1 Introduction

The Purpose of the Research

The 1997 European Year Against Racism provided a welcome opportunity for organisations and researchers across the European Union to apply for funding for projects confronting issues of racism, xenophobia and antisemitism within the EU. It was particularly welcomed in Ireland, given the recent increase in racism following the economic boom and increases in immigration since the mid-1990s. The project proposed by the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) was one of a small number of Irish projects which were awarded EU grants, and represented a unique chance for the organisation and for the researcher to carry out an empirical study of the effects of Irish prejudice and discrimination on international students in Ireland.

The specific focus on the experience of international students - defined as students normally resident outside the country but temporarily in Ireland for the purposes of study in higher education institutions - was broadened because of the Commission's requirement to include a comparative element in all projects. It was therefore decided to look at the Irish experience in the context of British and Dutch experiences, since in both cases there were developed international student programmes and student support organisations with whom ICOS already had active links.

The literature review at the outset of the study showed that many theorists and researchers in these two countries viewed racism in the higher education sector and in the wider society as parts of a continuum in which they are clearly linked. The review also revealed that in their discussions of racism in a university setting, analysts frequently inter-related a number of different types of discrimination - gender, nationality, ethnicity, class, disability - while often using the term 'racism' to cover a range of types of discrimination variously based on national, physical or cultural differences. Official European Union literature in general similarly seemed to subsume prejudice and discrimination based on race, along with antisemitism and nationalist xenophobia, into one broad category of racism.

However, given the opportunity of carrying out a new research project, it seemed important to look at the Irish experience freshly, and to aim for pre-

cise distinctions among the bases and motivations of any prejudice and discrimination encountered. In particular, the researcher's own American background demonstrated that the American experience could not be directly applied to the Irish experience. Furthermore, an awareness of common patterns among other European countries provided a frame of reference in which to see both the common European and the distinctively Irish patterns in the experience investigated (see chapters 2 and 4).

An initial hypothesis was that Ireland's national experience as a relatively homogenous society with regard to nationality, ethnicity and race, would in some way be reflected in the patterns of contemporary Irish prejudice and discrimination against the non-Irish. In the late nineteen century, 'traditional' nationalism prioritised the British-Irish social and cultural division, expressing itself through elements such as nationality, language and religion, as well as a Celtic/Anglo-Saxon racial opposition. Following Partition in 1922, conditions were created in which much of the country's ethnic and national diversity remained in the six counties of Northern Ireland, while in the Republic Protestants and British nationals declined in numbers, leaving these communities, along with the small Jewish community and the somewhat larger group of Travellers, as the only significant minorities. So 'traditional' forms of Irish prejudice and discrimination were mostly expressed in national and ethnic terms, reflecting the continuing significance of the Irish-British divide in Irish culture and society.

It might therefore be expected that, as a consequence of these historical developments, Ireland's recent transformation into a country of in-migration would lead to expressions of prejudice and discrimination based primarily on this sense of a largely homogenous Irish national culture. These might be manifested as nationalist xenophobia against foreigners in general, as ethnicism against groups whose cultures differ significantly from the Irish norm, or as racism against 'non-white' people. Nationalist xenophobia and ethnicism would already have roots in the traditional Irish-British division, but racism against non-white peoples would be a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland (though not unknown in Irish migrant communities abroad, for instance in the USA or Australia). From these considerations, the research approach was designed to encompass and to distinguish among the various forms of discrimination, and not simply to address 'racism' in the classic sense.

The timing of the project was particularly relevant in Ireland, given the rise of racism directed against refugees and asylum-seekers from Africa and southern Europe. It gave an opportunity to investigate whether international students - particularly those from the majority world - were also experiencing this rise in racism in Irish society and in their places of study. The focus on the experience and perceptions of these students was considered useful from a wider perspective, given their social position as a group of temporary educational migrants in Ireland, encompassing a wide range of national, ethnic and racial diversity. They are a relatively privileged group, yet encounter many of the same challenges as other migrants in regard to language, religion, cultural adjustment, forming friendships and dealing with discrimination, and face similar practical problems with accommodation or employment. So it was hoped that an appreciation of the international students' experiences would provide an interesting barometer of the treatment of migrants in general, as well as a useful comparison with the experience of other migrant groups and minority ethnic people in Ireland.

In addition, it was hoped to contribute to current knowledge and debate by providing an empirical supplement to the already existing theoretical and experiential accounts of contemporary racism in Ireland. When the research for this project was conducted in late 1997, the best empirical study of racism in Ireland was contained in Mac Gréil's *Prejudice in Ireland Revisited* (1996) which used data from quantitative interviews administered in 1988 - 1989, and concluded from its results that in the period since his previous study of the 1970s, there had been a 'reduction of racialism' in Irish society, and an 'increase in ethnocentrism i.e. prejudice based on nationality, culture and way-of-life' (132). The ICOS research project, although small-scale in comparison, nevertheless was able to survey the new increase in 'racialism' since the mid 1990s, and could also provide an in-depth analysis of its interview results, because of its qualitative methodology.

The Scope of the Research

The design and conduct of the research was guided by a number of practical considerations (see chapter 5). It was planned to start in September and complete the project by December 31st 1997, to coincide with the end of the European Year Against Racism. This led to the decision that the comparative element was most appropriately handled through a literature review; ICOS archives provided useful material in relation to international students and out-of-print literature on racism in Ireland, and involvement in an EYAR conference in Germany facilitated access to official EU documentation. The conference also demonstrated that only a handful of projects funded during the Year were academic in nature, highlighting the need for research of this kind both in Ireland and elsewhere.

The stipulated timeframe determined the number of universities to be included as well as the number of student interviews that were feasible. It was considered that the survey would be a more genuinely national one if it involved universities in more than one city, and in the end three universities in different cities kindly agreed to cooperate with ICOS in the project. It was especially important to achieve diversity in the student sample, and so staff in the universities' international offices were asked to invite participation from a range of international students, covering all world regions but leaning towards countries of the majority world. As the interviews were to take place early in the academic year, only students in their second or subsequent year of study were invited. The final selection of interviewees from among the volunteers was made largely on the basis of their availability. Nevertheless, the final sample did satisfy the requirements of the survey and to a large extent mirrored the overall profile of the full-course international student population in Irish higher education.

The Outcomes of the Research

Comparison with the British and Dutch experiences revealed that in a European context, the recent Irish combination of economic boom, increasing immigration and rise in racism were far from unique, but seemed to follow a similar pattern to events occurring forty years earlier in other EU countries. The comparison also highlighted the absence to date of a comprehensive Irish policy framework in relation to the whole range of groups of national, ethnic and racial minorities in Ireland

(including international students as temporary educational migrants) and yielded examples of effective policies and practices in place elsewhere which might provide useful models for consideration here.

The interview results showed clearly that, while there are links between prejudice and discrimination in Irish society and their expression in Irish universities, the universities are more tolerant of diversity than are other sectors of society. They showed also the usefulness of distinguishing between the different forms of discrimination in the Irish context, as they revealed a dominant pattern in which Irish racism was combined with either nationalist xenophobia or with ethnicism, and which was primarily directed against non-white people from the majority world.

One surprising result was that most of the international students liked Ireland precisely because it was perceived to be a largely homogenous society, which in their view showed more friendliness towards its minorities than did majority groups in their own more culturally diverse countries of origin. On the other hand, they recognised insularity as a negative outcome of this relative homogeneity, seeing it expressed at times through national, ethnic and racial discrimination against the non-Irish. Further, many of the non-white students detailed their personal experiences of the rise of racism in Ireland coinciding with the economic boom and the increase in refugees and asylum-seekers.

To some extent, the international students' experiences supported the view that contemporary Irish prejudice and discrimination is built on the structures of the traditional - friendly yet insular - Irish culture and society which emerged out of the struggle between British imperialism and Irish nationalism in Ireland. At the same time, the non-white students'
experiences of racism rising in tandem with increasing social and cultural diversity suggested that these traditional structures are now being rebuilt along more racist, post-war European lines.

This study should be of interest to the general reader who desires a more tolerant, inclusive Ireland, and who is appalled by the recent expressions of racism in the country. It should also interest the reader who seeks a better understanding of the roots of Irish prejudice and discrimination, both from a purely Irish perspective and in a broader European context. At the specialist level, the report should be of particular relevance to

those who work in education, especially at third level,
to those who work with Ireland's new migrants and to academics and
researchers who study forms of discrimination in Ireland.

The report is divided into seven chapters, moving in sequence from
historical, comparative and theoretical issues to the details of the research
and the interview results. In this way, Chapters 2 to 4 develop an argument
which can be used to analyse the interviews in Chapter 6, ideally providing
the reader with a more comprehensive understanding of the international stu-
dents' experience and the nature of prejudice and discrimination in
contemporary Ireland. But that is for the reader to decide.

2 The Research in its European and Irish Contexts

The European Context:
the Post-War and Contemporary Periods

To put the Irish experience in context for the purposes of this study, it is useful to outline briefly some of the significant political, economic and social developments of the last fifty years within Europe as a whole which are directly relevant to phenomena such as racism and xenophobia.
Two historical periods can be distinguished. The first, from 1945 to 1989, includes: the decolonisation process of the major European colonial countries; the economic boom which lasted until the early 1970s and was followed by periods of recession and comparative economic stagnation; the creation of the European single market partly in response to global economic changes; European internal migration, both from southern Europe to northern Europe and post-colonial immigration to the more developed European countries (especially before 1973/74); and the growth of racism, ethnicism, antisemitism and xenophobia in response to these population movements and to economic changes in EU countries.

The second period began with the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellite regimes in Eastern Europe, and was followed by the reunification of Germany and the renewal of Eastern European nation-states, and the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. It was characterised by the increased impact of globalisation in both developed and developing countries, the movement towards a single European currency, the rise in the numbers of immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers from the former eastern bloc and majority world countries to the EU, and the return of higher levels of racism, ethnicism, anti-semitism and xenophobia across Europe, in response to these recent population movements and economic changes.

Broadly speaking, a common pattern linking the geo-political, economic and social changes to manifestations of prejudice and discrimination emerges from both these periods. Specifically, higher levels of expressed prejudice and discrimination against internal or immigrant minority groups within European nation-states appear to be related to significant geo-political and economic transformations as well as to the relative rise in the numbers of 'foreigners' entering European countries. In terms of social psychology, these rapid changes appear to increase levels of fear, insecurity

and mistrust among majority groups in European member states which may then be expressed in socio-cultural terms as racism, ethnicism, antisemitism and xenophobia against members of minority groups within the country.

As a result, members of minority groups can be 'scapegoated' by members of majority groups who feel powerless in the face of large-scale changes in their societies. Even when change is positive in its effect on the majority, as in the experience of an economic boom or the creation of a new nation-state based on the majority ethnic group, increases in the levels of prejudice and discrimination may arise because members of majority groups now feel more powerful with respect to minorities and wish to exclude them from the increased benefits of societal membership. At other times, there may be an interaction between these elements when majority group members feel both more powerful in their new-found wealth in a period of economic boom but insecure about how long the increased material benefits may last. Out of these contradictory feelings, majority group members may scapegoat and exclude members of minority groups, for instance by using stereotypical beliefs such as 'they are lazy' or 'they sponge off the state' against the minority group to justify their exclusion from the country, from citizenship or from improved access to education or well paid employment.

When these processes occur, majority group members are frequently drawing on pre-existing cultural repertoires of prejudicial beliefs about 'their' minority groups. These cultural repertoires of prejudice may be historically specific to the ethnic groups involved (i.e. the English and the Irish, the Germans and the Jews, or the Serbs and the Croats) or they may be broadly similar across many countries and groups, as in antisemitism or the common European forms of stereotyping minority group members through imputed characteristics like laziness, stupidity, aggressiveness and animal sexuality.

There is much evidence to suggest, in relation to such cultural repertoires of prejudice, that a majority group's beliefs about the numbers, interests, power and resources of a minority group can often be wildly at variance with the facts, frequently overestimating the strength of the minority group. An example of this phenomenon is shown in a documentary about the history of European antisemitism, *The Longest Hatred*, in which contemporary Polish antisemitism, endorsed by authorities of the Catholic

Church and leading politicians, portrays the Jews as a threat to Polish society despite the fact that Jews number in the tens of thousands in a country of almost 40 million people. Ireland of the last few years
provides another example in the manifestations of racist and xenophobic over-reaction to the arrival of a relatively small number of 'non-white' and southern and eastern European refugees and asylum-seekers in a country of 3.6 million people with one of the lowest percentages of resident
'foreigners' in Europe (Irish Times 6/6/97, p. 8). The point here is that inherited cultural beliefs about social reality can become real for members of the majority group, and turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy which justifies prejudicial beliefs and discrimination based on those beliefs.

To summarise, there are common patterns of prejudice and discrimination in the post-war period which are broadly similar across most European states. One of these patterns links large-scale economic, political and social changes to increases in racism, ethnicism and nationalist xenophobia against minority groups. Another involves the use of common cultural repertoires of prejudice by national majority groups against resident or immigrant minority groups. On the other hand, there are specific national patterns which arise from the particular history of a nation-state, especially the history of relations between its majority and minority groups. This study situates its analysis in the dual contexts of the common European and the specifically Irish national patterns of prejudice and discrimination.

Official European Union Responses

This study of the experience of international students in Ireland was commissioned in 1997, designated as European Year Against Racism. Many important initiatives were undertaken during that year, but in a context where, until the Draft Treaty of Amsterdam is ratified, there is as yet no legal basis in the European Treaties for joint Community action against
discrimination. When ratification does take place, the provisions of Article 6A will come into effect, at which point the EU will be empowered to make policy with respect to 'discrimination based on sex, racial, or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation' but this will require unanimity of all member states on the Council of Ministers (Draft Treaty Of Amsterdam 1997, p. 9), which is clearly a major limitation.

Another limitation to the potential usefulness of this non-discrimination

Article is the clear tendency, articulated in Chapter 2 of the Treaty, to proceed with the creation of what has been dubbed 'Fortress Europe', by agreeing within five years of the Treaty's ratification to common measures with respect to 'external border controls, asylum and immigration' (13). In this sense, the Draft Treaty benefits national citizens of EU countries in terms of non-discrimination while at the same time excluding 'foreigners' from the Union's borders, or containing them once inside the EU. It might be argued that this is not a very progressive policy, in terms of the urgent need to combat racism, ethnicism and xenophobia directed against non-EU nationals outside the EU, or immigrants and asylum-seekers within the EU, in that it appears to confirm and foster an 'us' versus 'them' cultural repertoire of prejudices in which 'they' have to be excluded or properly controlled by 'us'.

On the other hand, within the confines imposed by the Treaties, the EU institutions have consistently adopted since the late 1970s various resolutions and declarations against racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and right wing extremist violence (see *The European Institutions in the Fight against Racism* 1997). Perhaps most active in this regard has been the European Parliament which in 1985 'set up a temporary committee of inquiry into the rise of fascism and racism in Europe' that recommended 'a European year on intra-Community harmony' (Speech by Jose-Maria Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado in *1997 European Year Against Racism Opening Conference Report,* p. 5). This initiative was followed in 1990 by a Parliamentary committee 'set up to investigate the progress of racist trends in European society' (5) leading to the publication of the Report drawn up on behalf of the Committee of Inquiry into Racism and Xenophobia in 1991. The result of all of these resolutions, declarations and inquiries was the Council of Ministers' decision in July 1996 declaring the European Year Against Racism in 1997 (*The European Institutions in the Fight Against Racism* 1997, p. 8).

The objectives of the European Year Against Racism were laudable in their intention to 'raise awareness', 'mobilise individuals', 'promote partnerships', 'exchange experience and good practice', 'support innovative initiatives' and 'give political encouragement' ('Why a European Year?' in *1997 European Year Against Racism Opening Conference Report,* p. 2). Nonetheless, the narrow scope of these objectives, focusing on exchanges between individuals and small groups, as opposed to developing and implementing policies directly applicable to individuals, institutions and member

states, highlights the Treaty's limitations with respect to non-discrimination as discussed earlier. In the long term, the fight against racism clearly requires more than this. Serious consideration must be given to devising and implementing measures which can counteract the negative impact of 'Fortress Europe' arrangements on social mentalities and attitudes, to developing policies for the inclusion of minority groups on their own terms in European national societies, and to extending citizenship rights to immigrants and recognised refugees.

The Irish Context:
Immigrants, Refugees, Racism and Fortress Europe

One of the most important developments of the last few years is the transformation of Ireland from a country historically marked by emigration, to a country of immigration, resulting from a number of significant factors including the recent economic boom and the tightening of immigration and asylum laws in other EU member states. According to Paul Cullen in the Irish Times, the total number of immigrants to Ireland in the year to April 1997 reached around 44,000 or 'more than at any time in the history of the state' (30/10/97, p. 8). In round figures, nearly half or 20,000 of these immigrants came from the United Kingdom, with more than 8,000 arriving from other EU countries, and approximately 6,000 from the United States and 9,000 from the rest of the world (8). Further, there were over 3,000 asylum-seekers in Ireland as of October 1997, a figure which has increased from the 39 recorded in the whole of 1992 (Irish Times 19/4/97, p. 9). It is still the case, as Cullen states, that Ireland 'has one of the lowest proportions of foreigners among Western countries' at 2.7%, compared to Germany for instance with 8.5% (Irish Times 6/6/97, p. 8).

With the relative increase in the numbers of 'foreigners' coming to Ireland, however, there has also been a noticeable rise in racism and xenophobia among many sections of Irish society, and it has been directed particularly at the few thousand or so refugees and asylum-seekers, as opposed to the tens of thousands of other immigrants. Not surprisingly, a high proportion of the refugees and asylum-seekers are from 'black' African countries or less developed southern European countries, such as the Roma or Gypsies from Romania. The prejudice and discrimination expressed against these minority groups is at the present time simply racist or directed against those who appear physically different, as opposed to being

xenophobic or directed against all foreigners. (The difficulties raised by this distinction in an Irish context are discussed in more detail later.) However, this is not wholly a new phenomenon; contrary to the prevailing popular belief that 'the Irish are not racist', there is considerable evidence of contemporary racism in Ireland prior to the economic boom and the increase in immigration (see, for instance, Fitzgerald 1992; Harmony 1990; National Youth Council of Ireland 1995; Tannam 1991) as well as of racist behaviour among the Irish diaspora (see, for example, McVeigh 1996).

So far, the policy responses of the Irish government have been inadequate to address the rise of racism and xenophobia among some sections of Irish society. These official responses include: the failure to imple-ment the 1996 Refugee Act (Irish Times 1/4/97, p. 14); the decision to implement only sections of the Act without providing an independent review body for asylum-seekers (Irish Times 12/8/97, p. 1); and the signing of the European Union's Dublin Convention on asylum-seekers - which requires them to apply for asylum in the first EU state in which they arrive - which was then initially implemented on Irish borders with Britain to target only 'non-white' people entering the country (Irish Times 18/10/97, p. 1). So it can be argued that in practice the Irish government of the day has adopted a 'Fortress Europe' policy and attitudes with respect to asylum-seekers, and in doing so has fostered a cultural environment conducive to an increase in Irish racism and xenophobia.

Just as these policy developments are to be seen in terms of European political and legislative developments, the European economic and social con-text is directly relevant to an understanding of racism in Ireland at the present time, when a period of economic boom coincides with an increase in racism and xenophobia, reflecting the underlying fears and insecurities of the majority group about the durability of their economic suc-cess. Finally, Ireland's comparatively late development into a country of immigration can be compared to the experiences of other European countries since the War with respect to racism in general and the experience of international students in particular.

The Irish Context: International Students in the Universities

For a variety of reasons, Irish universities in recent years have seen a significant rise in the numbers of international students they have enrolled. The increase began in the late 1980s, thus predating the changes in emigration/immigration outlined earlier, and is largely due to two major factors: first, the strong stimulus to intra-EU student mobility provided by the ERASMUS, LINGUA and SOCRATES Programmes, which has meant that EU students have formed the majority of registered international students in the university sector for some years now, and second, new institutional policies aimed at recruiting high fee paying non-EU students on full length courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

An indication of the change is the fact that, whereas in the late 1980s, 'overseas students' as they were then termed, formed only around three or four per cent of the total student body in even the larger institutions, by 1996 in some of the older universities the proportion was often nearer to ten per cent, an increase which would have seemed much more conspicuous had it not taken place in the context of an even greater increase in Irish students in the university population over the same period. Meanwhile, international students and trainees are now being educated in significant and still-increasing numbers in the technological sector, in private third level institutions, in language schools, in secondary schools, in the training sections of semi-state and professional training bodies, and a variety of private training institutions as well. This trend was well-established by the mid-1990s, and although precise numbers are not available, it is likely that they outnumber students in universities by a very large margin.

In total, therefore, international students of all kinds formed a very substantial part of the 'foreign' (though transitory) population in Ireland at the point when the immigration tide turned and the increase in numbers of asylum-seekers began. As such, it is reasonable to expect that these international students, particularly those who are non-white, would be affected to some extent during their stay here, by the newly-visible racism in Irish society.

Given these recent changes in Irish society and universities, one might expect that the government, in consultation with the universities, would have been developing systematic plans in relation to accommodating the needs of

these particular 'foreigners' in Irish society. At official policy level, the Irish government has yet to develop a clear immigration policy
applicable to all immigrants, including students, to Ireland. In regard to the universities, the Department of Education and Higher Education Authority, while encouraging the recruiting of 'full-fee' international students and supporting generalised recruiting efforts on behalf of the range of educational sectors outlined earlier, has basically left it to the institutions themselves to devise their own policies and plans. The possibility of a growing number of third level students from ethnic minorities permanently resident in Ireland has so far received little official attention (see the
White Paper on Education 1995; and *Minority Ethnic Groups in Higher Education* 1997).

At a national level, just as with the EU draft Treaty, a full legislative framework to combat discrimination is still awaited. At the time of writing, a redrafted Employment Equality Act (based on an earlier one enacted but subsequently deemed unconstitutional in part) has recently been passed and is expected to come into force later in the year, to be followed by the introduction of a more wide-ranging Equal Status Bill to outlaw all forms of discrimination (Ministerial statement to the 'Racism In Ireland' Conference 31/10/97). But as yet a fully comprehensive range of measures against discrimination is lacking in Ireland.

This situation is mirrored at the university level, where there are at the moment no inclusive anti-discrimination policies, and where so far the range of equality and equal opportunities policies in place are largely aimed at staff, covering in particular the areas of employment equality and sexual harassment. Following the enactment of the Universities Act 1997, all universities are required to develop equality policies covering 'access to the university...by economically or socially disadvantaged people, by people who have a disability and by people from sections of society significantly under-represented in the student body', as well as 'equality, including
gender equality, in all activities of the university'. It is to be hoped that as these more comprehensive policies are developed, equality will be interpreted as broadly as possible to include the dimensions of race, ethnicity, religion etc, which are relevant both to international and ethnic minority university students. For the moment though, there is little or no official protection for international students and those from minority ethnic groups against racial, ethnic, gender, religious and other forms of discrimination while attending university in Ireland.

On the other hand, the Irish universities in general, including the three universities in the sample, have made significant organisational responses, in parallel with the growth of international student numbers, including the creation of new structures such as International Offices, the provision of specialised information materials, the setting up of orientation programmes, and the appointment of administrative and student services staff with specific responsibilities for international students. Interviews conducted with the international student officers in the universities in the sample made clear the high levels of dedication and professionalism that have been brought to these new roles, although actual levels of staffing often seem to lag behind the increasing demands of a continually growing international student clientele.

In relation to minority ethnic students at Irish universities, a category barely recognised at official level as yet, the present Irish situation is extremely unusual within Europe. In Ireland, as a very recent country of immigration, there is still a fairly clear distinction between minority ethnic students and international students, which has become blurred elsewhere. More specifically, the facts of the comparatively small percentage of minority ethnics in Irish society, and the even smaller number attending Irish universities (see *Minority Ethnic Groups in Higher Education* 1997), suggest that international students form a relatively higher percentage of 'foreigners' in Ireland and at Irish universities than they would in well established countries of immigration like Great Britain and the Netherlands. In this case, then, the experiences of international students at Irish universities with respect to discrimination, and particularly non-white students in terms of racism, will be of particular significance to an understanding of larger patterns of discrimination against minority ethnic groups in Irish society in the late 1990s.

This summary of the situation inevitably conflated a number of social group categories, such as foreigner, ethnic minority, non-white and international student, as well as forms of discrimination like xenophobia, ethnicism and racism. It also linked a number of social phenomena, such as geo-political and socio-economic changes, cultural repertoires of prejudice and psychological fears and insecurities, to increases in racism, while 'racism' itself was treated as a single form of discrimination isolated from all other types of discrimination. Finally, a linkage was assumed between racism in society and in the educational sector.

From an academic perspective, these categories, forms and linkages are far from uncontentious, and so the next chapter is devoted to providing some further exploration and clarification, as a framework for the later chapters which present the substance of the research.

3 Some Theoretical
Issues - But Is It Racism?

Recent manifestations of hostility and prejudice towards foreigners in Ireland have generated a great deal of debate and worthwhile practical action in many different contexts. However, both discussion and planning for action may be impeded by lack of clear and agreed terminology and by a natural tendency to utilise readily-available frames of reference deriving from rather different situations in countries such as Britain or the United States. Compared to countries which have experienced immigration for decades or longer, accepted substantial numbers of refugees, and acquired new ethnic minorities alongside their indigenous ones, Ireland's present case is clearly very different. At the outset of the research project, it was considered important to reflect on the usefulness of different terms and frameworks for describing what is happening in Ireland today, in order to achieve a clear understanding of these new social realities, as a starting point for effective action, whether in the third level sector or in other social settings. This chapter deals with some theoretical issues provoked by the research, and looks at questions of categories and definitions and their appropriateness to different aspects of the current Irish situation.

Multiple Causes and Linkages

The first issue arising concerns causality. The research undertaken for this study did not set out to uncover conclusively the causes or a single cause of 'racism' in Ireland as experienced by international students. The broad analysis in chapter 2 which relates racism in Europe to a matrix of geo-political, socio-economic, cultural and psychological factors, while necessarily an incomplete explanation for such a complex phenomenon, makes good sense as a framework for the study itself, because it stresses the multiple causes of the phenomenon. Moreover it is one which is widely accepted in much academic work and in contemporary political discussions; much of the documentation produced at official EU level for the Year Against Racism reflects this approach. The important point for this study is that its thinking about 'racism' assumes multi-causality and linkages between a number of factors in its examination of the experiences of international students at Irish universities.

A second general theoretical question which had to be confronted is that of the validity or usefulness of studying one specific form of

discrimination in isolation from others, since it is frequently argued that many specific forms such as racism, ethnicism, nationalist xenophobia, classism, sexism, heterosexism etc. should be properly viewed as different cases of the general category of oppression deriving from prejudice. Further, it can be convincingly demonstrated that in many instances the effects of inter-actions among different forms of discrimination - such as race, gender and social class - produce the injustices which most urgently demand attention. The study has endeavoured to bear this larger framework in mind, in that the interviews were devised to elicit information and views about 'discrimination' rather than 'racism' alone. While it focuses primarily on the issue of racial discrimination for international students in Irish universities, it also considers the interaction of racism with other forms of discrimination evident in the Irish case, principally ethnicism and nationalist xenophobia.

A third general theoretical issue which was raised and which is particularly relevant to this study concerns the linkages between racism in society and in its educational system. This is particularly interesting in the case of the university sector, which has often viewed itself as a neutral observer, less affected by societal problems than other parts of society, an 'ivory tower' necessarily aloof from the 'real world'. This stance can be reinforced by popular and political beliefs about the role of education and the university in particular in analysing and resolving major social prob-lems. In this view, racism is not part of the university's own reality; it can be researched and 'taught against' but is not an aspect of the day-to-day life of the institution.

In the following chapter, which looks in some detail at the British and Dutch situations for the purposes of comparison, these beliefs about the sep-aration of society and education in regard to racism are challenged. Social analysts in both countries have shown how racism as a societal problem is inextricably intertwined with educational processes at all levels, in that racialised institutional structures of selection, retention and achievement throughout the education system inevitably result in the relative exclusion of members of certain ethnic minority groups from university education, as compared to members of the dominant ethnic group. Such an analysis is particularly strong in the work of Philomena Essed (1991) whose study of Surinamese women students in Dutch universities proved particularly stimulating and instructive for this research project in Ireland.

Because of these racialised social and educational processes, universities have indeed often been relatively insulated from the problems of racism in the wider society. However, it is clear, for example in the recent British experience, that this insulation has been increasingly tempered by the growing ethnic minority student presence in higher education, alongside the rise in the numbers of international students (particularly non-white students from majority world countries), which have led to official institutional actions in response to concrete problems of racism on campus.

The present situation in Ireland, though, is strikingly different from either. The much smaller proportion of ethnic minorities in the resident population, the sudden shift in immigration trends, and the recent rise in racism, all combine to suggest that Irish universities are still largely insulated from the problem of racism in Irish society. However, the European examples indicate that, if current immigration trends continue, and if the numbers of non-white international students continue to increase also, it is highly likely that the British and Dutch experiences will become increasingly relevant. It thus makes sense, in a study of this kind, to explore the linkages between racism in Irish society and in Irish universities with respect to the experiences of international students at present, and accordingly, the interview questions were designed as a two-part set, dealing first with the international students' experiences at their Irish university and then their experiences in Irish society.

Terminology in the Irish Context

It is useful to define at the outset the usage in this study of the terms 'prejudice' and 'discrimination', which are central to the research and its findings. 'Prejudice' here refers to negative and positive stereotypical beliefs and attitudes about a group of people which are normally resistant to change when confronted by contradictory facts or explanations, while 'discrimination' refers to actions against members of a social group usually based on such prejudicial beliefs and attitudes about that group.

An important distinction which has been current for some time in the literature and in much enlightened official thinking on racism and discrimination, is that between direct and indirect or 'institutional' discrimination. The Commission For Racial Equality in Britain defines direct discrimination as 'treating a person, on racial grounds, less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances'

(*Code Of Practice For The Elimination Of Racial Discrimination In Education 1989*, p. 9). The Commission then defines indirect discrimination as 'applying...a requirement or condition which, although applied equally to all racial groups, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of a particular racial group can comply with it' (10). Since the application of these requirements or conditions usually occurs within an organisation in a institutional sector of society, like a rental agency in the housing sector or a university in the educational sector, indirect discrimination is often referred to as institutional discrimination.

In the context of the findings of this study, 'institutional discrimination' is used to refer to indirect discrimination in societal institutions such as the state and the media, but in relation to the education sector, a separate term, 'university discrimination', is employed to refer to discrimination experienced by the international students in the three Irish universities. Finally, the general notion of 'everyday racism', as used for example in Essed's analysis of racism in Dutch universities (which is treated in chapter 4) proved extremely illuminating in relation to the international students' experiences in their everyday lives in Irish society outside the university, but for maximum clarity in the context of this study it seemed more appropriate to talk instead of 'everyday discrimination' so as not to pre-judge the racial content or origin of the discriminatory acts described.

Social Categories and Related Forms of Discrimination

As a framework for thinking about the Irish situation, the present study utilises a number of terms for the social categories under consideration, and views each as related to a particular form of discrimination.

The broadest category used in this study is that of 'foreigner', which in contemporary terms normally refers to any non-national in Ireland. It is thus a nationally defined category and is commonly related to concepts of nation-states, nationalism, nationality and citizenship. Generalised prejudice and discrimination against foreigners is usually referred to as 'xenophobia', a term retained at EU official level, appearing frequently in the documents published in conjunction with the European Year Against Racism. In the context of this study, the category 'foreigner' would include a wide range of immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and international students; the prejudice and discrimination directed against members of these groups simply because they are foreigners and for no other apparent reason, would be

most accurately termed 'xenophobia'. For additional precision, the term 'nationalist xenophobia' can be employed to distinguish this nationally-defined intolerance of foreigners to one's nation from the common older meaning of a more local fear and mistrust of strangers.

A clearly different social category is referred to by the term 'ethnic minority'. To be a member of an ethnic minority usually means being a citizen or resident of a national state but belonging to a group whose members are perceived to have, or actually do have, significant cultural differences from a dominant national majority group. In comparison with the term 'foreigner', this is less of an externally-defined category and more an internally-defined one, since both groups may well share the same citizenship or nationality status. However, some conceptual confusion can be caused by the fact that other groups of people who are in a country other than their own as foreigners and non-nationals - including recent immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and international students - are readily classed in the popular mind as members of ethnic minorities if there already exists a large enough resident community from their countries of origin in the state.

In the current Irish context, this overlap is rarely encountered, because of the small numbers of Irish ethnic minority groups and the huge national diversity of such non-national groups, including international students. In a recent report, McVeigh has estimated that 'there are around 70,000 minority ethnic people in the Republic of Ireland', who form about two per cent of the population (*Towards an Anti-racist Dimension in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy,* 1997, p.8). His statistics show that Travellers form the largest ethnic group, followed by the Chinese, South Asians (divided 'along national and religious lines - Indian, Pakistani, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and so on') and 'other smaller communities including a substantial number of Black Irish people' (8).

Given this situation regarding ethnic minorities, international students in Ireland are less likely at the present time to face ethnic-based discrimination than a general nationalist xenophobia. In the longer term, however, this may change significantly as more foreigners who are immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers or international students become residents and citizens and form ethnic minority groups based on themselves, their families, friends and fellow nationals. That is, Irish

nationalist xenophobia could over time turn into more specifically-based ethnic prejudice and discrimination directed at the particular perceived cultural differences of a number of more populous Irish ethnic minority groups.

In terms of defining the prejudice and discrimination which is specifically directed toward members of national ethnic minority groups, the term 'ethnocentrism' has been the one most generally used in common parlance to refer to beliefs, values and feelings based on the supposed superiority of one's own culture compared to other cultures. It frequently refers to a locally-based or even individually-based form of discrimination, rather than one directly linked to national cultures and cultural repertoires of prejudice against ethnic minority groups within a nation-state. In contrast to this usage, the term 'ethnicism' can offer a more accurate descriptive term for prejudice and discrimination directed against national ethnic minority groups by a national ethnic majority group, which is based on perceived or actual cultural differences such as religion, language, nationality, food and dress among others. This definition of the term is close to American academic usage which utilises a distinction between the categories 'ethnic groups' and 'racial group', in which 'ethnicity' is based on cultural features and 'race' on the purported physical characteristics of a minority group.

The term 'ethnicism' is not always used so straightforwardly by social analysts, however. In Essed's study of students in Dutch universities, it has a more complex and subtle meaning as a hybrid form of 'cultural racism', based on an ideology of 'cultural inferiority' and 'notions of cultural determinism' in which 'cultural arguments are used more and more to blame Blacks themselves for the situation of poverty and their slow rise in the system compared with White immigrants and Asians' (1991, p. 13-14). This seems close to the general meaning, in the British context, of the term 'new racism' as coined by Barker (1981) and others, to signify a strategy of the majority population in a country with a long history of immigration, intended to 'mobilise notions of culture and nation to construct a definition of the British nation which excludes those of a different cultural, ethnic, or racial background from the national collectivity' (Solomos 1993, p. 35) or leads to 'ethnic marginalisation through social, economic and political disempowerment' (Essed 1991, p.15).

As described by these writers, what is represented here is a newly-emerging and quite complex form of prejudice, which has superceded the older so-called 'scientific' racism based crudely on the supposed natural differences between 'races' arising from the imputed physical, biological and/or genetic characteristics of racial groups. Thus, this emerging new racism 'eschews notions of racial supremacy in favour of the celebration of patriotism and fixed cultural boundaries' (Solomos, p. 245).

However, such postures and attitudes on the part of dominant social groups in these instances have arisen out of long histories of immigration, which have created substantial numbers of national, racial and ethnic minority groups. They are also clearly responsive to the changing frameworks of government policy which over recent decades have endeavoured to structure the relationships between the majority and the various minority ethnic groups as they compete for societal resources. Across the EU there have been examples of different dominant policy trends at different times, from assimilation (the adoption of the dominant culture by ethnic minority groups) through integration (seeking the inclusion of minority group members in the dominant institutions of the national society through policies based on the legal equality of citizens, equal opportunity, anti-discrimination and/or positive discrimination), pluralism or multiculturalism (promoting the tolerance of plural or multiple cultures on the assumption that the ethnic majority culture remains predominant) and finally to the more radical strategy of anti-racism, which focuses on attempts to redress the historical, structural, institutional and ideological factors leading to the marginalisation of certain ethnic minority groups.

In the Irish case, the country's current status as a new country of immigration which so far lacks an integrated immigration and racial/ethnic relations policy, suggests that it is more appropriate for this study to utilise the simpler definition of ethnicism as prejudice and discrimination based primarily on perceived cultural differences, when attempting to define the sources and significance of acts of discrimination. (Of course, if Irish society continues along the same racial and ethnic trajectory as other Northern European countries of post-war immigration, it will be increasingly relevant in future to apply a more complex definition of ethnicism in order to understand the Irish case fully.)

Taking the simpler version as a working definition, even though it may be contentious to some extent, makes the third and last set of terms used in the research process relatively simple to define. Thus, the category 'non-white' as used in the study refers to members of social groups distinguished primarily with respect to their actual or perceived physical differences from the 'white' Irish majority group, such as skin colour, hair texture or facial features, rather than by any cultural characteristics. Racism, then, refers straightforwardly to 'white' prejudice and discrimination directed against members of minority groups based on perceived or actual physical differences.

A closely related term in this context is 'racialisation', which refers to the process whereby majority groups redefine apparent or real cultural ldifferences between themselves and minority ethnic groups into naturally based physical differences. As McVeigh (1996) among others has shown, the Irish have often been treated by the English as a racialised ethnic group, while the Irish themselves have at times responded by racialising other ethnic minority groups, particularly in their countries of emigration (see for example Ignatiev 1995).

A recent example of this phenomenon in Ireland has occurred in the case of southern European asylum-seekers, especially the Roma from Romania, who have been racialised and grouped together with 'non-whites', especially Africans, to become one of the principal targets for the contemporary expression of Irish racism. Part of the explanation may be a popular perception about the relative poverty and lack of development of southern European countries, which may be ascribed to the supposedly negative cultural features of its people, such as laziness, lack of intelligence and inability to plan or save for the future. There is an ironic echo here of historical English stereotypes about the Irish. Could it be that in the context of Ireland's economic boom, many Irish people may now be turning against other national groups the prejudices that have been used against them as a people in the past, and thus justifying Irish discrimination against them?

What Can International Students Expect in Ireland?

Based on this exploration of some of the theoretical issues arising from the definitions of these terms in the contemporary Irish context, a number of preliminary hypotheses can be drawn with respect to results likely to emerge from the interviews with international students.

First, 'non-white' international students from majority world countries are the ones most likely to face straightforward racism in Ireland, whether at university or in the wider society. Second, 'white' international students from poorer southern European countries may encounter very similar prejudice and discrimination through the process of racialisation, as described earlier. Third, 'non-white' international students whose cultural backgrounds differ significantly from that of the Irish national majority group, such as non-white Muslims, are likely to encounter a mixture of ethnicism and racism. Fourth, any group of international students whose most significant difference from the Irish norm is purely cultural may well experience ethnicism. Fifth, if 'white' international students from developed countries experience discrimination in Ireland, it is most likely to take the form of nationalist xenophobia and, to a lesser extent, ethnicism. Sixth, international students as a whole group are more likely, because of their identity as foreigners, to be confronted by nationalist xenophobia than by ethnicism, racism or racialisation. How these hypotheses were borne out by the interview results is the substance of chapter 6.

Conclusion

Some conclusions drawn from the argument in this chapter are not just of relevance to social researchers, but are of equal importance to those charged with responsibility for policy and day-to-day practice in the universities. Their analysis and interpretation of discrimination and prejudice will be more productive if it guards against labelling all acts of apparent discrimination against non-white people as racism pure and simple, and takes care to distinguish between different forms of discrimination, while allowing for the possibility of cultural misunderstanding underlying the negative experiences which are reported. In coming to terms with the current Irish situation, there is a demonstrable need for these distinctions, given the apparent increase in racism in a society which, generally speaking, still seems comparatively less racist than many of its European neighbours. (This point was made in a number of the

interviews, by international students who had lived in countries such as Britain or France before arriving in Ireland.)

So, when considering the experiences reported by the students in their interviews, the quality of both analysis and action will benefit from a balanced perspective, which does not deny the existence of Irish racism - which indeed challenges the popular belief that 'the Irish are not racist' - but equally does not 'over-racialise' and thus over-simplify the meaning of acts of discrimination which take place. There is a clear need to reach a better understanding of the specific nature of Irish contemporary racism through research. The most productive research, though, is likely to be that which asks the question 'But is it racism?' without assuming in advance that the answer is 'Yes'.

4 Racism and International Students in the Netherlands and Britain

As a project under the auspices of the European Year Against Racism, this research study was required to make some comparisons with the situation in two other EU member states. The choice of the Netherlands and Britain was made on the grounds that both have long histories of educating international students as well as organised programmes and structures for doing so, and that both have concerned themselves at official level with the general welfare of these students. Given the time frame, the comparisons could not be exhaustive, but the consideration of two other cases helped to create valuable points of reference for understanding and analysing the evidence provided by the interviews with international students in Ireland.

Although much Dutch material proved inaccessible for reasons of language, the search for comparisons yielded up one extensive research study (Essed 1991), of ethnic minority students in Dutch universities in the late 1980s, which proved to be of great interest for the present Irish case. In this study, entitled *Understanding Everyday Racism*, the author offers historical insights into the progressive effects of immigration on a society, a stimulating theoretical analysis of the relationship of discrimination against ethnic minorities to ideologies and strategies prevalent in the majority 'white' social group, and a comprehensive listing of categories of everyday discrimination suffered by the Surinamese university women whose experiences she researched.

The investigation of the British situation drew widely on work published by the Commission For Racial Equality, UKCOSA and the Overseas Students Trust, and its most useful outcome was the information on policy proposals and good practices adopted in the British context to deal with the problems encountered by international students (see Appendix II). These offer examples and models which could usefully be considered by Irish third level colleges as they begin to frame policies for their own circumstances.

The evidence from both Britain and the Netherlands suggests that racism has become part of the institutions and ideologies of both societies, growing out of similar post-war experiences in each case, and that its long-term effect has been to create a structure or system of 'everyday racism' experienced by ethnic minorities at all levels, including students in the higher education system.

Everyday Racism and the Ideology of Dutch Tolerance

Dutch higher education differs from most of its European neighbours in having a specifically international higher education sector for students recruited originally from former colonies and now from all over the world, alongside its mainstream universities and the professional/ technological sector which educate primarily Dutch nationals (Warman 1996, p. 56). In recent years, however, the system as a whole has become more diversified, with mainstream universities offering international education courses and recruiting non-EU international students, as well as participating in the intra-European exchange programmes. The international education sector, though, has operated under different regulations and laws, and the overall experience of its international students, in a system designed primarily

for them and where they form the majority, must differ significantly from that of either the dominant majority or ethnic minority groups in the mainstream institutions. Hence information about the experience of ethnic minority students with respect to racism in the mainstream 'Dutch' sectors of the higher education system is likely to be more useful for purposes of comparison to the Irish situation, and it is this experience which was researched so thoroughly by Essed.

Essed places the subject of her research firmly in a historical context, and her analysis utilises some central concepts which can throw light on the situation in other countries. The first of these is 'everyday racism', which refers to a process in which racism 'is routinely created and reinforced through everyday practices' (1991, p. 2). Through this process, the structures and ideology of racism are connected with 'routine situations in everyday life' (ibid) and personally experienced in such social situations as 'racism in shops, in the streets, at the university or in the workplace, as well as racism experienced through friends and family, racist practices in children's schools and other confrontations with racism such as in literature or the media' (36). For Essed, Dutch everyday racism is linked structurally to the marginalisation of Dutch ethnic minorities, and ideologically to a dominant preference for a supposedly 'tolerant' cultural assimilation of the minority groups to the 'white' Dutch cultural standard (15). Everyday racism in the education system, operating to exclude minorities from fair participation at its higher levels, and to discriminate against those who do succeed in obtaining university education, is thus seen explicitly as part of a broader pattern of racism in society as a whole.

A second central concept in the study is the 'ideology of Dutch tolerance', and here she refers to a historical and contemporary 'discourse of tolerance', originating in the ideal of religious toleration, in which 'the dominant opinion maintains that the Dutch are tolerant and that there never has been a problem of racism' (6). This results in a general denial of racism among the white Dutch majority group in Dutch society (5), an inability to accept actions as racist and a failure to respond to acts of racism against ethnic minorities (279). (The continuing taboo on thinking in terms of race, because of the Dutch experiences under Nazism in World War II, ironically strengthens this tendency to avoid confronting issues of discrimination.) Such an ideology of tolerance masks not only the fundamental belief of the white majority in the superiority of 'their' culture as compared to the cultures of ethnic minority groups, but also the 'real' goal of official Dutch ethnic relations policy, which is one of 'pluralistic assimilation' or 'the use of pluralistic strategies with the aim of assimilation' (26). Viewed in this light, the ideology of tolerance has come to operate as part of a system of cultural oppression (287).

Official Policies and Popular Responses

Tracing the origins of the contemporary situation to the Netherlands' post-war decolonisation process and the immigration of former colonised groups and Southern European immigrants to the country from the 1950s to the early 1970s, the study shows how the Netherlands became a multinational, multiethnic and multiracial country with the arrival of Indonesians, Moluccans and Surinamese from former colonies alongside the economic migration of Italians, Spanish, Greeks, Turks and Moroccans invited for their 'cheap labour' (18-19). By the early 1990s, 'Blacks' and 'Mediterranean immigrant workers' composed roughly five per cent of the Dutch population (17-18).

In the 1950s, the government responded with a straightforward assimilationist policy, then moved to one based on integration of immigrants into Dutch society within a framework of cultural pluralism from the 1960s onwards (18-19). However, with the onset of economic stagnation in the mid-1970s, higher rates of social exclusion among Blacks and attendant social problems led to a popular backlash against integration. Blacks were increasingly blamed for their own problems, with policy-makers, the intellectual élite and working class people all claiming that

'the government had "pampered" the minorities, who...had become unwilling to take a job or to adapt to Dutch society' (17). Contemporary racism then is a complex blend of elements from different periods, 'a combination of remnants of colonial paternalism, structural marginalisation and cultural assimilation' (15).

The Processes of Everyday Racism

In Essed's theoretical analysis of the situation at the time of her study, cultural control for the purposes of maintaining the status quo continues to be exercised by the majority group through specific 'mechanisms of racism' (289), which are grouped into three broad categories. The first is marginalisation strategies, such as imposing 'artificial ceilings' to maintain the majority 'status quo' (ibid). The second is the problematisation or questioning the validity of ethnic minorities' 'perceptions of social reality, their cultural experiences and their social and intellectual qualifications' (ibid). The third mechanism involves 'containment strategies...to prevent or counter opposition to racism' (ibid), which include 'intimidation, patronising, pressure to assimilate, cultural isolation and the overall denial of racism'. These mechanisms form the basis of all of the specific processes of everyday racism encountered in Dutch society, including those experienced in universities.

The study sets out the inter-relationships between ideology, strategic mechanisms and actual day-to-day experiences of racism in diagrammatic detail (279), to show how white Dutch members of the majority group rationalise and legitimise the existing hierarchical order of ethnic groups in Dutch society, and use the discourse of tolerance while systematically excluding and subordinating ethnic minority group members. In its outlining a range of processes whereby this preservation of the status quo takes place, the analysis has obvious relevance to both the British and contemporary Irish situations.

First, with respect to defining social reality, white Dutch people seek to maintain the dominance of their view by accusing ethnic minorities of being 'oversensitive' to issues of race and 'unreliable' in their assessment of Dutch ethnic reality. They thus demonstrate an attitude of 'indifference towards Blacks' and succeed in avoiding, or simply 'ignoring the issue of racism'.

Second, in terms of social norms and values, the existing hierarchical ethnic order is rationalised and legitimised by 'portraying Blacks as uncivilised and backwards', and by 'attributing a language deficiency' and 'social incompetence' to Blacks. The discourse of tolerance, using 'whites as the norm group', reinforces the ethnic order by the 'overemphasis of difference' between the majority and minority groups, the 'cultural non-recognition' of Black culture, the rejection of 'ethnic' behaviour and the 'ethnicisation' of Blacks. This is very much a 'passive tolerance', which does not attempt to engage with the minority groups in any way.

Thirdly, Essed considers the utilisation by members of the majority of negative attitudes, erroneous beliefs and hostile forms of behaviour towards minorities as resources for maintaining cultural dominance. Available beliefs and attitudes include the 'attribution of intellectual inferiority', or 'sexual pathology' to minority groups, theories of 'race purism' and the 'criminalisation' of Blacks. Such individual or group behaviours as 'patronising' Blacks, using 'racist talk or jokes', 'rudeness', 'name calling', 'petty harassment', or 'resentment' can all be used to maintain the majority view of ethnic reality, and can reach more extreme forms such as 'punishing the assertiveness' of Blacks, white 'humiliation' of ethnic minorities and even the use of 'violence' against Blacks.

At an institutional level, further resources for bolstering cultural dominance can come into play. She catalogues a range of institutional strategies, which clearly can apply to universities, including 'ignoring' the presence of ethnic minorities, maintaining 'inflexibility' towards them, 'failing to facilitate participation' of Blacks in white institutions, 'not acknowledging the qualifications' of ethnic minorities, 'discouraging' Blacks from applying for positions or awards, allocating 'secondary facilities' to them, and providing 'no positions of authority' for ethnic minorities.

Everyday Racism in Dutch Universities

Essed's study is full of specific examples of how the processes of everyday racism were encountered by the ethnic minority women in Dutch education whose experiences she studied (see pp. 193, 197-9, 200, 201-2, 203, 205, 209, 211, 212, 226, 231, 232-3, 234, 235, 236-7, 238-41, 242, 243, 249-50, 254, 256, 261, 263-4, 265, 271, 273 and 277). For the purposes of comparison with the Irish situation, it is interesting to consider

five specific types of discrimination detailed in her study, which show how everyday racism was working against ethnic minority students in Dutch higher education.

The first type of everyday racism involves passive tolerance, which Essed defines as 'not taking any specific action against the presence or participation of Blacks but not doing anything to support or to facilitate it either' (196). One expression of this process of everyday racism is the systematic neglect of and indifference to Black students by university professors and teaching assistants (197). Thus, a Surinamese woman says that her professor 'repeatedly cancels his appointments, does not keep his promises, and gives me the feeling he finds it a burden to see me'(198). A second student claims that teaching assistants 'give a cold feeling, so that you never want to go back' (197). Other students often exclude blacks from their study groups 'not by rejecting them openly, for then discrimination would be obvious', but by 'us[ing] small lies and deception' (197).

A second type of everyday racism identified in the universities is petty harassment, including 'pestering' or 'picking on' Black students, 'telling all kinds of lies' and 'making chronic complaints' to authorities (231). She cites a Surinamese lab assistant harassed by white students in the laboratory, who each day 'put broken glass in the wash area where I was and blamed it on me when the supervisor asked about it…They were picking on me to force me to quit which worked in their advantage because I did' (ibid).

A third type concerns 'failing to acknowledge positive contributions' of Black students (235), particularly in relation to grading. Thus, one Black student who always helped a white student who had trouble 'in setting up his experiments' is shocked when 'he always ended up with an A' yet 'she only got a C' (239). Another student who received a D from a professor complained and got the grade changed to an A after the professor read the exam. The student concluded that 'he had not even looked at my exam before. He had put down a D when he saw my [Surinamese] name on the paper' (239). Finally, a third student details how she received the highest grade on an exam only to be accused of cheating by the professor. When she was forced to take the exam again and received the highest mark one more time, he 'accused her again of cheating' (240).

A fourth type of everyday racism in the universities is racist talk. One example cited concerns a professor in a geography class composed of mostly white Dutch and a few Black students. As the Surinamese student explains it, 'the professor made a pun with the name of a Surinamese town and the word nikker (Dutch for nigger), which ended with, "So it's the country of the niggers"' (260). After the Surinamese students 'stared back [at him] as if he were crazy…he faintly apologised with: "Oh well I was only joking, you know"' (ibid). In this case, Essed concludes that the professor used the racist talk as a resource to both reaffirm the 'white consensus' and to attempt to 'intimidate' the Black students (ibid).

The final type of everyday racism identified in the universities is the failure of white Dutch people to act against racism. An example is given of a South African student whom white Dutch students did not challenge when he made racist comments in front of Black students. The Surinamese student noted that when the South African student 'makes discriminating remarks about the Brown race, they [the white Dutch students] just sit there quietly nodding yes…In such a discussion, they still feel closer to him than me, so they don't contradict him'(277).

In summary, Essed's study of the everyday racism encountered by Surinamese university women in the Netherlands provides a comprehensive and detailed view of how racism in society may become an integral part of the fabric of its higher education system. Thus it offers a useful yardstick by which to measure the experiences of international students in Ireland, in relation to contemporary forms of Irish racism.

Race Relations and the Limits of British Tolerance

The British ideology of tolerance is neither as prevalent nor as predominant as in the Netherlands in the contemporary period (see Cohen 1994; Holmes 1988; and Solomos 1993). On a positive note, Holmes writes that 'there is a well-worn opinion that one of the peculiarities of British society is its sense of liberty, and there is an equally strong opinion that this quality extends to the history of immigrants and refugees…It is also possible to find more often a pronounced stress on their toleration' (1988, p. 294). Yet Holmes also finds in his study of British immigration and society that 'it is possible to trace a wide range of hostile responses towards immigrants and refugees in Britain between 1871 and 1971' (295),

particularly towards groups like the Irish, Jews, Gypsies, Germans, Poles, Blacks and Asians among others.

Further, Holmes notes that there has often been a mixture of tolerance and discrimination in the beliefs and actions of national and local officialdom (312), concluding that 'at the level of ideas, images of immigrants and refugees often revealed a complex rather than a simple structure and, as regards behaviour, individuals could encounter varying treatment according to the particular situation'(314). From this perspective, then, culturally-based beliefs in British toleration and liberty have long been intertwined with prejudices and discrimination against racial, ethnic and national minority groups in British society.

From the mid-1960s onwards, this mixture of tolerance and racism can be identified in Britain's 'dual interventionist' strategy for immigration and race relations, in which increasingly restrictive immigration laws have been accompanied by 'integrative measures aimed at improving race relations' (Solomos 1993, p. 78-79). The discriminatory aspect of immigration policy arises from the succession of laws which have been enacted in the post-war era (in 1948, 1962, 1968, 1969, 1971, 1981 and 1986), implementation of which has progressively excluded non-white individuals from Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia from migrating to Britain and acquiring or maintaining British nationality and citizenship (Cohen 1994, p. 17-19; Solomos 1993, p. 56-71). Cohen summarises these as manifestations of the 'determined attempts...made in post-war British immigration law and practice to bolster the myth of a racially exclusive British identity' (1994, p. 18). Despite the restrictions, the new Commonwealth population in the early 1990s reached just under six per cent of the total population in Great Britain (209), while by that date 'half of the ethnic minority population was born in Britain and nearly three-
quarters are British citizens' (Verma in Tomlinson and Craft 1995, p. 61).

These racially-driven changes in immigration law have been accompanied by varying levels of official and popular racism expressed against Black immigrants and ethnic minorities, an early example being the inflammatory speeches of former cabinet minister Enoch Powell in the late 1960s, linking the Black immigration of that time to fears and insecurities about preserving the homogenous white British national culture (Solomos 1993, p. 67). In this way, he contributed to the later emergence of a 'new

racism', which mixed older racism, ethnicism and nationalist xenophobia in a form which had at its core the perception that 'white Britons [were] increasingly becoming isolated and "strangers" in their own country' (ibid).

In the 1970s and 1980s, as the first generation of post-war immigrants became second and third generation ethnic minorities, often excluded from full participation in a post-industrial British society dominated by the creeds of Thatcherism, the focus shifted to 'the enemy within' (73-74) and a newer racial construct in which Black people were seen as 'undermining the moral and social fabric of society' (184) by failing 'to adapt to British society' (185) and making illegitimate claims for 'special privileges' thereby threatening 'the cultural, political and religious homogeneity of white British society' (ibid).

As in the Netherlands, the majority began to rationalise the increasing marginalisation of disproportionate numbers of racial minorities by blaming Black people for their own social exclusion. This shift in the ideological basis of racism also led in Britain to 'the racialisation of issues such as employment, housing, education and law and order' (73), in a process similar to that creating the phenomenon of 'everyday racism' as analysed by Essed. Thus, Verma writes that 'race relations in Britain form part of a complex pattern of urban living, impinging upon a wide range of social issues and provision including housing, employment, policing, social services, and youth work as well as education. In these and other areas of life, ethnic minority groups continue to experience the impact of racism' (in Tomlinson and Craft 1995, p. 62).

At the official policy level, however, the ideal of tolerance continued to find expression and is perhaps most clearly represented in the Race Relations Acts of 1965, 1968 and 1976 (80-94). Through these successive measures, a Race Relations Board and a Community Relations Commission were established, and definitions of racism were refined to include both direct and indirect or institutional racism. Finally the Board and Commission were merged in the 1976 Commission For Racial Equality (CRE) with strengthened powers and procedures for handling complaints of discrimination (87).

The new CRE was provided with statutory powers to 'carry out formal investigations into organisations where it believed unlawful discrimination was taking place, to help individual complainants in the cases of

discrimination and to issue codes of practice containing guidance about the elimination of discrimination...and the promotion of equality of opportunity' (88-89). Unfortunately, most commentators agree that this positive and tolerant side of British policy, promoting the principles of equality of opportunity and of integration, has been outweighed by the effects of immigration policy and the virulent ideologies of British racism. The result has been 'the persistence of inequalities of opportunity for the descendants of black immigrants' (91) in British society.

Racism and the Educational System: Policies and Realities

Under the powers of the 1976 Race Relations Act, the CRE has investigated racism in educational organisations and issued codes of practice as well as practical manuals for all levels of the education system (for example, *Exclusion from School and Racial Equality* 1997; *Further Education and Equality* 1996; *Set to Fail?* 1992; *Code of Practice for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Education* 1989; *Racial Segregation in Education* 1989; and *Medical School Admissions* 1988). Overall, the existence and need for these studies and policies underline the fact that, as in the Netherlands, racism has become embedded in the structures and processes of the British educational system, including higher education.

Interestingly, in the context of new Conservative Party policies for higher education the participation rates of ethnic minorities in the British higher education system actually increased, confirming popular belief in the workings of British tolerance based on race relations policies of integration and equal opportunity. In fact, increased participation was facilitated first by the deliberate expansion of the university system itself from 1980 onwards, which ultimately doubled the student population (Bhavnani in Cohen 1995, p. 8), and secondly, by the effects of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which 'removed the divide between the vocationally and technologically oriented public sector and the academically exclusive university sector' (Arora in Cohen 1995, p. 17).

It could therefore be argued, as Bhavnani does, that 'access to the higher education sector is no longer the key issue for Black students' (in Cohen 1995, p. 9), and this can be substantiated from recent statistics on participation. For example, Bhavnani cites figures showing that 'in 1992, eleven per cent of home students from ethnic minorities entered universities (greater than their proportion in the total population)' (19).

However, some clear patterns of participation emerged, showing differences among and within ethnic groups, and demonstrating that this is by no means a clear-cut 'black/ white' situation. For example Asians as a whole had higher participation rates overall than African-Caribbeans, but within the Asian group, participation rates were 'lower amongst Pakistani women and amongst Bangladeshi men and women' (ibid). At the traditional universities the Asian population achieved proportionately more places than their white peers and all other ethnic minority groups (21). There has been a tendency for ethnic minorities as a whole to be clustered in professional and technical subjects in the newer universities, but it can certainly now be argued that integration in terms of access to higher education has been more or less successfully achieved for Britain's ethnic minorities.

While access has been achieved, this does not mean that discrimination is not an issue for ethnic minorities in the British higher education system. Problems of discrimination are now seen to centre on issues of institutional racism, such as 'the ethos and culture of the institutions or issues of curriculum design and review' (9). In particular, there are institutional barriers for ethnic minorities with respect to matters such as tokenism and isolation (23-4), language (25), guidance and support (26), assessment (27), work placements (28), support for students and staff who have experienced racism (28-29), the prevalent Eurocentrism (30), the lack of anti-racist strategies in teaching (ibid) and finally, adequate anti-racist staff training (Twitchin in Cohen 1995, p. 46-50).

British universities have made efforts to address some of these institutional issues through the adoption of equal opportunities (often referred to as EO) policies, encompassing the categories of ethnic origin and gender among others. Thus, Twitchin cites figures for the early 1990s in which 'of one hundred and six universities, 93% have EO policies; 69% have a staff member with designated responsibilities for EO; [and] 73% have committees to discuss EO' (in Cohen, p. 45-46). However, these positive developments have not always been supported by adequate resources for implementing and monitoring the policies. In fact, Twitchin notes that at the time of writing 'only 37% have developed an action plan...to implement those policies; only 28% have earmarked a budget to make EO effective...only 42% had supplied any training; [and] moreover, such training was confined to those with designated responsibilities and only 21% of this was on a compulsory basis' (ibid).

A further criticism which has been levelled at the typical equal opportunities policies in practice is that they do not adequately address the Eurocentrism of the institutions, or the assumption that 'everyone is white' (Bhavnani in Cohen 1995, p. 30), implicit in the structures and ideology of the university from staffing to curriculum design. Thus, British higher education practice is seen to reflect the present dominance of a race relations model based on integration and assimilation, whereby ethnic minority students are provided with equal access to the university system (integration) providing that, once in the university, they adopt the British national values which pervade the structures and curriculum of the system (assimilation).

Despite these limitations, however, the introduction and partial implementation of equal opportunities policies in British universities offer examples of good practice in relation to ethnic minorities in higher education which could be considered in relation to both ethnic minority and international students in Ireland.

For example, in a recent equality manual for higher education institutions produced by the Equal Opportunities Commission in collaboration with the Committee of Vicechancellors and Principals (Powney, Hamilton and Weiner 1997), a clear and comprehensive framework for good equal opportunities practice covering race/ethnicity, gender and disability is outlined. The foreword covers the UK legal and higher education quality assurance frameworks, and lists the essential elements of institutional policy and its implementation. The seven main sections of the manual cover a broad range of matters including equal opportunities awareness, implementation of anti-discrimination policies and procedures, management structures, student recruitment, support, achievement and representation, staffing matters, curriculum development, data-gathering and disparity-checking in relation to gender, ethnicity and disability in the institution, consultations with relevant ethnic minority, women's and disability associations, among others. The manual is 'predicated on the assumption that diversity in the community of students and staff of a college or university enhances quality' (3) and contains several references to the situation of international students, so it could usefully be consulted by Irish institutions designing and implementing such policies. (See Appendix II)

International Students in British Higher Education

Turning to the specific category of international students in higher education, one specific policy change, which was an integral part of Conservative reform of higher education, should be noted. Moving from a system of effective subsidy for students from abroad, 'full-cost fees' were introduced for non-EU students, to encourage universities to generate fee income. (The shock waves around the Commonwealth then led to the hasty establishment of a new structure of scholarships to offset the negative effects on diplomatic relations.) A sharp dip in numbers was however followed by a steady increase, and by the mid-1980s, 'most universities now rely on overseas students for between 5 and 10 per cent of their income' (Williams et al. 1986, p. 5). As a result, international students came increasingly to be viewed from a business perspective, both as a 'commodity' for the university and as a 'client' or 'consumer' requiring satisfaction and value for money (Niven in Williams et al. 1987, p. 124). To some extent, this has informed official thinking about their needs, both academic and general, and how the university ought to respond to them.

From the perspective of British tolerance, though, international students continued to be viewed as forming part of Britain's multicultural and multiracial society, albeit as a group whose temporary integration into British education and society gives rise to specific economic, political, legal and socio-cultural problems. Thus, since the early 1980s, UKCOSA (the umbrella body for higher and further educational institutions involved in international education, originally known as the UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs) and its parent body the Overseas Students Trust have produced practical manuals as guides to good practice in relation to international students' needs and problems, and have devised and offered training to staff. For example, a UKCOSA guide to provision of initial orientation programmes for international students lists 'problem areas' likely to be encountered, including 'loneliness and homesickness, cultural adjustment, racism, accommodation, food, language, health, finance, national crises at home, obligation to succeed, adjusting to new learning styles and techniques of teaching, absence of usual support network, the usual stresses experienced by students, immigration and expectations of students, staff and institution' (Dholakia 1992, p. 2). Some of these problems overlap or coincide with those faced by ethnic minority students, but others clearly are specific to the international student experience.

Racism features in several such publications from UKCOSA and the OST (see, for example, Caul in Callan 1991, p. 40; and Niven in Williams et al. 1987, p. 125) as a potential problem to be encountered by international students in Britain, suggesting both its common occurrence and the acceptance of racial discrimination in British society. Not surprisingly, then, two surveys from the 1980s on international students' experiences in British universities and society also show the prevalence of racism. Thus, a comprehensive survey of 1,760 overseas students in 1985 found that 'a quarter of all students felt they had been badly treated at some time or other on account of their race or nationality…particularly…students from Africa and the Middle East' (Williams et al 1986, p. 2, 4-5). In this case, the instances of reported discrimination consisted largely of 'verbal abuse' (ibid). More strikingly, a qualitative study of women international students reported that twenty-eight of the thirty-five interviewees 'had experienced some form of racial discrimination' including verbal abuse, harassment, being ignored and passed over in shops and restaurants (Goldsmith and Shawcross 1985, p. 29).

Based on this evidence, it seems likely that there is a direct relationship between the racism experienced by ethnic minority students and that experienced by international students in British universities and society. That is, the forms of British racism, as expressed towards ethnic minorities, will also be directed at non-white international students, particularly those from 'developing' countries. As such, the equal opportunities policies devised for Britain's ethnic minorities in the universities ought ideally to be extended to specify discrimination experienced by international students, and, similarly, discrimination needs to be fully dealt with in any comprehensive university policy on addressing the particular needs and problems of the international student population.

Institutional Policies and Codes of Practice

Model institutional policies and codes of good practice for the higher and further education sectors, covering different aspects of the provision of international education and the international student experience, have over the last two decades been devised and further developed by UKCOSA and the Overseas Students Trust, and have been taken up by the British Council in its worldwide promotion of British higher education. They are clearly an extension of the British (and Irish) tradition in higher education of concern for the

general welfare of students, rather than simply their academic success or failure. Often based on already existing examples of good institutional practice, to a greater or lesser extent the key principles of these model policies have been taken up by British universities and built into their normal structures and practices in relation to international students; many would claim that it is simply good business sense to do so. Very recently, quality assurance procedures have been used to analyse and improve international education services within the institutions.

Such published policy documents and codes of practice would include, for example: *Good Practice: Institutional Policy for Overseas Students* 1992; *Achieving Good Practice* 1991; *Code of Practice: Educational Institutions and Overseas Students* 1989; and 'Salad Days without the Dressing? What British Higher and Further Education Institutions Can Do for Their Overseas Students' in *Readings in Overseas Student Policy* 1987.

All stress the essential requirement of a comprehensive and integrated institutional policy in relation to the recruiting and continuing support of international students. While encouraging specific standards of sound practice in relation to marketing and recruiting, they also cover questions of university structures for devising and implementing policy, the need for provision of specialised services, and the structural relationship of these to mainstream student services. Such specialised services for international students include: those relating to advance information provision, post-arrival and pre-departure orientation; those concerned with accommodation, catering, counselling, health and general welfare services; as well as specialised academic services (language support, study skills training, assessment procedures etc.) and religious, cultural, sporting and social facilities.

Alongside all of these, the need to have good policies and practices in relation to potential discrimination and racism is emphasised. Clearly, in an ideal institutional policy, there needs to be a combination of the principles and procedures devised in the UKCOSA/OST framework with those arising from the thinking of the Commission on Racial Equality. For example, the tackling of racism on campus can be extended by means of a broad-based university/community committee to deal with local community racism affecting students.

Such a combined package of policies can of course be characterised as founded essentially on an integrationist view of the position of international students, as of ethnic minorities, in society and in the educational institutions. It clearly does not go beyond questions of access and opportunities, or attempt to confront the hidden agendas and cultural biases of the institutions, and this issue, in relation to many different minority groups within society, has certainly been at the centre of academic and political debate for some time.

Leaving this ideological debate aside, however, there are clearly many aspects of the situations briefly surveyed in the two other EU countries which are relevant to the contemporary Irish situation. Following the general argument of the report, it can reasonably be assumed that the British and Dutch experiences of post-war racism prefigure to some extent the current Irish situation as a new country of immigration without a large ethnic minority population, and with as yet undeveloped immigration and race relations policies. It can thus be expected that international students' experiences of racism in contemporary Irish universities and society will have features in common with earlier Dutch and British situations, while at the same time reflecting specific Irish conditions. Awareness of these similarities and differences will aid understanding of the present situation for international students in Ireland.

In addition, the ideal models of well-developed policies and procedures outlined above can provide a comparative basis for evaluating the international education policies already in place in Irish universities, and offer a starting point for further developments in institutional policy to deal specifically with discrimination and racism.

5 Research Methods and Characteristics of the Student Sample

Devising the Methods

The overall purpose of the research study - to undertake a preliminary exploration of the ways in which international students in Irish universities experience racism and prejudice - together with the timetabling and funding requirements of a small project grant-aided by the EU Commission within the timeframe of the 1997 European Year Against Racism, naturally determined many aspects of the methods used in the research.

At the outset it was agreed that the research would be carried out using a qualitative methodological approach based on in-depth, semi-structured, single interviews and focus groups. Given the project framework, this was considered the best method to research international students' experiences with respect to racism, enabling the researcher to gain an understanding of the students' experiences through their own words, and thus to grasp something of their own perspectives on Irish realities. In-depth interviews can be especially useful with some individuals for handling subjects considered controversial, while others who might be reluctant to discuss complex or 'taboo' topics in a one-on-one interview with a stranger might contribute more openly and honestly in a focus group interview with four or more people who are their peers. So by using the two methods in conjunction, it was hoped to elicit a broad range of relevant information and views.

The next set of choices involved the sample. It was decided for practical purposes to undertake the research in three different universities in Ireland, aiming for a reasonable spread in terms of location and institutional characteristics. At the request of one of the universities, it was agreed that they would not themselves be identified in the report, so they are referred to simply as Universities A, B and C in the report. Given the time constraints, the total number of students to be interviewed at the three sites was set at between forty-five and fifty, or around fifteen students at each university. Ideally, the fifteen interviews at each site would include approximately ten single interviews and a focus group of five people.

It was hoped in these interviews to talk to a reasonably representative sample, in relation to regional origin, nationality, gender and academic discipline, of the whole population of international students in Irish

universities. However, access to the students was arranged through, and in consultation with, staff members of international offices, who first distributed a written invitation to students to take part, and then set up an interview schedule. As a result, while the international officers agreed to aim for a broadly representative group, the nature of the final sample depended on a number of practical factors (such as students' interest in the project and their availability on a particular day) and could not be determined precisely in advance by the researcher.

A decision was made at the outset to limit the sample to students who were in their second or subsequent year of study at an Irish university. This was because the interviews were to be conducted in the first semester of the academic year, and it was agreed that students to be interviewed should be those who had already 'settled in' and had time to reflect upon their experiences in Ireland.

An obvious result from that decision was the effective exclusion of the majority of EU students, and of US students, who on the whole attend Irish universities as visiting or exchange students for a year or less. Given the overall statistical picture in terms of simple numbers from different regions registered at any particular point in time, this meant to some extent over-selecting international students from majority world countries, but this bias was considered useful for the study because they would be more likely to have encountered some form of discrimination in Ireland than would students from Europe or from former 'white settler' colonies like the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In order to check the sample characteristics of the students interviewed against the ideal categories, a background survey was devised and administered to the international students interviewed; a copy of this is included in Appendix I of the report.

With the characteristics of the sample determined, the next set of methodological issues concerned the interview stage of the research. Following Essed's research paradigm which set educational institutions firmly in their social context in the study of racism, the interview questions were designed as two sets of mirror questions which linked various aspects of the international students' experiences at their Irish university (in the first part of the interview) to their experiences in Irish society in general (in the second part). These questions are reproduced in Appendix I. However,

in the actual interviews so many students, in answering the initial questions, linked their experiences in the university to their experiences in the community, that the interviews were not necessarily conducted in two distinct parts as planned.

The questions were also designed so as not to bias the results towards finding definite examples of racial discrimination; this was intended to be a methodological device for greater 'objectivity' and to reflect the contemporary situation in Ireland, in which racism is a fairly new category which may or may not be linked to other types of discrimination. In this regard, the international students were asked to say whether they experienced discrimination at their university and in Irish society and, if they had been discriminated against, to name the type of discrimination themselves. Following social scientific practice, all students were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, both in the invitation and again at the beginning of the interview. Finally, to increase the reliability of the results, all of the student interviews were taped.

The Characteristics of the Student Sample

With respect to the number of interviews conducted, the sample for University A included eleven single interviews and seven focus group participants, with eleven interviews and six in the focus group for University B and nine interviews and four in the focus group at University C, giving a total number of forty-eight international students interviewed for the research over the three sites. Of the forty-eight students, there were eighteen from Asia, fifteen from Africa (including Mauritius), seven from North America, four from Europe (including one ethnic minority student from the UK), three from the Middle East and one from Australasia. The following list of the students' countries of origin shows their national diversity, with twenty-three countries represented. (Numbers above one indicate the total from each country in the final sample.)

TABLE ONE: Countries of Origin of the International Students Interviewed

AFRICA	Total : 15		AUSTRALASIA	Total: 1
Botswana	6		New Zealand	1
Ethiopia	1			
Kenya	1			
Mauritius	2		EUROPE	Total: 4
Nigeria	1		Belgium	1
Sudan	2		Finland	1
Swaziland	1		France	1
Uganda	1		United Kingdom	1
ASIA	Total: 18		NORTH AMERICA	Total: 7
Hong Kong	1		United States	7
India	4			
Japan	2		MIDDLE EAST	Total: 3
Malaysia	6		Oman	2
Nepal	1		Palestine	1
Pakistan	2			
Singapore	2		GRAND TOTAL	48 students

It might appear that there was an over-representation from the United States, with seven out of forty-eight or almost one-sixth of the sample, although the six each from Botswana and Malaysia offset this to a certain extent. However, figures supplied by the universities in the study show that Americans and Malaysians have indeed been among the largest groups in the population of international students at university in Ireland in recent years. For example, figures for 1995/96 from one university show Americans and Malaysians ranking as the first and third largest national groups respectively, with Germans as the second largest. More detailed figures for 1996/97 for another university show that Americans represented approximately 18%, Germans 10%, French 9% and Malaysians 8% of their international students .

In such features as the relatively large numbers of students from Botswana, alongside the absence of students from Germany for example, the listing above corresponds to the intentional bias of the study towards majority world students. As mentioned earlier, the decision to interview only students in their second or subsequent years produced, statistically speaking, an under-representation of EU students in terms of their relative strength of numbers in the whole international population.

A similar picture emerged in relation to gender balance. In terms of the whole international population, a statistically-based study would probably look for a fairly equal balance, but if the majority of EU and US students are excluded by definition, then the remaining international population - those on whom the study was focused - is likely to be predominantly male. So the actual proportion of male students in the sample (thirty-eight men compared to ten women) came reasonably close to the reality of the international student population undertaking full courses of study at all levels in Irish universities. Although this dimension had not been specified, the age profile of the final sample was interestingly balanced, with a range from nineteen to thirty-four years old, giving an average age of twenty-five for the total sample, and with twenty-eight of the students in the twenty-one to twenty-five age bracket. It is possible that the greater availability of postgraduate students in some instances affected this outcome. Even so, in an Irish context in particular, the average international student is likely to be a little older than the average Irish university student, a point raised often by many of the international students themselves. In terms of marital status, with most of the international students aged between

twenty-one and twenty-five, it was not surprising that forty-one out of the forty-eight students were single.

The age profile of the students interviewed was linked to the students' occupations before entering Irish universities, in that thirty-two of them were students either at the secondary, undergraduate or postgraduate levels. Of the remaining sixteen who had been at work before coming to Ireland to study, four were engineers, two civil servants, two more veterinary assistants and the other eight included an accountant, lawyer, research scientist, manager, computer consultant, water advisor, medical technician and a waitress. Using their parents' occupations as an indicator of socio-economic background, one would have to conclude that by and large the international students in the sample came from the middle to upper middle classes of their respective national societies. With respect to their fathers' occupations, this conclusion is indicated by the fact that eleven were in the medical profession including nine doctors, eight were managers of various sorts, five were in the educational sector including three teachers, five were businessmen, three worked in banking or finance and a further three were in the civil service in some capacity. The remaining occupations ranged from an engineer, lawyer, telecommunications employee and six farmers, with three of the fathers deceased and two retired. In terms of their mothers' occupations, twenty-three or almost half were 'housewives', while nine worked in education, including four teachers and two professors, five in the medical sector with four working as nurses, five more were businesswomen, two farmers and the rest included a manager, a civil servant, and a journalist, with one of the mothers deceased. As a result, the sample shows a high representation of those from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Given the fee structures for non-EU and US students, it is almost certainly the case that this result more or less reflects the actual composition of the population of all international students in Ireland.

The remaining two categories considered in the background survey were the faculty or department in which the international students were studying, and the length of stay in Ireland at the time of the interview.

Given the stipulation that only students in their second or subsequent year of study in Ireland would be interviewed, the sample was likely to contain only students studying for a full degree, a large proportion of whom are clustered in the high-status professional faculties and in

technological and business studies courses, many at postgraduate level. Random practical considerations also clearly affected these results, producing a sample in which fully twenty-three of the forty-eight international students were studying medicine, seven were veterinary students, six taking applied science masters degree courses and one each studying dentistry, physiology, agricultural science and botany. There were also three students in arts subjects, two people on business studies courses, and one person each in mathematics, law and the social sciences.

The sample significantly over-represents international students in the medical faculties as well as, broadly speaking, those studying science-based subjects. Using the detailed figures for 1996/97 provided by one of the universities, the extent of this over-representation in relation to medicine becomes clearer. While medical students composed forty-eight per cent of the sample, in reality they represented twenty per cent of the international students in that year. Under-representation of the proportions of the whole international population attending courses in arts, social sciences, and business arises from the exclusion of the one semester or one year European and US students, who predominantly attend these faculties. However, in a sample of this size, and given the constraints of the project, an accurate matching of the sample to the proportions of international students in different areas of study was not likely to be possible. Nor is subject of study very likely to be a significant variable in terms of the students' experiences in relation to racism and other forms of discrimination.

With respect to length of stay, most of the students interviewed were either in their second (nineteen students) or third year (fourteen). Seven more were in their third year, five in their fourth year and one each in their fifth and seventh years. The one exception was a student who was born in another country but in fact had been living in Ireland for over twenty years. Thus all of the students met the stipulated requirement for length of stay, although the tendency in the sample is biased towards those international students who were just beginning their second year of study at the time of the interview.

Overall, then, the actual sample results reflect the intended sampling choices in that there is a bias towards international students from majority world countries who have studied in Ireland for more than one academic year. Further, the fact that most of the students interviewed are older than the aver-

age Irish university student - which also corresponds to reality - hopefully translates into more maturity, life experiences and the ability to evaluate them. The high proportions of men and of individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds in the sample, while not perhaps a statistically perfect match, nevertheless is close to the realities of the full-course international student population.

Finally, although these sample results cannot be compared to the actual characteristics of all the international students in Ireland, as no such data set exists at present, they do compare favourably with those of more comprehensive British-based surveys of international students from 1980 and 1985 (Williams G. et al. 1986). In the British survey from 1980, 75% of the respondents were male, 82% were aged thirty or below, 72% were unmarried, 68% of the students came from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, 72% of the students' fathers were self-employed businessmen, craftsmen, farmers or civil servants and the typical student either studied for an undergraduate degree or for a postgraduate degree in engineering, science, administration or business (95). Further, results from the 1985 survey showed that students came from over one hundred countries with the largest numbers from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Nigeria and the United States (96). Thus, the Irish sample results for 1997 are remarkably similar to the British surveys from the 1980s, save for the over-representation of medical students and the lack of large numbers from Hong Kong, a dimension particular to the British situation.

6 The Interview Results: The Irish Are Friendly, But...

The present study set out to let international students in Irish universities speak for themselves in relation to their experiences of prejudice and discrimination, and in so doing, to suggest issues that merit further research as well as problems that require more immediate action. It was hoped that a comparative framework, setting Irish experience in the context of other EU situations, and a careful consideration of some of the theoretical issues involved in any discussion of racism, would help to develop an accurate understanding of how current changes in Irish society are affecting the international students who come to Irish universities, and what interventions might be helpful and appropriate at the institutional level.

This chapter presents and analyses the results of interviews conducted with 48 international students in three Irish universities in late 1997. Its five main sections look at their experiences from different perspectives, and address topics relevant to an understanding of these students' encounters with discrimination in Ireland. The first section summarises the information reported in the interviews, concerning instances of discrimination at the everyday, university and institutional levels of Irish society. The second attempts to unravel the presence of the differentiated threads of Irish racism, ethnicism and nationalist xenophobia in some specific experiences reported by the students, a process greatly assisted by the students' own interpretations. The third section explores how the students themselves made use of an ideology of Irish friendliness and insularity which could explain, and often explain away, their experiences of Irish discrimination. The fourth focuses more specifically on one significant area of inter-cultural difference, the integration of Muslim students into Irish society, in relation to the barriers of Irish drinking culture and of self-segregation. Finally, the fifth section examines the students' own proposals for improving their integration into and equality of treatment in Irish universities and society.

Part 1: Everyday, University and Institutional Discrimination

The good news arising from the interviews is that these international students reported a relatively low level of discrimination in Irish universities, whether of the racist, ethnicist or nationalist xenophobic kind. The bad news is that they experienced a relatively high level of these forms of discrimination in Irish society beyond the campus.

In total, the 48 international students who were interviewed documented 128 separate instances of discrimination, which can usefully be grouped into the three categories outlined in earlier chapters. Thus, there were 82 cases of everyday discrimination in Irish society (64% of total), 23 examples of institutional discrimination outside the university (18%) and 23 instances of university discrimination cited at the three institutions covered (also 18% of total), with an average number of 2.6 acts of discrimination reported per student in the sample.

However, not all the international students reported discrimination. 30 of them (62.5%) said in a general statement that they had experienced discrimination while 18 (37.5%) said they had not. However, five of the students who claimed to have experienced no discrimination in fact reported specific instances of personal discrimination in their interviews, so the figure might be corrected to give a total of 35 or 73% of the international students who cited at least one instance of discrimination in one or other context.

In terms of the racial backgrounds of the international students who reported experiences of discrimination in Ireland, 32 out of the 35 or 91% were non-white: 15 of the 18 Asians, 14 of the 15 Africans, 2 of the three Middle Eastern students, and one European (an ethnic minority student from the UK.) There were also 3 white students who reported discrimination: one American, one French student and one white African. So the interview results show that almost three-quarters of all the international students and thirty-two of the thirty-six (89%) non-white students in the whole group interviewed had experienced racist, ethnicist or nationalist xenophobic discrimination in Ireland. However, nearly two-thirds of these instances of discrimination occurred 'off-campus' in the community and only around one-sixth of the cases involved discrimination in the university.

Everyday Discrimination in Irish Society

The majority of the instances of discrimination cited overall took place in the broader social context. There were 82 instances of everyday discrimination in Irish society reported by the students, classifiable into 14 distinct groups as follows:

34 instances of verbal abuse
(use of racist, ethnicist or xenophobic words and phrases)

16 instances of staring
(prolonged looking at those with physical or ethnic differences)

5 instances of stereotyping
(the use of national, ethnic or racial stereotypes in non-abusive ways)

4 instances of physical assault
(includes the touching of a veil and the throwing of a stone)

4 instances of hostility to inter-racial couples
(verbal abuse of black or foreign male in couple)

4 instances of unfriendly reaction to someone of apparently 'mixed' identity (student appears 'foreign' yet speaks with Irish accent, or appears Irish yet speaks with 'foreign' accent)

4 instances of differential treatment (treating foreigner unequally)

4 instances related to accommodation-seeking
(discrimination in granting tenancy/ renting)

2 instances of discrimination in customer services
(ignoring foreigner in shop or restaurant)

2 instances of patronising behaviour
('colonial' attitude towards those from developing world)

2 instances of drawing attention to cultural differences
(includes jibes about cleanliness and wearing the veil)

1 instance of offensive graffiti
(seeing racist, ethnicist or xenophobic writing in public places)

Clearly, verbal abuse was by far the most significant type of everyday discrimination reported, accounting for over 40% of these incidents, followed by offensive staring, which accounted for almost 20%. Overall, instances of verbal abuse and staring together made up 54 (50 everyday and 4 university examples) of the total of 128 instances of all types of discrimination reported by the students in the sample.

University Discrimination

An analysis of the instances of university discrimination cited by the international students shows that of the 23 cases reported, 8 (approximately 35%) involved Irish students, 6 (26%) the administration, 4 lecturers or supervisors, 3 course structure and content, and 2 laboratory technicians. They can be classified as follows:.

Instances cited of discrimination by Irish students:

3 instances of verbal abuse

1 instance of staring

1 of mimicking the foreigner's accent

1 of 'informing' (white students inform lecturer about black students)

1 racist comment in a student publication

1 instance of questioning an international student's knowledge

Instances cited of discrimination by university administration:

3 examples of lack of internships
(for non-Irish students in medical schools)

2 instances of restricted quotas
(e.g. capped numbers for non-Irish in medical schools)

1 instance of non-acceptance of foreign academic credentials
(developing world student)

Instances cited of discrimination by lecturers/supervisors:

1 instance of racist talk (in lecture)

1 instance of verbal harassment
(demeaning foreign students in front of Irish students)

1 instance of higher demands
(insisting on more or higher quality work from foreign students)

1 specifically anti-American comment (in lecture)

Instances cited of discrimination in course structures:

3 references to Eurocentric/ Hibernocentric course structures
(in curricular choices and content)

Instances cited of discrimination by laboratory technicians:

1 instance of withholding information (from black students)

1 instance of differential treatment (of black students)

When compared to everyday discrimination, there was some overlap in terms of the types of discrimination encountered by international students in Irish universities, but some examples of perceived discrimination were specific to educational institutions, such as those related to internships, the non-acceptance of foreign academic credentials and the Eurocentrism of certain courses. They can be seen, from a perspective like that of Essed's study (chapter 4), as directly connected to official and cultural processes of discrimination at the societal level. In this case, the Eurocentrism of curricula indicates the 'white European' values underlying mainstream Irish culture, while restrictions on medical internships reflects official policy with respect to the immigration of foreign workers, whether professionals or otherwise.

Institutional Discrimination

The main sites of institutional discrimination identified by the students included particular sections of the Irish state and the media in general. With respect to the Irish state, 17 out of the 23 or 74% of the instances mentioned by the international students involved Irish immigration officials, both at the airports and at the Aliens Registration Office in Dublin. Of the remaining 6 cases, 5 concerned media bias and 1 the Gardaí, as follows:

Instances cited of discrimination by state officials:

5 instances of differential treatment
(of 'non-white' students by immigration officials at airports)

5 visa-related instances
(refusals of multiple entry visas for students to cover the academic year)

3 instances relating to family visits
(refusals of visas for students' spouses and children)

2 instances involving work permit regulations
(current restrictions appear discriminatory)

2 instances in the (Dublin) Aliens Registration Office
(demeaning aspects of queuing, frustrations of daily quota system and inadequate staffing, and unhelpful or hostile treatment by civil servants)

Instances cited of discrimination by the Irish media:

5 examples cited of European/Irish centrism
(with effect of excluding Africans and Muslims)

Instances cited of discrimination by the Gardaí:

1 instance (raiding a cinema for illegal immigrants)

Although the frequencies and the processes of discrimination vary, it seems reasonable to deduce, both from the wide range of experiences cited and from comparison with the Dutch and British cases, that common threads link the experiences of the students in their everyday life in Irish society, to those they experienced in relation to state officialdom, the media and the university.

Part 2: Irish Racism, Ethnicism and Nationalist Xenophobia: Links and Distinctions

So far, the analysis has chosen deliberately to use the term 'discrimination' as the best general description of all of the 128 racial, ethnic and xenophobic incidents in Ireland which were cited by the international students interviewed. This choice was made on the basis that Ireland's position as a new country of immigration, lacking established ethnic minorities of foreign origin, requires a clearer distinction between racism, ethnicism and nationalist xenophobia than is necessary in the 'older' countries of immigration such as Britain and the Netherlands. In the present Irish situation, it may be important to avoid 'over-racialising' the issues and concerns raised by the students interviewed, if they are to be understood and tackled appropriately.

With this in mind, even apparently clear-cut instances of Irish racism need to be scrutinised in relation to their intent and meaning. For example, in the interviews, four of the black African students reported that the word 'nigger' was shouted at them by Irish people in the community. As a classic form of racist verbal abuse in European and American discourse. mainly referring to skin colour or other supposed physical characteristics of 'black' African peoples, it has also acquired cultural or ethnic connotations such as 'laziness', 'lacking initiative' and even (in a modern urban American context at least) 'choosing welfare over work'. In the Irish instances cited, one cannot be sure if these additional components were present, making it a mixed racist and ethnicist insult.

A related question arises with the terms 'chink' and 'paki', shouted three and seven times respectively by Irish people at a number of the Asian international students (who were not necessarily of these nationalities). In this case, the derogatory terms (almost certainly learned from British usage) normally refer to people of Chinese and Pakistani descent identified primarily by their physical appearance. However, since they also refer to their (attributed) national origins, the Irish use of these terms may not always be purely racist in its significance, but could rather be a combination of racism and a nationalist xenophobia directed against 'foreigners' from these particular Asian countries.

This question of disentangling the racist, ethnicist and nationalist xenophobic meanings of Irish verbal abuse is also raised in the use of the phrase 'niggers, go home!' shouted on separate occasions at two of the black African students. In fact, the expression 'go home' or similar ('go back to your country', 'what do you want in our country?' and 'why don't you get out of here?') occurred in 10 of the 34 or 29% of the instances of verbal abuse in the category of everyday discrimination described by the international students. It suggests that the Irish people involved were more concerned about the presence of foreigners as such in Ireland than about either the race or ethnicity of the students. However, since all of the international students who faced this form of verbal abuse were 'non-white' it makes more sense to argue that these particular cases of discrimination combined Irish racism with nationalist xenophobia.

One repeated pattern of Irish discrimination against the international students brings together ethnicism and nationalist xenophobia. The main victims of this pattern were Muslim students and to a lesser extent Europeans and

Americans. In the latter case, a European and two American students reported instances in which Irish students and in one case a lecturer used national stereotypes of cultural differences to demean them. These few instances, though, were relatively mild compared to the ethnic discrimination reported by many Muslim students ranging from verbal and physical assaults to extremely patronising behaviour. In one instance, a Muslim man was called a 'wife beater' and accused of having 'four wives'. The two examples of physical assault involved a Muslim woman's veil being touched by Irish children and in the other a group of Muslim women wearing veils had eggs thrown at them on the street. These acts of discrimination against Muslim students can be best characterised as examples of Irish ethnicism in that the actions appeared to be based on visibly-signalled cultural and religious differences involving marriage practices, gender relations and clothing.

Some of the examples of patronising behaviour were, however, more complex and difficult to define, often involving elements of racism and sexism as well as ethnicism towards Muslims. In both instances, an Irish man and woman adopted 'colonial' attitudes towards a Muslim woman, expressing their willingness to help 'this poor Muslim woman from Africa' until they found out that she was not poor and did not really need their help. After further instances of discrimination, including being denied accommodation because she wore the veil, this woman realised that she had 'somehow become black' in Ireland: 'I am not black [back home], but when I came here I discovered that "oh, I am black"'. In relation to this woman's reported experiences, then, a pattern of Irish discrimination begins to emerge in which generalised ethnicism and racism are interrelated with specific regional prejudices about peoples from the developing world.

In a further example of this particular pattern of Irish discrimination, a non-white international student reported that two white men in a pub loudly said something racist and xenophobic to him before adding that 'these people come here to take our jobs away'. Of course, non-EU international students are not legally permitted to work in Ireland, but for the two Irish men, however, the student simply appeared as a representative of all non-white foreigners and their imputed characteristics - in this case, presenting a threat to Irish economic security because of their need for work, viewed as a scarce resource even in the 'Celtic Tiger' economy. (Characteristically, in such a reaction, no reference is found to

the somewhat larger numbers of 'white' people migrating to Ireland primarily for employment purposes.)

Surveying the various instances of Irish discrimination discussed above it is possible to hypothesise an 'ideal type' or typical form of Irish discrimination faced by international students in their various contexts, one in which elements of racism, ethnicism and nationalist xenophobia combine in different measures, but with a specific focus on peoples from the developing world. While not all instances cited included all these elements, the most frequently occurring pattern shows an intertwining of racism with either nationalist xenophobia or ethnicism against non-white students., while a residual or less frequent pattern combines ethnicism with nationalist xenophobia against 'white' foreigners like Americans and even fellow Europeans. The most typical form encountered by international students, then, is a combination of the main pattern with culturally based discrimination or 'regionalised ethnicism' derived from common negative stereotypes (including beliefs about 'poverty', 'overpopulation', 'laziness' and 'welfare dependency') about peoples from the developing world.

This description of the typical form of Irish discrimination makes sense in contemporary Irish conditions. Since Ireland has only recently thought of itself as 'developed' and has even more recently become a destination for immigrants, fears of a return to the hard times, unemployment and high emigration of the past are not far below the surface. This makes considerations of race much less important in relation to foreigners than the 'poverty, unemployment and welfare demands' stereotypically associated with non-white peoples from the developing world, (associations which in Irish popular culture still attach to the Irish themselves in spite of the decade or so of comparative economic success). One could even argue that this specific form of Irish discrimination is partly the result of Irish people projecting negative cultural stereotypes about themselves onto the most available 'others'. Ironically, then, their real underlying fear could be that people from the developing world will act like the Irish supposedly acted in the past.

The Students' Perceptions of Their Experiences

The way in which international students explained discriminatory actions was often illuminating. In relation to instances of institutional discrimination in the Irish state and the media, the vast majority of the inci-

dents involved official treatment of 'foreigners', especially by the Immigration Service, with 17 of the 18 cases relating to immigration controls at the airport, family visits, entry visas, the Aliens Registration Office or work permits. Most of the international students perceived themselves to be treated differently by Irish officials because they were foreigners and/or non-white, so in their understanding too, the institutional pattern of discrimination matches the main pattern of everyday discrimination in its combination of racism with nationalist xenophobia.

In particular, many of the international students experienced a tightening of Irish immigration controls over the summer of 1997, when many of them (even those arriving from the UK and thus within the 'common travel area') were stopped and questioned on arrival for the first time. A number of the non-white students detailed how all 'European-looking' people were allowed to pass rapidly through immigration while all apparently non-white people were stopped by the officials. This appears to be a clear example of racism mixing with nationalist xenophobia at the official level. In terms of the other immigration issues raised, the students, who evidenced the more liberal policies of other European countries such as Britain, France and Germany, considered that the Irish government was unnecessarily restrictive in its refusal to issue either work permits or multiple entry visas to international students. However, the students agreed that these particular Irish policies applied to all foreigners regardless of race, and as such were more likely to express nationalist xenophobia than racism.

With respect to the media, three of the five instances involved bias against Africa and Africans, the fourth concerned negative stereotypes about 'wife-beating' Muslim men and the fifth alleged a national bias towards white, Catholic middle class Irish people. The African students detailed their perceptions of Irish media discrimination against their continent and its various peoples, noting how media reporting concentrates on negative events while failing to show any positive side to African life. Thus, one student sarcastically stated that the Irish media publicised only African 'war, famine and wildlife', while another remarked that 'this is not our identity'. Finally, a third student linked these overwhelmingly negative portrayals of Africa and Africans to the discrimination faced by African students in Ireland. So the media discrimination described by the students appears to approximate to the typical form suggested earlier, in that it com-

bines elements of racism against Africans or ethnicism against Muslims with nationalist xenophobia against non-Irish people while emphasising only the negative characteristics of the developing world.

In relation to analysing the bases of discrimination in the universities, the twenty-three instances of discrimination cited by the international students seem at first glance to fit nicely into the 'processes of everyday racism' Essed identified in the Dutch context. Thus, there were cases reported of institutional Eurocentrism in the curriculum, lecturers using racist talk and making higher demands of non-white students, laboratory technicians withholding information and treating non-white students inequitably, as well as white Irish students verbally abusing and informing on non-white students.

However, some of these instances could equally well be interpreted as forms of ethnic or nationalist xenophobic discrimination. For example, the Eurocentrism cited by African and American students referred to the lack of comparative treatment of tropical diseases in one of the Irish science-based courses. The students themselves interpreted this curricular emphasis not as racism but as a cultural bias towards common Irish national and European regional issues with respect to diseases, which demonstrated Irish cultural and national 'insularity' first and foremost.

In one of the cases of verbal abuse in the university context, an African student described a process of Irish-African student interactions over a few years, which is of particular interest. In the beginning, the African student was accepted by other Irish students, but as more African students arrived in the programme, and Africans arrived as asylum-seekers in Ireland, his original value as an 'exotic' diminished to the point where he was rejected by his former Irish friends, one of whom he overheard saying, 'these black people, what do they want in our country?' For this student, an initial Irish 'friendliness', experienced precisely because of his physical and cultural difference from the Irish norm, changed over time, as the university and society became more diverse, into a form of Irish discrimination which was primarily racist and xenophobic in content but which also included elements of ethnicism as well as prejudice towards non-white peoples from the developing world.

In terms of frequency, the other main form of university discrimination cited concerned the lack of medical internships for non-Irish students after

completing their clinical studies. This issue was specifically mentioned by three of the Asian students, although the importance of the problem was acknowledged by most of the other medical students in the interviews. According to these students, their letters of acceptance into Irish medical schools included the offer of an internship in Irish hospitals, but the policy had been changed after their arrival to one which gave first preference to Irish medical students, leaving foreign students to compete for the remaining places. The international students themselves interpreted this action primarily as nationalist xenophobic discrimination, and as another example of Irish insularity, arising from fear of competition with well qualified foreigners for 'Irish' jobs. This particular example merits further investigation, but suggests at least that perceived discrimination operating in the employment field affects highly-skilled professionals as well as unskilled would-be immigrants.

Finally, there were cases of discrimination cited by the white international students from the developed world, which are simply ethnicist and/or national xenophobic. A European student who was also a teaching assistant outlined an incident in which Irish students would not accept the validity of his knowledge until confirmed by the Irish lecturer. An American student remarked how an Irish lecturer would often express an anti-American bias in lectures, often drawing negative comparisons between the Irish and American educational systems and then saying things like 'that's the problem with the American school system. You don't get that here'.

Another American student noted an interesting cultural contradiction in Irish people's attitudes to Americans. On the one hand, 'the Irish know American culture so well through…the media that they know us already and in a way they like us', yet often 'they see us as garish and loud-mouthed'. Her view was that the Irish exhibit a generalised fondness for Americans, rather than much actual liking for individual Americans, which is explicable because they 'want to live in America', and enjoy an American standard of living. It is possible that these contradictory attitudes towards 'Americans' are simply the opposite side of the coin of Irish discriminatory attitudes towards peoples from the developing world. 'America' represents what Ireland wants to move towards, while 'the Third World' symbolises what Ireland has left behind and does not want to be reminded about. While it is possible that such contradic-tory attitudes may also exist with respect to other peoples from the developed world, particularly other Europeans and even more particularly the British,

they were not mentioned by the few European students in the survey.

To summarise, the forms of discrimination encountered by international students in various contexts in Ireland tend to consist of interrelated elements of racism, ethnicism and nationalist xenophobia, rather than expressing a single or simple pattern of pure Irish 'racism'. They can be related to Ireland's new and still unfamiliar place in the contemporary world, as well as to the difficulties which Irish popular or mainstream culture has in accepting and absorbing Ireland's recent shift from a comparatively insular society to one which is multinational, multiethnic and multiracial.

Part 3: Explaining (Away) Discrimination: the Ideology of Irish Friendliness and Insularity

As part of the semi-structured interviews, the international students were asked specific but open questions about particular areas of experience outside the university: first impressions after arrival, finding accommodation, daily life, making friends and so on. Related questions required more evaluation of their experiences, including outlining any discrimination they felt they had experienced, and any changes experienced since first arrival in Ireland. They were also asked to make suggestions about how Irish people should treat foreigners (Appendix I). Where the student had clearly thought about these matters, and had perhaps made comparisons with other situations they had known, their views were drawn out in a broader discussion of the issues, and some of the responses were both illuminating and thought-provoking, both in relation to Ireland now and to possible future trends.

Asked whether they had experienced discrimination in Ireland, the students' responses showed four distinct patterns. First there were the students who simply said they had not experienced discrimination. In the second, more complicated, pattern, the students said that they had not been discriminated against, then went on to detail experiences of discrimination in their interviews. In the third pattern, students said that they have experienced discrimination in Ireland but defined it as ethnicism (directed against cultural difference) or nationalist xenophobia (generalised hostility to foreigners in the state). In the last pattern, the students said that they had

suffered from discrimination and defined this discrimination as racism pure
and simple.

Students' Views of Contemporary Ireland

In general discussion about their experiences in Ireland, most of the inter-
national students sketched their own pictures of Irish culture and
society, outlining what they perceived as its general characteristics. The main
characteristic remarked on in almost all the interviews was the
cultural trait of 'friendliness' exhibited by Irish people, expressed in phrases
like, 'the Irish are friendly' or 'Irish people are very friendly'. It would appear
that, in some way, their experiences of and belief in Irish
friendliness served to inoculate them from the some of the impact of

discrimination experienced, or to increase their willingness to explain it away.
Even the students who claimed to have experienced racial
discrimination often went on to minimise it by referring to the friendliness of
the vast majority of Irish people.

The other main features noted by a large number of the students
were the relative insularity of Irish culture and the lack of diversity in
Irish society compared either to their home society or to other societies
in which they had lived. They tended to view insularity as having both
positive and negative aspects in relation to discrimination. On the one hand,
Irish insularity was seen as responsible for discrimination because it gener-
ates fear of foreigners, and of cultural and physical differences. On the other
hand, Irish insularity and homogeneity means that Irish people lack knowl-
edge about other societies and cultures, and have no experience
of living with difference. So from this perspective, Irish people do not intend
to discriminate; they simply do not know any better, yet.

Minimising Discrimination

Further, many of the international students tried to relate Irish
friendliness and insularity to the contexts in which they had experienced dis-
crimination, in order to minimise the seriousness of what occurred. In the
social context, the students often explained away Irish discrimination by
stressing that the offenders were just 'kids' or 'drunks' and that the
incidents generally happen 'at night'. What the statistical evidence from
the interviews showed, though, was that there was support for these
assertions in some cases, but as generalisations they were not supported by

the facts.

In terms of verbal abuse outside the university, the students reported that of thirty-four instances of verbal abuse, children or young people initiated thirteen (38%) and 'drunks' three (9%), so that 47% of cases involved young people or people who had been drinking. Only four of the thirty four (12%) incidents reported took place at night. So in fact, the numerical evidence clearly shows that most (62%) of the instances of verbal abuse in everyday discrimination were initiated by Irish adults, over 90% of whom had not apparently been drinking, and almost nine out of ten (88%) incidents took place during the day!

The gap between perceptions and the reality reported is very intriguing, suggesting that, in order to retain their belief (which may be very important to their personal sense of security as a foreigner) that 'Irish people are friendly', these international students played down or mis-represented the involvement of 'normal' Irish people in acts of discrimination. They thus could retain the ideology of essential Irish friendliness while defining Irish discrimination as an aberrant action enacted by abnormal Irish people, or by Irish people in an abnormal state.

How did the students understand the behaviour of the 'kids and drunks' who accounted for almost half of reported cases of verbal abuse? In some cases, the students were willing to suggest that younger people, as well as people who have been drinking, were more likely to express what they actually feel or believe and thus in their abusive behaviour were simply expressing openly what most normal adults really feel and believe about the non-Irish in Ireland. This type of explanation assumed these negative attitudes to the non-Irish as the norm, and saw a more malicious intent behind acts of discrimination. In the words of one student, 'behind the smile lies the true colours of the Irish person' so that Irish people will be 'friendly to your face' but speak and act quite differently 'behind your back'. The 'kids and drunks' then, are more willing or more likely to act without the mask.

This reinterpretation of the same evidence to reach opposite conclusions is itself an indication of the ideological nature of these contradictory beliefs about Irish society and culture as expressed by different international students. The 'counter-ideology' however was held by only a very small number of the students (mainly black African

students), while the belief in the combination of friendliness and insularity was true of most of those interviewed, whatever their origins.

With respect to explaining the discriminatory behaviour of Irish children, some of the students offered other possible explanations: either they have not been taught how to treat non-Irish people, or they know that they should treat everyone alike, yet choose to behave badly towards non-Irish people. One student told a story about how he confronted a group of neighbourhood children shouting 'Paki, go back to your country!' by approaching them and chiding them, 'We are friends and neighbours. You should learn good things from your parents. Irish people are very friendly. Why are you doing these foolish things to give a bad impression of your country?' They apologised by saying, 'It was only a bit of fun', and left him alone after that. The ideology of Irish friendliness thus became real for this student as he expected and demanded to be treated in a friendly way. This student also made specific comparisons with his experience elsewhere, to further to explain and explain away the act of discrimination.

Several other students made similar comparisons in order to minimise Irish discrimination. For example, three Asian international students in separate interviews explained away Irish 'staring' as a product of the homogeneity of Irish society, and described a process of 'getting used to being stared at 'because one is Asian and therefore looks different compared to most people in Irish society'. One of them pointed to the 'lack of minority groups in Ireland' compared to England, affirming that 'there is no malicious intent behind the stares here'.

A second Asian student focused on the effect of Ireland's cultural insularity, which means that 'Irish people do not have enough exposure to other peoples' and so 'probably do not know how to react or what to say to us'. He recalled an incident when some 'lads from the countryside' shouted stereotypical remarks and made 'funny noises' at him. Rather than taking offence, he found their actions 'funny too' because he saw them as based on 'ignorance not racism', but he added that if the same incident had occurred in the US, he would have been deeply offended and would certainly have found it racist.

In similar vein, a third Asian student minimised Irish tendencies to discriminate by describing the positive developments she had witnessed in recent years in Ireland: as more Asians came, Irish people became more used

to their presence and stopped staring as much as when individual Asians were a 'novelty'.

Pessimistic Views of the Future

However, a striking feature of the interview results overall was how many of the international students interviewed, from all geographical regions, expressed themselves far less optimistic than this student, in relation to the future of ethnic relations in Ireland if current immigration trends continue. Their reasons for this view were equally striking.

Referring to their own home societies or to other countries in which they have lived, they portrayed racial and ethnic relations in these countries in a fairly negative manner, citing discrimination between Arabs and black Africans, Muslims and Hindus, Asians and Africans, as well as incidents between black and white people, those from the developed and the developing world and the Irish and non-Irish. Basing their conclusions on their own experiences, they seemed to share a general sense that increased societal diversity and cultural heterogeneity in a country can only result in increased inter-group conflict. Many therefore characterised Ireland's comparative cultural insularity and social homogeneity as a positive feature, typical of an older and 'purer' society, 'unspoilt' by the racism and xenophobia of other countries, which they attributed to greater cultural exposure and the attempted integration of differing peoples and cultures into a national society. They saw Irish friendliness as directly related to this condition of innocence, and in this way the ideology of friendliness and insularity was greatly strengthened in their minds.

It was disturbing to find, among this élite and educated group of students, such a marked preference for a quasi-mythical monocultural national society, rather than for the multicultural, heterogeneous societies of contemporary reality. The attitudes they expressed should certainly give pause for thought to those involved in international education, who often believe that student mobility in itself - the simple fact of bringing together students from diverse backgrounds in order to learn together - will contribute to a new global society of increased tolerance and understanding among peoples.

Comparing Ireland to Other EU States

Some of the non-white students had a good deal to say when they compared experiences of inter-group relations in Ireland to those in other countries. Those who had lived in other EU countries reported higher levels and intensity of discrimination and lower levels of integration than in Ireland. Compared to the Irish, one student said, in France and England 'people do not care for you', and another compared Irish friendliness favourably with the atmosphere of the Netherlands where he was 'treated as a foreigner' and not 'integrated into Dutch society'. Their accounts
suggested that, from a non-white international student's perspective at least, European countries with more established traditions of immigration have not been very successful in tolerating, let alone fully accepting, 'foreign' students in their societies even for a short period of time.

The most frequent references and in-depth comments concerned Britain, particularly in the case of Asian students who had lived in Britain as international students, or who were members of ethnic minority groups in Britain. Two of them provided extensive information on the place of Asians in post-war British society, and argued the relevance of this analysis for the Irish case. For one of them, 'Britain has been reduced from an Empire to that little island' where 'Asians have taken over many of the jobs', often because they have been 'willing to work cheaper'. As a result, 'racist hatred' has risen in Britain.

Looking at contemporary Ireland, one of these students noted how 'some Irish people have a narrow-minded view of Asians', both from the mass media and from their lack of 'exposure to the outside world', so at present they discriminate against Asians out of simple ignorance. However, if Ireland with its 'booming' economy follows British patterns, and more Asians actively seek jobs here, 'then racism will come too'. He concluded pessimistically, 'racism over here is at a baser level but it does exist. It will grow as more people come over'.

Interestingly, this was a student who began his interview by taking pains to emphasis that 'Irish people are very friendly', but he saw this friendliness as a product of an insular, homogeneous society with slow
economic growth and little immigration. He predicted that, as Ireland changes, so too will its attitudes, and Irish people will become more like the European norm of 'people who do not care for you'.

The second student compared Ireland to Britain with respect to some

of the long-term effects of racial and ethnic relations in British society. He described the dual pressures on him as a member of an ethnic minority, first 'to conform to British culture', and second 'to stick together' with other members of his own group. 'Sticking together' led to insularity within the ethnic group and tended to 'drive a wedge between the majority and minority groups' as well as sustaining sub-ethnic 'local identifications' within ethnic groups, such as the '200 Pakistani associations' in which people are grouped according to 'where they are from back home'. To counter the negative processes he perceived, of diminishing interactions among 'black communities' in Britain, and increased 'intolerance' overall, he proposed a kind of 'nominal integration' or 'the limited adoption of English culture' by ethnic minorities, to be supported by 'equal opportunities for both groups', implemented through racial and ethnic relations laws. This limited integration would increase interaction among groups within a shared majority culture, but allow each ethnic group to maintain the significant aspects of its own culture.

In his understanding too, Ireland may be 'twenty years behind Britain' but is likely to 'catch up' rapidly, and could follow the same negative path, unless it can learn from the mistakes of its neighbours and promote good ethnic relations policies and a shared popular culture which could allow for integration and equality for all.

A Different View:
Refugees, Racism and International Students

While on average the students interviewed seemed to express reasonable optimism about the future, there was one group of international students for whom the more pessimistic predictions of developments in racial and ethnic relations in Ireland had become a negative contemporary reality. This group was composed of five black African students and one Indian student, who specifically linked their own recent experiences of discrimination in Ireland to the increased numbers of asylum-seekers arriving into the Republic over the last few years. (The students themselves followed popular and media usage by always using the term 'refugee' in this context, and many seemed to have absorbed popular and media prejudices about asylum-seekers too.) They had perceived changes in Irish attitudes and behaviour towards in the last few years, which for them corresponded to the rise in the numbers of refugees coming to Ireland.

The Indian student 'did not feel' Irish 'inhibitions towards foreigners' for his first one and a half years in Ireland but 'lately there is a difference', such as 'when you walk down the street and see graffiti about refugees', with the result that now 'you are treated as if you are a refugee'.

Further, one of the African students remarked, 'in 1994, with few black people here, we were treated well and with the utmost respect' but now 'with influx of refugees and black people increasing in numbers, it is easier to pick out black people'. To illustrate this change he cited an incident in 1994 in which a drunken Irish man verbally abused him using racial epithets, and compared this to a recent experience in which 'a man with a tie driving an Audi during lunchtime' shouted right from the car, 'Nigger, go back home!' as he walked down the street. For this student, the first incident was a rare occurrence and could be explained away because of the infrequency of discrimination at the time and the condition of the 'drunken man', but the latter incident however was more disturbing, both because of the greater frequency and intensity of discrimination recently experienced by the student, and the unlikely source of the insult.

His explanation for changing Irish behaviour towards black people was that black people as a group, including students, were now generally assumed to be refugees, and as such were perceived to be dependent on the Irish state and even taking social welfare benefits from more deserving Irish people. However, in his view, if more 'professional black people' immigrated into Ireland as workers, then Irish discrimination would be 'directed towards black professionals taking Irish jobs' instead of towards 'refugees on social welfare', a more recognisably racist phenomenon.

Possible competition for resources was forecast by another of this group of African students, who stated that 'if more refugees come to Ireland, things will get worse because the Irish do not like to compete with others for jobs'. He commented on the popular Irish inability to distinguish between different groups of immigrants, and the automatic assumption that anyone black is a refugee and therefore poor. He cited a recent incident when an Irish landlord refused him accommodation because he 'thought I was a refugee who would not be able to pay money, even though I had a letter to show that I was a student sponsored by the government'. The student defined this and other discrimination he had experienced as racism, which he felt was particularly directed against people from Third World countries, who were being treated as 'scapegoats' in

the present situation.

Finally, a third African student made a link between Irish insularity, the new refugee phenomenon and the rise in Irish racism against black people. Noting how 'the Irish are isolated from the rest of the world', he recalled that 'when I came here it was fairly obvious that people were not used to black people', yet at that time most Irish people 'made me feel welcome'. However, there was a change with 'the coming of the refugees', resulting in 'more and more people expressing their dislike' of black people, and a rise in the number of 'racial encounters'. From his perspective, Irish friendliness and insularity were overwhelmed by Irish racism, expressed in the scapegoating of asylum-seekers, and the widespread presumption that all black people in Ireland must be refugees and therefore are unwelcome.

For this group of international students, the ideology of Irish friendliness and insularity no longer applied. Instead the forms of discrimination they had experienced were specifically identified as racism directed against people from the developing world, racism triggered, in their view, by the relatively modest increase in Ireland's social diversity and cultural exposure of the last two years.

However, for the moment this was the minority view in this sample of international students, forty-two of whom (88.5%) drew on some form of the ideology of Irish friendliness and insularity to explain and explain away most of the Irish acts of discrimination which they have experienced in Ireland.

Overall, the group of students interviewed had experienced everything from acts of overt friendliness to outright discrimination, and a continuum of motivations driving these interactions ranging from kindness and respect for the other to ignorance and racism. The central question is what will happen next in Ireland? Will friendliness remain part of the dominant ideology and dominant behaviour as the country becomes more diverse, or will a more European form of cultural racism overtake Irish friendliness? The best judges in this case will be the non-Irish and ethnic minorities in Ireland.

Part 4. Integrating Muslim Students: Is Drinking Alcohol The Barrier?

For one significant group of international students, religious affiliation played an important role in defining their level of integration into, or segregation from, Irish society. Although the background survey (Appendix I) did not request information about religious affiliation, during the interviews around one third of the students identified themselves as Muslims and commented on ethnicity and integration issues arising in their experience from their membership of a distinct religious minority in a predominantly Christian, Roman Catholic country.

Many of them wanted greater integration into Irish society but believed that specific aspects of Irish culture, and particularly Irish student culture, presented a barrier which contributed to the segregation of Muslims as a group. More specifically, they focused on the site of the pub and Irish drinking culture as the principal barriers to their increased integration into Irish society and culture. As one student expressed it, 'the pub is the barrier'.

The majority of those interviewed who raised these issues expressed their adherence to the prohibition against alcohol consumption. Of course, across Islamic countries and so across the different national groups in Ireland, there is a range of practice at group and individual level with respect to the consumption of alcohol. So some of the students from the more liberal traditions of Islam said that they would be prepared to go into a pub or other place where alcohol was served (and one or two admitted to drinking alcohol on occasion), while students from the more conservative traditions would not consume alcohol and would not enter places where it was served. Not surprisingly, the former group did not express the same strong concern about their integration into Irish society as the students who followed a stricter regime.

At one extreme, some Muslim students ascribed their relative lack of integration into Irish society as almost wholly due to Irish drinking culture. As one student put it, 'for Irish people, everything is about drinking', and this 'is a limitation to integration because of our religion and culture. It is a barrier'. However, another observed that, while Irish people spend 'loads of time in the pub', there is more to Irish culture than this. Nonetheless, the focus on the pub and drinking can present difficulties for Muslim

students who participate in student societies or politics, and in addition, 'class meetings are held in pubs', so the student's integration is limited to the extent that she or he is willing to tolerate this. At the opposite extreme, a Muslim student who had adapted to the extent that he drinks alcohol himself, remarked that of course not all Irish people do drink, but that 'once you drink, you can make friends easily enough'.

For the international students in general, including the Muslim students, making friends with Irish people was an important measure of their integration. The Muslims often perceived a close relationship between making Irish friends and willingness to drink. Thus, one student noted that 'Irish friendships are based on pub talk' and another offered the generalisation that 'here it is socialisation by drinking'.

Interestingly, several of the students offered a social-psychological explanation for this pattern as they perceived it in Ireland. First, according to this account, Irish students in general are 'difficult to get to know' largely because they 'tend to stay in groups' (often based on friendships formed early in life at school and in their local communities) and it is difficult for non-Irish people 'to break into the circle'. Second, the reason for this tendency to form small groups is that Irish people are basically 'shy' and 'lack confidence'. So, when they are sober, Irish people tend 'to avoid you partly out of shyness', but they 'come to you as a friend' after they have been drinking because they 'get confidence with drink'.

Whatever the merits of this theory, it suggests that many of the Muslim students perceived the Irish as basically friendly yet shy, so that these students seemed to have adopted their own special perspective on the ideology of Irish friendliness and insularity. By subscribing to these explanations for Irish patterns of socialising, they both explained their own lack of integration into Irish culture, and avoided blaming the Irish for persisting in social behaviour which clearly contributes to the segregation of Muslims from mainstream Irish society.

This perspective on the issue of integration, however, assumes that drinking alcohol, particularly in pubs, is the dominant characteristic of Irish culture and society. One of the Muslim students took a broader view, placing Irish drinking culture and the pub in a wider cultural setting in which Irish people 'interact through the church, pub and sporting events'. Still, even this more balanced viewpoint excludes Muslim students who do not drink

from at least two of the three pillars of Irish culture (the church and the pub), leaving only sporting events for Muslim students who want to integrate more into Irish society. While a few of the male Muslim students followed this route to integration and suggested it for other male Muslims in Irish universities, it is unlikely to be an acceptable solution for many Muslim women students.

Of course, in this group of students were those who did not perceive alcohol as a total barrier, but also acknowledged that Muslims in Ireland could become integrated through alternative social interactions with Irish people. Some of the social activities suggested included going to a restaurant or inviting friends over for dinner; going to the cinema, renting a video or watching television together; going to a cultural event like a play, dance or concert; participating in student societies or even in student politics on campus. As one student expressed it, 'you can stick to your religion and you can integrate with people by going to somebody's house, playing pool or going to the cinema'.

Thus, Irish drinking culture was generally perceived as an important factor and a potential cultural barrier for many Muslim international students in Ireland, but also as a barrier which can be overcome with imagination and effort, both within the university and in Irish society. Nevertheless, it was often felt that Irish students and Irish people in general should be more understanding of Muslim religious beliefs concerning alcohol and should help on their part by organising more social events where alcohol is not a dominant feature.

However, leaving aside the social significance of the drinking culture, there were clearly other reasons for a felt lack of integration into Irish social life, which need to be explored. According to the Muslim students themselves, these reasons include self-segregation, social or peer pressure to conform to Islamic traditions, and in some cases their home government's influence over their lives in Ireland.

With respect to self-segregation, the students identified a number of religious, ethnic and national social groupings in which the Muslim international students segregate themselves while living in Ireland and attending an Irish university. In a comment suggesting parallels with Irish social patterns they had identified, one of the students stated that 'we tend to stick together in small groups' in the university setting and in the wider com-

munity because we 'know each other and how to deal with each other'. It was not clear though whether the formation of small Muslim groups was a reaction to the pre-existing Irish small group culture or would be simply a normal response of groups of international students in any foreign country.

A certain amount of self-segregation of groups of international students is to be expected. It can be a rational 'survival strategy' as well as a natural reaction to real cultural differences between members of the majority national group and international students. The extent and nature of these cultural differences, as well as other factors such as length of stay, linguistic abilities, personal psychological characteristics, levels of discrimination in the environment and so-on, will influence the results for each individual student. There has been much debate in international education circles about appropriate levels of integration or segregation in the particular circumstances of international students, but one important dimension is the question of how much this is an individual choice, and how much a result of peer-group or official pressure.

At an ethnic level, some of the Muslim students at one university discussed 'sticking together' through the Asian society at their university, which provided gatherings in which 'Indians, Malays, Chinese and Arabs meet and have celebrations together'. For example, they would 'celebrate Ramadan' and 'Chinese holidays' together. They had also tried to expand the focus of the society by including African students in their meetings and events, to create an international students' society for non-white people from the developing world. Significantly, this example suggests that part of the motivation for one kind of self-segregation is simply the need to maintain the most important cultural practices of the group, which they do not feel are supported or facilitated in Irish university life or in Irish society generally.

There were very specific dimensions to these questions for one particular group of Muslims in the sample. While the students who articulated these in the interviews were Malaysians, what they discussed was an experience in Ireland which could be paralleled by that of other national groups sharing similar characteristics. In this case, they tended to come from the dominant ethnic group in their multi-ethnic home society, and to be the recipients of home government scholarships for study abroad. They themselves, as well as other international students,

characterised themselves as 'sticking together', and as showing 'no effort or will on our part to integrate'. In one student's account, the reasons for this included the sense of obligation arising from their scholarships, their avoidance of alcohol, and the importance of maintaining 'very proper male-female relationships' according to the norms of their religious and national culture. One or two of them might have integrated to a limited extent, but the strength of the national ethnic culture (and perhaps the effect of their relatively large numbers in the student bodies of several universities) meant that 'most of them would not even try'.

Other students, though, explained self-segregation as a result of group social pressure on individuals to conform to national ethnic practices with respect to Islam and gender relations, among other types of behaviours. Thus, one woman talked about a male friend who had a girlfriend from another country, who suffered a nervous breakdown because he was 'ostracised by the group - they wouldn't talk to him'. Another student described a friend of his who would eat during daylight hours during Ramadan but only if others were not around, because 'he was afraid of them'. A third student suggested that the process of social conformity was led by influential individuals from this national ethnic group who 'make the choice not to integrate into Irish culture and then enforce it on themselves and others'. In this way, the social pressure to conform to the national ethnic culture becomes internalised by the individual before being externalised as a requirement of others in the same group.

According to other students, this pressure formed part of the socialisation process at home and was furthered by government policy in respect to education, including education abroad. Thus, one student noted that 'there would be questions about your morality if you were mixing with people who drink alcohol and eat pork, particularly if you come from a small community'. Since the other main ethnic groups in the country are non-Muslim, this kind of expectation can be understood as part of a strategy for preserving the dominant group's culture within a multicultural national society, and the students' behaviour in Ireland as an extension of patterns at home.

In further support of this point, one student described how in his home education system, he had learned that 'European culture is bad'. As an example, he noted that 'when in school, we would write essays about how the youth culture in Europe was corrupting Asian values'. In this way, Malaysian

students had often been educated or socialised into viewing Ireland as part of the European, Christian and developed region of the world, whose culture was a threat to their own superior Asian culture. It is possible that such a regional perspective on social and cultural matters, as well as the relative numerical strength of the Malaysian student population in Ireland to date, has strengthened a tendency of this group to keep themselves apart while in Ireland.

Finally, it was acknowledged by some students that their behaviour as 'sponsored students' on government scholarships may be monitored to some extent by government officials while they are in Ireland, in order to reinforce a degree of segregation from Irish students and society. One student instanced the separate accommodation arrangements provided for Malaysian students, especially those in their first year of study, in one Irish city. The universities themselves might receive enquiries from government officials about students' behaviour as well as academic progress. The situation for the Malaysian group, as with other groups of sponsored students from countries with strict religious regimes and/or strong political pressures for conformity, was that an individual student could exercise little personal choice in relation to integration into Irish society. The decision was largely decided in favour of relative segregation because of the pressures arising from the sponsoring government's policy, the national ethnic culture, and peer-pressure from the other students of their ethnic group in Ireland.

It is apparent from all of the above that the issue of international students' integration into, or segregation from, a host society and culture should be considered from a number of perspectives, and should take account of the students' interpretations of their host society, the characteristics of the students' national society, and other relevant matters to do with sub-national and trans-national groupings. In the case of Muslim students in Ireland, it is reasonably safe to assume the importance of Irish drinking culture in relation to the integration of certain Muslim students, especially those from the stricter regimes. That it is not a total barrier was accepted by many of these students, but it seemed clear that Irish universities could do more to include Muslim students in non-drinking social activities, facilitating their temporary integration into Irish society on terms which do not contravene their cultural beliefs. Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that some groups of Muslim students may be actively discouraged by their government, national culture and fellow students, from

integrating into Irish society and culture. In this case, there are more complex questions than simply that of alcohol consumption to be explored in relation to promoting tolerance and good relations between them and their Irish hosts.

Part 5. International Students' Integration and Equality Proposals

In the interviews, the students were asked to make suggestions and recommendations for action by Irish society in general and universities in particular. In their replies the students did not necessarily differentiate between them, seeing the university campus as a place where social and cultural exchanges relevant to the wider society could readily take place.

Whatever the position for their own group on the integration/segregation scale, most of the international students seemed concerned to enhance their individual socio-cultural integration during their stay. They usually saw integration as a two-way process; they wanted to preserve their own culture while in Ireland, but they also wanted opportunities to share this culture with Irish people, and to learn about and participate in Irish culture. The frequently expressed view that 'Irish people should get a better understanding of other cultures and not assume total assimilation… There should be more give and take', went along with an equally strong sense that 'international students should try to mix more with Irish students' and with people in the local community.

There were many practical suggestions forthcoming in relation to events designed to bring international and Irish students together (as opposed to those intended for or effectively utilised by international students only, which is often the case). These included organising social gatherings based on lectures and discussions, 'pot luck' dinners or parties on a regular basis (which ideally should involve university staff as well as home students); holding 'national days' or other special events to 'show-case' aspects of the international students' cultures to Irish students and staff by means of food, dress, music or ceremonies; arranging similar events and interactions in the local community; and conducting more 'cultural heritage' trips and events to help international students become better acquainted with Irish history and cultural traditions.

The students felt these interactions could be organised by existing student societies at their universities but should also receive official support, with some suggesting that the university itself should take explicit responsibility for enhancing cultural understanding and tolerance by such means.

However, some of the students went on to demonstrate a concern with issues of equality. Some stated that while they were prepared to make efforts to integrate during their time in Ireland, and positively wanted more cultural exchange, the Irish should reciprocate in terms of greater respect and equality of treatment. The ideal, as one student expressed it, would be that 'the Irish should treat the non-Irish as Irish people'.

The students also put forward a wide range of practical proposals by which Irish universities could facilitate the integration of international students, as well as ensure equality of treatment for them. These included: sending a detailed pre-arrival booklet to each international student; incorporating non-Irish national, ethnic and religious holidays into the university calendar; creating a mandatory cultural awareness course or programme for all students; specifying an auditorium or part of a student centre for intercultural interactions; introducing a peer-pairing scheme for international students; hiring more support and specialist staff in the international students' office; increasing the numbers and diversity of international students at the university; building more university housing for international students; training lecturers so they could incorporate cultural differences and lessen the Eurocentrism of their courses; providing for international student representation on university committees and organisations; devising university programmes to educate Irish students and the local community about the changing nature of Irish society with respect to non-Irish groups such as immigrants, refugees and international students; and instituting policies and procedures to address cases of discrimination within the university.

Much of what these international student proposed for Irish universities comes close to the examples of good practices and equal opportunities policies outlined in chapter 4, suggesting that issues of integration and equality are similar for international students in Ireland and Britain at least. However, given Ireland's position as a new destination for immigration, it was not surprising that the students in Ireland specifically linked their integration and equality proposals for universities to the need for similar

changes at the official institutional level of Irish society, urging changes in government policy and in the media representation of the non-Irish.

Suggestions about government policy changes covered a broad range of issues. With respect to immigration regulations, it was suggested that the Irish government should provide multiple entry visas for non-EU students and make it easier for their family members to visit them here. The refusal to grant work permits of any kind to non-EU students was seen as unnecessarily restrictive, compared to the situation in other EU states, and should be changed, particularly for students on lengthy courses of study. In relation to problems of accommodation, it was recommended that the Irish government should regulate landlords to ensure that they 'treat equally all people'. Further, the Irish government should enact laws on race relations and equal opportunities, in order to promote equality and tackle discrimination.

Regarding the media, a number of students suggested that radio and television programmes should provide more accurate information and discussion about the non-Irish in Ireland, as well as about ordinary life in the countries of the majority world. These students believed that the Irish media should take part in a wider government-led programme to educate the Irish public about the realities of becoming a multinational, multiethnic and multiracial society within the European Union and in an interdependent world.

Overall, the students' proposals for improvement demonstrated a high level of awareness of pertinent social issues based on their own experiences. Their responses indicated a conscious wish not to focus unduly on aspects of discrimination in Ireland, but rather to stress less personalised questions of integration and equality.

Of course, their desire for greater integration and equality itself hinted at the more negative aspects of their experiences as university students in Ireland, but their positive emphasis overall seemed to confirm the strong adherence, on the part of most students interviewed, to the ideology of Irish friendliness and insularity and to its usefulness as a means of describing and explaining their treatment in Irish society. Certainly, at the time and in the places where this study was conducted, the great majority of the international students who participated wanted to believe that the Irish *are* friendly, with no ifs, ands or buts.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations from an ICOS Perspective

"We call upon all European institutions, public authorities, private organisations and individuals at both European, national and local level, to contribute in everyday life, at school, at the workplace, in the media, to the struggle against racism, xenophobia and antisemitism"

(Wim Kok, president of the Council of the European Union, José Maria Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado, President of the European Parliament, Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, at the launch of the European Year Against Racism, The Hague, 30th January 1997)

This final section of the report offers, from the point of view of the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS), an evaluation of the outcomes of the research project and some outline recommendations to Irish third level colleges which the report has prompted. ICOS hopes that it will provide information and stimulate action, and will be useful in the development of institutional equality policies and practices.

ICOS considers that, in general, the overall experience enjoyed by international students in Ireland in recent years has been of a high quality. But recent changes in attitudes and behaviour towards immigrants and minorities, including hostility directed against international students, suggest that this positive experience - on which so much depends for individual students and colleges alike - cannot be taken for granted, but may need to be strengthened and secured through specific policies and actions at national, and also at institutional, level.

In these circumstances, ICOS felt it could best serve the interests of the students and of the third level colleges who are the organisation's members, by providing information, identifying issues and pointing to areas in which institutional policy can be developed. The present report is intended to build on ICOS' earlier (1988) survey by exploring the experiences and perceptions of a sample of international students in Ireland now, and in so doing to illuminate some of the interconnections between the realm of 'international education' and prejudice and tolerance in present-day Irish society.

In ICOS' view, the value of the completed report lies first and foremost in its careful and convincing documentation of the experiences and views of a particular category of temporary foreign visitors to Ireland. This should be of interest to everyone interested in the changing face of Irish society, but especially to a wide range of people for whom international students are a professional or personal concern - teachers, administrators, student services staff including medical and counselling staff, accommodation officers, international office staff, landlords and host families, and others besides - as well as to those who develop policy in the third level sector.

In presenting many of the students' comments in their own words, the report offers some illuminating feedback for those who work on a day-to-day basis with international students, giving a fuller view 'from the other side' of problems and issues as the students defined them. 'We' may of course not always find it possible to see things precisely 'their' way, but listening to their accounts and their comments may help us to develop an informed empathy, and thus to avoid many cultural misunderstandings at a practical level. Indeed, it could be said that true 'international education' depends on a fundamental willingness, across all the activities of an educational institution, to allow space for understandings of reality which are different from each other and from our own.

It is certainly good news to learn that, in the eyes of the students, universities are still perceived as protected and privileged places to be, compared to the world outside. Rather than concentrating on the subtle instances of discrimination and exclusionary or patronising behaviour which undoubtedly occur on campus, the students' accounts were dominated by instances of discrimination in society at large and by state officialdom. However, this general statement of the present case gives rise to the important questions: how can the colleges be preserved as relatively secure and conflict-free spaces, and how can they utilise their growing diversity as resource for their own development and for the long term benefit of society?

One of the more thought-provoking aspects of the report emerges from its interesting comparison of the ways in which two groups of students - the Dutch ethnic minority university students surveyed by Essed and the group in the present survey - understood and evaluated their experiences. Although most of the types of discrimination reported by the Dutch

students could be paralleled in situations reported to international student advisers and counsellors in Ireland, the majority of students interviewed for this report had strong inclinations to let Irish society 'off the hook' of racism, and to hold out hope that a fundamental Irish 'friendliness' will prevail. However, some of the students in Ireland offered less optimistic views, and these too should be taken seriously.

The report is also valuable from the point of view of social analysis, in its raising of questions about the status and position of international students as a social group in Ireland, at a time when a momentum towards a more multicultural and multiracial society seems firmly established, so that many who were previously thought of as 'others' are becoming part of 'us', and minority groups previously silent are finding their voices and claiming their places in society. Further, by placing the current Irish situation in a European context, the report draws attention to what is specific and unusual in the current Irish situation. While its theoretical frame-work may provoke debate, there can be little argument with its emphasis on the need for accurate documentation and thoughtful analysis.

How can the third level colleges make best use of this report? To begin with, it is hoped that those responsible for policy and for day-to-day practice in relation to international students will read it, discuss it and draw conclusions appropriate to their own institutions and circumstances. It is also hoped that they will recognise the value of research of this kind, and support or initiate more detailed and extensive studies in this area.

Two general recommendations are prompted by the results of the research. Firstly, one way in which colleges can meet the challenges of the changing social context is by identifying the overlapping interests and matters of common concern of their international and minority ethnic students, and considering how to address these in an integrated way, rather than consolidating a system of separate structures and processes. Secondly, colleges should go beyond the necessary immediate focus on actions to pre-vent and tackle discrimination on campus, to consider the enormous potential benefits to be derived from utilising the resources of an increasingly diverse and multicultural college community, which can offer all its members valuable opportunities for intercultural learning, both in formal and informal settings. Approaching change from this positive perspective will strengthen support for new activities and arrangements

designed to help the 'outsiders' feel more at home as equals on campus, will broaden the educational process for home students, and will enable the colleges to make their own particular contribution to the development of a more tolerant and pluralist society.

At a more specific level, it is likely that the combination of the forthcoming equality legislation, recent government-supported initiatives for widening access to higher education, and now the development of university equality policies, will create a strong framework in which third level colleges can formally address discrimination in its various guises. It will be crucial that race and ethnicity are specifically named and included at the outset, and that international students feature clearly among the groups for whose protection such policies are designed.

Having established a policy framework which clearly promotes diversity and outlaws discrimination, institutions will need to devote considerable resources to its implementation. The generating of awareness across the institution, the creation of necessary structures and mechanisms such as anti-discrimination and anti-harassment codes and procedures, the training of staff and the promotion of a new equality ethos are all ideals which will take time, thought and effort to achieve. Those who manage the process will need to be conscious of the basic questions of rights involved, as well as sensitive to local circumstances. But they can usefully draw on the principles underlying recent codes of practice and guides to equality policy and practice which have evolved elsewhere, such as the Equal Opportunities Commission guide referred to in chapter 4, or the excellent recent publication on promoting and managing diversity in Northern Irish colleges produced by the Northern Ireland Student Centre (McNeill 1998). And they can expect further encouragement from the forthcoming recommendations on ethnic minority students currently being drawn up by the Higher Education Equality Unit.

In the light of these institutional policy developments, it is an appropriate time for colleges to review their existing specialised services for international students - advance information brochures, induction courses, advisory services, language support and so-on. In addition, they will also need to evaluate how well the range of mainstream student services - accommodation, health, counselling, career guidance, catering, sports and leisure etc. - address the needs of students from diverse ethnic

and cultural backgrounds. For adequate evaluation, feedback from international students themselves is clearly essential, and so mechanisms will need to be devised for this purpose, alongside strategies for promoting their participation in student representative bodies and on relevant staff-student committees.

It is not always easy to make links across cultures, but, as the report makes clear, third level colleges provide one of the best contexts in which to do so, and so they should consider how best to support and offer social and leisure activities which are designed to include as wide a range of students as possible, and so to stimulate inter-cultural exchange. The students interviewed for this report offered many suggestions in this regard, and there are also other imaginative and well-tested schemes available which can be adapted and implemented alongside formal teaching and learning programmes, such as family home-stay schemes for new international students, peer-pairing or 'buddy' systems for informal support of international or ethnic minority students on campus, or link arrangements with local groups in the community.

Educational institutions, like society at large, face a new challenge of adaptation to a more multicultural Ireland. For students from many different ethnic backgrounds to feel equal and equally welcome in our colleges, training of all categories of staff in cultural awareness and sensitivity will need to be established as a normal and ongoing aspect of staff development. International and ethnic minority students themselves, and the professional staff of the international offices, can contribute directly to this training.

There are longer term issues too. In the case of staff recruitment and promotion, colleges might consider, in the new framework, how a truly equal opportunities policy could ultimately broaden the range of social and cultural backgrounds of those who teach and those who provide professional services to students, and so are potential role models. Developing existing curricula in directions which link the local and national to the global is a long term project, but one that will undoubtedly come to assume great importance in future.

The recent expressions of explicit racism in Ireland, some of which are documented in this report, may seem a cause for despair, but alongside it are many signs of fresh determination to work for a more tolerant, pluralist and

inclusive society of the twenty-first century in Ireland. The third level institu-
tions now have a remarkable opportunity to promote positive social change,
in the context of official educational policy and the new equality legislation.
Their international students will be the beneficiaries of new policies and atti-
tudes, but as this report shows, if their active participation is sought and sup-
ported, they will themselves be important contributors to the process of
change.

Preamble (read to interviewees before beginning the interview):

> The European Union's Year Against Racism has funded the Irish Council for International Students to conduct a survey on the experiences of international students in Irish universities. The goal is to improve the quality of life for international students who attend Irish universities. We are pleased that you have agreed to participate in the survey. In answering the questions, we would greatly appreciate it if you could mention both positive and negative experiences you have had. It would also be helpful if you could distinguish between what you believe are cultural misunderstandings from instances of racial, ethnic, national, religious or gender discrimination. Following social scientific practice, you are guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. Thank you again for participating in this important research project.

Interview Questions:

1. What were your initial experiences of your Irish university? How were you treated upon your arrival at the university?

2. Could you describe your experiences with university staff and administrators?

3. What have been your experiences with lecturers and your supervisor?

4. What has been your relationship with Irish students at the university?

5. What about your experiences with other international students?

6. Do you believe that you have suffered discrimination at the Irish university which you attend? If yes, what type of discrimination?

7. What recommendations would you have for Irish universities in their policies for international students?

Now I would like to ask you a few general questions about your treatment in everyday life by Irish people and institutions in Ireland.

8. Could you describe your first experiences after arriving in Ireland? How were you treated by Irish people?

9. What have been your experiences with finding accommodation in Ireland?

10. What about in your daily routine like going to shops or leisure activities such as going out to the pub?

11. What have been your experiences with Irish friends?

12. What have been your experiences with Irish authorities?

13. In general, do you believe that you have been discriminated against in Irish society? Has there been a change in the way that you have been treated since coming to Ireland?

14. What recommendations would you have for Irish people in their treatment of non-Irish people?

15. What positive actions can international students take in their interactions with Irish universities and Irish people?

Background survey questions:

1. What is your country of origin?

2. What is your age?

3. What is your gender?

4. What is your marital status?

5. What was your occupation before attending university in Ireland?

6. What is your father's occupation?

7. What is your mother's occupation?

8. Which Irish university do you attend?

9. What do you study in your Irish university?

10. How long have you been currently living in Ireland?

*ICOS gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of the Equal Opportunities
Commission in granting permission to quote selected extracts from this Guide.*

Section C: Students' Recruitment, Guidance and Support

The following quotations, relevant to the purposes of this study, have been
taken from the checklist of questions on different aspects of policy and procedure, pro-
vided in this section (pp 31-38 of the Guide):

Communicating policies relevant to students

• Does the institution have written equal opportunities policies and procedures
for students covering issues of disability, ethnicity and gender?

• How will discriminatory behaviour which contravenes the institution's
commitment to equal opportunities be dealt with?

• Does the institution have guidance procedures for students on dealing
with sexual, racial and other forms of harassment? Is there advice about
how to seek redress for complaints about alleged discrimination?

• Does the institution have a policy or code of conduct on harassment which
students must adhere to?

• How are applicants and students informed of the institution's equal
opportunities policy?

Access and entry

• Do student recruitment procedures take account of the varied experiences
and needs of students?

• Does the institution inform students of the full range of learning supports
available to them including English as an additional language...?

• How does the ethos of the institution reflect a welcoming and open
approach...[and] foster a comfortable environment which values diversity...?

• How does the institution ensure that qualifications gained overseas
are valued?

• Are students made aware at induction sessions of the institution's equal
opportunities policy, codes of practice for harassment, learning and
counselling support services and their rights and responsibilities under
those policies?

Student development and support

• How do the institution's student support services take into account the equal opportunities policy? Is the general environment a supportive one for all students including those in a minority situation?

• How are all students given the support they need to work well in diverse groups?

• In what ways do course programmes formally address study skills?

• How does the institution ensure that ethnic minority or female students who want counselling and guidance from an ethnic minority or female counsellor or personal tutor, receive it?

Progress and assessment

• How are modes and conduct of assessment proofed to avoid unfairly discriminating against certain groups or individuals?

• Are the criteria for assessment explicit and do assessors have training about equal opportunities issues?

Student participation and representation

• Do the composition of Staff-Student Committees or Boards reflect the diversity of the student body?

• Are there...procedures in place for student feedback on the effectiveness of an institution's equal opportunities policy and practices?

Monitoring, review and change

• How are student attendance, progress, option choices, completion rates and attainment monitored with reference to disability, ethnicity and gender?

• If monitoring data highlight significant...disparities, what action is taken...?

• What evidence is there that the range of extra-curricular activities provided by he college/university or by the students themselves, attract a wide range of students and do not exclude those with special needs? e.g. careers and counselling services, refectory, leisure, sports, information technology facilities.

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The Author

Gerry Boucher is a dual American and Irish national. Born and raised in the United States, he has lived in Ireland for nine of the past eighteen years. He holds a BA in Politics and Sociology from Trinity College Dublin and an MA in Sociology from Temple University, Philadelphia.

He is currently completing his doctoral dissertation in the Department of Sociology in Trinity College Dublin, on the topic of Ireland's European, British and global integrations. In particular the dissertation examines how members of the Irish political élite explain the influence of these integrations in relation to policy choices and Irish identity.

He has taught a number of courses on the subjects of race and ethnicity, including American Ethnicity and Race and Racism at Temple University, and Ethnicity in Irish Society for the M.Phil in Ethnic and Racial Studies in Trinity College Dublin. He hopes that the present report will contribute in some small way towards building a more inclusive multiethnic and multiracial Ireland based on 'traditional' Irish values of friendliness, community and social justice.

The Irish Council for International Students

The Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) was established in 1970
to promote the welfare of international students in Ireland.

Its mission is to enhance the quality and the benefits of international education in
Ireland by providing expert support services to international students, to host institutions
and to government, and by actively promoting good policy and practice at all levels in
relation to the recruitment and support of international students.

ICOS is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organisation, whose
members include Irish universities, institutes of technology and other institutions involved
in international education and training at post-secondary level. Its main activities are:

•

providing specialised advisory, support and training services to international students
and to its member institutions;

•

administering Irish government-funded and other official Study
Fellowship Programmes;

•

promoting good policies and practice in international education, particularly through
research, publications, conferences and meetings.

ICOS has always had a special involvement with students from the majority world, and
an interest in the issues that most affect them. It contributes its expertise to relevant
initiatives in the non-governmental sector and to bodies established by government which work in
related areas.

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