". It goes on to say: 'If you are black you may well experience a particularly naive brand of ignorant racism.' (Pollack, April 24,1999, The Irish Times). The article continues stating that the evidence of racial abuse and assaults growing in the last two years, since the increase in the number of asylum seekers, is overwhelming. An article in *The Examiner* tells of how hate mail was sent to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees office by Irish racists. The venom in these letters was mainly targeting people from African countries (O'Doherty, May 4, 1999, The Examiner). The situation is made worse by the activities of an unknown, but believed to be tiny, number of racist activists, who place crude posters and stickers around Dublin City. Pat O'Beirne, who presently works with the Refugee Council, writes that:

'In some areas in Dublin in recent times the words "Niggers out" have appeared on walls and a number of our clients have reported verbal and written threats and even physical attacks they have received putting pressure on them to move out of the area.'
(1997: 4)

Hate mail directed towards refugees only recently came to the attention of the public when the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Joe Doyle received mail through his own letterbox after he had introduced a refugee integration initiative for the city. On one letter was printed "Save Ireland: Stop the Nigerian invasion". (Pollack, March 27, 1999, The Irish Times). Doyle also warns that to ignore the urgent challenge of integrating people of different ethnic backgrounds who arrive in Dublin would create a highly danger vacuum in which racial hostility, ignorance and prejudice would flourish (O'Sullivan, July 5, 1999, The Irish Times). In the same article Ms. Mary Frehill in an address to the annual meeting of the Refugee Council, said that the State had experienced "a very sharp learning curve" in recent years in learning to cope with asylum seekers, a process which she claimed was by no means complete.

At a human rights conference in June of this year, a young black man stood up and read aloud a racist letter which was being circulated in some parts Dublin city. The letter was supposed to be a warning of the "dangers" of granting asylum to Africans. The letter stated that asylum seekers were trying to take advantage of "young insecure Irish women" in order to gain access to citizenship. The letter continued that "Black men are here in Ireland, they want to live like leeches by taking advantage of our good-natured Irish personality (Oliver, June 6, 1999: The Irish Times). Although such attitudes are representative of only a minute section of Irish society they cannot be taken lightly. Professor James W. Clarke, an expert in race relations from the

University of Arizona is currently on an exchange with University College Cork. He states that "any country which has a sudden increase in immigration ran the danger of experiencing race relation difficulties." Moreover, "if the Irish are like every other nation I am familiar with which has experienced a significant influx of immigrants, there will possibly be repercussions if the situation is not handled properly." (Carroll, March 17, 1999, The Examiner).

Aine Ni Chonaill, a schoolteacher from West Cork, is the PRO of the Irish Immigration Control Platform. What she articulates, writes Musgrave, is a subtle philosophy of exclusion. Philip Watt of the National Committee on Racism and Culturalism says that:

> *She uses the language adopted by the anti-immigration parties right across Europe which says that cultures should be maintained intact and shouldn't be mixed. It's more subtle than the National Front but amounts to the same thing in the end – keep them out."*
> (Musgrave, February 22, 1999, The Examiner)

She herself has written that: "I don't care what nationality, class or lifestyle they come from – they are all non-nationals and there is no room for more." Ni Chonaill and her colleagues on the anti-immigration platform do not appear, however, to have instigated much support from their fellow nationals. In the last general election she only managed to poll 293 votes.

The beliefs of Ni Chonaill point to what some sociologists have described as new racism. It does not involve clearly articulated beliefs about superiority or inferiority. Furthermore national identity and nationalism involve, almost by definition, group identification and social categorisation: inclusion and exclusion. Whatever they may be, they are perhaps most usefully regarded, therefore, and in much the same way as 'race' and racism, as

a historically specific manifestation of ethnicity. Both ideologies serve to identify individuals and groups and to locate them in the social world. They make claims about the way the social world *is*, and crucially, about the way it *ought* to be (Jenkins 1997: 84). This knowledge is mobilised in the definition of criteria of group membership and principles of exclusion. It specifies the rights and duties of membership, and at the same time the forms of treatment which it is appropriate to non-members.

Interviews

I intend throughout this discussion to compare and contrast the data gathered in my interviews in relation to the concepts and theories that have already been discussed in detail in the review of literature. The ideologies that I am particularly interested in are racism, ethnicity and national identity and how these are used as mechanisms of exclusion. In carrying out this research I centred my questions around how effective these mechanisms seemed to be in pushing the asylum seekers and refugees to the peripheries of society.

I will begin with Sarah and the information she disclosed to me about the Vietnamese Community in Ireland. After briefly discussing their arrival here in 1979, the interview quickly moved onto the theme of racism:

S: *The older people who came didn't suffer much from racism here. Their main problem was loneliness and isolation. They didn't speak the language and didn't have time to learn. Many of them had to stay at home and mind their young children. It's these young children that would tell you differently about racism now. When they went to school they stuck out like sore thumbs. The adults were nice to them but the other young children weren't. They were in a sense rejected by their peers. What they needed was to be in a separate class.*

M: *Do you think that that would have been a help or would it have made them stand out or be excluded even more?*

S: *No, the children in mainstream school feel that they can't communicate properly and children can be so cruel. They'd pass remarks on their colour the shapes of their eyes, or they're called 'chinks' and all those types of things.*

I went on to ask her how the Vietnamese feel about the more recent arrivals of refugees in Ireland and of how they think it will effect their position if at all here. She told me that about two years ago they would have felt uneasy it but

that now they feel very confident that they have for the most part been accepted here.

S: *There is a tendency to lump all Asians in together. They're all 'chinks' even if they are from Hong Kong or anywhere. For the last four years with all of the refugees coming from all over the world, nobody could tell the difference of them being Irish citizens or having just arrived off the boat last week ... They feel confident that the Irish around them know that they have been here for years and that they have never caused any trouble. They've also made many friends who have stuck up for them in the past.*

Although Sarah pointed out that the Vietnamese have been relatively fortunate in the amount of racism they have experienced, it does not mean that they have escaped unscathed.

S: *Many of the members that call in here have had verbal abuse shouted at them walking down streets. The younger ones especially would tell you that they are sometimes told to 'go back to where you came from'. Only recently, a girl was at a counter in a shop in Dorset St. when the door was pushed open and terrible things were shouted into her, terrible things. This is an Irish girl with an Irish passport who has been living here for 20 years. The lads took off after her out of the shop to beat her. Now these were just teenagers maybe sixteen, seventeen, eighteen – for no reason, they were just passing by.*

M: *Why do you think there is such racism?*

S: *Listen, they're racist towards their own in a whole lot of ways. I mean what chances do people from other countries have? We don't like anyone who is different or seen to be different. We've very short memories first of all. We weren't turned. My husband had to go to England to work in 1956. The English didn't say: ' Now you came out of Ireland for economic reasons, now get back there and starve, you know?*

M: *So do you think this racism stems from cultural issues or do you think its material?*

S: *We're afraid that if more people come in we'll have less. It is material. All the time I hear comments like 'oh, they're coming over here and taking* ***our*** *houses, and* ***our*** *jobs. They're not ours. They are out there for everybody. I remember when the Vietnamese came here first. There was high unemployment in the area that we lived in. The Irish lived differently to Asian cultures. The Irish husbands had the mentality that you were as well off unemployed as you'd get as much on the labour. The Vietnamese would work three jobs for very little money. The Irish resented not that they were working three jobs but that they were getting on.*

It is apparent here that xenophobic considerations are indeed tainted by unemployment and slow economic growth which harden public attitudes towards refugees.

As we have already seen the media plays a large role in the formation of public opinions in relation to refugees in Ireland. All in all Sarah said that the Vietnamese did not have any problem with the Irish media. There was one incident in 1991 or 1992 which involved verbal and physical racist attacks on one Vietnamese family that were living in an area in North Dublin. The family had stones constantly coming through and breaking their windows and were subjected to verbal abuse each time they ventured out of their home. The media managed to pick up on this story which it covered extensively. Sarah told me that this was not what the Vietnamese wanted. They simply wanted the problem to be dealt with without having to draw attention to themselves. She went on to tell me that she was a member of a tenants association in the estate next to the one where the trouble was.

S: *A few of us went around to the neighbour's houses telling them what their children were doing. We were met with answers like, 'since they came here in the first place on their own, they can stay on their own'. It's small wonder when the parents are like this.*

According to Sarah, although the Vietnamese Community still keep there own culture alive and maintain their own unique identity, they feel that they have been successful in being integrated into Irish society. They do not attract too much attention in their direction and this is the way that they want it to stay. One difference Sarah pointed out between the Vietnamese and the Irish is that their lives are based around the extended family. They do not socialise as the Irish do and tend not to go to pubs. This does not mean that they do not interact with Irish people. On the contrary, they have many Irish friends and visit each other's homes regularly. There are, however, some changes taking place with the younger members of the community. The Vietnamese language is still spoken in the home but Sarah believes that this will change over time. Many of them no longer see any relevance in learning or speaking the Vietnamese language.

One of the functions of the centre is to lobby the government in relation to receiving an allocation of visas for family reunion. They feel that at the very least one hundred visas are needed. Sarah asserts that they do face a challenge in that many of the politicians and civil servants in immigration are very racist in their outlook.

S: *We can see how other refugees from other countries are treated in the departments. Some of them are racist but in general not towards the Vietnamese. I think it is because they have been here longer and are more accepted.*

The younger generation in the Vietnamese community now describe themselves as 'new Irish'.

S: *You hear many of them saying, 'I'm Irish now', but they are still proud of the Vietnamese.*

There is a distinction to be found here again between the older and younger generations. The older Vietnamese do not consider themselves as being Irish. They look upon themselves as being Vietnamese with Irish passports. Sarah herself has a granddaughter whose father is Vietnamese. She recalled a day when the child came home from school exclaiming that she was not a 'chink', but was Irish. Although the child was born in Ireland, is being raised in Ireland, and is an Irish citizen she is still ostracised for no other reason than her physical appearance. It is clearly evident here that citizenship is embedded with nationalist discourses and is functioning as a mechanism of exclusion. For many, it would appear that citizenship is in fact equated with sameness. Turner argues that it is of crucial importance that such a link is severed. All of the others interviewees viewed citizenship as a purely legal mechanism granting them the right to stay in the country. It would not change their identity in any way.

There is a sharp contrast between the story of the Vietnamese experience in Ireland and of that which Jean tells. I began by asking Jean why he had chosen Ireland as his point of destination.

J: *You have to plan to plan. . You don't want to jump from a fire pan to a fire. My wife was to go to Canada but because of cost that was a problem. Then my wife decided to come to Ireland ... the Irish people are Catholic, they are religious and have had many missionaries. So the religious background and maybe because of Guinness!* (laughs)

What seems to bother Jean the most are the labels that are collectively applied to all asylum seekers. Throughout the interview he keeps referring to these

labels. Beforehand he had explained to me why he had come to seek asylum in Ireland. He had been working as an accountant for the military government. During his time there he unearthed a lot of information on corruption among many officials in power. After disclosing this information to a journalist the leak was traced back to him. He was arrested and spent 11 months in prison before he managed with help from a friend to escape. There are many reasons he outlines that asylum seekers are unable to carry their papers with them.

J: *Even if she (his wife) was to carry the papers they wouldn't let her leave. Also when they attacked my house they took my papers ... they were also burning passports.*

The fact that many asylum seekers have arrived in Ireland without the necessary documentation has lead to many repercussions.

J: *It has lead to many of us being called 'bogus' ... I don't think too much about it. Ah, you feel bad when you think about your past. My wife, foe example, had her own shop. She worked for herself and employed 6 people. I had two private cars to my self. I have two big houses – one with 6 flats in it. Every month I got the rent. If I think about it I feel bad.*
Now I live here and they give me social welfare. That is not what I want. This is not my purpose of coming over here. We haven't got the right to work. You can't travel, you can't go to school, and you can't work.
When I think about all of the racist attacks I feel bad. But I take solace or delight that I 'm still alive. If I was in Nigeria I'd probably be dead. You get my point? You see the contrast?

Jean compares his situation today with that of the Irish in the past who were forced to emigrate to different countries.

J: *Look at Australia, America and Britain. The Irish have made a very good landmark there. Look at JFK. In Australia Keating was Prime Minister. The two of them had an Irish background.*

And yet it is said,

J: *That many of us are 'bogus' or 'spongers' and that we should go back to wherever we came from. What do you do for two years when you can't do anything, you can't work? Life is very monotonous. Very boring. We don't want to live on social welfare anymore. I'm an accountant.*

Jean feels that it is the government that are to blame here.

J: *I have a feeling that the government policy is not working but is contributing immensely to the attitudes of the Irish people. You think about it. Some people in the country for the last two years but cannot do anything. Many want an education but can't go to schools. Many want to work. Even if you look at the media they are calling us 'spongers'. The amount they give me here a week I can't even buy food like I did in Nigeria. I'm not fussy about it .. I am not trying to rebuke the government .. but if they want to work then bingo.*

We see the government policy to be one of exclusion.

Jean was trying to tell me that on many different levels they do not have the opportunity to socialise. There are numerous reasons for this. One form of socialising that is automatically cut off to him is through work.

J: *At work or at school you meet colleagues – you know me, I know you. If I see you tomorrow we can have this kind of interaction. Even with that we could integrate.*

Jean begun to talk about the constant "intimidation" that exists almost everywhere and how this in return has the power of keeping himself and his family somewhat isolated from society. When I interviewed him we met in the pub that is located right under his flat. Eight families including his own live in the eleven-room building,

J: *There are people who are too intimidated to go out. This is the only pub that I can go to in Ireland. Why? I've seen friends of mine beaten up in the*

pub just because they were there. Now, I go to Tesco, buy my Guinness and stay up there with my wife and just drink.
It's because of the intimidation. You have to understand. When a friend went in the pub before he knows it someone just says to him, 'you don't belong here, get out'. Before he knows it he got two hits and is bleeding. The bouncers that were there couldn't do anything. The cops wouldn't arrive on time. Many people have been attacked like that and they have not seen anybody prosecuted because of racism.
So my attitude is prevention is better than cure. It is better not to be attacked or to be looking for justice because you just might not get it.

Jean has quite a justifiable reason for feeling so intimidated.

J: *When I think about all the racial abuse, the racial attacks. About two weeks ago somebody through eggs at my wife and my daughter. The original traditions that brought my wife over here that the Irish are friendly, but we're thinking about it now – really, are they? I would still say that the percentage of people that are being racist are still very small compared with people who are very friendly. The average Irish person walking down the street is good.*

This may very well be the case but Jean and his family now only socialise within the one group of people that they feel most comfortable with. This group is their religious community the Jehovah Witnesses.

J: *People we socialise with we don't stand out with. They visit us and we visit them. We accept ourselves not as a colour but as each person. They've never asked me about my status. They might have their assumptions that I am an asylum seeker but we never talk about it. They see me as a person, as Jean. If we need anything we get it.*
I feel much more at home and welcome in my religious community.

I also asked him if he had much involvement with the Nigerian Community here. He told me that he did not know many others here from the Nigerian community. He said that he did, however, keep in contact with the

organisation ARASI to get news and information. His main social group now is his religious group, which he told me comprises of people from many different nations. One of the reasons he gave for there not being a strong Nigerian community in Dublin is that:

J: *Numbers fluctuate. Many are tired. They just leave and abandon the application and move forward.*

Jean went on to talk about the fact that he had a new baby daughter born two weeks ago in Dublin. He did not say it directly but he seemed to be implying that the child can be used as a reason to be permitted to stay in the country. This is the case as the child is an Irish citizen. According to Jean, however, the child is most definitely not Irish. The fact that she has Irish citizenship is merely instrumental in them staying here.

J: *At the end of the day many of us want to live here. I had a baby twelve days ago now. We have been told she is Irish. My baby is not Irish, my baby is still of Nigeria. You know what? They are saying that if you want to stay here you can, you know ... where we are living 99 percent of us – 99 percent have all had babies here. Eleven rooms and eight families – out of that the seven families can stay if we go with the new rules. Do you understand that ..?*
I won't lie to you. I'll always be Nigerian. To the extent of your happiness you'll always be Nigerian. Talk less of myself who might not be accepted or welcome. So I will never say I'm Irish when I'll never be accepted.

Despite all of his problems here Jean remains very optimistic about his future here. On the one hand, he is quite certain that he will not be repatriated back to Nigeria. Secondly, he believes that anything is accomplishable here. He told me that his ambition is to become the first black manager of a financial

institution in Ireland. When I asked him if he thought his colour would ever prove to be a barrier in achieving his goals he said:

J: *I can be what I want to be. It's just a matter of time.*

His main hope for the future, however, is that one day the circumstances will be right and he will be able to go home once more. This is mainly a longing to go home as he thinks about his family, relatives, friends, and work every day. There is also another fact that plays largely on his mind.

J: *I am aware of government policy and know that they don't want us here.*

The way forward for now according to Jean is through education. At the moment there is no objective way of educating the Irish public in relation to the plight of asylum seekers. What sets Jean apart is the fact that he looks 'different' and is made aware of this at every conscious moment.

J: *If people are educated – I'm not talking about your kind of education, but we are talking about enlightenment.*

During my group interview in the Islamic Centre only one of the men spoke about racism as being a problem. He was the youngest of the three other men and was studying for his Leaving Certificate in a private school. He told me that he definitely felt discriminated against, especially in school. He went on to explain that there is a barrier as a whole that keeps him isolated from both his classmates and Irish society in general.

R: *Just as you begin to get close to others they suddenly back away.*

The reason he gives for this is because of the fact that he dresses differently, and as a result stands out even more amidst the other students. They have no comprehension of where he comes from, who he is so to speak, and of what he represents. The main thrust of his point is that he is not excluded from various

forms of social interaction because of economic issues, but it is rather, due to the obvious cultural differences between himself as an Eastern Muslim and Western society at large. In general, he thinks that all Irish people are somewhat hesitant when forming relationships with refugees. They only open the door a little bit, he explained, and because of this it is not possible to from any meaningful relationships them. He believes that racism lies at the root of this problem. Again, this was the only respondent that showed any form of emotion during the interview. It was clearly evident that he found interacting in Irish society very difficult and that apart from the Islamic community he constantly felt excluded.

The remaining interviewees were not willing to discuss their experiences of racism in Ireland. One respondent said that they were not seen as Muslims but were looked upon as being coloured. He did not, however, elaborate. The main focus seemed to centre around the fact that because Ireland is a Catholic country they are treated better in terms of social welfare. One interviewee did say that it had been shouted at him to go back to his own country. He also outlined that many asylum seekers are referred to as 'bogus', or that they are all bogus. What came, as quite a surprise to me was that they laid all the blame for this at the hands of Jewish sources in the country. They felt strongly that the Irish government had no independent information or neutral sources about Muslims. All of the men felt that they were being portrayed as Islamic fundamentalists that posed a threat to the security of the country. They all thought that they were not treated as individuals. Instead, they are recognised as a collective community that are categorised under a

banner of fundamentalism. They were at all times very careful not to be critical of the Irish government or indeed the Irish population as a whole.

In the case of the final respondent that I interviewed he told me that you get 'the good, the bad, and the ugly everywhere'. Racism, according to him, can be equated with Dubliners referring to people from the country as 'culchies'. It did not appear to be a serious problem. In the seven years that he has been in Ireland he told me that he never once experienced any form of racism. He did say that racism can sometimes fester in the 'bottom of society', where people can feel that foreigners have taken their jobs.

What became apparent during the interview was that these men and their families only really socialised within the constraints of their community ties. Their main source of contention was that Irish culture revolved around the pub scene. This is not an option that is open to them as Muslims. Instead, one of the members told me that their lives revolve around prayer. Their mosque is not only used for prayer but also functions as a place where they as Muslims can gather together socially. They get to meet and interact with Irish people when they go shopping.

All of the respondents acknowledged a desire to return to Libya one day. They all conveyed the fact that they were well educated Libyans. It was pointed out to me that the 'Libyan Muslim Arab world' is 'not just a piece of land' but is 'a way of thinking'. All of their other answers were tied to the fact that they saw their present situation in Ireland as asylum seekers as being pre-

determined. When I was approaching this research I came from the point of view of Irish society excluding its 'others'. Another perspective was thrown my way during the course of this interview. One of the men in explaining the differences as he saw them between the Irish and Libyan nations said that:

R: *Religion is one of the things ... and the social habits. I am not myself open to Irish culture or the way of life here.*

Hence, it may be the situation that not only does the host society exclude its 'others' under the pretext of difference, but so also do the minorities themselves create a form of enclosure. This factor creates problems for the creation of a multicultural society.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In the words of Adorno and Horkheimer, 'Homeland is the state of having escaped' (Welsch 1999: 205). According to my research, for the thousands of refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland, this does not appear to be the case. Throughout this thesis, I have explored the ideological mechanisms of exclusion that refugees and asylum seekers face in this country. From what we have seen it seems to be fair to say that these barriers prevent many people from making Ireland their home, irrelevant of whether their stay may be temporary or permanent.

Barth, in his study of social identity, wanted to understand how collective social forms exist, given that the modern social world is – before it is anything else – a world of individuals. Although Barth did make the assumption that it was sensible to continue to talk about groups, he moved away from a structural-functionalism which over-solidified them as Durkheimian social facts. Societies are not to be seen as *things*. That, groups are produced by people in social interaction is the basic theorem, and it is necessary to look at how the membership of ethnic groups is recruited, rather than simply assuming an obvious process of birth-and-death reproduction. He declared particular interest in 'the social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete social categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the course of the individual life histories' (Jenkins 1996: 92). It is interesting to note that these ideological mechanisms are being used to keep Others, who are perceived to be 'different',

at a comfortable distance. The Other is perceived as being somewhat threatening even though most of the time no interaction has taken place.

In this research topic I focused particularly on racist and nationalist discourses as instruments of exclusion. Firstly, in the review of literature we saw that it has become necessary in order to conceptualise racism, that we set aside the notion of racism, or at least as a category of analysis. As Wieviorka states, the shift by which we move from race to racism as our object naturally does not exclude the relations between groups defined by race. What it does if is demand that we affirm the subjective, socially and historically constructed character of the recourse to that notion, which belongs to the discourse and consciousness of the social actors (Wieviorka 1995: 54). For the most part they now leave out the idea of race. I have looked at the ideology of racism which may be regarded as a partial theory awaiting integration into a broader, more general one. I also examined the 'idea' of a nation. Most writerson the subject today see the nation as a concept rather than something natural. It is "an ideology which builds on the idea of the nation and makes this the basis for action". (Kellas 1991: 20). People imagine their membership in nations as their minds are trying to make social constructs of their relationship with other people. It is essentially about belonging and as an ideology it can be used to exclude those who are perceived to be different. When such attributes are ascribed to qualifying for citizenship, then citizenship can itself in turn, through its ideological links, become a mechanism of social and political exclusion.

I began my research by analysing recent newspaper articles from 1998-1999. Various studies, which have been carried out, have shown a relatively high level of racist attitudes held among Irish society at large. The rise in the curve of hardening racist attitudes can be matched to the increasing amounts of immigrants that have been entering this country since the beginning of the 1990s. The feeling among many also seems to indicate that what is available in Ireland should be kept specifically for the Irish.

The data which I generated from my research, corresponds with the above. All of the respondents felt that they were in some way excluded from mainstream Irish society. The Vietnamese Community, as they have been in Ireland for twenty years, have by and large been integrated. At the same time, however, although many of the Vietnamese community have either been born in Ireland or have Irish citizenship, they are still recipients of certain forms of exclusion.

As I outlined in my introduction, the danger of ideologies lies in the fact that they claim to hold the key to a universal Truth. It is ironic that although the make-up of certain ideologies, as we have seen, can change over time, their purpose remain the same – that is, in the exclusion of others. Time is a constant variable which inevitably entails social change. Thus, it becomes essential to remember that: "No one descends twice into exactly the same cultural river: culture is not a static structure but an everchanging flux". (Fornas 1995: 1). Why not embrace change and the new possibilities that it

may bring? Is it the case that it is in fact Irish society rather than migrant cultures that is primordial, static and regressive?

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