Tolerance and Cultural diversity in Ireland Concepts and Practices

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Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe (ACCEPT PLURALISM)

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List of Abbreviations

ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CSO	Central Statistics Office (Ireland)
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
ENAR	European Network Against Racism
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
EU	European Union
EUMC	European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
FOSIS	Federation of Student Islamic Societies
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
ICCI	Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland
ICCL	Irish Council for Civil Liberties
ICI	Immigrant Council of Ireland
ICP	Immigration Control Platform
IFI	Islamic Foundation of Ireland
IHRC	Irish Human Rights Commission
INIS	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
INTO	Irish National Teachers Organisation
ISOC	Islamic Societies (Student)
ITM	Irish Traveller Movement
JMB	Joint Managerial Body (of Voluntary Secondary Schools)
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
NAPD	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCCRI	National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism
NPAR	National Action Plan Against Racism
OMI	Office of the Minister for Integration
OPMI	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration
PPSN	Personal Public Service Number
RTE	Radio Telefís Éireann
TD	Teachta Dála (Member of Irish Parliament)
TUI	Teachers' Union of Ireland
UK	United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
VEC	Vocational Education Committees

Executive Summary

This study examines the ways in which religious and cultural diversity are accepted in Ireland on a spectrum of non-toleration, toleration and respect or recognition. It outlines the social context and history of diversity and toleration in Ireland, and examines the increased religious and cultural diversity which have come with rising immigration, and the developments in attitudes and policies that have accompanied this. These are studied with particular respect to three case studies in the areas of education and public life.

Chapter 2 outlines the framework within which issues of tolerance arise in contemporary Irish society, the development of national identity and the composition of the principal cultural and religious groups, both indigenous and immigrant. We review public debates on the evolution of national identity and the emergence of increasing diversity, and explore tolerance and cultural diversity discourses that have emerged in the Republic of Ireland in recent years.

Toleration was traditionally not necessarily understood as a central value in the Irish context. In the mid-twentieth century the dominant national and religious settlement provided some institutional toleration of religious minorities; other institutional toleration, attitudes and practices of tolerance were until recently more limited.

A context and driver for the recent development of toleration and of the discourse of toleration in the Republic, and one whose importance it is hardly possible to overestimate, has been the evolution of the peace process between Protestants and Catholics on the island in general, and in Northern Ireland in particular, as well as between Northern Ireland and the Republic, and the Republic and the United Kingdom. A second context and driver has been the area of sexual morality, from the increasing acceptance of unmarried mothers, to the admission of divorce and the tolerance of lesbian and gay sexuality, up to the recognition of civil partnerships in 2011. Both of these spheres however fall outside the remit of this study, which deals specifically with religious and cultural diversity in the Republic of Ireland.

Immigration has led to increasing racial, religious and cultural diversity. In the context of our study, the importance of these developments was the late and rapid rate of immigration and the arrival of a multicultural population at a time when Ireland came to be classified as one of the most globalised countries in the world. Immigrant cultural minorities still represent a new phenomenon. In 1996 immigration first exceeded emigration in Ireland and, by the time of the last Census (April 2011), non-Irish nationals represented 12% of the population.

The pattern of diversity emerging in Ireland has been distinctive in a number of ways. Its long history as a country of emigration and rather recent transformation into a destination of choice for immigrants distinguish it from most EU member states. Ireland has never been a colonial power; its migrants do not come from countries it had previously occupied, although some come from regions in which Irish missionaries were active, arguably participating in the western colonisation enterprise. Ireland did not have a guest worker programme in the 1950s and 60s, and therefore did not go through a process of coming to terms with the fact of a permanent migrant population that this entailed. As immigration is still a recent phenomenon in Ireland, the main focus is still on 'newcomers' or 'new communities' rather than second and third generations and many of the claims and challenges deriving from cultural diversity have yet to arise. The great bulk of migrants come from within the European Union, tend to be predominantly of working age, well educated and highly skilled.

The language of toleration has not been prominent in discussions of diversity. From a historical context in which the toleration of diversity (as permission) was seen as suspect, Ireland has evolved to a situation in which 'mere' tolerance as permission, or even respect, are seen as inadequate responses to diversity. Rather the official emphasis has been on integration of diverse religious and cultural communities, framed in terms of 'interculturalism', defined in Ireland by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (2006) as the 'development of strategy, policy and practices that promote interaction, understanding, respect and integration between different cultures and ethnic groups on the basis that cultural diversity is a strength that can enrich society, without glossing over issues such as racism' (NCCRI, 2006, p. 29). This emphasis on interculturalism as a strategy for integration and social cohesion again distinguishes Ireland from other EU countries whose focus has been on either assimilation or multiculturalism. Yet the development of institutional and practical toleration, as well as attitudes of toleration, has been mixed.

Chapters 3 and 4 present specific case studies. These are based on both desk research and empirical fieldwork, consisting of semi-structured qualitative interviews with members of the relevant communities, former and current politicians, representatives from NGOs working with the communities, as well as two discussion groups. Combining data gathered through the desk research and the empirical study, we employ a critical discourse analysis to highlight and discuss the main argumentation strategies evidenced in the controversies.

Chapter 3 addresses toleration in the context of education. Historical and contemporary religious diversity has made accommodation in education a long-standing issue in Ireland. The position of religion in Irish education has been distinctive, framed by the original constitutional position of the Catholic Church and simultaneous recognition of other religions, in a settlement different from the strict separationist, establishment and other accommodational models found in other European countries. Education has been organised on a largely denominational basis, while primarily funded by the state. This constitutes a level of recognition for majority and minority religious groups in education. Most schools are managed by the Catholic Church, but there are also Protestant, Jewish, Muslim and multi-denominational schools. Trends in religious belief have brought about pressures of various kinds on these structural arrangements and recent immigration has led to increasing cultural and religious diversity.

Our case studies in this section explore two recent challenges that have raised issues of tolerance in education: the funding of Protestant schools and the wearing of the hijab in Irish schools.

The first debate arose from the government decision in 2008 to remove some special funding, namely the ancillary grants previously provided to Protestant secondary schools. This arrangement was seen as an acknowledgment by the government that these schools serve a special purpose by allowing the geographically dispersed Protestant population to maintain affordable education provision in accordance with their religious ethos. Despite claims of discrimination raised in the debate, the decision was not reversed. While the Protestant schools retain a block grant, and are thus treated in the same way as other fee-paying schools, they did not regain the ancillary grants.

The second was an appeal by a school principal in 2008 to the Department of Education to provide official guidelines for schools on whether to allow pupils to wear the hijab, previously a matter for each principal to decide. The Department of Education responded by issuing non-binding guidelines for schools, which effectively left the decision to principals. Thus, while most schools appear to have increasingly accepted the headscarf, there was little change in practice as a result of this challenge.

These cases represent touchstones in contemporary debates on school diversity in Ireland – debates on both the new diversity *within* schools and the growing diversity *of* (types of) schools. Both involved both practical and legal challenges, and were hotly debated in the media and the political arena. At the same time, these two issues represent very different diversity challenges to Irish education – while

both engage with primarily religious (though also cultural) minorities, the first involves an historical 'native' minority (Protestants), and the second a relatively 'new' and (mainly) immigrant minority (Muslims). While both engage with the recognition of religious minorities' rights to education, they also embody significantly different demands and highlight different facets of tolerance in Ireland.

The debates that followed the reduction in funding to the Protestant schools were framed predominantly in terms of a) minority rights or elite privileges; b) retaliation for a previous legal challenge by the Protestant schools; and c) recognition and support for plurality and diversity more widely.

Overall the perception was that the Protestant community is generally well perceived and in a way well integrated in the Republic of Ireland, and the change tended to be seen, even by those who opposed it, primarily in terms of practical considerations, whether of politics or economic constraints.

In locating this issue on the acceptance spectrum (non-tolerance, tolerance, respect-recognition), we can interpret the removal of funding for Protestant schools as a shift from a state of respect and recognition for this minority (level 3) to a level of basic toleration (level 2), where the state authorises and tolerates denominational / minority faith schools (and participates in their funding), but does not recognise their special needs as 'minority' schools.

But, given the structure of Irish education, which in some sense recognises all religions (at level 3) by financially supporting separate schools and their distinct ethos, this could, in a more complex sense, be seen as a change *within* the third, rather complex, level of respect, and thus as a reduction, but not a complete withdrawal of recognition.

Our second case, the hijab debate, was selected as of particular interest as occurring in a country which has not seen any prohibition on headscarves in schools or public places. In this light, and in view of the fact that the episode did not lead to any regulation, it provides a contrast with those European countries where the headscarf has been a major issue or has been banned in schools. This debate brought out to a greater extent than any previous event a range of views on the new religious and cultural diversity, and is thus useful in casting light on the state of tolerance in Ireland.

This debate was framed rather differently, principally in terms of a) gender rights and protecting vs. rejecting the veiled woman; b) integration vs. segregation; and c) the place of religion in school and beyond. It demonstrated a generally tolerant attitude towards headscarves in schools, with some dissenting voices. Almost unanimous intolerance towards the so far hypothetical case of the niqab in school (rare but increasingly present in society) was noteworthy, however.

Interpreting this case with respect to the spectrum of acceptance (intolerance, tolerance, respect-recognition), we may see it as ranging from general tolerance (level 2) of the hijab in Irish schools (if conditional on each school's assessment of the situation) to hypothetical intolerance (level 1) of the niqab by all education actors.

The two challenges and debates must be seen in the context of the major issues in education that are now coming to the fore, concerning the structure and control of schools (whether they should be religious or non-religious, and state managed or otherwise) and the role of religion and religious education in schools. The evidence from these debates suggests that this will raise further challenging issues about acceptance of religious and cultural diversity.

Chapter 4 then examines the extent to which cultural and religious minorities participate as equals in Irish public, institutional and political life, and examines the avenues and obstacles to their participation.

In Ireland, non-citizens are not excluded from employment in the public service or in specific occupations. While political rights in national elections are confined to Irish (and British) citizens, Ireland grants political rights to vote and stand in local elections to those who have been resident for a minimum of six months, and has thus one of the more inclusive voting systems in the EU.

The opportunity to stand for local elections has been taken up by a number of candidates from minority groups; some of these have been successful and in some cases have achieved considerable media notice. Political parties, however, were slow to recognise immigrants until the 2007 local elections. Immigrants have also been relatively slow to mobilise and to register to vote. Aside from conventional electoral politics, migrant communities have also engaged in active participation and representation through the development of a variety of community structures and networks.

Access to citizenship, a significant benchmark of inclusion in society and political life, may be seen (again in comparative European terms) as relatively inclusive in principle. Resident non-nationals can acquire citizenship after five years of residence, but with a number of other conditions. In addition, there is complete Ministerial discretion to award or reject applications. For many years, the numbers of those naturalising were very low, due to small number of applications, slow processing and a rather restrictive approach. In recent years this has changed considerably. Increasing numbers are naturalising, the process has been speeded up, and official celebratory ceremonies introduced; yet the numbers refused are still high, and there is no process of appeal.

Issues of recognition for cultural and religious groups have arisen most notably in connection with the claim by the Traveller community to be recognised as an ethnic group. This has been supported by the Equality Authority and the United Nations Periodic Review on Human Rights group, but has been resisted by successive governments.

Migrant inclusion has been favoured by the Equality Act, which forbids discrimination on nine grounds, including race and religion, by a series of government anti-racism campaigns, and by the institution of a Minister for Integration, from 2007 to 2011. This has now been replaced by a co-ordinating office without a dedicated Minister of State. A consultative Ministerial Council with appointed migrant minority representatives, set up in 2010, has been discontinued. These shifts may, along with shifts identified in official language, constitute a wider trend to interpreting integration in a more assimilationist way.

Ireland has not seen the emergence of any real right-wing, anti-immigrant party, or any significant campaign against immigrants. At the same time there is evidence of a significant underlying level of racial discrimination, and of intolerant and racist discourses, including by political and media figures. It is not clear whether instances of racially motivated violence have increased in frequency or seriousness or whether they are being better documented, and it is clear that only a percentage of these is reported.

Our case study in this area focuses on a controversy that emerged in 2007 when a member of the Sikh community applied for membership of the Garda (Police) Reserve.

While still small in numbers, the Sikh community is quite visible. As the part-time Garda Reserve was being set up, a Sikh applicant, who had taken part in the training process, was informed just before being commissioned that he would not be allowed to wear his turban with the uniform. The man refused to accept this, and did not take up his post. The issue sparked a significant media and political debate, in which journalists, politicians, NGOS and others took a wide variety of positions. The case was referred to the Equality Authority.

In our analysis, we interpret this as a case of official non-toleration of a practice, and non-accommodation of a primarily religious (though also cultural), immigrant minority in the public service.

The three main issues identified in this debate were a) the existence, importance and significance of 'the uniform'; b) discrimination and rights of (religious) minorities: c) 'how far should Ireland go' to accommodate diversity, questioning the real definition of Irish interculturalism.

In interpreting the Sikh turban case in terms of the spectrum of non-toleration/ toleration/respect-recognition, the ban may initially be understood as exemplifying the limits of recognition or accommodation of diversity in Ireland, in not adjusting a policy which creates an obstacle to full participation of a minority in public institutions. It may be argued, however, that it also involves the border between toleration and non-toleration. To the extent that the turban is a non-negotiable aspect of the Sikh faith, and banning it thus effectively prevents any Sikh from joining the police force, the ban constitutes a policy of exclusion, limiting the rights and career options not only of 'new migrants' but also of their Irish-born children. It thus represents a case of non-toleration of the practice, and non-accommodation of religious/cultural diversity in the public service in Ireland. This case provides an interesting contrast to the controversy over the wearing of the hijab in Irish schools, which concluded with broad acceptance, where the hijab could be incorporated into the uniform.

Taken together, our three case studies illustrate and explore different facets of the management of cultural and religious diversity in Irish society; they highlight different ways in which 'tolerance' is conceived of and discussed by different actors and lead us to some conclusions on how Irish interculturalism is really interpreted and translated in practice.

In particular they reveal some parameters of the *nature* and *limits* of Irish acceptance in relation to both the strength (number) and 'visibility' of religious diversity within Irish institutions (accommodated in the schools to a certain extent but more problematic and restricted in the police). They also highlight some *conditionality* imposed on the expression of diversity (i.e., as long as it doesn't challenge the ethos of the institution in question).

They provide thus some indications of *the kind of diversity Ireland is prepared to deal with* and *the areas in which such diversity can be accommodated* and highlight the existence of *scales of tolerance* depending on *who* or *what* is tolerated, *where* it is tolerated and *why* it is tolerated; and they reveal that acceptance can be quite selective.

Finally, subtle *shifts in government policy* are highlighted, moving from an initial focus on *interculturalism* to a stronger emphasis on *integration* and, more recently, on *naturalisation* of the 'new Irish', supported by a strong message that becoming citizens represents the main path to integration and therefore to full participation in Irish society.

Keywords

Toleration, minorities, immigrants, education, politics, participation, representation, accommodation, integration, national identity, Irishness, interculturalism, Muslims, Protestants, Sikhs, Travellers

1. Introduction

Ireland, an island on the western periphery of Europe, has had a distinctive history in Europe in not having been conquered by the Romans, but having been converted to Christianity at an early stage. Its peripheral position has historically often delayed the arrival of waves of social and cultural change in other parts of Europe. Part of its self-identity has derived from the narrative of its having been as a refuge for civilisation and Christianity during the invasions of what were once known as the 'dark ages', when it was described as 'the island of saints and scholars'. Another part derives from its history of invasion, settlement and colonisation and, more specifically from its intimate relationship with Great Britain.

The Republic of Ireland now occupies approximately five-sixths of the island of Ireland but from the Act of Union in 1800 until 1922, all of the island of Ireland was effectively part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and ruled directly by the Westminster parliament in London. The war of Independence ended with the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, and on 6 December 1922 the entire island of Ireland became a self-governing British dominion called the *Irish Free State* (*Saorstát Éireann*). Northern Ireland chose to opt out of the new dominion and rejoined the United Kingdom on 8 December 1922. In 1937, a new constitution, the Constitution of Ireland (*Bunreacht na hÉireann*),[1] replaced the Constitution of the Irish Free State in the twenty-six county state, and called the state *Ireland*, or *Éire* in Irish. This completed a process of gradual separation from the British Empire that governments had pursued since independence. However, it was not until 1949, after the passage of the Republic of Ireland Act 1948,[2] that the state was declared, officially, to be the Republic of Ireland (Garvin, 2005).

During British rule and initial independence, Ireland was one of the poorest countries in Western Europe and was regarded by most of the global community as a small and remote island, still struggling to find its place in the world five decades after gaining independence from the UK, and suffering from poverty, mass unemployment and high emigration (Fitzpatrick, 1989, 1996). The protectionist economy was opened in the late 1950s, and Ireland joined what was then the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973. This had an impact on Ireland's development as a nation that not even the most optimistic observers could have predicted. Membership contributed to rapid progress and increased prosperity in a range of areas including the development of agriculture, industry and services. It is estimated that 700,000 jobs have been created in Ireland during the years of membership and that trade has increased 90 fold.[3] EU funds have also contributed significantly in supporting the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland.

Ireland has held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on six occasions,[4] and most recently, in 2004 when it oversaw the biggest enlargement in the history of the Union with the accession of ten new Member States, it was also one of the only three countries to open its borders to the workers from these new member states without restrictions or the need for a work permit.[5]

Although the Lisbon Treaty was controversial, and was approved only after two referendums, Ireland has consistently been one of the most pro-European member states; in 2009 a Eurobarometer poll showed that 72% of the population considered EU membership was a good thing and 81% believed

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[1] http://www.constitution.ie/constitution-of-ireland/default.asp?UserLang=EN
[2] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1948/en/act/pub/0022/index.html
[3] Department of Foreign Affairs - http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=28457
[4] Ireland is scheduled to hold the presidency again in 2013
[5] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3675801.stm

that Ireland has benefited from being a member of the EU.[6] Despite the current European crisis, the refendum on the fiscal treaty was passed in May 2012 by a large majority (60.3% to 39.7%) (RTE, 2012).

As Ireland increasingly looked to Europe changes were not only economic but political and psychological as well. Ardagh for instance has argued that the EU has 'enabled the old unequal face-to-face relationship with Britain to change into a new, more relaxed partnership, within a wider club where both are equal members; and this has eased the old Irish complex about the English' (Ardagh, 1994, p. 328). But Ireland has also entertained strong and complex relations with the United States, as Mary Harney, then deputy Prime Minister expressed it in a speech in 2000: 'As Irish people our relationships with the United States and the European Union are complex. Geographically we are closer to Berlin than Boston. Spiritually we are probably a lot closer to Boston than Berlin'.[7]

After a further period of economic recession in the 1980s, the 1990s saw the beginning of the substantial economic growth that became known as the *Celtic Tiger*. Social changes accompanied this process, ranging from the decline in authority of the Catholic Church to a dramatic rise of immigration. In 1996 the country reached its migration 'turning point', the most recent EU-15 member state to become a country of net immigration - a decade later, in 2006, non-Irish nationals represented approximately 10% of the population and, at the time of the last Census (April 2011), that number had increased to 12%. In the context of our study, the importance of these developments was the late and rapid rate of immigration and the arrival of a multicultural population at a time when Ireland came to be classified as one of the most globalised countries in the world.[8] In September 2008, Ireland became the first eurozone country to officially enter recession, putting an end to the boom that was the Celtic Tiger.

This sets the scene for the current dominant sense of Irishness, which is an amalgam of references to Gaelic culture, Catholic religion, invasion and oppression, historical emigration and recent experience of economic success and cultural diversity, and the subsequent exploration of 'tolerance' in the Irish context. In a relatively short period of time, Ireland's growing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity has generated several challenges in various areas such as employment, housing, healthcare, politics, education or policing, but also, more generally in terms of incorporating new needs and demands, and new and varied customs and values, in the different spheres of Irish society.

This report presents an in-depth exploration of Ireland's reactions and responses to the growing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity within its borders and how these can be interpreted with regard to the spectrum of concepts of 'non-toleration/toleration/respect-recognition' (Dobbernack and Modood, 2011).

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the current population of the Republic of Ireland and of its main minorities: ethnic, cultural and religious; native and immigrant. It presents a concise historical account of the country's government structure, citizenship policy and conception of national identity, and discusses the current discourses concerning tolerance and diversity in Ireland.

Chapter 3 focuses on diversity and tolerance in the education system and explore how different actors in the education arena (i.e., mainly the Department of Education and the schools themselves) have responded to the increased diversity of their pupils. It examines the issues and challenges that have arisen in terms of the *structure of the education system itself*, the *curriculum, pedagogy and general*

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[6] Eurobarometer (2009). Ireland was the only member state to hold a referendum on the Treaty. In a first vote on 12 June 2008 the treay was rejected; however, a second vote was held on 2 October 2009 and approved the Treaty.

[7] Remarks by Tánaiste, Mary Harney at a Meeting of the American Bar Association in the Law Society of Ireland, Dublin on 21st July 2000 - http://www.deti.ie/press/2000/210700.htm

[8] Carswell (2010). The globalisation index includes data on openness to trade, capital movements, exchange of technology and ideas, labour movements and cultural integration.

educational culture and in relation to the pupils' *well-being and interactions in the school context*. Two case studies representing two relatively recent challenges pertaining to diversity illustrate and explore in more depth and detail how tolerance has been conceived of, perceived, discussed and ultimately defined by different actors in the area of education. The first case study examines the decision to remove ancillary grants for fee-paying Protestant schools and the second explores the issue of the hijab in Irish schools.

Chapter 4 explores Ireland's response to diversity in the area of political life and, more specifically, the avenues and obstacles to minorities' political participation and representation in Irish society. It examines recent challenges that have emerged with regard the existence and treatment of *intolerant discourses in political life*, the *opposition to - and facilitation of - the political mobilisation of minorities* and *public policies of inclusion and exclusion*. The in-depth exploration of a particular recent challenge to tolerance regarding diversity in Irish institutions – namely the issue of the Sikh turban in the Garda (Police) Reserve – aims to shed additional light on 'how much' and what 'kind' of cultural diversity is considered acceptable in Irish political life.

Chapter 5 brings together and analyses the findings from the previous sections and attempts to identify types of intolerance/tolerance/respect-recognition in discourses and practices with respect to different minorities in contemporary Ireland.

2. Tolerance and Cultural Diversity Discourses in Ireland

2.1. National Identity, State Formation and Citizenship

2.1.1. National Identity

It may be argued that Irish national identity is defined primarily in opposition to Britain, or more specifically, England – the 'other' in terms of which it has been formulated. This also has significance for the position of the Protestant minority, the internal other, who have been seen as aligned with England, even if descended from those resident in Ireland from as long ago as the seventeenth century.

Nonetheless, social connections with Britain but also with the USA were substantial, as up to the late 20th century these represented the principal destination[s] of the emigrant flow that became a significant feature of Irish life, especially from the Famine of 1845-49, in which, of a population of 8 million, 1 million died and 1 million emigrated. This particular event and the legacy of emigration are also formative experiences in Irish self-definition.

Relations with other Celtic neighbours have been less significant even though the Irish traditionally looked beyond England to France and Spain, which were for long Catholic powers, and traditional enemies of England, and where Irish exiles went for education, to serve in military, and to seek military and political support for independence.

In this sense, the conception of Irish identity has always been predominantly ethnic. Two principal strands intertwined in the nineteenth century: the Gaelic language and culture, and the Catholic religion. This identification of the two was maintained despite the leading role of a number of Protestant (Anglo-Irish) or English figures in both the national Gaelic cultural revival of the late nineteenth century and the political independence movement of the early twentieth century. This tension surfaced in a debate on Irish identity that raged furiously in the context of the Northern Ireland Troubles from the late 1960s. A central issue was whether the Troubles should be seen as a problem of a British occupation that oppressed both Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, while dividing them and setting one group against the other, or of the presence of Northern Ireland Protestants as an alien settler class oppressing the Catholic population. From this, a variety of interpretations of what it meant to be Irish emerged – was it to be Catholic, to be Gaelic speaking, to participate in Gaelic cultural and sporting activities, to live in Ireland, or to have been shaped by its history? Was it, as Conor Cruise O'Brien (1965) once wrote, 'not primarily a question of birth, blood or language, but the condition of being involved in the Irish situation and usually of being mauled by it'?

Another historically important dimension of the Irish self-image has been that of a predominantly rural people. There was very limited industrialisation or urbanization outside Dublin in the southern part of the country in contrast to the area around Belfast. More than half the population was engaged in agriculture until well into the second half of the twentieth century. In recent years, this pattern has changed significantly, with population growth, and significant agglomeration of the population in urban areas. The 2011 Census revealed that the number of people living in urban areas (i.e. towns with a population of 1,500 or more) surpassed 2.8 million for the first time – this means that 62.0% of the population lived in urban areas in April 2011, compared with 46.4% fifty years ago. Figures also show that over 1.8 million people lived in the Greater Dublin Area, over one-third of the population.[9]

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[9] The Greater Dublin Area (GDA) represent the area encompassing Dublin City and counties Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin in the Dublin Region, together with counties Kildare, Meath and Wicklow in the Mid-East Region.

A further aspect of identity, if less controversial, is that living in Ireland was for most Irish people considered a precondition of being 'really' Irish. Despite references to the evil of emigration in literature and policy documents, the Irish diaspora was given little attention until President Mary Robinson's 1995 address to the Joint Houses of the Oireachtas, 'Cherishing the Irish Diaspora', in which she reached out to the '70 million people worldwide who can claim Irish descent' and spoke of the 'added richness of our heritage that Irishness is not simply territorial'.[10] Those who claimed to be Irish by descent, living in the United States or Britain were not seen as really Irish by those living on the island, and have sometimes been referred to in recent years as 'plastic paddies' (Hickman, 2002). This reflects a practical attitude of what has been termed a 'twenty-six county nationalism', which contrasted to the equally widely held official belief in the goal of unity of the whole island. Allied to this was a growing gulf between those living in the Republic, and those in Northern Ireland, both Protestant/Unionist and Catholic/nationalist, due to the different experiences on each side of the border since independence in 1922. At the same time, living in Ireland was not enough to be considered Irish, as even after living on Irish soil for many years individuals were regarded as 'newcomers'.

2.1.2. The foundation of the State

The institutional framework set up in 1922 operated first on the basis of an agreement with the British Government, and while it gave Ireland a limited independence, it did not initially lead to a radical restructuring of Irish politics or Irish society. The partition however, led to a further characteristic of Irish political identity - irredentism - with respect to what were known in the South as the 'six counties'. In addition to its history, the geographic unity of the island was emphasised as a naturally defining characteristic.

However, from the 1930s more distinctive social and economic policies were adopted, and the 1937 Constitution set out a model for the Irish state that was guided by the intention to express and promote a specifically Irish and Catholic way of life and norms. On the one hand, the Constitution provided for freedom of worship, prohibited the establishment or endowment of any religion, and ruled out religious discrimination. On the other hand, even though it did not establish the Catholic Church as the state church (and recognised other Christian denominations and Judaism), the Constitution did emphasise that Catholicism was the religion of the majority,[11] and, while there was a separation of church and state in one sense, it explicitly embodied an extensive range of Catholic social principles in the text. In addition the Church was given significant powers especially in the areas of health, education and social affairs. From 1933 at least, the Irish language was to be restored to the position of national language, became compulsory in schools and was required for work in the public service, the legal profession and other areas. Thus from its foundation, the state set about constituting a system that would give priority to the Gaelic and Catholic elements of Irish identity.

Gradual change in the character of Irish society, and a motivation of rapprochement with the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland led to the removal of the reference to 'the special position' of the Catholic Church in 1973,[12] and the repeal of constitutional elements and legal prohibitions seen as particularly connected with Catholic beliefs and practices, such as the prohibition on divorce in 1996, though this was driven also by a strong demand within the Republic itself. The peace settlement of 1998 finally brought about a redefinition of the constitutional self-description of Ireland.

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[10] Address by Mary Robinson to Joint Sitting of the Houses of the Oireachtas, 2 February 1995, available at: http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/addresses/2Feb1995.htm

[11] Article 44.2 Section 2 of the original 1937 Constitution read: The State recognises the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens.

[12] The article of the Constitution naming specific religious groups, including the Catholic Church, was deleted by the fifth amendment of the Constitution in 1972.

An indicator of wider contemporary concerns for equality may be seen in current legislation that forbids discrimination in employment and services (in both the public and private sectors), on grounds of gender (including transsexuals), marital status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race (including nationality), religion (or lack thereof), and membership of the Traveller community. A civil partnership registration scheme for same-sex couples was introduced in January 2011 under the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010.[13] The rights and obligations that civil partners have towards each other are broadly the same as those of married couples and civil partners are treated in the same way as spouses under the tax and social welfare codes, however, the Act does not change the law on issues relating to children, for example, guardianship, adoption, custody, access or maintenance. Same-sex marriages, are not allowed in Ireland as the Civil Registration Act (2004) explicitly declares that there is an 'impediment to a marriage' if 'both parties are of the same sex'.[14] It is interesting to note, however, that the most recent public opinion poll, in January 2012, showed that 73% of voters supported the idea of same-sex marriages being recognised in the constitution.[15]

2.1.3. Citizenship policy

Despite the predominantly ethnic conception of Irish identity that prevailed in the twentieth century, Irish citizenship may be seen as representing a somewhat more civic conception of Irishness. Irish citizenship laws have evolved under the influences of British legal inheritance, republican ideas of political membership expressed in the state's founding documents, the territorial claim over Northern Ireland, and the fact of emigration. The first three influences contributed to the centrality of *ius soli*, the last to the place of *ius sanguinis* in these laws (Honohan, 2007; Handoll, 2010).

In the system that emerged citizenship was granted on the basis of *ius soli* to those born on the island as a whole, and on the basis of *ius sanguinis* to the children and grandchildren of 'natural born' citizens.[16] Thus, alongside a conception inclusive of the resident population, the children of emigrants were granted citizenship on a medium term basis.

The foundation of *ius soli* laid the basis for a relatively open conception of citizenship, albeit one that sat uneasily with the more firmly bounded and exclusive ethno-cultural conception of the nation that prevailed in the public consciousness and influenced many areas of policy.

For those who come to live permanently in Ireland, the conditions for naturalisation are a relatively short period of residence (legal residence in five of the previous eight years), the intention to live in the country, being deemed to be 'of good character', and swearing an oath of fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State. There is still no test of language ability or cultural knowledge. But there is a high level of ministerial discretion, including the power to dispense with conditions on the basis of Irish descent or associations. In practice until recently the numbers applying were also rather limited. In recent years applications have increased, and there is a concern that ministerial discretion has been used to refuse many applications, and that there is no procedure for appeal (Handoll, 2010).

The most significant recent change in citizenship laws arose in the context of developments in the Northern Ireland peace process, and, in particular, of the dimension of North-South reconciliation. As part of the Good Friday (or Belfast) Agreement, the article embodying the territorial claim to Northern Ireland was removed from the Irish constitution.[17] It was replaced by Article 2, passed (with the rest of

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[13] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2010/en/act/pub/0024/index.html

[14] "§2 Interpretation (2)(e)". *Civil Registration Act 2004*.

[15] Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (2012).

[16] The current conditions allow those with an Irish-born grandparent to claim Irish citizenship. Those born abroad to Irish citizens born abroad may become citizens on registration.

[17] The pre-1998 Article 2 read: 'The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas.'

the Good Friday Agreement) by referendum in 1998. It basically granted the right to Irish citizenship to those born in Northern Ireland independently of the claim to territorial sovereignty over Northern Ireland. At the same time, it made a gesture towards the claims of Irish descendants that fell short of any explicit constitutional right to citizenship.

A significant change in the grant of citizenship was made in 2004, through which Ireland ceased to be the only country in Europe that granted unconditional ius soli. A referendum was held on this provision in the light of what was perceived as the instrumental use of birth in Ireland as a means to claiming residence in Ireland or another EU Member State. The Irish government introduced the proposal to restrict *ius soli* as a technical change necessary to remove a perverse incentive to give birth in Ireland.

Rather than removing or amending the recently introduced Article 2, the proposal inserted a provision in Article 9 (on citizenship) which returned the allocation of citizenship on the basis of *ius soli* to a legislative matter. Constitutionally it retained an element of effective *ius sanguinis* in making constitutional *ius soli* citizenship dependent on the citizenship of a parent. The legislation subsequently introduced (Irish Citizenship and Nationality Act 2005) grants *ius soli* citizenship only to a child whose parent has been legally resident for 3 of the previous 4 years, focusing thus on the *parent's* status and length of prior residence. Not just a technical adjustment, this change effectively tilted the conception of citizenship embodied in the constitution towards *ius sanguinis*.

2.2. Cultural diversity challenges during the last 30 years

2.2.1. Ireland's current population

Demographically, Ireland's history has been one of invasion, settlement, colonisation, and net emigration. For decades dating back to the famine in the 1840s, emigration has been a significant feature of Irish life. Some have even argued that after 1840, emigration had become a massive, relentless, and efficiently managed national enterprise (Fitzpatrick, 1989; 1996).

The population of the area now comprising the Republic of Ireland was over 6.5 million in the first major census of population, the Great Census of 1841. The deaths which resulted from the Famine of 1845/49 and the large scale emigration which followed led to a halving of the population by 1901, and the population low point of 2.8 million was reached in the 1961 Census. Employment expansion in the 1970s resulted in net inward migration, but the 1980s were again characterised by strong net outward migration. The population has increased in every intercensal year since then, apart from 1986-1991 when a fairly modest decline was experienced. As the economic recovery started to take hold, however, migration turned around in dramatic fashion, and since 1996 there has been strong net inward migration.

Comparing Ireland to other European Union countries underlines the rapid changes that took place during this period. During 1990-1994, Ireland was the only country among the member states of the then EU-15 with a negative net migration rate. In contrast, between 1995 and 1999, the country's average annual net migration rate was the second highest in the EU-15 (the first was Luxembourg) (MacÉinrí and Walley, 2003).

The 2002-2006 period witnessed record population growth with the annual increase amounting to 79,000 - consisting of a natural increase of 33,000 and an annual net inward migration of 46,000. As a result, Ireland experienced a rapid growth in ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. This diversity built on the diversity (albeit in relatively small numbers) that always existed in Ireland and, by 2006, the non-national population stood at over 10% (CSO, 2007a).

The first results of the last census undertaken in April 2011 were released in March 2012 and revealed that, despite the economic crisis and a return of emigration, Ireland's population has continued to grow strongly since 2006, to reach almost 4.6 million, its highest level in 150 years (CSO, 2012a). They also revealed that the make-up of Ireland's population today encompasses more nationalities, ethnicities, religions and languages than ever before and that diversity is therefore an established fact of Irish life (see Table 1 below).

Table 1   **Usually resident population by nationality, 2006 and 2011**[18]

Nationality	2006	% change since 2002	2011	% change since 2006
All Irish	3,706,683	3.4	3,927,143	5.9
Non-Irish	419,733	87.2	544,357	29.7
EU27 excluding Irish	284,440	92.9	386,764	36
Other European	15,760	73.5	16,307	3.5
African	35,326	68.4	41,642	17.9
Asian	46,952	115.6	65,579	39.7
American	21,124	37.3	24,884	17.8
Australian	4,033	8.8	2,849	-29.4
New Zealander	1,756	7.3	1,394	-20.6
Other nationalities	7,984	321.5	4,098	-48.7
Multi nationality	2,358	0.8	840	-64.4
No nationality	1,318	55.6	1,487	12.8
Not stated	44,279	-8.5	52,294	18.1
All nationalities	4,172,013	8.1	4,525,281	8.5

Source: Central Statistics Office 2012

Whilst it was thought that many immigrants had left Ireland in recent years, the number of non-Irish nationals has actually increased by 29.7% (or 124,624 persons) since 2006: they now account for 12% (or 544,360) of the population and represent 196 different nationalities.The rate of growth was however considerably slower than in the previous intercensal period (2002 to 2006) when the non-Irish population almost doubled from 224,000 to 419,733.

A small number of groups account for the majority of the increase. Polish nationals increased by 93.7% (from 63,276 to 122,585), accounting for almost half of the total increase of this group, and, significantly, overtaking UK nationals (112,300) as the largest non-Irish group living in Ireland. Other groups showing large increases were Latvians, Lithuanians, Romanians, Brazilians and Indians.

As of 2011, the number of Irish residents who were born outside the country has also reached a new high of 766,770, a 25% increase since 2006, and they now represent 17% of the population. Although this includes a significant number of Irish citizens born abroad to emigrants who have since returned, by comparative standards, the 17% of residents born abroad is well above the EU average of 6.5% - only Luxembourg and Latvia have bigger foreign-born populations (*Irish Times*, 2012a).

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[18] A more detailed table is presented in Annex 1.

The change in the 'top ten' (foreign) nationalities is clearly visible in the Table below and reveals not only an evolution from mainly EU nationals to non-EU ones but also a significant increase in strength of the non-national groups.

Table 2   **Top 10 Nationalities in 2002, 2006 and 2011**

2002	Numbers	2006	Numbers	2011	Numbers
UK	101,257	UK	112,548	Polish	122,585
USA	11,135	Polish	63,276	UK	112,259
Nigerian	8,650	Lithuanian	24,628	Lithuanian	36,683
German	7,033	Nigerian	16,300	Latvian	20,593
French	6,231	Latvian	13,319	Nigerian	17,642
Chinese	5,766	USA	12,475	Romanian	17,304
Romanian	4,910	Chinese	11,161	Indian	16,986
Spanish	4,347	German	10,289	Filipino	12,791
South African	4,113	Filipino	9,548	German	11,305
Filipino	3,742	French	9,046	USA	11,015
Irish	3,477,383		3,706,683		3,927,143
Population	3,917,203		4,172,013		4,525,281

A final interesting result is the 32% increase in Irish Travellers enumerated in the 2011 census – while the population stood at 22,435 in the 2006 census, it now stands at 29,573. However, Damien Peelo, Director of the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), argued that the census results reflected an increase in people 'self-identifying' themselves as Travellers rather than an actual rise in the population, and suggested that the census was still under-representing the number of Travellers in the Republic, which he maintained was closer to 36,000 (Burke-Kennedy, 2012).

A question on 'ethnic or cultural background' was included for the first time in the 2006 census and was repeated in 2011. It is interesting to note that, as in 2006, over 70.000 people 'refused' to answer this question in 2011. Both the format and the implications of this question have been contested; Cadogan (2008) for example argues that 'the pre-given 'ethnic categories' of the Census are questionable, in part, insofar as they implicitly consolidate a large 'white Irish' ethnic grouping as culturally homogenous, as an undifferentiated 'majority' against which 'minorities' are highlighted as exotic and deviant' – it is also argued that 'white' and 'black' are presented in the census as if matter-of-factly referring to skin colour, and as if ethnicity simply and unequivocally adhered to each these category (see also King-O'Riain 2006; 2007). Among those who responded (4,525,281 persons), 'White' was the predominant category accounting for just over 94% of the usually resident population. The detailed groups for 2006 and 2011 are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3   **Population Usually Resident and Present in the State by Ethnic or Cultural Background and Census Year**

Ethnic or Cultural Background	2006 (Numbers)	2011 (Numbers)	% Change 2006-2011
White Irish	3,645,199	3,821,995	4.9
White Irish Traveller	22,369	29,495	31.9
Any other White background	289,041	412,975	42.9
Black or Black Irish - African	40,525	58,697	44.8
Black or Black Irish – any other Black background	3,793	6,381	68.2
Asian or Asian Irish - Chinese	16,533	17,832	7.9
Asian or Asian Irish – any other Asian background	35,812	66,858	86.7
Other including mixed background	46,438	40,724	-12.3
Not stated	72,303	70,324	-2.7
TOTAL	4,172,013	4,525,281	8.5

Source: Central Statistics Office (2007, 2012)

Increased immigration has also led to an important increase in religious diversity, however, Ireland remains an overwhelmingly Catholic country with over 84% of the population (or 3.86 million), describing themselves as Roman Catholic. While the number of Catholics increased by nearly 179,889 over the last five years, 'much of this increase came from the non-Irish (mostly European: Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, American, Indian and Filipino immigrant) national community' while the increase in native Irish Catholic numbers is estimated at 2% (Hilliard, 2012).

Church of Ireland[19] have the second highest membership with 134,365 (a 7% increase since 2006), followed by Islam (49,204 – up by 51.2%), Orthodox (45,223), Christians (41,200) and Presbyterians (24,600). Some denominations have experienced spectacular growth since 2006, though from a low base - most impressive is the 117.4% growth in Orthodox Christians (from 20,798 to 45,223), the 75.7% increase in the number of Hindus (from 6,082 to 10,688) or the 73% growth of Apostolic or Pentecostal Christians (from 8,116 to 14,043). The small Jewish community in Ireland recorded a marginal (2.8%) increase in the same period, standing now at 1,984 members. In contrast, the Methodist Church in Ireland, traditionally one of the four main churches on the island, has experienced a spectacular drop of 43.7% in the Republic since 2006 (from 12,160 to 6,842) while the number of 'Lapsed (Roman) Catholics' has risen by 136.9% (from 540 to 1,279).

The number of Atheists grew by 320.3% (from 929 to 3,905 individuals) while Agnostics increased by 132.4% (from 1,515 to 3,521 individuals), and the number of people who disassociate themselves from any creed by stating 'No religion' (mainly Irish nationals) has risen by almost 45% since 2006

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[19] i.e., Church of Ireland, Church of England, Anglicans, including Protestants, from the CSO classification

(from 186,318 to 269,811) (CSO, 2012a). A further 72,914 individuals (3.7%) did not respond to the question at all.

Table 4   **Population classified by religion, 2002, 2006 and 2011**

	2002	2006	Percentage Change 2002-2006	2011	Percentage Change 2006-2011
		Thousands	%	Thousands	%
Roman Catholic	3,462.6	3,681.4	6.3	3,861.3	4.9
Church of Ireland, England, Anglican (inc. Protestants)	115.6	125.6	8.6	134.4	7.0
Muslim (Islamic)	19.1	32.5	69.9	49.2	51.2
Orthodox (Greek, Coptic, Russian)	10.4	20.8	99.3	45.2	117.4
Other Christian religion	21.4	29.2	36.5	41.1	40.9
Presbyterian	20.6	23.5	14.4	24.6	4.5
Apostolic or Pentecostal	3.1	8.1	157.5	14.0	73
Hindu	3.1	6.1	96.3	10.7	75.7
Buddhist	3.9	6.5	67.3	8.7	33.6
Methodist, Wesleyan	10.0	12.2	21.2	6.8	-43.7
Jehovah's Witness	4.4	5.1	16.3	6.1	19.4
Lutheran	3.0	5.2	72.1	5.6	7.7
Evangelical	3.8	5.2	39.6	4.1	-20.6
Atheist	0.5	1.0	85.8	3.9	320.3
Baptist	2.2	3.3	47.4	3.5	5.8
Agnostic	1.0	1.5	47.4	3.5	132.4
Jewish	1.8	1.9	7.8	1.9	2.8
Pagan, Pantheist	1.1	1.7	52.9	1.9	14.7
Mormon	0.8	1.2	48.5	1.2	3.8
Lapsed (Roman) Catholic	0.6	0.5	-8.5	1.2	136.9
Society of Friends (Quaker)	0.8	0.9	2.7	0.9	4.9
Baha'i	0.5	0.5	2.9	0.5	3.2
Brethren	0.2	0.3	64.4	0.3	-8
Other stated religions (3)	8.9	8.6	-3.9	14.1	64.7
No religion	138.3	186.3	34.8	269.8	44.8
Not stated	79.1	70.3	-11.1	72.9	3.7
All religions	3,917.2	4,239.8	8.2	4,588.2	8.2

Source: Central Statistics Office (2012)

Finally, a question on foreign languages was asked for the first time in the 2011 census. The results show that over half a million (514,068) Irish residents (11% of the population) speak a foreign

language at home, more than 25% of whom were born in Ireland. Unsurprisingly, Polish – with 119,526 people – was the foreign language most spoken in the home, followed by French (56,430), Lithuanian (31,635), German (27,342) and Spanish (22,446).[20] Nearly 82,600 people – or 1.8% of the population – speak Irish every day outside school, making it the third most used language in the country.

2.2.2. Indigenous minorities

Since the foundation of the state in 1922, the principal minorities with respect to which tolerance issues could potentially arise have been religious: Protestants and Jews, and socio-cultural: Travellers. The relative position of the English and Irish languages also gave rise to some issues of toleration.

Protestants

There is a remarkable imbalance in the amount of research on Catholic-Protestant relationships in the two parts of the island: in the North the literature runs to thousands of items; in the South it comes to little more than a handful – it seems that in the South Catholic-Protestant relationships are not a significant issue.

With the partition of Ireland in 1922, 92.6% of the Free State's population were Catholic while 7.4% were Protestant (Collins, 1993, p. 431). By the 1960s, the Protestant population had fallen by half, in part reflecting a disproportionate rate of Protestant emigration. Many Protestants left the country in the early 1920s, either because they felt unwelcome in a predominantly Catholic and nationalist state, because they were afraid due to the burning of Protestant homes (particularly of the old landed class) by republicans during the civil war, because they regarded themselves as British and did not wish to live in an independent Irish state, or because of the economic disruption caused by the recent violence. The Catholic Church had also issued a decree, *Ne Temere,* whereby the children of marriages between Catholics and Protestants had to be brought up as Catholics.[21] After the end of World War II, the emigration rate of Protestants fell and they became less likely than Catholics to emigrate - indicating their integration into the life of the Irish State.

In 1991, the Protestant population of the Republic was at its lowest point at approximately 3%. While the 2006 Census had found that a little over 5% of the population was Protestant and that all the Protestant denominations have gained in numbers since 2002, the picture in 2011 was more mixed with the Church of Ireland (and other Anglicans), Presbyterian and Baptists' ranks slightly increasing (by 7%, 4.5% and 5.8% respectively) while the Methodist population had decreased by 43.7%.

Rather than any deep sectarianism, available studies suggest that the situation is complex.[22] Protestantism was established in Ireland as part of a British colonising process and 'Irish independence placed Southern Protestants in the position that for centuries they had struggled to avoid: becoming a minority in a Catholic-dominated state' (Ruane and Todd 2009). Traditionally, being a Protestant in Ireland has carried with it presumptions of British identity and loyalty, and of distinction from Catholics not simply in terms of belief, but by virtue of a different history on the island of Ireland and different ethnic origins.

Coakley (1998) posed the question whether Southern Irish Protestants are an ethnic or a religious minority, and his conclusions tended to indicate that they are now a religious rather than an ethnic minority. Most studies effectively indicate that Protestants in Ireland, with very few exceptions, see themselves as Irish rather than British. They are, however, conscious of a difference from their

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[20] See Graph in Annex 2.
[21] The *Ne Temere* decree was issued in 1908. It was criticised by the Second Vatican Council and repealed in 1970.
[22] See Bowen (1983), Mennell et al. (2000), Murphy and Adair (2002).

Catholic neighbours. Although there were class divisions within the Protestant population, they were less significant than in Northern Ireland, as were denominational differences, as the various Protestant churches were present in smaller numbers.

After partition, it was often considered that Protestants in many ways constituted a privileged minority in terms of ownership of land, industrial property, and income. However, Butler and Ruane (2009) argue that their situation was far from unproblematic: 'They were subjected to Catholic and nationalist triumphalism, they were not fully accepted by Catholics as part of the Irish nation, the Catholic Church's *Ne Temere* decree was given legal standing in law, no allowance was made for the British component of their identity and the Irish language was imposed on their schools though it was not part of their tradition' (p.73). Between the 1930s and 1960s there were numbers of incidents that led to significant controversies in relation to cases of employment, education and intermarriage.[23]

Nonetheless, with the higher social and economic status of Protestants, freedom of worship, and state support for educational provision for Protestants, toleration of Protestants was not widely perceived to be an issue.

More recently, the dominant view is that the transformation of the Republic into a modern, outward-looking, liberal and pluralist state means that Southern Protestants are now much more at ease with it. Catholics and Protestants share inter-church religious and commemorative ceremonies, schools, workplaces and leisure activities, and there is more recognition by the state of the distinctive history, identity and memory of its Protestant citizens. The evolution of the situation in Northern Ireland has also given Southern Protestants an opportunity to re-negotiate their identity, separating the religious and ethnic aspects of Protestantism and renegotiating boundaries. While the question of a 'dilution of the Protestant identity' within the majority culture has been raised,[24] Todd et al. (2009) argue that, rather than 'disappearing', Protestants in the Republic are redefining their identity and renegotiating their ways of being Protestant in various ways.

Controversies emerged in 2009 following the reclassification of schools in the October Budget and the decision to remove ancillary grants for fee-paying Protestant schools, covering expenses such as caretaker and secretarial supports, and to increase their pupil-teacher ratio. This special arrangement had been in place since 1967, and was seen as an acknowledgment that the schools were viewed by the Government as separate, serving a special purpose by allowing the geographically dispersed Protestant population to maintain affordable education provisions in accordance with their religious ethos. The decision was widely criticised by the Protestant community. This particular issue is explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

Jews

Ireland's Jewish population dates mainly from the last years of the nineteenth century. However, the earliest reference to the Jews in Ireland was in the year 1079. A permanent settlement of Jews was definitely established in the late fifteenth century when, following their expulsion from Portugal in 1496, some Marrano Jews settled on Ireland's south coast. Ireland's first synagogue was founded in 1660 near Dublin Castle. There was an increase in Jewish immigration to Ireland during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1871, the Jewish population of Ireland was 258; by 1881, it had risen to 453. By 1901, there were an estimated 3,771 Jews in Ireland and by 1904, the total Jewish population had reached an estimated 4,800. Most of the immigration up to this time had come from England or Germany. In the wake of the Russian pogroms there was increased immigration, mostly from Eastern Europe and in particular from Lithuania. As Ireland was part of the United Kingdom at this time, the Jewish community benefited from the British government's emancipation laws, and new synagogues

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[23] See for instance the appointment of a librarian in Co. Mayo in 1931 and the Fethard-on-Sea boycott in 1957.
[24] See Bowen (1983); Brown (1996).

and schools were established to cater for the community. Many of the following generation became prominent in business, academic, political and sporting circles.

Ireland's Jewish population reached its peak in the late 1940s and declined steadily since (mainly through emigration to larger Jewish communities such as those in the United States, England and Israel). With the arrival of the Celtic Tiger and the immigration it has brought, the Jewish community has also benefited from new families settling down. The 2002 Census recorded 1,790 Jews in the Republic; by 2006 the community had grown to 1,930 and the 2011 Census indicated a small increase of 54 members since then (CSO, 2012a). The Republic of Ireland currently has three synagogues: two in Dublin, one in Cork. There is a further synagogue in Northern Ireland, in Belfast.

The Irish Constitution of 1937 originally gave specific constitutional protection to Jews (along with named Christian denominations). This was considered to be a necessary component to the constitution by De Valera because of the treatment of Jews elsewhere in Europe at the time (O'Grada, 2006). With the Fifth Amendment, the reference to the Jews, as other religious groups, was removed from the Constitution in 1973.[25]

Although the Jewish community has always been small in numbers, it has generally been well-accepted into Irish life and incidents of overt anti-Semitism in Ireland have generally been few and far between. However, historically, there have been some cases of 'institutional' and 'perceived' anti-Semitism. One of the most serious incidents recorded is the anti-Semitic boycott in Limerick in the first decade of the 20th century known as the *Limerick Pogrom*, which caused many Jews to leave the city. It was instigated by a fundamentalist Catholic priest, Fr. John Creagh of the Redemptorist Order, who incited the local population against 'blood-sucking' Jewish money-lenders. His sermons led to a two-year trade boycott of Jewish businesses that was accompanied by harassment and beatings and resulted in the almost total departure of the Limerick Jewish community (Rivlin, 2003).

There was also some domestic anti-Jewish sentiment during World War II, most notably expressed in a notorious speech to the Dáil in 1943, when independent T.D. Oliver J. Flanagan advocated *'routing the Jews out of the country'* and a certain indifference from the political establishment to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust during and after the war.[26] Ireland had an extremely restrictive policy on immigration for Jews from Europe during the Nazi period. When Ireland held its first Holocaust Memorial Day on 26 January 2003 in Dublin City Hall, Justice Minister Michael McDowell apologised for a policy that was inspired by 'a culture of muted anti-Semitism in Ireland'. He said that 'at an official level the Irish state was at best coldly polite and behind closed doors antipathetic, hostile and unfeeling toward the Jews'.[27] Post-war, Jewish groups had great difficulty in getting refugee status for Jewish children (Keogh, 1998) and the Department of Justice explained in 1948 that:

> It has always been the policy of the Minister for Justice to restrict the admission of Jewish aliens, for the reason that any substantial increase in our Jewish population might give rise to an anti-Semitic problem.[28]

However, de Valera over-ruled the Department of Justice and the one hundred and fifty refugee Jewish children were brought to Ireland in 1948.

Nevertheless, Jews were generally prosperous and respected in society from the middle of the twentieth century. Thus for example, at one time in the 1990s, there were three Jewish TDs (MPs).

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[25] Changes to the text: Deletion of the entirety of Article 44.1.2: 'The State recognises the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens' and Deletion of the entirety of Article 44.1.3: 'The State also recognises the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, as well as the Jewish Congregations and the other religious denominations existing in Ireland at the date of the coming into operation of this Constitution' - http://www.constitution.org/cons/ireland/constitution_ireland-en.htm

[26] Dáil Éireann, Volume 91, July 9, 1943.

[27] *Irish Times*, January 26, 2003

[28] Department of Justice Memorandum 'Admission of One Hundred Jewish children' 28 April 1948

Although many Jews complain of increased apprehension in the community relating primarily to events in the Middle East and Europe, there appears to be no perceptible change in attitudes among the Irish population. Incidents of anti-Semitism are considered to be few and at a low level, with no evidence of systematic targeting of the Jewish community in Ireland. Only one anti-Semitic incident was recorded by the ADL in 2005 and one in 2008,[29] however, in July 2011, information from the CSO revealed that, while racists incidents were overall decreasing, offences against the Jewish community seemed to be rising with 13 incidents being categorised as anti-Semitic in 2010 (Baker, 2011).

Travellers

A cultural minority regarded as Irish, but becoming increasingly marginalised in Irish society throughout the 20th century are 'Irish Travellers'. The historical origins of Irish Travellers are the subject of academic and popular debates. It was once widely believed that Travellers were descendants from landowners or labourers made homeless by Cromwell's military campaign in Ireland and in the 1840s famine. However, their origins may be more complex and difficult to ascertain because through their history the Travellers have left no written records of their own. Furthermore, even though all families claim ancient origins, some families adopted Traveller customs centuries ago, while others did so in more modern times (Gmelch, 1986). Bhreatnach (2007) has shown that the community perceive important internal differences based on origin myths, economic and occupation traditions, marriage patterns, language and behaviour, and suggests that we view this society as a series of micro-ethnicities, comprising intermarrying clusters that see themselves as distinct from other Travellers.

An exact figure for the Traveller population in Ireland is unknown. There were 29,573 Irish Travellers, representing 0.65% of the total population, enumerated in the 2011 census. This represents an increase of 7,126 individuals or 31.9 % compared with 2006. However, Traveller organisations estimate that there may be up to 36,000 Travellers in the Republic.[30]

The age profile of Travellers is markedly different from that of the population as a whole: over 41% of Travellers are under 14, only 23.6% are aged 35 or over and, most strikingly, only about 2.5% are aged 65 or over. Their marital status also differs markedly from the population as a whole. Between the ages of 15 and 24, for example, almost a quarter (24.1%) of Travellers are married compared with only 1.76% of the population as a whole.

Originally following a nomadic lifestyle and pursuing occupations of horse rearing and traditional rural crafts and services, the urbanisation of Irish society led to the disruption of their way of life. On the one hand there were calls for the provision of education and other services to improve their welfare; on the other hand policies promoted their settlement and conformity to urban norms. While there is a traveller dialect (gammon or cant) this does not create a linguistic division between Travellers and the rest of population.

There have been increasing tensions with the 'settled community', over locations of settlement and anti-social behaviour, feuding and inter-Traveller violence. The legal requirement of the state to provide serviced halting sites has generally not been met, in part due to local resistance to their establishment in particular areas, and laws of trespass have rendered many of their practices illegal.

The European Parliament Committee of Enquiry on Racism and Xenophobia found Travellers to be amongst the most discriminated against ethnic group in Irish society (Danaher, Kenny and Leder, 2009). Travellers fare poorly on every indicator used to measure disadvantage: unemployment,

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[29] http://www.adl.org/Anti_semitism/anti-semitism_global_incidents_2008.asp#Ireland

[30] The Pavee Point website indicates that 'Our Geels', the All-Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010) gives a figure of around 36,000 Travellers living in the Republic of Ireland, with about 4,000 more living in Northern Ireland. See: http://paveepoint.ie/question/how-many-travellers-live-in-ireland-today/ (accessed 20.06.12)

poverty, social exclusion, health status, infant mortality, life expectancy, illiteracy, education and training levels, access to decision making and political representation, gender equality, access to credit, accommodation and living conditions.[31] Individuals, when recognised as Travellers, are sometimes refused access to public places or services such as shops, pubs, restaurants and leisure facilities. Individuals often experience verbal or physical abuse because of their identity. Prejudice against Travellers is so strong that MacGréil (1996, p. 341) described the prevailing attitude in relation to Travellers as one of 'caste-like apartheid'.

Since the 1960s there have been several official initiatives to address these problems, even though early efforts blatantly identified the Traveller lifestyle as 'the problem' and advocated a policy of assimilation (Helleiner, 2000; Fanning, 2002). State policy on Irish Travellers can be separated into three distinct phases based on the reports of three government bodies. The Report of the Commission of Itinerancy (1963) explicitly used the language of assimilation in trying to identify how the 'problem' of Travellers might be solved and recommended housing Travellers as the most effective means of assimilating them into the settled community. The Report of the Travelling People Review Body (1983) acknowledged that 'the concept of absorption is unacceptable'; it went on, however, to assert that housing was still the best form of accommodation for Travellers. Finally, the Report of the Taskforce on the Travelling Community (1995) recommended that the distinctive elements of Traveller culture be recognised and supported by a range of government policies. As a result, a number of policy interventions were undertaken and consultation bodies established such as the Traveller Accommodation Unit and the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

However, one of the main issues regarding Irish Travellers is their recognition as an ethnic group (Equality Authority, 2006). In December 2008 the Irish Traveller Movement launched the Traveller Ethnicity campaign (ITM, 2009) and their claim is supported by the Equality Authority, which emphasises that the lack of recognition as an ethnic group 'has negative practical implications in the promotion of equality of opportunity for Travellers and in the elimination of discrimination experienced by Travellers' (Equality Authority, 2006, p.8). However, the Irish government does not officially recognise Travellers as an ethnic group and continues to refer to them as a 'cultural group'.[32]

Language has been less central to matters of toleration, but issues have arisen with respect to Irish and English, the two historical and official languages of the state. Irish, the 'first official language', is spoken daily by a small percentage of the population, though knowledge at varying levels is more widely distributed. It is a compulsory school subject (with exemptions for those educated abroad in early childhood), is used in public documentation and plays a significant role in cultural activities including music and literature. Until recently knowledge of Irish was required to pass the school Leaving Certificate, and to enter university or the public service; this requirement has been lifted in most areas, but continues to apply in some, mainly teaching, posts. Irish is given greater priority in the Gaeltacht – those areas of the country officially designated as Irish-speaking – where, however, the number of native speakers has steadily declined. Two principal sorts of issue have arisen: one concerning the adequacy of provision for Irish speakers of, for example, educational resources and legal services in Irish, and the other the constraints, particularly for non-Irish speakers, involved in the provision of education almost exclusively through Irish in the Gaeltacht. Ireland has not signed the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

2.2.3. Immigrant minorities

As we have seen earlier, Ireland has experienced a strong net inward migration since the mid 1990s. Initially, the most significant groups of immigrants were returning Irish, or came from Britain and the USA, but by the end of the 1990s flows from other parts of the world came as workers in the

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[31] NCCRI - http://www.nccri.ie/travellr.html
[32] This issue is developed in more detail in Chapter 4.

expanding economy and as asylum seekers.[33] After 2000 continuing economic expansion and the enlargement of the EU bought significant flows from Eastern Europe. These rose further when Ireland (together with the UK and Sweden) admitted workers from the 2004 accession countries without requiring work permits. As we have seen earlier, despite the economic downturn the number of immigrants has continued to increase in Ireland - although at a much slower pace - indicating that diversity is now a permanent feature of Irish society.

At the time of the last (2011) Census, there was a total of 544,360 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland, representing 196 different countries. We will focus especially on the groups which have made the strongest imprint on Irish society - three ethnic groups: the Poles, Nigerians and Chinese, and one religious group: Muslims.

Poles

Polish migration flows to Ireland started in the mid 1990s and were mainly motivated by economic considerations. After Poland joined the European Union in May 2004, Ireland was one of just three EU members to open its borders to Polish workers, and thus quickly became a key destination for Poles wishing to work abroad; in 2004 a website advertising Irish jobs in Polish received over 170,000 hits in its first day (RTE, 2004). Polish migrants to Ireland performed the classical 'chain migration': they came having been encouraged by someone who had already been staying in Ireland for some time; very often they had a place to live when they arrived, and in some cases they also had a job; in addition, as the issue of visa or work permits does not apply to Polish workers, they only need to register with the Department of Social and Family Affairs and receive a Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) to be entitled to work legally in Ireland (Kropiwiec and King-O'Riain, 2006).[34]

The Polish community now represents the biggest group of 'non-Irish nationals' in Ireland (before UK nationals). A total of 122,585 Poles were living in Ireland in April 2011 – an increase of 93.7% since the last (2006) Census. While a large number of Poles left in the post-tiger period there has also been a new inflow. Polish people live in every town and city in Ireland, and in some towns they make up a significant proportion of the population. Polish workers accounted for four out of every five additional non-Irish workers in Ireland between 2006 and 2011 (19,709 out of 23,670) and, four out of every five of these were women, whose numbers increased by 104.1% compared with a 10.6% increase in the number of Polish men at work over the same period. Out of the 100,381 Poles aged 15 and over, 69,473 (69.2%) were 'at work' - a significant decrease from 84% in 2006 - while 18,853 (18.8%) were unemployed and 4,586 (4.57%) were students/pupils (CSO, 2012b). It is a young community: 92.42% are under 45 and the number of children under 14 has increased by 363.5% since 2006 (from 4,790 to 22,204). Just over 90% were Roman Catholics, while 4.8% ticked the 'no religion' box and 1.7% did not indicate their religion. 65% indicated that they speak English 'well' or 'very well' while almost 25% indicated 'not well' or 'not at all' (CSO, 2012a).

The Polish community is possibly the community that has established itself the most strongly as a community and Polish presence is quite visible in Irish society. The growing number of Poles in Ireland has led to the provision of a number of media outlets catering to them. Newspapers include the *Polska Gazeta* and a section in Dublin's Evening Herald entitled '*Polski* Herald'. Dublin cable television channel, City Channel, also features a programme aimed at Poles in Ireland entitled Oto Polska (This is Poland). Polish, although not officially an established subject in the school curriculum, can be taken as part of the Irish Leaving Certificate examination (as is the case with all official languages of the European Union)[35]. During the 2007 Polish general election, Polish parties

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[33] There are almost no statistics available on illegally resident immigrants beyond the number of outstanding deportation orders, mainly for failed asylum applicants. Most illegally resident persons have entered legally and their residence status has later become illegal (Quinn and Hughes, 2005).

[34] The PPSN is a personal reference number used for access to public services, tax authorities and for heath and social benefits.

[35] http://www.examinations.ie/index.php?l=en&mc=ex&sc=eu

campaigned in Ireland and three voting locations were set up in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick (RTE, 2007a).

The overall perception of the community is generally positive – Poles are thought to be good workers and reliable, like the Irish they are fervent Catholics, good drinkers and share a common past of fighting against an empire - however there are many accounts of being discriminated against in terms of wages (Roos, 2006). In addition, while well integrated into the wider society, and blending in as white Europeans, Poles tend to live together, socialise together, they have their own media, their own food shops, etc. A significant proportion of the community does not speak English and tends to see Ireland as a 'temporary' home, and so many do not feel the need to learn (Lejman, 2006).

Nigerians

Although Ireland did not colonise any country in Africa (or elsewhere) in the official sense, through its church missionaries it was considered a part of the alleged western 'civilizing mission' in Africa and thus has always entertained strong links with the continent (Rolston and Shannon, 2002; Ugba, 2003; 2004). Africans' reasons for coming to Ireland have changed overtime; from the 1950s to the mid-1990s, (the few) Africans in Ireland were mainly students, visitors, or specialized workers including doctors, and nurses. They were reasonably accepted, probably because of their very small numbers and the temporary nature of their stay (Mutwarasibo, 2002).

At the time of the 2011 Census, however, a total of 17,642 Nigerians were living in Ireland. This represents an increase of only 8.2 % on the 2006 figure (16,300) which contrasts strongly with the 82% increase in that population between the two previous Censuses as the community represented only 8,969 individuals in 2002. Nigerians nevertheless represented the 5th largest 'non-Irish national' community in 2011 (CSO, 2012a). There are more women (54.27%) than men and the number of children under 14 has decreased by almost 10% since 2006, representing now only 21.2%. Roman Catholic was the main religion (26.18%), followed by Apostolic or Pentecostal (21.88%), and only 0.70 % of Nigerians ticked the 'no religion' box. 62.4% of that group indicated that they speak English 'well' or 'very well' while only 1.5% indicated 'not well' or 'not at all'.

The African/Nigerian presence in Ireland – and especially in Dublin – is now very visible and for instance, so many Africans have set up grocery stores on historic Moore Street that it is known as 'Little Africa' (White, 2002). As the main 'visible' minority, several issues regarding negative representations, stereotyping, incivilities, discrimination and racism have arisen. A small section within Irish society sees Africans generally as scroungers, illegal immigrants, and so on. According to Mutwarasibo (2002) this is partly a reflection of the images portrayed by some sections of the media that have tended to cover stories on the cost of looking after asylum seekers or the crimes committed by a minority within the immigrant population. As Nigerians were the greatest section of asylum seekers this increased their 'negative' visibility (Ruhs 2004; Coakley and Mac Einri, 2007).

Prior to 2004, some highly publicized cases of African women arriving in the latter stages of pregnancy supposedly to avail of the provision within Irish law that children born on Irish soil had a right to Irish citizenship were perceived by the government and some section of the population as unacceptable (Lele, 2008; Ruhs, 2004). This also led to a 'racial targeting' of African women and, by extension of the African community in Ireland – according to some (i.e., Lentin, 2003; 2004a; 2004b; Shandy, 2008, Luibhéid, 2004) Africans challenge Ireland's conflation of national and racial identity and Nigerians, as the largest and most active and 'visible' group, have become the focus of discrimination as a result.

Chinese

From the 1950s to the 1970s the majority of Chinese immigrants originated from Hong Kong and many Chinese immigrants first travelled to Great Britain before travelling to Ireland. During the 1980s Malaysian Chinese came to Ireland primarily as students, however, it is only since 2002 that people from mainland China have started to come in greater numbers and to open Chinese restaurants. Research on Chinese immigrants in the Republic of Ireland is minimal and most of the academic interest has focused on the Chinese students rather than on the global community (Yau, 2007). Chinese students have been coming to Ireland in significant numbers since 1998, mainly as language students but also as third level students. This inward migration was greatly facilitated by a decision in 2000 to allow all non-EEA students to work part time to help finance their studies. However, in 2005 restrictions were introduced which meant that only full time students on third level courses of at least one year duration were allowed to work (Wang and King-O'Riain 2006).

A total of 10,896 Chinese people were reported as living in Ireland in 2011. This represents a decrease of 2.4% since the 2006 Census and contrasts strongly with the 91% increase in that population between 2002 and 2006 (from 5,842 to 11,161). This means that Chinese have gone from representing the 7th largest non-Irish national' community to the 11th place. Just over 72% indicated they had 'no religion', by far the highest percentage of any national group, while 4.9% stated Roman Catholic (the highest number for a declared religion). Almost 94% are under 45 years old and just over 60% indicated that they speak English 'well' or 'very well' while almost 23.3% indicated 'not well' or 'not at all'.

Chinese are possibly the most 'isolated' minority community: they mainly develop contacts, friendships and support networks within their own community, do not generally socialise in pubs and have their own media. The major newspapers are CNewsxpress and the Shining Emerald Newspaper and there is a Chinese radio station called Chinatown Radio. As a result, Chinese people are still isolated from mainstream Irish society and have parallel communities to the mainstream. However, unlike the Poles or Eastern European generally, Chinese cannot 'blend in' society easily: most are not Catholic and they are racialised as 'non-white' and clearly a 'visible' minority in Ireland (King-O'Riain, 2008). On the other hand, according to Yau (2007), because of the 'black-white dichotomous framework in Irish society', Chinese can actually become 'invisible'.

In their study of Chinese students, Wang and King-O'Riain's (2006) revealed that respondents who had been here more than four or five years, felt that Irish people had changed their attitudes towards Chinese people in recent years, most likely as a result of the migration increase and argued that 'They were not as friendly as they used to be'. Many interviewees also felt like 'a foreigner' regardless of how long they have been in Ireland. Reports of racial discrimination in employment and in other areas of public life and a degree of acceptance of this, featured in a number of the responses of those interviewed. In addition, in many cases, their immigration status severely limits Chinese people's freedom - they cannot apply for jobs freely because of the work permit system. As non-white, non-Catholic, non-EU immigrants Chinese tend to report more experiences of racism both at work and on the street.

Muslims

Muslims are another rapidly growing minority, one which is potentially 'visible' and which may be the only 'new religious minority' with the potential truly to challenge Irish society. Compared with other EU countries, especially the neighbouring UK, the Muslim community in Ireland includes a great variety of ethnic and national origins including Malaysia, Somalia, South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Libya, Bosnia and Pakistan. Muslims in Ireland also have a distinctive social and economic background as 'the majority of Muslims that came to Ireland already had a solid background and

education. They were doctors, engineers, business people and students; it made it easier for them to integrate and become part of the community' (Fitzgerald, 2006).

The first Islamic Society in Ireland was formed in 1959 by students from South Africa followed by students from India, Malaysia and the Gulf states and was called the Dublin Islamic Society - it would become the Islamic Foundation of Ireland (I.F.I) in 1990. In 1976 the first mosque and Islamic Centre in Ireland was opened in Dublin, followed in 1978, by the Galway Islamic Society, in 1984, the Cork Muslim Society, and in 1986, the Ballyhaunis Mosque in the northwest of Ireland. In 1994, a house was bought in Limerick for use as a mosque, and in 1999, a branch of the Islamic Foundation of Ireland was formed in Waterford. In 1992 Sheikh Hamdan Ben Rashid Al-Maktoum of Dubai financed the Muslim National School and a purpose built mosque and Islamic Centre in Dublin. This ICCI was officially inaugurated by President Mary Robinson and Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum in November 1996. The ICCI now hosts the Muslim National School, a state funded primary school with an Islamic ethos.

According to the 2011 Irish census, there are 49,204Muslims living in the Republic of Ireland. The community has increased by 51.2% since the 2006 Census, a slower pace than the one observed between 2002 and 2006 when the number increase by 70% (from 19,147 to 32,539) (CSO, 2007c, 2012a). In comparison, in 1991, the number of Muslims was below 4000 (3.873).[36] Islam is a minority religion in Ireland, and, in terms of numbers, Islam in Ireland is relatively insignificant, representing only 1.07% of the total population. Although Muslims can claim to be the third largest faith group in Ireland, they also lagged significantly behind those who claimed to have no religion, at 269,811, and those who did not state a religion, at 72,914. However the Muslim community is an important part of the growing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in Ireland.

The Muslim community is well organised with a number of mosques, some of which have many hundreds of people participating in Friday prayers and others attracting only a small number of people, two Muslim primary schools established under the Department of Education and Science and many societies.[37] There are also several student Islamic societies (ISOC) in universities all across Ireland. In 1992 Moosajee Bhamjee became the first - and to date only - Muslim Teachta Dála (Member of Irish Parliament).[38] In 2003, the Islamic Cultural Centre and Foras na Gaeilge joined forces to translate the Qur'an into Irish for the first time and in September 2006 the Irish Council of Imams, was established (BBC News, 2003).

The experience of living in Ireland has been generally positive for Muslims. One of the spokespersons for the Islamic Centre, Ali Selim (2005), argues that the Muslim community has integrated well into Irish society and has avoided the assimilation model, preserving their faith and way of life. Nonetheless it has taken some time for accommodations to be made within, for example, the area of health care, where a significant proportion of the Muslim population is employed. There are also sporadic incidents related to racism/Islamophobia. Typical incidents relate to verbal abuse and other forms of harassment and disrespect rather than physical assaults or criminal damage. This can increase at times of heightened global tensions. In particular, the NCCRI Racist Incident Reporting Procedure reported in 2001 that almost one fifth (20%) of all incidents recorded between May and October 2001, were directly related to September 11th.[39] These incidents reported physical assaults and verbal abuse against the Islamic community and also those perceived to be of middle-eastern or Asian origin, including visitors to Ireland, migrant workers and refugees and asylum seekers.

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[36] *Spectrum*, Issue 9, July 2005
[37] The two primary schools are the Islamic National School in Clonskeagh, with 280 pupils, and the North Dublin Muslim National School Project, which has 157 pupils.
[38] *Irish Independent*, December 19, 2006
[39] National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI)

As Muslim schools are accommodated within the state funded system, there have not been contentious issues about separate schooling. Many Muslim children attend other schools, and there is as yet, no post-primary Muslim school. Thus Muslim students can encounter a number of issues e.g. food, prayer and hijab. There have been over the past few years some issues regarding headscarves. Many schools allow the wearing of the hijab, but some do not. The issue of the hijab grabbed the headlines in May 2008 in Wexford and prompted the Minister of Education and the Minister for Integration to issue joint recommendations on school uniform policy. This particular issue is explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

The first comprehensive poll of Muslim opinion in Ireland was carried out in 2006 for the Irish Independent/RTE Primetime. The poll revealed that the vast majority of Muslims living in Ireland have integrated successfully into society and strongly reject Islamic extremism (Byrne, 2006). However it also showed that a minority holds more extreme views. Among younger people, More than a third (36%) agreed that they would prefer Ireland to be ruled under Sharia law, while 37% agreed that they would like Ireland to be governed as an Islamic state. It also found 28% of young Muslims aged between 16 and 26 believe violence for political ends is sometimes justified. These contrasting views suggest that there may be important cleavages within the Muslim-Irish community.

Sikhs

Finally, another religious minority, much smaller in size but also, to a certain extent increasingly 'visible' in Irish society, should be mentioned: the Sikhs. It is impossible to find an exact number for members of the Sikh community in Ireland as the category did not appear in any of the population Censuses and, while it is possible to 'write-in' a particular religion on the form, it does not seem that (many) people do as the term 'Sikh' does not appear at all in any of the Census findings. However, there are approximately 2,000 Sikhs in Ireland ranging from children to the very elderly.[40] They are primarily of Punjabi descent and the main community lives in the Dublin area, but there are also small communities in Cork, Clare, Limerick, Sligo and Roscommon. The only Sikh public place of worship (Gurdwara) in Ireland is based in Dublin. Besides being a place of worship, it functions as an information and support centre for Sikh and Indian immigrants.

Although a number of Sikhs were living in Ireland since the early 1980's, the main growth of the community took place during the years 2000-2003. The Irish Sikh Council was established in July 2004.[41] Though small, the community is quite 'visible' in Ireland as baptised Sikhs wear a specific dress code, including the turban, bracelet and kirpan or miniature sword, as part of their religious observance. Sikhs work in the areas of medicine, IT, business, the hotel and catering industry. Following 9/11, the (male) Sikh community in Ireland became more vulnerable to prejudice and racism because of their turban and full grown beard that often led misinformed people to equate Sikhs with followers of Bin Laden. Members of the Sikh community faced not just verbal abuse but also suffered physical attacks on the streets of Dublin and in other areas.

In 2007 an issue arose in connection with a Sikh applicant for membership of the newly instituted Garda (Police) Reserve, to which minorities were invited to apply. The applicant, who had taken part in the training process was informed just before being commissioned that he would not be allowed to wear his turban with the uniform. This ruling diverged from the established practice in the United Kingdom, and gave rise to considerable discussion. The applicant said that he would not take up the post on the Garda Reserve. This particular issue is explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

2.3. Preliminary perspectives on tolerance and cultural diversity discourses in Ireland

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[40] Health Services Intercultural Guide – Accessed 22.09.2010
[41] http://www.irishsikhcouncil.com/default.aspx

Given the drive to promote a Gaelic and Catholic Ireland that succeeded the foundation of the state, it may be argued that the idea of tolerance was not a central term in the discourse of diversity in Ireland. It is only in recent years that the idea of tolerating or even respecting moral and cultural diversity, in addition to religious tolerance, has become part of the mainstream discourse.

Individual toleration was perhaps less recognised than collective toleration of specific, mainly religious minorities. In the Republic of Ireland, these were small and not regarded as a threat. Some structures of toleration for minorities were paralleled by official and popular attitudes that prioritised certain values, whether these were deemed to be prescribed by the Natural Law, Christian/Catholic teachings or an Irish way of life, whether democratically, or more likely, traditionally determined. Thus prohibitions on birth control, censorship of books, and prohibitions on divorce and homosexuality continued later than in many other western European states. Indeed in a number of cases European courts played a role in bringing about such toleration (in the case of homosexuality for example).[42]

While the dominant position of Catholicism has been seen as a driver of intolerance of diverse religious perspectives in Ireland, there is another view, which holds that because Ireland has traditionally been a religious society it may be more hospitable to religious minorities, and which has been expressed by members both of the Jewish and Muslim communities. While particular values were established in Irish institutions, officially promoting a particular view of Irish identity, in practice, practical accommodations have been facilitated in areas of dispute.

The modernization of Ireland that has taken place over the last forty years has changed the conditions of tolerance considerably. Liberal reforms have removed most, though not all institutional restrictions on individuals. The consuming public debates through which these reforms emerged focused primarily on matters of individual, rather than groups/cultural diversity. Arguments in favour of a 'pluralist' society became more widely expressed from the 1960s onwards. Thus issues of tolerance were articulated in debates over sexual behaviour (sex and child-rearing outside marriage); divorce, sexual orientation and so forth. The strength of these debates was reflected in the fact that the acceptance of divorce in a referendum took two attempts, in 1986 and 1995.

But tolerance of cultural or ethnic groups remains an issue. An indication of the grounds on which discrimination is likely to be a concern can be seen in the legal prohibition on discrimination in employment and services (from both the public and private sectors) on grounds of gender (including transsexuals), marital status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race (including nationality) and membership of the Traveller community, as well as religion (or lack thereof).

In Ireland the concepts 'tolerance' and/or 'toleration' are not noticeably articulated in the debates about diversity, and these concepts are actually seldom used. Interestingly, the term 'tolerance' is not used in most 'official' documents or policies which tend to refer instead to notions such as equality, interculturalism, accommodation of differences and, most of all, 'integration'.

Contemporary debates about how 'tolerant' Irish society is have often related to the idea that the Irish, having been for centuries a nation of emigrants, know what it feels like to be a foreigner in a new country and can not only understand immigrants' experiences and difficulties but also empathise with their tribulations. The evidence with regard to this is mixed.

Ireland's new ethnic and cultural 'diversity' has been relatively well perceived, it has been seen as an 'enrichment' and a 'revitalization' of society and overall the experience of most migrant communities is a 'positive' one. However, there are also concerns that there might be 'too much' diversity which

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[42] See ECHR 1988 Norris vs. Ireland - The European Court of Human Rights ruled that the law criminalising male-to-male sex was contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights.

has potentially negative implications for Irish society and 'Irishness'. Institutional responses to issues of toleration with respect to the immigrant minorities have focused on themes of anti-racism and interculturalism. Racism has been identified as an issue in Irish society, but the extent of racism is a matter of debate. Several studies and surveys from the 1990s onwards have consistently found a significant minority who held hostile attitudes to 'the other'. In his study of *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland* on the eve of the migration turn in Ireland, Mac Gréil (1996) found that there was a significant minority of Irish people who expressed racist views:
- 16.7% of his sample said that black people could never become good Irish people because of their basic make up;
- 10.8 % believed that black people were inferior to white people;
- Only 13.5% would welcome a Traveller into the family while 59% would not welcome Travellers as next door neighbours;
- 78.6% said they would welcome a white American into their family, while only 26.2% would welcome a black American.

In November 2006 an ESRI study explored the experience of racism and discrimination of work permit holders and asylum seekers in Ireland – it showed that:
- 35% of the migrants sampled reported experiencing harassment on the street, in other public places or on public transport.
- Among those entitled to work, insults or other forms of harassment at work was the second most common form of discrimination, with 32% of work permit holders reporting this.
- Black Africans experienced the most discrimination of all the groups studied, in the work domain, in public places, in pubs/restaurants and in public institutions.
- Asylum seekers were much more likely to report discrimination than work permit holders (McGinnity et al., 2006).

Two other reports indicate that discrimination in work and other areas is experienced particularly by sub-Saharan Africans, and that immigrant children experience bullying at school (Fundamental Rights Agency 2009; Smyth et al., 2009).

The main findings of a Special Barometer survey in relation to Ireland revealed a more positive and optimistic picture (Eurobarometer, 2009). It showed that people in Ireland tend to have a fairly diversified circle of friends and acquaintances in terms of religion, disability and sexual orientation. However, results also showed that Irish people mixed less with people from a different ethnic background than respondents from other Member States did.

In all these surveys, an important issue is that both the level and the nature of discrimination – and, conversely, of 'tolerance' – vary across different types of migrant or ethnic minority groups. It is clear that racism/discrimination/intolerance in Irish society affect Travellers differently from Nigerian, Chinese or Polish communities. Under current conditions the principal groups that are likely to be seen as subject to prejudice and intolerance are Travellers and immigrants of different race or colour - it could be argued that these are the two groups who contradict the 'ideal' of Irishness as 'white, Catholic and settled' the most.

A body of work argues that identity in Ireland is indeed 'racialised', a phenomenon (if not a process) that originates in the country's history of colonisation, oppression, struggle and threat and has led to a necessary 'narrow' definition of 'authentic' Irishness, more 'exclusive' than 'inclusive', and which has precluded and now negates diversity among its members.[43] As a result, on this view Ireland can only 'accommodate' diversity and not 'integrate' it within its definition of the nation or its definition of identity/Irishness; hence the lack of references to 'multiculturalism' in Ireland, and this transpires at the level of the institutions of the state (Tannam, 2002, p. 204).

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[43] See Lentin and McVeigh (2002, p. 18) ; Ruth (1988, p. 436)

A significant section of these debates addresses the historical treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland and especially the issue of 'migrant (African) women flooding the country to give birth' which led to the change in citizenship legislation in 2004 – many refer to and associate the role and impact of migrant (black) mothers 'engendering the new Irish nation' and the pervasive picture of the 'black babies' in Ireland carrying images of 'need' and 'inferiority' (Ignatiev, 1995; McVeigh, 1996; Lentin, 2004; Luibhéid, 2004).

A context and driver for recent developments in toleration and of the discourse of toleration, and one whose importance it is hardly possible to overestimate, has been the evolution of the peace process between Protestants and Catholics on the island, and in Northern Ireland in particular, as well as between Northern Ireland and the Republic, and the Republic and the United Kingdom. A second context and driver has been the area of sexual morality, from the increasing acceptance of unmarried mothers, to the admission of divorce and the tolerance of lesbian and gay sexuality, up to the recognition of civil partnerships in 2011. Both of these spheres otherwise fall outside the remit of this report, which deals specifically with ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in the Republic of Ireland. The next section will now focus on the challenges to tolerance generated by diversity in the area of education.

3. The embodiment of tolerance in discourses and practices addressing cultural diversity in Irish schools

3.1. *The education system in Ireland*

Education has always been highly valued in Ireland and is now regarded as a central force in the economic, social and cultural development of Irish society. There is a high level of public interest in educational issues.

Many aspects of the administration of the Irish education system are centralised in the Department of Education, including curricula, regulations for the recognition, management, resourcing and staffing of schools, and negotiation of teachers' salary scales. The Minister for Education has specific responsibility for policy issues in the systems of primary, secondary, third-level and further education. But the provision and management of education is almost all devolved to other, largely private bodies, so that there is virtually no public state education in Ireland.

Primary education

Attendance at full-time education is compulsory for children between six and sixteen years of age, but many children start school earlier.

The structure of primary education is quite complex, combining state funding with management by a range of non-state institutions.[44] The current and capital costs of primary or 'national' schools, including teachers' salaries, are funded almost entirely by the State, supplemented by local contributions. Schools serving areas of particular disadvantage or children with special needs receive additional funding. The vast majority of national schools are State-aided parish schools, established under diocesan patronage, with State recognition of their denominational character. In recent years multi-denominational national schools have also been established in response to local parental demand. A significant number of national schools providing education through the medium of the Irish language have also been established in English-speaking areas under both diocesan and independent patronage.

The current system of primary school management, or patronage, originated with the establishment of primary education in 1831. The original intent was to establish non-denominational local national schools. However, within 40 years the existing church structures had become the basis of organisation for schools throughout the country. This system (now underpinned by the Education Act, 1998) came to include a range of patron bodies (the Churches, and bodies with limited company status organising multi-denominational and all-Irish schools).

The educational philosophy of the patron is reflected in the distinctive character of the education provided in the school, described in a variety of terms, from *ethos* through 'characteristic spirit', 'mission', 'purpose' or 'philosophy'. This is supported by the 'integrated curriculum', introduced in 1971, and still central to the programmes of Catholic and Church of Ireland schools (Mawhinney, 2007). Since the mid-1970s, day to day responsibility for running schools has been devolved from the patron to the board of management.

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44 For a detailed (historical) presentation of the Irish Education system see Coolahan (1981).

The (6) main types of primary school are:

- National schools, also called 'denominational' or 'faith' schools in Ireland, date back to the introduction of State primary education in 1831. They are usually controlled by a board of management under diocesan patronage and often include a local clergyman. Faith formation forms part of the school day. The majority of denominational schools are under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The other main denominational schools currently recognised by the Department are Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist, Muslim, Jewish and Quaker schools. In the context of the Education Act 1998, the Department of Education recognises the rights of the various church authorities to design curricula in religious education and to supervise their teaching and implementation.

- Gaelscoileanna started late in the 20th century. Irish is the teaching and working language of the school. Nearly 10% of school children attend Gaelscoils, the fastest growing education sector. Gaelscoileanna follow the standard curriculum. The ethos of a gaelscoil can be denominational, multi-denominational or inter-denominational depending on local circumstances.

- Multidenominational schools are another innovation, often opened due to parental demand and students from all religions and backgrounds are welcome. Most multi-denominational schools currently recognised by the Department are Educate Together schools, which currently number 58. These schools do not provide for faith formation or religious observance during school hours but do facilitate faith formation on school premises outside school hours.

- Community national schools, under the patronage of local Vocational Education Committees (VECs), all in the greater Dublin area, were set up in response to pressures in areas with considerable numbers of immigrants, and where children could not get places in local schools. Two were established in September 2008 and a further three in September 2010. These are not intended to replace existing models but to provide an additional option, and to meet the demand for diversity and whole community inclusion. The delivery of religious education in the new schools is being developed on an experimental basis over the course of the pilot phase.

- Preparatory schools represent a small number of independent, fee-paying primary schools that are not reliant on the state for funding. Most are under the patronage of a religious order.

- Finally, there are **130 special schools,** under the patronage either of the Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland, or various public and private organisations that deal with disability.

Traditionally, the choice of primary school has been based either around the choice of denominational education, formation and practice, or choice of the language of instruction (English or Irish).

The Constitution enshrines the principle of parental choice. Article 42.3 provides that: 'The State shall not oblige parents in violation of their conscience and lawful preference to send their children to schools established by the State, or to any particular type of school designated by the State'. Article 42.4 provides that: '…the State shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation'. Table 5 presents the patronage of primary schools in 20010/11.

Table 5   **Total number of primary schools by patron body (2010/11)**[45]

Patron Body	No of Schools	% of Total
Catholic[46]	2,841	89.65
Church of Ireland[47]	174	5.49
Presbyterian	17	0.54
Methodist	1	0.03
Jewish	1	0.03
Islamic	2	0.06
Quaker	1	0.03
John Scottus Educational Trust Ltd	1	0.03
Lifeways Ireland Ltd	2	0.06
An Foras Pátrúnachta na Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge Teo	57	1.80
Educate Together Ltd (national Patron Body)	44	1.39
Educate Together School with own patron body[48]	14	0.44
Vocational Education Committees	5	0.16
Minister for Education & Skills	9	0.29
Total	**3,169**	**100.00**

Source: *Report of the Commission on School Accommodation*

Second level education

The second-level education sector is also quite diverse and consists mainly of three sectors: voluntary secondary schools; vocational schools and community colleges; and community and comprehensive schools.

Voluntary secondary schools are privately owned and managed, while teachers' salaries are paid by the state. They are under the trusteeship of religious communities (largely Catholic), boards of governors or individuals. The Education Act 1998 requires them to have boards of management that include parent and teacher representatives. Such schools may be fee-paying or non-fee-paying.[49] The majority of secondary schools in Ireland do not charge fees, participating in the free secondary education scheme introduced in the 1960s. Such schools receive grants based on the number of pupils attending the school to assist with their running costs. Schools rated as disadvantaged receive an additional grant per pupil. Even students attending non-fee-paying schools must pay for books, uniforms and examination fees. In fee-paying schools, the State pays the salaries of all teachers, but the schools do not receive any state grants towards their running costs. There is thus no strictly private or independent secondary school system in Ireland.

Vocational schools and community colleges are owned by the local vocational education committees (VECs), statutory bodies set up by local authorities (usually county councils). Their boards of

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45 This table presents the patronage of ordinary mainstream primary schools and does not include Special Schools.

46 187 of these schools operate through the medium of Irish (106 schools in Gaeltacht areas and 81 gaelscoileanna outside Gaeltacht areas).

47 One Church of Ireland School has shared patronage with the Methodist Church, four schools have shared patronage with the Presbyterian Church and three schools have individual patron bodies.

48 One of these schools is a gaelscoil.

49 The system of fee/non-fee paying schools is given expanded treatment in our first case study

management include VEC, parent, teacher and community representatives. These schools and colleges are largely funded by the Department of Education. Initially, they were orientated towards providing a technical education; today they generally provide a wide range of both academic and practical subjects.

Community and comprehensive schools were established in the 1960s as part of an initiative to provide a broad curriculum for all the young people in a community. Many were established as the result of the amalgamation of voluntary secondary and vocational schools. They offer a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. They are financed entirely by the Department of Education, and managed on behalf of the State by boards of management which are representative of local interests and include religious orders and/or Bishops.

Second-level education consists of a three-year junior cycle followed by a two or three-year senior cycle. The Junior Certificate examination is taken after the three-year Junior Cycle. The Senior Cycle is now typically a three year cycle, including a 'Transition' Year that includes a wide range of educational inputs and work experience at a remove from the examination focus. A number of options for graduating from the Senior Cycle through the Leaving Certificate examination are provided. This is usually taken at the age of 17 or 18, after 5 or 6 years of post primary education.

Second-level education in Ireland is undergoing a period of transition in response to educational, cultural, demographic, legal and constitutional change. This finds expression in increasing pluralism, new management structures for Catholic schools, changing patterns of religious commitment among pupils, parents and school staff, and increased parental choice in school selection. In recent decades the decline in the number of members of religious orders, an increase in the number of lay teaching staff, and the amalgamation of schools, for instance by the merging of existing single-sex voluntary Catholic secondary schools with vocational schools, has brought the question of the distinctive character of Catholic schools especially into greater prominence.

3.2. Cultural and religious diversity in school life

In addition to the existing religious and cultural diversity, reflected in school structures, Irish society has become more diverse in terms of nationality, language, ethnicity and religious affiliation, as immigrants increased from 3% of the population in 1993 to 6% in 2002, to reach 12% in 2011 originating now from more than 190 countries (Ruhs, 2006; CSO, 2008, 2012a). While immigration has benefitted Ireland economically and provided a welcome cultural diversity, it has posed certain challenges for schools with little prior experience of dealing with ethnic, cultural, linguistic and to a certain extent, religious, diversity (Devine, 2005; Smyth et al., 2009; Gilligan et al., 2010). Unlike countries with a long-standing history of immigration, Ireland does not yet have a substantial second immigrant generation and thus the majority of children with an ethnic minority background are first generation immigrants (Taguma et al., 2009).

The statistical tools to estimate the numbers and situation of immigrant students and compare them with native students is less well-developed and robust in Ireland than in many other countries because of the recent and rapid shift in immigration patterns. However, Ní Laoire et al. (2009), using the information available from the 2006 population census, highlight that just over 10% of the total childhood population of Ireland was born in countries other than Ireland (mainly EU); children make up almost 20% of the total immigrant population (as defined by country of birth); just over 7% of all children living in Ireland do not have Irish nationality; and the most common nationality of immigrant children living in Ireland is British (22,157), followed by EU15-25 (13,828) and Africa (9,788). The

2006 Census had not recorded the nationality of 13,000 children because their nationality was not stated.[50]

There are a number of differences between the primary and second-level sectors with regard to the distribution of newcomer students. Smyth et al (2009) estimate that at primary level, out of a total school population of 476,600, there were 45,700 newcomer students, making up around 10% of the total primary school population in 2007 and that over three-quarters of these were non-English speaking. At second level, of a total school population of around 327,000, approximately 18,000 were newcomers.[51] Thus newcomers made up 6% of the total second-level school population in 2007. Based on these estimates, about 70% of newcomer students at second level are non-English speaking.

There is no evidence of school segregation in relation to immigrant students relative to international comparisons, as most immigrant students are quite broadly dispersed, and in schools with a low proportion of immigrant students. But there are marked differences between primary and second-level schools (see Figure 1).

Figure 1   Proportion of newcomers in Irish schools (by school level)
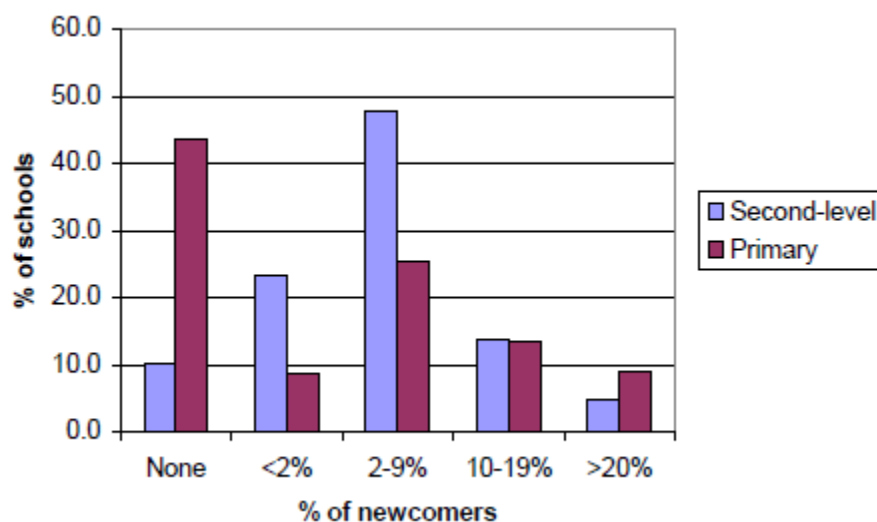
Source: Smyth & al, 2009

While approximately 90% of second-level schools in Ireland record newcomer students, only 56% of primary schools do. Almost half of the second-level schools in Ireland have between 2% and 9% of newcomers. Primary schools in general tend to have higher proportions of newcomers, or none at all. Almost one in ten primary schools has over 20% of newcomers.

Non-Irish students are also diverse in terms of nationality, as 160 different nationalities were recorded at second level in the school year 2006/2007. While there are more East Europeans than other national groups, overall, there is a substantial mix of nationalities within individual schools. While this absence

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50 The most recent (2011) Census showed that the nationality of 16,716 children under 14 had not been stated while 809 children in the same age group were listed as having 'no nationality' (CSO, 2012a).

51 At second level, the estimates from the survey have been adjusted using supplementary information from the Department of Education and Science and the 2006 Census of Population.

of segregation on the basis of nationality is positive, it also offers greater challenges for schools, given the variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds of newcomer students (Smyth et al., 2009). The nationality of immigrant students in a school is important in a number of respects. It is usually a good indicator of English language competency, which may have a crucial impact on learning outcomes; it may also indicate cultural distance, where certain nationalities may be seen as 'further' from Ireland than others, in terms of customs, cultural references, religion and a shared identity (Byrne et al., 2010).

Religious diversity among newcomer pupils is also a challenge for the largely denominational Irish school system. Findings from a survey of 450 of its members by the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN), showed four out of five primary schools now cater for pupils from at least two religious backgrounds, with one-in-six catering for children of at least six different faiths. Cleary et al. (2001) argued that there is a lack of research on children of minority beliefs in the Irish context, while in her study of the experiences of minority belief parents in the denominational primary system, Lodge (2004) concluded that '…differences in belief are denied in the denominational primary system and those whose beliefs are different are rendered invisible and subordinate' (p. 32).

The greatest challenge for Irish schools, however, has been that the majority of newcomers do not have English as their first language. Indeed, existing research on immigrant students identify language issues as one of the biggest challenges (Keogh and Whyte, 2003; Devine et al., 2004). The language barrier is generally seen as a major barrier to student achievement, affecting their grasp of subjects as well as their self-esteem (Keogh and Whyte, 2003; Vekic, 2003).

While children from English-speaking immigrant families fare well in school, children from non-English speaking backgrounds are struggling. Results from the most recent (2009) PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) survey, in which 3,937 or 8.3% of the 15-year-old students participating in Ireland had an immigrant background, show that these scored significantly lower on reading performance (473.1) than native Irish students (501.9) (Perkins et al., 2010).[52] This is a change from the 2006 PISA study, which found no performance difference in reading between Irish students and immigrant students.

Other evidence of educational disadvantage comes from a recent comprehensive study of early school leaving in Ireland. In their report using data from a longitudinal study of 12 post-primary schools, Byrne and Smyth (2010) find that 20% of non-Irish students leave school early (i.e., before completion of the Leaving Certificate examination), compared with 11% of Irish students. Language problems are the most commonly identified problem that principals and teachers report of non-Irish national students, and have a serious impact on both the academic performance and the social integration of non-Irish children (Lyons and Little, 2009; Smyth et al., 2009).

Teachers play a key role in integrating newcomer pupils; however, they bring their own cultural perspectives to the classroom and are in a position to strongly influence the views, conceptions, and behaviours of (all) students. Existing research in Ireland shows that newcomer students generally feel positive about their teachers (Vekic, 2003; Darmody, 2007; Nowlan, 2008). This is often linked to the fact that the majority of immigrants to Ireland are a highly educated group (Barrett et al., 2006; CSO, 2008) and thus have positive dispositions towards schooling and education in general. However, in her study of the experience of ethnic diversity in a selected sample of primary and post-primary schools, drawing on interviews with teachers as well as observation of school practice, Devine (2005) found that while teachers were positive about their experiences of working with newcomer students, often praising their work ethic and respectful behaviour in school, their views also demonstrated both class-related and racialised perceptions. Interestingly, the teachers showed more positive views of migrants of East European origin than other migrant groups such as African, Muslim, Asian and Roma

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52 Immigrant students are defined as those who were born outside Ireland (the majority of the group) or those born in Ireland where both parents were born outside Ireland.

migrants, the latter groups being more clearly outside the Irish 'norm'. She further observed that teachers showed feelings of ambiguity and insecurity, somewhat linked to the lack of policy within which they were working. For Devine (2005), 'The delay in the development of national guidelines on intercultural education signifies a *laissez faire* attitude by the state to this area, mirrored in the absence of the development of a national policy on immigration in Ireland as a whole' (p.66).

Government strategy

In line with the Office of the Minister for Integration's perception that 'efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society', the Department of Education was one of three Government departments designated as having a central role to play in 'dealing with the integration of migrants into Irish society' (OMI, 2008: 67)[53] and a dedicated 'integration unit' within Department of Education was established in October 2007. Since the late 1990s, the Department of Education had made provision for the appointment of 'language support teachers' in schools to provide non-native English speakers with sufficient verbal and written skills to facilitate their integration (Joint Committee on Education and Science 2004). Students were entitled to two hours of language support tuition per week for a maximum of two years, which typically involves the withdrawal of pupils from mainstream classes (Nowlan 2008). Intercultural educational materials and guidelines have been produced by various statutory and non-statutory agencies in recent years. Most notably, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), an advisory body to the Department of Education, published intercultural guidelines for both primary and secondary schools (NCCA, 2005, 2006).

An Intercultural Education Strategy was launched in September 2010 by the Minister for Education and the Minister of State for Equality, Integration and Human Rights.[54] The strategy encompasses all participants in education (both education providers and students) from both immigrant and host communities, based on the EU principle that integration is a two-way process. It is relevant to all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education and has five main goals: (1) Enable the adoption of 'whole institution approach' to creating an intercultural learning environment (2) Build the capacity of education providers to develop an intercultural learning environment (3) Support students to become proficient in the language of instruction (4) Encourage and promote partnership between education providers, students, parents and communities and (5) Promote and evaluate data gathering and monitoring so that policy is evidence based. A data portal on accessing intercultural materials has also been developed for use by students, parents, educators, researchers and policymakers.[55]

As we have seen, a key issue for migrant children in Irish schools is the provision of English language tuition and, although the Intercultural Education Strategy emphasises that all teachers have a role as 'language teachers', the provision of English teachers for migrant students has been an issue of serious debate over the last few years. Current 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) provision is allocated on the basis of the number of newcomer students.[56] Provision had been extended in March 2007, but as a result of cuts in the November 2008/April 2009 budgets, 'the level of EAL support will generally be reduced to a maximum of two teachers per school, as was the case before 2007' (Circular 0015/2009). This change is likely to disproportionately affect schools with a high proportion of newcomers.

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53 The OMI (Office of the Minister of State for Integration) is now The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration
54 Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015 (2010)
55 http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=10856&ecategory=51922&language=EN
56 Schools with fewer than 14 students receive a grant towards tuition; schools with 14-30 pupils one extra teacher; students with 31-90 pupils, two extra teachers. Schools with more than 90 students requiring English-language tuition need to make a special application to the DES (Circular 0015/2009). Available at: http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=19963&ecategory=52540&language=EN

Restrictions on access to education

All children resident in Ireland have the right to access free primary and secondary education. Restrictions exist, however, on the rights of non-EU children to come to Ireland in the first place and enter the education system. The entry and residence of those from outside the EEA are subject to a range of immigration and residency categories, and certain education restrictions. The children of international students are generally not allowed to access state funded education at any level, as this is interpreted as the student being in breach of the requirement of their residence permit. In cases where children have been attending a State school in Ireland for at least some of the last school year, they will be allowed remain in education until the completion of the parent's course (O'Connell and Joyce, 2010). With such exceptions, resident children, including unaccompanied minors and asylum-seekers, have access to primary and post-primary education on the same basis as Irish citizens, but do not have free access to further or third-level education or FAS training programmes.

Firstly, not all non-Irish nationals may enter third-level education. Asylum seekers and those whose parents are asylum seekers are generally not permitted to access third-level education. Secondly, while the majority of non-Irish nationals may access further and third-level, most must pay fees and non-EU nationals generally pay a considerably higher rate. Information on grants and financial assistance is often complicated (Coghlan et al., 2005), and information on the types of education open to immigrants is poorly disseminated and leaves many immigrants unaware of the opportunities available to them.

Immigration status itself can also be a serious issue for migrant children (and their access to education). Once they turn 16, all non-EU citizen migrant children must register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), produce their registration card when requested, and may not be allowed to seek after school or weekend work. The GNIB issues the child with one of a number of immigration stamps, each of which carries different rules and entitlements. The stamps most usually issued to migrant children are those intended for students coming to Ireland to undertake second level education (Stamp 2A), or sometimes, those normally intended for migrants coming to study at a third level institution (Stamp 2). These stamps are issued even if the child has lived in Ireland for years and been educated mainly or wholly here. Sometimes the stamp issued to dependents is given (Stamp 3). This can create misunderstandings, confusion and anxiety. Issues intensify once children turn 18, when they must obtain independent immigration status and, if not naturalised by the time they reach third-level education, are generally required to pay either EU citizen or international student fees. According the Immigrant Council of Ireland (2010), 'The ad hoc nature of the immigration system, as it impacts on children, can cause an early realisation in young people that their sense of belonging in Ireland is not reciprocal'.

3.3. *Exploring discourses and practices of tolerance in education in Ireland*

3.3.1. Issues related to acceptance/tolerance in the school context

Over the years, a number of areas have raised debates concerning **issues of curriculum, pedagogy and general educational culture** in Ireland. The most important of these include the role of the Irish language in education, and the place of religion in the curriculum and the ethos of the school.

Irish is identified as the first national language in the Constitution (Article 8), though it is now the daily language of a small minority. The promotion of the Irish language has been an important aim of successive Irish Governments and its place in the education system has been consistently protected. Irish is compulsory for all pupils at primary and secondary level. There have been proposals that Irish should no longer be a compulsory subject beyond Junior Certificate level, most recently from Fine Gael before the election of 2011 that brought the party into government.

Education for children living in Gaeltacht areas (those identified as predominantly Irish-speaking) is provided exclusively through the medium of the Irish language. While this can be seen as recognition of the national heritage, and of the minority which speaks the language, some Gaeltacht parents would prefer their children to be taught through English. Even if these parents can choose a different school, they cannot avail of state-subsidised transport to an English-medium school. It should be noted that these issues are driven mainly by Irish people who argue that the language should be less central to the education system, and not by immigrants to whom the language might be unfamiliar.

A second area in which there has been increasing debate is **the place of religion in the curriculum**, in particular the way in which religion is integrated into the whole curriculum in the great majority of primary schools. By law, schools *can* and *must* teach the 'integrated curriculum', in which religion is integrated with other subjects throughout the school day (e.g., prayers at start and end of day, religious assemblies, religious services in churches during school time, preparation for religious sacraments at ages 7 and 11, etc). According to Mawhinney (2007), the practice of an integrated religious curriculum in 98% of Irish primary schools endangers the freedom of religion of children who do not want to be exposed to doctrinal teaching; she argues that 'the Irish domestic legal order does not provide protection against involuntary religious indoctrination conveyed through the practice of a doctrinal integrated curriculum in primary schools' (p.402). In paragraph 411 of the Third Report by Ireland on the Measures Adopted to Give Effect to the Provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2007), the State suggests that a student can be exempted from any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent or student, a practice referred to as 'the opt-out clause'. However, when an integrated curriculum is taught, 'opting-out' is not a viable solution. A child cannot be opted out of unscheduled and potentially continuous religious teaching woven into the fabric of daily education.

The most important issues regarding the **structure of the education system** have arisen with regard to the **denominational structure of management of primary education**, in particular the extent to which the vast majority of primary schools are controlled by the Catholic Church. As we have seen, there are no state-run or 'public' primary schools in Ireland, almost all primary schools are run by private bodies, but are financed by the state. 98% of these schools are religious. This means that the vast majority of primary schools, though publicly funded, are privately run denominational schools. This has facilitated separate State-supported primary schools for minority religions, including Jews and Muslims. Until recently the religiously segregated nature of the education system was not seen as really problematic. However, as the population becomes more (religiously) diverse, including a growing 'no religion' section, the issue of religious schools has given rise to growing debates over the years. Two main issues have been identified by Mawhinney (2006, 2007):
- First, in areas of high population growth there is a shortage of schools. Catholic schools in these areas operate admissions policies based on the religion of the families, and this has resulted in non-Catholic children being turned away and left without any school place. It has also led some parents to have their children baptised specifically to ensure they can gain entry to a school, any school. (This is the context in which the new Community national schools were set up.)
- The second problem arises particularly outside major urban areas and refers to a lack of choice. Very often parents who do not wish to have their children educated in a religious environment have no choice but to send them to the local Catholic or Protestant school. As doctrinal religion is taught in these schools through timetabled religious education classes and the integrated curriculum, the issue is the protection of the religious liberty of families who do not belong to the religions that run the primary schools but whose children have little option but to attend these schools.

An *Irish Times*/Ipsos, MRBI poll in January 2010 revealed that a majority of people (61%) believe that the Catholic Church should give up its control of the primary school system; 28% said it should maintain its position, and 11% had no opinion on the matter (Collins, 2010). In March 2011, the

Minister for Education, Ruairi Quinn, established a Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector and called for submissions on three specific themes: [57]
(1) How to establish the demand for diversity of patronage
(2) The practicalities of managing the divesting of patronage
(3) How diversity can be accommodated where there is just one or two schools serving a community

Over 240 submissions were made by stakeholder groups and the wider community, and open working sessions were held in June 2011. Professor John Coolahan, Chair of the Forum, stressed that the aim was not to design a new blueprint for the national education system but to examine the existing form of school patronage with a view to making it more generally acceptable to all citizens. He emphasised that the significant social changes that have taken place in Ireland in recent years have led to increased demand for new forms of multi-denominational and non-denominational schooling and that the need to adapt patronage structures to meet this changing reality was generally accepted; the key issue addressed by the Forum was *how* change can be implemented.

The report of the Advisory Group to the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector was published in April 2012.[58] It notes that while 96% of education provision at primary level is denominational, arising from the historical development of Irish primary education, there is clearly increased demand for new forms of multi-denominational and non-denominational schooling, as well as increased demand for Irish language schooling. The report recommends achieving diversity of patronage by using the existing stock of schools in areas where the population is stable. Where there is a cluster of denominational schools but also parental demand for alternative school patronage, the report recommends that transfer of patronage be achieved with assistance from the Department. The Advisory Group cautions against a 'big bang' approach and advises that change of patronage should happen in a phased way, through the adoption of a catchment approach, taking account of the preferences of parents. The first phase would involve examining school patronage in 43 towns and 4 Dublin areas identified by the Department in 2010, arising from a request by the Catholic Church, as likely to have substantial demand for diversity. This will involve scrutiny of approximately 250 schools, out of which approximately 50 may be divested.

In June 2012, the Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn, stated he broadly accepted the recommendations on divestment made by the Advisory Group and had requested that the process leading to divesting of patronage begin immediately. Surveys of parents will begin in the first identified town areas in the autumn and an information leaflet will be circulated to all primary schools in the autumn to ensure parents are fully informed about the consultation process. A formal call for submissions from education stakeholders and any other interested parties will be issued in September with a deadline for receipt of submissions at the end of November. Following the consultation process, the Forum Report findings and the submissions received will be considered in drafting a White Paper by early 2013.

A specific controversy on the status of religion in education and the structure of education concerns the **funding provided for Protestant secondary schools**. Controversies emerged in 2008/2009 following the decision to remove the ancillary grants received by fee-paying Protestant secondary schools. This funding, in place since 1967, was seen as an acknowledgment by government that the schools served a special purpose, allowing the geographically dispersed Protestant population to maintain affordable education provision in accordance with their religious ethos. The decision was widely criticised by the Protestant community. This issue is explored in more detail in our first case study.

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57   All   the   information   concerning   the   Forum   is   available   at: http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=10856&ecategory=56743&language=EN.
[58] http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobservlet/fpp_report_advisory_group.pdf?language=EN&igstat=true

There have also been some debates regarding the problems faced by Travellers in the education system, mainly poor levels of achievement, the lack of recognition of their culture in schools, and the need for more teachers from the Travelling community itself. Traveller educational status has been recorded repeatedly as considerably lower than that of their peers. The 2006 census had revealed that 63.2% of Traveller children under the age of 15 had left school, compared to 13.3% nationally and that participation of Travellers in higher education was 0.8% compared to 30.2% of the national population (CSO, 2007b).[59] In the past there was separate or even segregated teaching of Traveller children, and assumptions about intellectual capability were coloured by children's membership of the Traveller community. To address this, the 2006 'Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy', proposed a 5-year strategy to examine Traveller Education from preschool to third-level education. The primary goal of the strategy is to achieve equality for Travellers in education, in terms of access, participation and outcomes.[60] However, while there has been no shortage of policy production over the years, these have not translated into consequent 'practical actions' and the delivery of education for Travellers is still not satisfactory. In 2010, the All-Ireland Traveller Health Study revealed that bullying, name-calling and fights at school were also serious issues for both young Travellers and their parents.

Finally, with regard to 'well-being' and 'interaction' in the school context, Ireland has legislation protecting young people from discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation.[61] Despite this, many young people identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) continue to experience name-calling, homophobic bullying and harassment.[62] In 2010 a survey by University of Limerick researchers found that the majority of parents wanted the issue of homophobia on the curriculum and reported concerns about the professional preparation of teachers for dealing with issues such as sexual orientation and homophobia (Walshe, 2010). With regard to the 'new' migrant communities, a 2009 ESRI study reported that bullying and racism were mentioned as contributing a lot or quite a lot to difficulties among newcomer students (Smyth et al., 2009). In April 2010 a survey by the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) revealed that almost 50% of teachers had reported a racist incident in their school in the past month and that the problem of racist abuse among pupils was particularly acute in Dublin (Flynn, 2010). While bullying or discrimination on the ground of religion have not made the headlines in the context of schools, a significant debate around the issue of the Muslim headscarf arose in May 2008; this issue will be explored in more detail in our second case study

3.3.2. Focus and methodology of the research on education

From these issues, in order to explore in more depth and details what the levels of acceptance: *intolerance – tolerance – respect*, mean in the area of education in Ireland and how they manifest themselves, we have chosen to focus on two (relatively recent) challenges relating to religious and cultural diversity in Irish schools. These will both illustrate and explore how 'tolerance' is conceived of, perceived, discussed and ultimately 'defined' by different actors in Irish society.

The first case study involves the controversies that emerged in 2008/2009 following the reclassification of schools in the October Budget and the subsequent decision by the Minister for Education to remove ancillary grants for fee-paying Protestant schools. As mentioned above, this special arrangement had been in place since 1967 and was seen as an acknowledgment that the schools were viewed by the Government as separate, serving a special purpose by allowing the Protestant population to maintain affordable education provision in accordance with their religious ethos.

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[59] Detailed information on Travellers from the 2011 Census will be available in October 2012 at: http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011reports/
60 Department of Education (2006)
61 Amongst seven other grounds including age, race, marital status, family status, religion, disability, and membership of the Traveller Community
62 Norman and Galvin (2006); Minton et al. (2006); O'Higgins-Norman (2008)

The second case study focuses on an issue that arose in May 2008, when the parents of a 14-year-old girl requested that she be allowed to wear the Muslim headscarf to school. The school principal accommodated the pupil but was concerned that, in the absence of national guidelines or policy, she could encounter difficulties if she transferred to another school. He wrote to the Department of Education seeking guidance and requesting 'official' guidelines on the issue, catapulting the matter into a national issue that ignited fiery debates and controversy among commentators, politicians and Muslims themselves.

Both issues have represented touchstones in the contemporary debates on school diversity in Ireland – debates on both the new diversity *within* schools and the growing diversity *of* (types of) schools. Both have involved not only practical but also legal challenges, and both have been hotly debated in the media and the political arena. At the same time, these two issues represent very different diversity challenges to Irish education – while both engage with primarily religious (though also cultural) minorities, the first one involves an historical 'native' minority (Protestants) while the other involves a relatively 'new' and (mainly) immigrant minority (Muslims) and while both engage with the recognition of religious minorities' rights to education, they embody significantly different demands and highlight different facets of tolerance in Ireland.

Each case study included both desk research and empirical fieldwork. The desk research consisted of collecting and analysing the available statistical data, media coverage, internet blogs, legal texts, parliamentary proceedings, consultation papers and policy documents related to the events/challenges investigated, and the relevant scholarly literature on the topics pertinent to each case study. The fieldwork consisted of semi-structured qualitative interviews and a discussion group and was for the most part conducted in the Dublin area (one interview was conducted in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and one in a town in Co. Roscommon).

Fifteen interviews in total were conducted between March and June 2011 with education experts, religious representatives, school principals, representatives from different organisations involved in education, parents and Muslim third-level students wearing the hijab. Some spoke exclusively about one case study, others discussed both issues. Most respondents agreed to be identified, and therefore to let us use their real names in the report – others have been anonymised to guarantee their privacy (the full list of interviews is presented in Annex 3). It proved difficult to arrange interviews with the individuals initially selected, as some were either busy educationalists, and others national politicians who, during our research, became involved in a general election that led not only to a change of government, but to some of the leading figures in the controversies losing their parliamentary seats.

Interview guides for each case study were developed from our initial desk research and adapted to each respondent (see Annex 5). The interviews started with a brief presentation of the research project, the case studies and the kinds of issues we were interested in, and a few background questions about the respondent. The interviews took place in the respondents' offices, homes, or, in some cases, in coffee shops, and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. With the exception of one interview conducted by phone, all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

We provided respondents with an explanation of the recording and transcribing process, and offered to let them see the transcript in case they wanted to add or correct anything – some requested to see the transcriptions, some did not; amongst those who did, some sent back additional comments and clarifications which were all included in the transcriptions.

A discussion group on 'The embodiment of tolerance in discourses and practices addressing cultural diversity in schools' was organised with experts in the field of education and/or immigration on Thursday 30 June 2011 in Dublin. In addition to the two researchers from the Irish ACCEPT Team, 8

people took part (see Annex 7 for a list of participants). All had been contacted previously (for the Launch event of the Project and/or since), and all had some knowledge of the project's aims and goals.

At the start of the session, we briefly outlined our research so far with particular emphasis on our two case studies: the headscarf in Irish schools, and the removal of funding for Protestant secondary schools, as well as the current wider issue of primary school patronage, and gave them a list of topics for discussion (see Annex 9). With the participants' agreement, we recorded the 2-hour session.

Combining data from the secondary sources gathered during the desk research and the empirical data gathered through both the interviews and the discussion group each case study provides a comprehensive picture of each challenge to tolerance in Irish education. The qualitative data were analysed using a critical discourse analysis approach (Wodak, 2001; Wodak and Meyer, 2009) and the main discursive topoi (argumentation strategies) are highlighted and discussed in each case study.

3.4. Case study 1 – The removal of funding for Protestant fee-paying schools

3.4.1. Protestants in the Republic of Ireland

At the partition of Ireland in 1922, 7.4% of the Free State's population were Protestant (Collins, 1993). By the 1960s, the Protestant population had fallen by half, in part reflecting a disproportionate rate of Protestant emigration. Many Protestants felt unwelcome in a predominantly Catholic and nationalist state, were afraid due to the burning of Protestant homes (particularly of the old landed class), regarded themselves as British, and did not wish to live in an independent Irish state. The Catholic Church decree, *Ne Temere,* whereby the children of marriages between Catholics and Protestants had to be brought up as Catholics also contributed to the decline in the population.[63] After the end of World War II, the emigration rate of Protestants fell and they became less likely than Catholics to emigrate - indicating their integration into the life of the Irish State.

Significant Protestant denominations in the Republic of Ireland are the Church of Ireland (Anglican), the Presbyterian Church, followed by the Methodist Church. In 1991, the Republic's Protestant population was at its lowest point at approximately 3%, but by 2006 had risen to a little over 5% of the population, and all Protestant denominations had gained in numbers. The 2011 census revealed that some Protestant denominations have continued to grow since 2006 (mainly Church of Ireland and Presbyterians), while the Methodist population has been reduced by over 43%.

There is a remarkable imbalance in the amount of research on Catholic-Protestant relationships in the two parts of the island: in the North the literature runs to thousands of items; in the South it comes to little more than a handful. While it seems that in the South Catholic-Protestant relationships are not a significant issue, available studies suggest, however, that the situation is a complex one.[64]

Protestantism was established in Ireland as part of a British colonising process and 'Irish independence placed Southern Protestants in the position that for centuries they had struggled to avoid: becoming a minority in a Catholic-dominated state' (Ruane and Todd, 2009). Traditionally, being a Protestant in Ireland has carried with it presumptions of British identity and loyalty, and of distinction from Catholics not simply in terms of belief, but by virtue of a different history on the island of Ireland and different ethnic origins.

Coakley (1998) explored whether Southern Irish Protestants are an ethnic or a religious minority, and his conclusions tended to indicate that they are now a religious rather than an ethnic minority. Most

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63 The *Ne Temere* decree was issued in 1908. It was criticised by the Second Vatican Council and repealed in 1970.
64 See Bowen (1983), Mennell et al. (2000), Murphy and Adair (2002), Ruane and Butler (2007).

studies indicate that Protestants in Ireland, with few exceptions, see themselves as Irish rather than British. They are, however, conscious of a difference from their Catholic neighbours. Although there have been class divisions within the Protestant population, they have been less significant than in Northern Ireland, as were denominational differences, as the various Protestant Churches were present in smaller numbers.

After partition, Protestants were often considered to constitute a privileged minority in terms of ownership of land, industrial property, and income. However, Butler and Ruane (2009) argue that their situation was far from unproblematic: 'They were subjected to Catholic and nationalist triumphalism, they were not fully accepted by Catholics as part of the Irish nation, the Catholic Church's *Ne Temere* decree was given legal standing in law, no allowance was made for the British component of their identity and the Irish language was imposed on their schools though it was not part of their tradition' (p.73). Between the 1930s and 1960s a number of incidents led to significant controversies over cases of employment, education and intermarriage.[65]

Nonetheless, with their higher social and economic status, freedom of worship, and state support for educational provision, toleration of Protestants was not widely perceived to be an issue.

More recently, the dominant view is that the transformation of the Republic into a modern, outward-looking, liberal and pluralist state means that Southern Protestants are now much more at ease with it. Catholics and Protestants share inter-church religious and commemorative ceremonies, schools, workplaces and leisure activities, and there is more recognition by the state of the distinctive history, identity and memory of its Protestant citizens. The evolution of the situation in Northern Ireland has also given Southern Protestants an opportunity to re-negotiate their identity, separating the religious and ethnic aspects of Protestantism and renegotiating boundaries. While the question of a 'dilution of the Protestant identity' within the majority culture has been raised,[66] Todd et al. (2009) argue that, rather than 'disappearing', Protestants in the Republic are redefining their identity and renegotiating their ways of being Protestant in various ways.

Protestants and education in Ireland

The majority Catholic ethos was recognized in the Irish Constitution of 1937, along with the Catholic Church itself, which exercised influence widely in legislation and state policies. Other religious denominations were also recognised in the initial Constitution [67] and, from the foundation of the State, certain accommodation was made for the Protestant minority in the domain of education. In so far as schools were expected to reflect the ethos of the patron, education policy supported the ethos of minorities as well as the majority religious ethos.

In particular, Protestant schools enjoyed special treatment when 'free' secondary education was introduced by the Irish government in 1967. In this scheme, all schools had to choose either to remain private and 'fee paying', thus receiving fewer state grants (though teachers' salaries would be paid by the state), or to become 'free', in which case the school would receive a per capita grant, though lower in many cases than the fees previously charged. Due to the geographically scattered nature of the Protestant population, in order to maintain the Protestant ethos many Protestant pupils would need to attend boarding schools. Thus a somewhat different arrangement was made for Protestant secondary schools, which were considered part of the free education scheme, while still being allowed to charge fees. What was paid to Catholic schools on a *per capita* basis, was paid as a 'block grant' to a

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65 See for instance the appointment of a librarian in Co. Mayo in 1931 and the Fethard-on-Sea boycott in 1957.

66 See Bowen (1983); Brown (1996).

67 The Fifth Amendment of the Constitution Act, 1972 removed from the Constitution the special position of the Catholic Church and the recognition of other named religious denominations, and was signed into law on January 5, 1973. http://www.constitution.org/cons/ireland/constitution_ireland-en.htm.

committee representing the main Protestant Churches, and distributed to minority families to aid in the payment of fees.

In 1966, Donogh O'Malley, the Minister for Education who introduced the scheme, had stated that:

> The Protestant schools are, therefore, a special problem and, I feel, require special assistance. It could be argued that they would be discriminated against because the nature of their problem would put them virtually outside the scope of the scheme for free education... The principle, therefore, of special treatment for Protestants to meet their special difficulties has already been recognised by my Department. I found it necessary, accordingly, to devise a scheme of assistance for Protestant children receiving post-primary education so as to provide equity of treatment with Catholic children.[68]

In 1967 he justified his decision in the Dáil again:

> In the matter of the free post-primary education scheme special consideration was given to the position of Protestant schools. If the general scheme had been applied to these schools, practically no Protestant pupils would have benefited. In order, therefore, to ensure that Protestants would be treated equitably in the matter of benefit under the scheme, a special arrangement was made whereby a Commission representing the schools under Protestant management is to be paid a lump sum which will be distributed by the Commission in grants towards the school fees of the pupils most in need of such assistance... It would just not be possible for my Department to distribute the grant in the same manner as we do to the Catholic schools... [The Secondary Education Commission for the Protestant Schools] came to the conclusion that the manner in which they were acting was the only manner in which they could act in order to ensure an equitable distribution, taking account of the varying circumstances of the pupils and their families.[69]

Thus Protestant secondary schools, which had always had to provide a boarding element (and therefore to charge fees) were treated in the same manner as 'free' Catholic schools to facilitate the widely dispersed and sparse Protestant population. This special arrangement was seen as acknowledging that the Government viewed the schools as serving a special purpose, allowing the Protestant population to maintain affordable education provisions in accordance with their religious ethos.

After the introduction of the scheme in 1967, subsequent Ministers for Education continued to recognise the need to provide state support for minority faith schools and have pointed to the dispersed and scattered Protestant population as a particular reason for this support.[70] There are now 26 Protestant second level schools in Ireland. Five are Comprehensive Schools. The remaining 21 are Voluntary Secondary Schools owned by or associated with a particular Protestant denomination. Of these 21 schools, the majority are boarding schools. All fee-charging schools are in receipt of payment of salaries for a quota of teachers. Historically this quota was established on the same basis across all post-primary schools.

3.4.2. The 'event' that sparked the debates

Controversies emerged in 2008/2009 following the reclassification of schools in the October Budget and subsequent announcements by the Minister for Education, Batt O'Keeffe, as the decision was

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68 Dáil Éireann, Vol. 225, No. 12, 30.11.66.
69 Dáil Éireann, Vol. 230, No. 11, 26.10.67.
70 See Minister Dempsey, Dáil debates, Vol.571, 02.10.03; Minister Hanafin, Dáil debates, Vol.638, 02.10.07.

made to remove ancillary grants for fee-paying Protestant schools and to increase their pupil-teacher ratio.

While the 'block grant' remains in place, all minority faith schools in the voluntary sector have, in effect, been removed from the Free Education Scheme. This translates into:
- The removal of all grants, including those for caretakers and secretaries, that are payable to schools in the Free Education Scheme (totalling €2.8million).
- The classification of all voluntary minority schools as 'outside the Free Education Scheme' for the purpose of allocating teachers at a higher pupil-teacher ratio (20:1) than that applying to schools in the Free Education Scheme (19:1).

The decision was widely criticised by the Protestant community, and generated a significant media and political debate. In October 2009, Church leaders, teachers and parents intensified their campaign against the education cuts, and the 'perceived discriminatory nature' of the Budget was the subject of strong comment at the Church of Ireland General Synod, the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Presbyterian General Assembly. A conference was organised by the Protestant community on 3rd October 2009 entitled *Protestant Secondary Education - A Challenging Future?,* to discuss the issues threatening Protestant secondary schools in Ireland. Involving church leaders, educators, parents, patrons and experts in the field of Irish education and constitutional law, this conference represented the largest gathering of Protestants across denominations on a single issue for many years.

3.4.3. Analysis of the debates

Combining data gathered through the desk research and the empirical study, our analysis employs a critical discourse analysis to highlight and discuss the main argumentation strategies – or discursive topoi (Wodak and Meyer, 2009) – through which the particular challenging event and the issues at stake have been constructed and debated. The empirical study involved 7 qualitative interviews[71] and a discussion group, and the desk research included over 100 media items (newspaper articles, TV and radio recordings), Oireachtas debates (Dáil/House of Deputies and Seanad/Senate debates representing over 40 pages of text), relevant official reports, legal documents and position papers (e.g., The Irish Constitution, the Education Act 1998, etc.) and relevant academic works.

Beside the budgetary arguments advanced by the Government and, to a certain extent, acknowledged by those who contested the cuts, **three main discursive topoi were identified in the debates.**

The first discursive topos can be termed the 'minority rights vs. elite privileges' topos.

This had a strong historical framing and underpinning. It emerged in the discourses of both those who criticised the removal of funding for the Protestant schools and those who defended it, and was probably the most controversial, perhaps because, as one interviewee emphasised, when assessing Irish education 'You can't see the immediate environment without understanding some of the background, historical traditions, which are deeply rooted' (JC).

Historical recognition

References to the historical development of the Irish educational system were indeed numerous, and many commentators argued that, since the foundation of the Irish state, the Protestant community had been treated 'sensitively' and that successive governments had made particular effort to ensure that minority communities were treated fairly and equitably.

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71 CW; DK; GL; EP; CB; DM; JC

Referring to the original Dáil speeches of Donogh O'Malley, many questioned the reasons behind changing a system that been in place for over 40 years and was perceived and interpreted as a recognition of Protestant minority needs:

> ...the Minister - and his Department - was very accommodating at the time and you could view this as 'positive discrimination' if you like, what he said was that the Protestant schools that charge fees will be accepted into the free scheme because they are a special case... (CW)

> ... the Catholic fee-charging schools had the option of going into the free scheme, we did not have that option, we never had that option... so we always maintained we should be treated equitably as a Protestant minority within the fee-charging scheme... we weren't looking for anything more actually, we were simply looking for the same level of funding as the free schools... every time there have been cuts in education to the Catholic free schools, there have been cuts in the Protestant fee charging, that's fine, it's exactly the same... it's when there was a difference there... but this is the first budget that there was a change of treatment, a change of status for us... (CW)

> ... so therefore the questions which we felt we have to ask… were... what has changed in the understanding of the State... that... these changes have taken place because, back when the current system of education was put in place… it was understood that, in order to maintain their identity, through schooling and all the rest... the Protestant community had extra costs, which were not necessarily met by the whole community... and they were respected in that way and the value of their education and their right to that education was respected and affirmed... in fact I think that in 1967, the settlement under Donogh O'Malley was a gracious thought and a generous settlement (DK)

When questioned about the surprise caused by the announcement and lack of consultation with the Protestant community, the Minister simply responded 'Of course we gave no notice; it was a budgetary measure'.[72]

Not 'privileged' and not 'elite'

The historical references provided the context for the debate between those who argued that the previous state of funding represented an acknowledgement of the *rights* and *needs* of the Protestant minority and those who interpreted it as an 'anomaly', a 'privilege' granted to a community (also historically) perceived as relatively wealthy. Certain observers effectively welcomed the reform on grounds of the 'privileges' or 'elitism' which they associate with fee-paying Protestant schools. In a relatively vitriolic article in the *Irish Times*, Sean Byrne (2009), for instance, asked 'why should the taxpayer fund institutions of privilege?'.

This argument was strongly rejected by the entire Protestant community and several school Principals and parents rejected this claim in the media (e.g., McConnell, 2009). Critics of the removal of the grants insisted that the Minister was simply not 'comparing like with like', arguing that a child at a Catholic fee-paying school may have the option to go to a free local Catholic secondary school, while a Protestant child goes to a fee-paying school because there is no equivalent free Protestant school in his/her area. Indeed, for Catholic parents there is choice, and often considerable choice, of both free and fee-paying schools. For Methodist, Presbyterian, or Church of Ireland parents, there is not the same choice, especially outside Dublin. Indeed, in rural Ireland sending a child to a school of one's ethos means sending him/her to a boarding school, and it was argued, therefore, that the Protestant schools affected by the measures take in a large number of boarders from low income families whose

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72 Dáil Éireann, Vol. 669, No. 4, 4.12.08.

fees are paid by the state, and so are not comparable to Catholic fee paying schools. Most of our interviewees developed these arguments:

> ... I think it would be wrong to call them elite because they really do cater for their whole community and that's what they are there for... [...] you look across the water and maybe you see something like Eton, and people think well that's Protestant, but it's a world away from the schools that we have here... [...] as a parent, I don't have the same choices as my Catholic neighbour...we only have two comprehensive schools that are state-funded in Dublin... both of whom are way over-subscribed... so, if you want to have your child educated in the ethos of the home, you really have to pay and send them to a fee-charging school... so, that's... that's where I would see is the discrimination... in not supporting our schools in the same way as we support Catholic schools... (EP)

> ...the majority of Protestant children live in the Dublin area and they are certainly not all elitist... so, if we agree to a Government policy that imposes a level of fees in Dublin that's beyond the reach of a substantial number of our children, those schools will cease to fulfil the purpose for which they exist... because what will happen is they will be filled with the well-heeled... Catholic, Protestant, atheist, secular, you know... but the poor Protestant children, for whom the schools are supposed to exist, will be excluded because they are raising the bar [...] St. Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School is designated as a special area needs school... so where's your elitism? (GL)

The efforts and adjustments made by the Protestant community were also highlighted – for instance, many Protestant schools had merged with others, and the number of schools had already declined from 43 to the current 26.[73] It was also emphasised that Protestant schools cater not only for the Protestant population but for the whole community within which they operate, each school consciously welcoming pupils of other faiths and irrespective of socio-economic background, and that the grants received enabled the Protestant schools to be truly inclusive.[74] Indeed, many Protestant schools had earned a 'good' reputation which also attracted parents of other faiths and while the charging of fees was a method of ensuring adequate funding, it also allowed Protestant schools to provide facilities that the state did not give to schools as a matter of course.

> ...that's another thing that... often isn't taken into account because we cater for our entire community, we are not in the situation where you might have the local convent school, girls school, deals with the academic, and the VEC deals with the more vocational... we have to provide everything... [...] curriculum particularly, we would need to provide for the child who wants to take classical studies, Latin... down to the guy who needs to do woodwork...... plus... there was a joint Oireachtas Committee back in 2008 I think... that looked at the provision of special needs education in fee-charging schools... [...] and it was quite clear from that examination that the Protestant schools have a very high percentage of special needs students within their schools... so we would be up around 14%... which would be even above the national average... but again it's because we cater for all of our children, and not just some... whereas in some of the Catholic fee-charging schools it may have been two or three percent or below… (EP)

Interestingly, the 'inclusiveness' of Protestant schools was also interpreted and turned into a 'weakness' or a 'flaw' by some detractors. In the *Irish Times* for example, Byrne (2009) argued that 'The term Protestant school is misleading as there is no school in Ireland which admits only Protestant pupils who are committed to their faith. In the case of the larger Protestant schools, such as King's Hospital, Wesley College and Alexandra College, it is not clear whether even a majority of pupils are

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73 From 79 minority faith schools at the time of Independence, 43 remained in 1965 (O'Buachalla, 1988).
74 Committee on Management for Protestant Secondary Schools (2009).

Irish Protestants. [...] A large number of pupils in these schools are either Catholics, non-believers or the children of affluent foreigners, of any or no denomination, for whom Irish boarding schools offer better value for money than those in the UK'; thus hinting that Protestant schools were somehow not only not 'Protestant enough' but also not 'Irish' enough.

The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, Dr John Neill, argued that the reclassification of schools was discriminatory towards students who wished to be educated in the Protestant ethos. In his Presidential address to the Diocesan Synod, he argued that the Republic's Protestant schools could be entirely wiped out by cuts in their funding, and claimed that the decision was driven not by financial concerns, but rather 'driven by what amounts to a very determined and doctrinaire effort within the Department of Education to strike at a sector which some officials totally failed to understand'. He accused the Minister of trying 'to place all Protestants into a category of privilege – suggesting that they have chosen private education – [this] is manifestly unjust'.[75] In his experience many Protestant parents were 'very poor, and I mean very poor indeed', and they would be the worst affected by the cutbacks since schools hoping to survive 'will only do so by charging excessive fees, thereby excluding the very community they were founded to serve'. This was also emphasised by one interviewee:

> ...we have children in the school that come from families where they are on social welfare and they don't have any outside income other than income from the state and social welfare... and we would have then people who would have plenty of money and can well afford it... and then there's this group that are really squeezed in the middle, who are not getting any capitation, but they're having to pay fees... so, Protestant parents who choose to send their children to Protestant schools, usually do so at quite... it's quite an effort... so it means that they really have to... you know... put their money behind their... their beliefs... whereas my Catholic neighbour can have a school of, you know, equal standard, but doesn't have to pay a fee... so that's... that's the major, as I would see it, discrimination between the two... (EP)

Batt O'Keeffe acknowledged the problem in the Dáil in November 2008 saying 'I am well aware it will cause serious difficulty and I obviously have concerns about this. However, I must also bear in mind what is equitable and right'.[76] However he cited the constitutional requirement of non-discrimination on religious grounds and argued that he had received advice from the Attorney General that 'to continue the grant that was available would be unconstitutional because it was being given to the Protestant denomination and being refused to the Catholic denomination' (McGarry, 2009a).

Both arguments were contested by the Protestant community. Article 44.2.4° of the Irish Constitution states that:
4° Legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school.

This article has been used in various contexts to support the right of minority communities to have their own schools. In this particular case, its interpretation was also 'contested'; as one interviewee argued that:

> ...in the Constitution... it's Article 44... I'm not sure which... that they are relying on now to stop giving us support... was actually put in place in 1937 to ensure that Protestants were treated equally to Catholics... so the piece of legislation that they are using to hit us with, was put in place to actually support Protestants... but the Attorney General has… interpreted it in a different way... (Name), who is now a judge, so we can use his advice anyway... would say

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75 *Irish Examiner*, October 20, 2009
76 Dáil Éireann, Vol. 669, No. 4, 4.12.08.

that he believes that if it came to the Supreme Court... that it would be viewed in a different light, that the Attorney General is wrong... that it is there to ensure that minorities are supported equally to bring them up to the standard of the Roman Catholics... but they've used it in the opposite way... (EP)

On the issue of the recourse to the Attorney General's advice, many again questioned its justification, its timing and also its legitimacy. Enda Kenny (Fine Gael leader at the time, now Taoiseach) asked the then Taoiseach Brian Cowen why 'advice on this matter was sought from the Attorney General given that the system in place operated without any difficulty for the past 40 years'. He also asked who sought the advice and what question was asked, adding 'Does the Taoiseach believe the system that had been in place for 40 years is unconstitutional'? Mr Cowen declined to be drawn 'on the constitutionality of the measures' (O'Halloran, 2009). The Education Minister also refused to discuss the matter, and a request by the Irish Independent newspaper, made under the Freedom of Information Act, for all correspondence relating to the decision was refused by the Department of Education, which cited 'legal professional privilege' (Walsh, 2009).

Throughout the debates, Batt O'Keeffe also argued that the retention of the block grant meant that the State continues to uphold Protestants' 'right to have their children educated within their denominational ethos', thereby downplaying the effects of the cuts – and by implication the change in the degree of recognition or accommodation of the Protestant community. [77]

The second topos can be called the 'retaliation' topos.

This appeared in various forms in both the media and parliamentary debates and in some of our interviews. In this argumentative strategy the budget cuts were associated with a kind of 'retribution' by the Minister of Education 'against' the Protestant schools and linked to a previous controversy. In fact, this was the second time that the Minister's policies had provoked anger among the Protestant community. In June 2007, four Protestant secondary schools had challenged the government's teacher redeployment scheme, which would have required them to accept teachers who had been made redundant by school closures elsewhere, and they had taken the government to court (Flynn, 2007a; 2007b). The schools had sought a declaration that it would be unconstitutional for the Minister for Education to compel them to employ teachers who were not of the Protestant faith without any assurance that these teachers would subscribe to the ethos of the schools concerned. The schools expressed concern that their hiring autonomy would be severely circumscribed (RTE, 2008). A settlement was reached and while the exact terms were not released, it was perceived as a victory for the Protestant schools.

The issue was mentioned in the Dáil by Enda Kenny (then Fine Gael leader, now Taoiseach) who suggested that the Department of Education reduced funding to Protestant schools to 'get at them' because the schools won a court victory against the Department, saying 'I understand from the Department of Finance that it is not a question of the extra grants for the fee-paying Protestant schools but of the fact that the Department of Education and Science lost its case against Protestant schools last year'. [78] The argument also appeared in the media, as one commentator argued that 'Whatever the rights and wrongs of the redeployment row, Protestant schools are entitled to feel angry and resentful. The Department is vulnerable to the charge it is punishing these schools because of their audacity in mounting a High Court challenge'. [79]

Three of our interviewees also referred to the redeployment issue in a more or less direct manner, to provide an explanation of the budget cuts but also to highlight that this may have been an ill-advised strategy.

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77 Dáil Éireann, Vol. 669, No. 4, 4.12.08.
78 Dáil Eireann, Vol. 692, No. 3, 21.10.09.
79 *Irish Times*, October 21, 2008.

... now, we had no difficulty with redeployment... but we said we wanted to interview these people, check them for their suitability... we were not allowed to engage in any of that...and at the end of the day, they could impose that teacher on your school, even though we're legally an independent, separate... identity... and we would be the employer if an action was taken and therefore accountable... so, we went to the courts, we threatened to go to the courts...[...] they were told by the Attorney General to settle, because it was going to pull the whole agreement down... and, they said... well they never honoured the judgments... I mean part of the judgment was that the Minister was to make a statement, and he never made that statement acknowledging that this had been done... so, then about... I suppose about, what, 12 months later... the Minister got up and imposed these cuts on us... (GL)

...the redeployment scheme back in 2008 therefore was perceived as a threat... to... Protestant schools being able to say 'we want to make sure that all our staff... understand... and can work within the ethos of our school'... so they took it to the court and... in the end, the Government lost... I mean it didn't entirely go through to court I think there was a settlement before but... the Protestant schools were prepared to go to court about it, on the big principle that the school does have a right to affirm its ethos and does have a right to see that those who are appointed to its staff are able to sign up to that ethos... [...] and the perception, rightly or wrongly, the perception among a number was that, because the Government in fact had lost this case... the Government were not going to be positively inclined towards the Protestant education sector as a result... (DK)

...as I understood it, that the view at the time was... and this was to do with redeployment, right, and schools feeling that they didn't want... right, so they went to court over that and I thought that that was unwise... in going to court and in looking to protect the right to interview under re-deployment issue, it was regarded afterwards as the Department putting the boot in... instead of giving the Catholic secondary schools, fee-paying secondary schools the same grants as the Protestant ones do, we take it away from the Protestant and level everybody down'... [...] but... I felt certainly that they were ill-advised to go to court... (CB)

Even though the Minister denied the link, arguing that the High Court hearing did not take place until June 2008, the shadow of the 'retaliation' argument hovered over the debates.[80]

The third topos encompasses arguments dealing with the 'recognition of and support for plurality and diversity'.

The issue of the removal of 'specific' arrangements for Protestant secondary schools generated a broader reflection of the perception and accommodation of minority religions/minority groups in Ireland.

One facet of the argument emphasised the role of Protestant schools in promoting diversity in an overwhelmingly Catholic education system. This view, perhaps surprisingly, was strongly supported by the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin. Speaking on the Morning Ireland radio programme in October 2009, Archbishop Martin argued that Ireland would suffer without the Protestant communities and stated 'I believe there is a public interest in guaranteeing the right of the Protestant community to education... without the Protestant communities and without their schools, I believe Ireland today, or pluralism in Ireland, would be poorer' (RTE, 2009).

Archbishop Martin also reiterated this view to us, developing his perception of the importance and value of the Protestant schools in promoting a space for diversity and tolerance:

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80 Dáil Eireann, Vol. 696, No. 3, 1.12.09.

I did say and I do believe that... there is a public interest in... in giving special funding to Protestant education... it's a historical fact as well... it is a minority... the Protestant schools have actually played an important place in providing a space of tolerance also in Irish society, historically, you know when... there was this very strong Catholic ethos in the schools, people who were free-thinkers and more liberal, the Protestant education gave them a space, in addition to providing support for the Protestant community itself and keeping the community alive... it's very hard to be a minority culture and survive, and therefore... you know, I think that there's something in that... (DM)

This view was also expressed by Senator Ivana Bacik in the Seanad, when she also argued for the added value of Protestant schools in promoting diversity and offering 'an alternative' in the Irish education system:

Given that we work with a system in which the Equal Status Act allows schools to opt-out, thereby allowing them to discriminate on religious grounds, it is important there should be a choice available to parents, not only to Protestant parents but also to parents like me. I am an atheist and would like my children to attend an Educate Together secondary school but that is not possible because there are no multidenominational Educate Together secondary schools in the State. For parents in my position, therefore, who do not wish their children to be educated within the Catholic ethos there must a choice of schools with a different ethos, whether it be Protestant or, ideally, multidenominational. Currently, Protestant schools offer less inculcation in religious doctrine than most Catholic schools. [...] As Senator Norris said, in many Protestant schools there is a wider diversity of class backgrounds than in their Catholic fee paying counterparts. For that reason too, there is a case to be made for treating them differently from Catholic schools.[81]

A second facet of this topos was the underlying idea that the state was not truly 'interested in plurality or diversity' – in the domain of education and possibly beyond. One interviewee articulated that view clearly:

I think it's very clear that the Department of Education and Skills doesn't... is not interested in diversity in education... [...] They are interested in *each* school accommodating diversity, within each school... but they are not interested in… in particular schools being diverse or different from each other... alright?... so... they are certainly interested in every school taking in... special needs children, and that the big thing, every school must take in children of all abilities, you may not discriminate in terms of academic ability, you may not discriminate in terms of being... membership of the Traveller community or... on a whole range of issues... [...] so you can have faith schools, Jewish schools... there's only one Jewish school, there's only one Methodist school... Catholic schools...
Q – Two Muslim...
Yes two Muslim schools... but they have shown no interest in tolerating the diversity... it's... the Education Act certainly says that... the... the ethos of each school should be respected but nothing has come from the Department of Education to suggest that they have any meaningful regard for that, nothing... in fact you can say that the cutting of funding is a very deliberate wish to... to get away from recognition of diversity... between one school and another... do you see the difference that I'm making? (CW)

So the debate developed beyond the particular issue of the withdrawal of funding to Protestant schools to articulate broader concerns about 'diversity' and 'pluralism' in Ireland – these were:
-   The perception and place of the Protestant community in the Republic of Ireland, and

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81 Seanad Eireann, Vol. 197, No. 5, 8.10.09.

- The perception and treatment of minorities in general and the valuing (or otherwise) of diversity.

Leading figures of the different Protestant Churches interpreted the cuts as a reflection of the manner in which the Irish State perceives - and treats - the Protestant community. Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher Michael Jackson said: 'One fell administrative swoop has cut at the root of this [the initial 1967 arrangement] and the devastation of its impact raises serious and ongoing questions about respect for Protestant identity as an interwoven component in national identity' (McGarry, 2009c), while Cork's Church of Ireland Bishop Paul Colton, said that it represented 'a litmus of how Ireland treats and values us' (McGarry, 2009b). The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. John Neill also made a 'minority rights' claim, asserting that 'widespread dependence on schools of the majority religious ethos requires that alternatives are catered for. A minority is as entitled to schools under their own patronage as much as the majority'.[82]

For former Archdeacon of the Church of Ireland, Gordon Linney, although the current debate took place in the education area, the underlying controversy was a deeper one, 'one of forgotten or neglected minorities'. He said 'While I acknowledge that progress has been made this country still has a problem respecting the rich diversity and interests of its entire people. For many, being Irish means being nationalist or republican politically and Roman Catholic at least by background. This attitude creates the illusion that anyone different is alien and perhaps suspect. The historic contribution of Irish Protestants in politics, religion, culture, the arts and in every other facet of Irish life is largely unreported as such. People generally don't realise how overbearing the characterisation of Ireland as a Catholic country is for those of a different tradition. We have a long way to go in establishing an understanding of Irishness that is genuinely inclusive and represents the rich diversity of our past and our present' (Linney, 2009).

This notion was echoed in the coverage of the issue in Northern Ireland as Waugh (2009) argued that 'The fact is that, to a large extent, Protestants inhabit the Republic without socially being visibly part of it. Only a fragment are in the police. The last count I had showed 14 Protestants in a force of 12,000. Two Protestants sit among the 166 deputies in the Dáil, four in the Senate's 60 seats… Keeping heads down politically has become the name of the game... But the Republic still claims it is the seat of a modern, pluralist society'.

Several of our interviewees also referred to the history of the Protestant community in the Republic, emphasising their usual discretion and reserve.

...I have to say that I feel... the anxiety was as much that... an understanding which was 40 years old and more was just changed... and... there was a deep feeling of... almost betrayal about that... you know... the Protestant community in the Republic of Ireland have tended just to want to get on with living in the Republic of Ireland... quietly... [...] and I think some of this goes right back to... the War of Independence and the Civil War in the early 1900s, 1920s... where... the Protestant community did feel under threat, where... there were occasions where they suffered specific difficulties... but I think they took a very deliberate decision that it would not be for the good if they... if they kept on about this and they... almost drew a line on this, a line of silence in many ways... particularly further down south, in Cork and Wexford and so on... they drew the line of silence and therefore just got on with being a minority in the State... (DK)

...part of what we've been doing in this campaign is really putting our heads above the parapet... Protestants in the South have been very much... quiet and... and haven't really engaged in social... in public life... we did in the early days, but we've sort of come back from that, and it's almost apologetic... and the same is true of our schools, you know... (EP)

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82 *Irish Times*, October 10, 2009.

Some of our interviewees also emphasised how Protestants were highly regarded in Ireland and argued that the budgetary measures did not represent an intentional 'targeting' of the community.

> ...as an interested outsider, it seemed to me that it wasn't intended as... as an anti-religious, anti-Protestant move as much... I think there were anomalies there for a long time back and... I think it was in the context of straitened times, I think there was an attempt to address those anomalies... [...] but also not just to leave them high and dry because I think that the Irish state has been, it seems to me... very anxious over the years to be seen to be fair to the minority religions... I have never detected in all my dealings with officials down here... never detected and I have heard a lot, the slightest, and I can say this quite honestly, I have never detected the slightest animosity towards a religious grouping like the Protestants at all, not the slightest... (JC)

> I think overall there's a certain sympathy to the needs of the Protestant community... but, as the cuts become savage, people will say 'they're far better off than the Travellers' so that... you know, the money should go there... the harsher the cuts become, the more self-centred people will become, and therefore their... intolerance comes when people are under threat, when people are prospering they can be more tolerant and... I've never seen many examples of real intolerance towards the Protestant community, I think most places are proud that they have Protestant communities... (DM)

However, in the political arena, the opposition's views were more strident; the (then) Fine Gael education spokesman Brian Hayes appealed to the Minister 'to back down on this issue and to stop the inevitable collision course that he has set for himself between his Department and the various Protestant Churches', while the (then) Labour Party spokesman (and now Minister for Education) Ruairi Quinn accused Batt O'Keeffe of undermining the constitutional right of Protestant families to send their children to a school that caters for their faith, adding that this was 'doing irreparable damage to the relations between the State and the Protestant community in this country' (McGarry, 2009d).

Questions were raised regarding the perception and treatment of minorities more widely, and the valuation of diversity in Ireland. In the Dáil, Ruairi Quinn argued that 'The Government's decision is really an attack on the principle of diversity within this Republic. The Minister is undermining a principle that we cherished in the South when, north of the Border, there was bigotry and oppression of a kind that we prized ourselves on condemning. This decision is starting the process that obtained in the North and I urge the Minister to reconsider it. There is a short-term impact in a cash year or current year and there is a long-term impact that will extend way beyond education'.[83]

These concerns were mirrored in some of our interviews by leading church members:

> ...I think it didn't bode well at the time for the State really working out an understanding how different communities in the State could be valued... and it does raise interesting questions about how other minorities within the State... particularly the Muslim community... may feel valued... [...] I think there are folks who would feel that deliberate lack of sensitivity doesn't bode well... [...] so I don't know what the future will bring but it seems to me that a Government which, for its own reasons, fails to be sensitive to its minorities... undermines trust... and the minority community thinks 'well... we just have to get on with living here'... and the Protestant people will do that... (DK)

> ...I believe everybody has to face the cuts... but one should be looking at the effects that specific cuts may have, simply in terms of... not just of tolerance, but of overall education policy, and allowing... you know the Irish Constitution is actually quite respectful of religious

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83 Dáil Éireann, Vol. 665, No. 4.11.2008.

diversity and actually provides the ability for any religious body to establish schools of their own... now... the change that's taking place is a new understanding of pluralism and, in some cases, people would want pluralism to be... that we all become the same... people say 'let's close all these Catholic, Protestant, Jewish... let's all come together and have a real... the national school system and then we'll be very tolerant' but that's... that's ideal... it's never happened... (DM)

These criticisms were more or less ignored by the Education Minister, who repeatedly emphasised that maintaining the block grant for Protestant schools clearly indicated the 'importance the Government attaches to ensuring that students can attend schools that reflect their denominational ethos' indicating the level of support he (and the Government) considered appropriate for minorities in Ireland.[84]

3.4.4. Concluding remarks on the case study

There was no 'back-down' from the Department – the cuts were carried out. Following the backlash, in December 2009, Batt O'Keeffe offered to review the possibility of funding for Protestant schools which were now in a particularly difficult situation, but stressed that he would not restore the grants in the previous format, citing again the constitutional basis of his decision.

In June 2011, the new Minister for Education, Ruairi Quinn, questioned on State funding for capital projects in fee-paying schools, somewhat surprisingly considering his initial stance on the 2008/2009 issue, reverted to the 'Constitutional argumentation' and mirrored Batt O'Keeffe's statements, saying that '...considerations of State support for minority religions has been an important factor in the provision of funding for such schools, given that much of the fee-charging sector has traditionally been made up of Protestant schools and those with a minority religious ethos. Such considerations however have to take into account the constitutionality of making resources available to fee-charging schools of one ethos and not to those of another. Officials of my Department have been in discussions with senior representatives of the Protestant churches and schools concerning the funding arrangements, including funding for capital projects, for their schools. Such discussions are continuing'.[85] This statement would seem to indicate that the new Government is not likely to be more inclined to provide special treatment for Protestant (and other minority faith) schools.

It can be argued that the removal of funding for Protestant schools represented a shift from a state of respect and recognition (level 3) to a level of basic toleration (level 2), where the state authorises and tolerates denominational / minority faith schools (and participates in their funding through teachers' salaries and per capita/block grant as for other schools) but does not recognise their special needs as 'minority' schools.

3.5. Case-study 2 – The hijab in Irish schools

3.5.1. Muslims in Ireland

The 2011 census showed that there were 49,204 Muslims in Ireland, a 51.2% increase since 2006 (CSO, 2012a). Unlike the UK and France for instance, there is no dominant national or ethnic background within the Muslim community. Initial Muslim settlement from the 1950s was primarily of students or others with high educational and professional backgrounds. The Islamic Foundation of Ireland (IFI), for example, estimates that there are more than 2,000 Muslim doctors in Ireland.[86] However, since the 1990s, Muslim immigration diversified to include refugees from Bosnia, Somalia

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84 Dáil Éireann, Vol. 676, No. 6, 5.03.09.
85 Dáil Éireann, Vol. 734, No. 4, 8.06.11.
86 Islamic Foundation of Ireland, www.islaminireland.com.

and Kosovo, asylum-seekers from Nigeria, Algeria, Libya and Iraq, and economic migrants from across the world (Flynn, 2006). It is also estimated that now one third of the entire Muslim community are Irish citizens (NCCRI, 2007).

There has been limited research on Muslims in Ireland, and few surveys on the *perception of Muslims* in Ireland. A 2006 poll of Muslims themselves revealed that more than two thirds of Muslims felt Islam was compatible with Irish life and 77% felt accepted, although a minority of young Irish Muslims took a more negative view of Ireland (Lansdowne Market Research, 2006). While the Gardaí deny that Islamist extremism is rife in Ireland, several newspaper articles in recent years have suggested links, particularly of young Muslims, with extremism (NCCRI, 2006b). In general, however, the Irish media has been rather indifferent, which may reflect a certain 'isolation' of Muslims from the 'mainstream community' – a separation both chosen and suffered, as Ali Selim stated: 'On Friday and Saturday night in town you often feel alienated, like a stranger in this city which is your home. It is more difficult for young Muslims' (O'Brien, 2004).

Ryan (1996) argued that the Irish Muslim community experienced 'very little overt prejudice from the host community', but a 2006 report stated that members of Muslim communities were more vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination than before (EUMC, 2006:60) and the NCCRI Racist Incidents reports (2001-2008) identified instances of racism as a result of 9/11, and instances of discrimination against Muslims on the basis of their religion, ranging from verbal abuse to physical assault.[87]

While the events of 9/11 and July 2005 in London have raised the Irish public's awareness of Islam in a negative manner, efforts have been made in Ireland to educate the public about Islam in order to counter negative stereotypes and to address concerns about fundamentalism and militancy. The Islamic Cultural Centre (ICCI) at Clonskeagh has welcomed visitors, and academic courses of study and conferences on Islam have been widely organised in Ireland.

Muslims and education in Ireland

There are currently two Muslim state-funded primary schools in Dublin: the Muslim National School, set up by the Islamic Foundation of Ireland (IFI) in 1990 and the North Dublin Muslim School established in 2001.

According to Ryan (1996), 'The Muslim National School was the first such school to be recognised in these islands and will stand as a monument to the respect accorded by the Irish State to the religious beliefs of minority groups'. At its opening ceremony, President Mary Robinson said that the school represented a significant step in showing the 'open and pluralist society' for which she had wished at her inauguration, and spoke of the 'enrichment' brought to Ireland by minority groups such as Muslims. Also at the opening, Imam Yahya al-Hussein, head of the Islamic Community, stated, 'We do not wish to isolate ourselves or consider ourselves as having no contribution nor duties towards Ireland and its people. Our hope and intention is that our school will produce well adjusted Muslim Irish boys and girls who will contribute to the spiritual and material welfare of Ireland'.[88]

Both schools follow the 'normal' Irish school curriculum, but have an Islamic ethos, teaching Arabic and Qur'anic studies. In order to cater for the spiritual and religious education of children who do not attend a Muslim school, other part-time schools have been established. The ICCI established the Nur Al-Huda School in 1999, since extended to two areas outside Dublin; and the Libyan School, which

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87 The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) came into being in 1998 with a remit to engage racism and to promote an intercultural Ireland. It operated as an interface with relevant national and international actors and acted as the Irish national focal point for the European Racism and Xenophobia Network (RAXEN). As a result of budgetary cuts by the Irish government in 2008, the NCCRI ceased to exist.

88 *Sunday Tribune*, October 8, 1990.

follows the Libyan curriculum. The IFI runs the Al-Falah Islamic School as well as the Sunday madrasa. There are weekend schools attached to mosques in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford among others.

There are no Muslim secondary schools in Ireland, so Muslim children in secondary education (as well as the majority of Muslim children in primary education) attend mainstream Irish schools, which are mainly denominational (over 90% Catholic).The presence of a religious ethos and of a large number of single-sex schools is often attractive to Muslims. Because numbers are still low, it has been relatively easy for the school authorities to accommodate the needs of Irish Muslim students without disturbing the schools or drawing unwelcome attention to the Muslim minority. A variety of provisions appears to be made locally for students to absent themselves from Christian education classes and to pray in any available room.

The issue of religious symbols and religious dress in Irish schools

Religious symbols to be seen in Irish schools include the Sikh turban or the patka, the Sikh Kara (a bangle worn on the wrist), the Jewish kippah and Christian crosses (NCCRI, 2007). Some school uniforms include crests with religious symbols including the sacred heart and crosses.

In Ireland, there are no 'rules' limiting the wearing of Muslim dress, and it is now quite common to see Muslim women and men in religious dress, particularly in Dublin. With regard to women, this is mainly the hijab and jilbab; with a smaller number wearing the niqab.[89] In organisations which have uniform, such as the Gardaí (police), however, Muslims must conform to that uniform, which at present does not include a hijab option.

Regarding the hijab, most schools came to permit it, as long as it was in the school's uniform colours, although there was no consensus on the issue; for instance the *Sunday Business Post* reported in 2004 that a south Dublin school had banned the hijab, citing its Catholic ethos as justification (Wood, 2004).

3.5.2. The 'event' that sparked debates in Irish schools - and beyond

Significant controversy arose in May 2008, when the parents of 14-year-old Shekinah Egan requested that she be allowed to wear the headscarf to school in Gorey, Co. Wexford. The principal accommodated her, but was concerned, in the absence of national guidelines or policy, that she might encounter difficulties if she transferred to another school. He wrote to the Department of Education seeking guidance and requesting 'official/formal' guidelines on the issue. In June, a new Muslim group – the Irish Hijab Campaign - was set up to support the right to wear the hijab, and to lobby for legislation to protect and support those wearing the hijab – its chairwoman was the mother of the young girl in the Gorey school (McGarry, 2008).

The issue came to public attention when the *Irish Times* published the correspondence between the Department and the Principal, catapulting the matter into a national debate. The issue quickly gained momentum, sparking off controversy and extensive media coverage. Columnists, politicians, Muslim representatives, NGOs and ordinary people argued for and against in newspapers, radios and on the internet, and even the international news channel Al Jazeera paid a visit to Gorey to speak to the Egan family.[90]

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89 National Women's Council of Ireland (2010).
90 *Enniscorthy Guardian* (2008).

The Office of the Minister for Integration undertook a consultation in order to devise a formal set of Departmental guidelines for future reference. They surveyed over 4,000 primary and post-primary schools and consulted key stakeholders such as teachers' unions, management and parent bodies.[91]

On September 23, 2008, the Ministers for Education and Science and for Integration jointly agreed recommendations on school uniform policy. They emphasised that these were formulated on the basis of the consultation process and took account of the legal position in Ireland**.** The recommendations were that:

1. The current system, whereby schools decide their uniform policy at a local level, is reasonable, works and should be maintained.

2. In this context, no school uniform policy should act in such a way that it, in effect, excludes students of a particular religious background from seeking enrolment or continuing their enrolment in a school. However, this statement does not recommend the wearing of clothing in the classroom which obscures a facial view and creates an artificial barrier between pupil and teacher. Such clothing hinders proper communication.

3. Schools, when drawing up uniform policy, should consult widely in the school community.

4. Schools should take note of the obligations placed on them by the Equal Status Acts before setting down a school uniform policy. They should also be mindful of the Education Act, 1998. As previously mentioned, this obliges boards of management to take account of 'the principles and requirements of a democratic society and have respect and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society'.

In September 2010 further Guidelines for Catholic schools on how best to integrate students of other faiths were issued by the Joint Managerial Body of Catholic secondary schools.[92] They too emphasised 'accommodation and dialogue' between schools and parents and, most significantly, they drew a distinction between the hijab, which is accepted in Catholic schools, and the niqab, the full veil worn over the face, which is not.

3.5.3. Analysis of the debates

We combined secondary data from desk research and an empirical study, and applied a critical discourse analysis to examine the main argumentation strategies (discursive topoi) through which the event and its repercussions were constructed and debated. The empirical study comprised 11 qualitative interviews[93] and a discussion group, and the desk research included over 80 media items (newspaper articles, TV and radio recordings), Oireachtas debates (Dáil and Senate debates representing over 40 pages of text), official reports, legal documents and position papers, and academic works.

While the Muslim headscarf issue has involved an intricate web of stereotypes, prejudices and discriminations with regard to gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship, three main discursive topoi can be identified in the Irish hijab debate.

The first topos can be termed the 'gender rights' topos, encompassing debates about 'protecting vs. rejecting the veiled woman'.

Media commentaries covered the full spectrum of feminist perspectives, with contributors and letter-writers voicing either support for, or absolute opposition, to the hijab in Irish schools (and Irish society), while invoking women's and/or individuals' 'rights'.

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91 Report on the need for a Guidance Note to Schools when reviewing their policies on School Uniforms.

92 The Joint Managerial Body is the representative organisation for boards of management in voluntary secondary schools (under the trusteeship of either Catholic trustees or those of the Protestant tradition).

93 AM; AL; BH; CB; DM; JC; PW; Z&M; SM; SK.

In the *Irish Independent* for instance, columnist Martina Devlin asserted that the headscarf is inherently oppressive, and argued that 'if we accept [the hijab] in schools, we open the door to other practices in the Muslim world even more repressive to women, among them arranged marriages and female circumcision' (Devlin, 2008). Eilis O'Hanlon (2008) wrote in the same paper that Muslim girls whose parents do not wish them to cover, 'can frequently be bullied and made to feel inferior and ashamed by those who wear the hijab', while O'Connor (2008) argued in the *Sunday Business Post* that 'No matter how you spin it, this is such a visible sign of inequality, it can only harm women's efforts in furthering equality. Just ask women in Afghanistan or in Iran'. Already in 2006, Emer O'Kelly, had noted the increasing presence of veiled women (including those wearing the niqab) in Ireland and stated that 'I do not welcome the veil, and I do not believe it is racist to say so. Rather, I believe that to talk about embracing and welcoming what it stands for is to deny equality to women, even when the wearing is merely symbolic' (O'Kelly, 2006).

Such arguments present the image of the veiled Muslim girl/woman as 'oppressed' by a patriarchal religion and/or culture. Letter writer Ruth Dudley Edwards, for instance, argued that allowing the hijab denies Muslim girls the possibility of contesting paternal authority, and equated the hijab with child abuse (Edwards, 2008).

Within this discourse of 'protection' it is perceived as Ireland's duty, as an 'enlightened' and 'liberal' nation, to counter such tendencies by, for instance, banning the hijab from schools. Indeed, journalist Sinead Ryan argued that 'we simply cannot have liberal equality laws and continue to pander to repressive minority customs' (Ryan, 2008). Here the discourse of protection is equated with the promotion of gender equality through the protection of Muslim girls and women from oppressive and patriarchal foreign culture practices. This was raised in the Department of Education's report which stated: 'There was also some concern expressed that the hijab is worn by some women as recognition of a second class status in society and is enforced by some parents to emphasise the lower status of women. Such an approach by parents is not acceptable in Irish society which recognizes equality between the sexes. Schools should seek to counteract such attitudes in their work in the area of intercultural understanding.[94]

This resonates with European Court of Human Rights rulings[95] that view the Muslim headscarf as incompatible with gender equality (Evans, 2006). It also reflects the widespread misunderstandings associated with the Muslim headscarf, seeing it as something that is necessarily oppressive rather than as a tool of empowerment where women are marking their identity, taking control of their bodies and giving them a sense of belonging. However, it begs the question of the voice(s) and of the choice(s) of Muslim girls/women.

However, this type of discourse can be interpreted as undermining the veiled woman as an autonomous agent and relegating her to a category of 'woman in need' of the state's protection while her personal desires and aspirations are ignored. While girls (and women) should be protected from being 'forced' to veil, they should be seen as capable of making the choice themselves. This discourse construes the veiled woman as not only 'different', but also 'inferior'.

In the media debate, a minority were supportive of Muslim girls' choice; their discourse focused on the protection of girls/women's' rights: their right to wear the hijab, their rights to religious freedom and to freedom of choice. Breda O'Brien, for instance, regarded the demand to wear the headscarf in Irish schools as an indication of Muslim women's autonomy, stating 'a girl who makes the request to wear [the hijab] in school is likely to have thought about it and be clear about what it means to her. She is doing something brave and countercultural' and questions why society should be so concerned

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94 Office of the Minister for Integration (2008) Report on the need for a Guidance Note to Schools when reviewing their policies on School Uniforms, para. 2.2.
95 Leyla Sahin v. Turkey ; Dahlab v. Switzerland, Dogru v France.

'with young girls from a different background asserting their right to dress modestly' (O'Brien, 2008). Here the notion of protection is centred on individual rights and freedoms. Mulloy (2004) similarly perceived the headscarf as a debate over individual rights, and argues that individuals must have the right to self-expression, cultural identity and freedom. In this perspective, the headscarf is perceived and construed as empowering – it enables girls/women to take control of their bodies, it gives them a distinct identity and a sense of belonging to a wider Muslim community.

The media debate on the hijab suggests that these opposing views reflect conflicting perspectives and interpretations of human rights. While those opposing the hijab perceive women's rights as endangered by the headscarf and what it (supposedly) represents, those who support the wearing of the hijab in Irish schools perceive a ban to be an infringement on individuals' right to self-expression (religious or cultural). Yet, in any case, wearing a headscarf as an expression of a Muslim woman's religious conviction is protected by her constitutional right to freedom of religion (Irish Constitution, Article 44).

It may be noted that despite their prominence in the media debate, neither the issues of gender rights nor arguments portraying the hijab as either oppressing or liberating Muslim girls/women featured strongly in our interviews; we take this to underline the lack of prominence of this issue in Ireland.

One interviewee, however, specifically touched on the issue, hinting that, under the apparent understanding and support, some stereotypes were still lurking below politically correct discourses:

> ...I saw an interview in the Times about a month ago of some Irish teenager, Muslim girls... it all started out very positively and... that they're liberated, that they don't see... they're not oppressed, they really wanted to make a statement that they're normal, happy, Irish teenagers... but as the interview progressed then... and they were asked about boys and relationships and 'oh I'm married and I'm 20'... that organised marriage thing and I've been set up with somebody and... you can't date them until you're engaged and.. suddenly the interviewer was horrified... and it started great like 'we feel more liberated than western girls who have to like... expose their bodies, be half naked to be noticed by a man and... you have to completely sell yourself to... and... they have a point... that's an interesting point... but then on the other side of the coin they turn around and say... there's such control around... their whole sexual lives and... rules... that's the cultural separation... (AM)

Another interviewee linked the hijab to a different 'gender issue' with regard to Muslims in schools – the potential 'lack of respect' or 'lack of recognition of the authority' of female teachers by Muslim boys:

> ... and, the point I made, and it wasn't picked up on at the time, but certainly a bigger issue for us... would have been the attitude amongst Irish lady teachers, that perhaps the veil was a symbol of the subjugation of women... and also we had issues with young Muslim males and their attitudes to female teachers which was becoming an issue... it certainly came up as an issue for us that in the context of teachers trying to correct students, that because of the feminisation of the profession, many male Muslims objected to being corrected by them... (CB)

Two of our male interviewees actually mentioned the potential 'aesthetic' qualities of the hijab, thus highlighting a positive 'gendered' perception of the garment itself, stripped off any religious or political underlying meanings or representations.

> Yes... I mean, obviously I... I personally have no difficulty with the veil... [...] ...now, is it a sign of... of discrimination against women? I don't think so in general... there are many

> Islamic women who wear a veil by cultural choice, the way that people wear jeans or... in fact they... in some cases it enhances their beauty, they're actually very elegant with it... (DM)

> ...and in fact all sorts of ironies came out of that, because in some schools apparently some young Muslim women were wearing hijabs, quite brightly coloured hijabs, attractive hijabs and actually other Irish school children were asking if they could wear them as well because they... or something similar, you know because... [...] They actually quite liked that... maybe it mightn't have been the hijab, but something, some sort of headscarf, you know... (PW)

None of the three respondents who wore the hijab themselves mentioned the 'gender issue' - the two students both emphasised that it was a serious choice for a girl to wear hijab because 'even for her to adopt that in a western country, for her friends to accept her, for the environment to accept her it's a big deal so...' (M). For SK, the issue of 'rights' was more prominent as she emphasised how 'disappointed' she had been by some of the politicians' comments at the time and how she would 'fight for future generations' right to wear the hijab' should that right be challenged again.

> ...I was very disappointed with some of the Government reactions, or... they were at the time the shadow Government as in Fine Gael... shockingly disappointed, actually I was... astounded by some of their remarks... and they're now in Government... but when I know their stance on the hijab... [...] and I'm appalled... and Ruairi Quinn... Ruairi Quinn if you go back to this man in his days where he... stood for everybody's rights, you know... for once I'm wishing... wishing the years on so life will pass very quickly and there'll be another election... I'm trying to put my head in the sand until it passes because I feel that's the option in front of me... [...] but... there's a rebel in there somewhere who wants to say 'let them bring it on!' so at least we can challenge it now for future generations'... (SK)

The second topos can be identified as the 'integration vs. segregation' topos and encompasses debates about the nature of 'Irish interculturalism'.

The issue went beyond the question of the headscarf in schools to embody the first controversy concerning the Muslim presence and potential claims for recognition in Ireland, which had to come to terms with the fact that it was now a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society.

These debates originated mainly from statements made by the girl's family, the Egans, and the opposition parties (one of which, Fine Gael, is now in government).

Speaking on the Al Jazeera English channel, Liam Egan accused the Government of repressing minority rights and stated that: 'It is time the world witnessed the true face of Ireland. It has silently repressed Muslim rights while flaunting itself as the bastion of democracy for far too long. The issue of the hijab is a reflection of how Ireland treats its minorities' (Murphy, 2008). He argued that it was not an immigration issue but was about freedom to practise religious beliefs and the importance of tolerance. To the argument that he should assimilate, he responded that he was Irish and Muslim. Liam (or Mujahid) Egan, was quickly identified as a controversial personality. He set up a website on which he criticised the main representatives of the Muslim community in Ireland (the ICCI and the IFI) while propagating the austere Salafist strain of Islam. The 2008 TV report, which featured no representative from any Irish mosque, led the ICCI to complain to Al Jazeera. Egan's website disappeared in 2010, shortly before he left Ireland. 'I didn't like the direction it was going in due to some contributors', he said, 'It was becoming very anti-Irish and counterproductive. It needed to be reined in' (Fitzgerald, 2011).

The education spokesmen of the two main opposition parties at the time argued that the hijab raises crucial questions around the Irish approach to cultural difference, and called for a ban on the hijab in public schools. Labour's Ruairí Quinn (now Education Minister) indicated that he was no longer a supporter of multiculturalism but a believer in integration following his study of the experience of

other European countries. 'I do not think that multiculturalism has worked in Denmark and Holland', he said, 'We have absorbed 10% of the population in a very short period of time. If we want to avoid the problems associated with other countries, we have to be as integrationist as possible'. As a result, his stance on the hijab was also clear: 'If people want to come into a western society that is Christian and secular, they need to conform to the rules and regulations of that country... Nobody is formally asking them to come here. In the interests of integration and assimilation, they should embrace our culture...Irish girls don't wear headscarves' (McDonagh, 2008). Speaking to the *Irish Times*, Fine Gael's Brian Hayes also warned that Ireland should not be going down the route of multiculturalism and gave his support for banning the hijab in public schools, adding that '[t]here is enough segregation in Ireland without adding this to it... It makes absolute sense that there would be one uniform for everyone. The wearing of the hijab is not about religiosity, it is more an example of modesty. It is not a fundamental requirement to be a Muslim' (McGee, 2008).

Many were confused by these positions. The Islamic Society of Ireland women's spokesperson, Summayah Kenna, branded the comments by Mr Hayes and Mr Quinn as 'baffling', adding that wearing the hijab was a religious obligation. Philip Watt, then Director of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, said the 'ill-thought' comments from both political figures were 'disappointing' (McDonagh, 2008). NAPD[96] Director Clive Byrne argued that individual principals should not have to make crucial decisions about the wearing of the hijab, as this was a decision for school boards and trustees. He said: 'Wearing a veil is unlikely to be an issue in most schools, but there will come a time when schools will be forced to deal with situations when parents demand that their daughters face be fully covered. Will it be found to be discriminatory under Equal Status legislation if school authorities insist that a full veil can't be worn?' (Ryan, 2008).

Throughout the debates, members of the Government rarely commented on the issue. In May 2008, Senator Joe O'Toole argued in the Seanad that 'the question of the wearing of the hijab by Muslim girls or women in Irish society needs to be addressed' and insisted that 'Everyone's view is important [because] It challenges us in all sorts of ways in terms of whether it helps pluralism and integrates society or does the opposite. One could argue both sides. It would be very helpful to have a debate in which people could offer their views and in which the Minister who will deal with this, whether it be the Minister for Education and Science or the Minister of State responsible for integration, could engage in an open way without prejudice to what might happen. Let us hear people's views'.[97] In the Dáil in July 2008, (then) Deputy Enda Kenny also asked the Taoiseach if there had been 'any discussion or explanation from the Government on its position on the wearing of the hijab, the headdress worn by Muslim women, and the burqa? ... Is that of concern or interest to the Government given that women in this country are supposed to have equality of opportunity? Was the issue discussed or raised or was any reference made to it?[98]

Apart from the consultation with school principals and selected stakeholders, no real public 'debate' was engaged in by the Government. Integration Minister Conor Lenihan simply stated that he had no problem with students wearing the hijab: 'For those that wear the hijab, it's an issue of modesty. It's not so long since Irish women wore headscarves to church, so we have to respect that'; while Education Minister Batt O'Keeffe said he did not regard questions over the hijab as 'a serious issue' in Ireland (Donnelly and Riegel, 2008).

Public opinion appeared to be relatively split, and people voiced their views and arguments though all the means at their disposal. The results of a TNS/mrbi poll on the place of the Islamic headscarf in Irish schools showed that 48% of those surveyed felt that Muslim students should be allowed to wear the hijab in state schools, with significant differences of opinion between men and women, younger and older people, socio-economic groups and supporters of the main political parties (O'Brien, 2008).

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96 National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD).
97 Seanad Éireann, Vol. 189, May 20, 2008, Order of Business.
98 Dáil Éireann, Vol. 659, July 9, 2008, Questions - Dialogue with Faith Communities.

On July 3, 2008, in the Comments section of the *Irish Times* website, one entry by 'Bryan' asked if the 'hijab issue' was 'getting out of hand':

> Honestly, what is the big deal? It's just a piece of cloth isn't it? If young Muslim ladies, or their parents for that matter, want them to wear it, what's the problem? Should this really be taking up two ministers' time as well as that of thousands of school principals? [...] Let's say that it is a genuine concern. What is the real underlying issue here? It cannot be about clothing. Or at least I really hope we aren't that petty as a society. Is it about Islam, or religion itself? Either way, if there is going to be a debate, let it be about Islam or religion as a whole and their place in contemporary Irish society.[99]

Over the next few days, this question alone attracted 62 comments, demonstrating not only the public's interest in the issue but the variety – and sometimes ferocity – of views – some mildly supportive, most brutally critical and expanding the debate to the general issue of immigration in Ireland:

> For me, I think allowing students to wear compulsory (to their faith) pieces of religious dress is fine as long as it is within reason. For instance, cross around the neck or hijab is fine. But a burka is not workable in a school with a uniform policy, and I'm not sure how tolerant I would be of allowing a woman to be hidden away from the world in such an outfit at school, no matter how much cultural relativism we engage ourselves in.

> The argument is based on the fear in the Western world of Islamisation, I think; there seems to be a strong view, in Ireland and the UK, that Muslims operate through infiltration, instead of integration.

> Well, if it's just a price of cloth, then they won't mind removing it, will they?

> Fine in their own country, fine Irish/Christian women should cover themselves in Muslim countries if required too but not fine in my country.

> Integrate or leave.

> I am concerned about three things: 1) that Irish people will be disadvantaged either now or in the future due to the influx of so many other peoples to our country; 2) that the character/culture of Ireland will be changed beyond recognition; and 3) that there will be conflict between all these different peoples that are living on this small island. [...] We're, of course, no strangers to ethnic conflicts in Ireland ourselves. Ireland saw a migration of people from southern Scotland/northern England to Ulster several centuries ago. At the time, that migration resulted in a 10 per cent migrant population on the island. We can all see how well that migration has gone.

It could be argued that, in Ireland, the primary concern is of the loss of 'Irishness' through the dilution of Irish culture and we can see in statements such as Mr. Quinn's assertion that 'Irish girls don't wear headscarves' the emergence of a politics of belonging which defines Irishness, not in terms of birth or blood, but also in terms of behaviour.

One letter writer to the *Irish Independent* expressed concerns that 'non-ethnic Irish women who have citizenship by birth or naturalisation will take up positions in the public service. I do not want, as a woman, to see religion or symbols of religion as the face of public service' and emphasised that 'once

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99 http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/outsidein/2008/07/03/the-hijab/.

one leaves or escapes the land of one's birth and enters a new society with a different culture and beliefs, one must adapt to existing values inherent in the new nation. When in Rome...' (Malone, 2009). Although a somewhat oversimplified representation of such views, this letter expresses a number of issues that lie at the heart of the accommodation/integration/assimilation – and tolerance - debate.

Throughout the hijab debate, the notions of 'ethnic' Irish and Christian were often conflated in the simplistic (but common) perception that 'to be Irish is to be Catholic'. Indeed, for O'Hanlon (2008), Ireland 'is not a secular State, but a Catholic one in which the Holy Trinity is invoked in the very first words of the Constitution. That leaves us much more open to a charge of hypocrisy on the issue, since we are seemingly willing to uphold some religious values and traditions but not others', while O'Brien (2008) observes that 'those who seek to justify their opposition to the hijab on the grounds that this is a Christian country are suffering from a large irony deficit. As Christians, we should be to the forefront in respecting the stranger'. However, an Irish person may also be Muslim, as was the father of Shekinah Egan, the school girl whose headscarf sparked the debate and, as one interviewee emphasised: 'What about Irish Muslims?' (Z). Within the discourse of the definition of Irishness and the 'preservation of the nation', the hijab has been clearly related to ethnicity and 'foreignness' and the veiled (Muslim) woman construed as a symbol of the (potential) loss of 'Irishness' and Irish values and the 'native' Irish Muslims have been largely ignored.

The overwhelming assumption seemed to be that there is a unitary Irish nation with cultural values that is accessible by newcomers to the country. This is expressed in one letter in the *Irish Independent*: 'immigrants to this country who accept the western way and may I say so the Christian way of life and who contribute positively to our society are welcome. We cannot drop our Christian ethos to suit special groups… The Irish nation has the ways and means to maintain our ethos and show Muslims that we want integration, absorption, and not separation. People who wear Islamic dress in Ireland (or elsewhere) are seen as Muslims. We should see people as humans first' (McCullagh, 2007).

Here, non-Christians are clearly defined as 'others', and their presence is permitted on condition that they behave - and dress - according to the standards of the Western Christian nation of Ireland and 'contribute positively', revealing not only a boundary but also 'conditions of integration' to acceptance. Again, the general perception seems to be that all Muslims in Ireland are 'newcomers/immigrant' and not 'natives'.

In the context of schools more specifically, the accent has also been on 'integration/assimilation' with a strong emphasis on downplaying differences and on 'treating everybody the same'. In the Department of Education's statement, the emphasis is placed on school uniform as an instrument of integration: 'School uniforms are generally viewed by schools as a means of providing a group identity for pupils, thus eliminating possible competition amongst students in matters of dress and the wearing of jewellery, etc'.[100]

In the spirit of 'treating everybody the same' most schools have been reluctant to develop a formal policy on cultural diversity (Smyth & al, 2009). Views downplaying differences were deliberately expressed in a teachers' union submission to the government on the hijab issue: 'If we focus on what we all have in common and respect difference, we reduce the significance of the difference… If we focus on difference we never get to the point of understanding what we have in common. To focus on difference can encourage the development of fundamentalist viewpoints... The emphasis should be on our common humanity & shared human experiences in the context of our tradition of respect for equality and liberty'.[101] Apart from diminishing the value of difference, and indeed problematising it, in one sentence 'difference' is equated with 'fundamentalism'. While it does not directly link the

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100 Report by the Minister for Integration on the need for a Guidance Note to Schools when reviewing their policies on School Uniforms

101 Submission from ASTI (Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland), 'Consultation on Clothing in Schools'

Muslim headscarf with fundamentalism, this connection echoes the underlying fear that if the headscarf led the way to greater Muslim visibility and greater Muslim affirmation in Irish society, it could possibly represent a first step towards the establishment of Islamic fundamentalism.

While our interviewees did not engage in an abstract debate about concepts of 'integration', 'multiculturalism' or 'discrimination', they did touch on these issues on a more 'grounded' 'pragmatic' level' and discussed the 'smaller/more practical' and real-life concerns and issues they saw as important to address:

The Muslim students remarked that, aware of the negative perceptions associated with the hijab, some Muslims make a deliberate choice not to wear it to avoid being instantly 'labelled':

> I do know that there's a part of the Muslim population ... who don't wear the headscarf because they're afraid that... it'll impact the way people treat them... to reach higher positions or to be accepted in certain places... [...] so that people would adapt... more easily to them.... so they'd mistake them for like... other European countries or something instead of... you know... labelling them as Muslims... (M)
> So clearly then there is this fear within the Muslim community that there isn't a tolerance level within the Irish population... (Z)
> The same thing in our college... we do have a lot of Muslims, there are a couple of... two or three that I've seen... actually professors... but they don't have the headscarf on... [...] it also could be like... because they want to fit in more or they're more comfortable that way... (M)

Associated with this, a few people mentioned the issue of the relative numbers of Muslim pupils in schools as an important factor:

> ...the difficulty is if they drift towards a smaller number of schools... you know there are some schools where, for various reasons, they were made very welcome and the parents like those schools... but if the Islamic population in the school becomes half the school then it's no longer the school that it's originally set out to be... [...] I think tensions could emerge and, strange thing, the result could be that the quality of the school would go down... (DM)

> ...I think it was just when... when they became more than 10 in a school or something... the management started to get anxious... and also... I think... once parents start coming in then as well and making demands and saying, you know... "we know our rights" or... you know, that's when the difficulty starts... (AM)

This issue of the 'number of Muslim pupils' in any given school – and thus of their 'visibility' but also of their potential 'strength' or 'weight' as a group capable to formulate requests – relates directly to the 'pragmatics' of accommodation and integration as it refers to 'how much' one is prepared – as a school but also as a community / a society – to welcome, to accommodate, to integrate – and possibly to assimilate. It can represent an indication of the nature (and 'quantity') of diversity one can deal with/accommodate.

Another 'pragmatic' issue highlighted by our interviewees was the training of teachers in dealing with increased religious and cultural diversity in Irish schools. The importance of such training was emphasised; while such training is currently available in teacher training colleges, it is, as many regretted, only optional, not compulsory:

> ...it's an option... there are courses there... in pre-service, in places like here... certainly there's a lot of culture and language in it, English as an additional language, there's good resources on that but... teaching about world religions... religious diversity... are optional electives... and I personally feel it needs to be an integral part of their training at this stage... (AM)

...like they have so many training days... why not introduce it into it... we're a religious minority, we're all Muslims here, that work in the centre but we're very different in that... there's Central Africans, there's North Africans, there's Irish, there's Europeans... we've had the intercultural training because it's a necessity... (SK)

Similarly, DM explained that in one teacher training school they had introduced an alternative, more 'philosophical' course for teachers who did not want to teach Catholic religious education, but that this course was not popular and that in another college, they had to withdraw a similar project because of lack of interest. As DM emphasised, it is difficult to determine the reasons behind such lack of enthusiasm; whether it highlights a lack of interest in diversity issues or a more practical belief that Irish schools will not be significantly affected by the religious and cultural diversity of their pupils, and thus that concentrating on the core teaching elements (and the teaching of Catholic religion) remains the focus of their training and their work.

One interviewee, AS, went further in suggesting that, in addition to improving the training of Irish teachers (and making 'diversity awareness' a compulsory element of that training), the Irish education system would benefit from including Muslim teachers in schools, despite the fact that their current absence was justified by a lack of recognised qualifications:

> ...I have been today on the Department (of Education) website and they have something that they call 'special needs'... well, can this be classified as a special need... you need to get Muslim teachers who can teach in these schools and they have to be exempted from certain conditions because it is really a special need... Muslim teachers will have an understanding of Islam and Muslim cultures that... has a dimension that will be definitely missed if we are talking about non-Muslim teachers... that would make the teachers' job easier and that would make the process of education easier for the children as well... (AS)

Finally, several interviewees emphasised dialogue and 'common sense' as another 'basic', 'pragmatic' issue in the 'integration vs. segregation debate', suggesting, as PW put it, that 'a bit of give and take' can go a long way in resolving challenging issues such as the hijab. In that respect, two individuals emphasised the importance – and current lack – of an independent 'mediator', a 'buffer' between minority/religious communities and Government/institutions, a role the NCCRI had successfully played for ten years (1998-2008), including in the case of the hijab, before being replaced by the Office of the Minister of Integration.[102]

> ...I like to think that the organisation that I was part of [the NCCRI] is one of the reasons why there hasn't been a lot of controversy around it and that we were extremely pro-active in... seeking out a way which would... provide for the reasonable accommodation of religious symbols in the schools and indeed in other settings... [...] and our view on it was, that it's... it should be a matter for negotiation, you know... there should be certain principles but there needs to be some dialogue and negotiation with the communities themselves in terms of how it is enacted... (PW)

> ...I believe they did great work [the NCCRI]... they were a great team of people and they challenged, they really did... the misconceptions, all that... both sides of the facts, they challenged it... I believe they did great work and now we're at a loss, we're lost without them... we're not at a loss without the Minister for Integration... (SK)

The importance and value of such a mediating agent was highlighted in two organisations - the Gardaí (police) and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) - which have created a Racial, Intercultural & Diversity Office and a National Inclusion and Integration Committee respectively, each with dedicated

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102 Now converted into the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration

inclusion officers, which have proved extremely successful in reaching out to and interacting with migrant communities.

However, if in effect, the hijab became a focus for debates about immigrants, and in particular, 'Islamic immigrants', despite the many calls to engage with this community and 'defuse potential tensions before they arise' (O'Brien, 2008), the only answer to the multitude of questions raised by the hijab controversy were the 'Guidelines' to schools released in 2008 (see previous section).

The main teacher unions welcomed the Ministers' statement; for the general secretary of the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI), the recommendations 'fully respect the various religious backgrounds of students in our schools while taking account of the legal position', while the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) described the recommendations as 'sensible and practical' (Mac Cormaic, 2008). However, these guidelines, representing a relatively 'laisser-faire' approach, did not fully satisfy either the supporters or the opponents of the headscarf in Irish schools.

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties officially criticised the Government putting the decision back on to school principals, thereby 'passing on' their responsibilities; Director Mark Kelly said: 'This would appear to be a policy not to have a policy …. In the absence of a nationally-agreed and enforceable policy, there remains a danger that individual principals could interpret this to permit them to exclude a child for wearing religious dress, such as the hijab. The Ministers should live up to their responsibility to close this loophole' (Carr, 2008). In September 2010, they released a consultation paper on the issue of the headscarf in Irish school highlighting the potential issues – not addressed by the Government – of Muslim girls being turned down by a school for requesting to wear the hijab and of school policies becoming opposed to hijab after students' enrolments.

Similarly, two Muslim interviewees expressed their disappointment with the guidelines and highlighted not only that the absence of a strong 'legal basis' could prove problematic in the future but that it had already proved so:

> The guidelines... yeah, I saw them, they were... they were petty in a sense I believe... I didn't believe it changed anything because all it told the schools was 'to do your best' and... schools believed they were doing their best initially... (SK)

> ...that was the mistake, they shouldn't have said 'up to every school to decide' but actually because they... before issuing the guidelines they have referred it to an item in the Constitution saying... according to this item that... religion has to be respected and... what does it mean 'has to be respected' if you do not allow them to wear the hijab... so I don't think there was a need for... legislation [...] maybe there is a need for... a clear statement... a clear instruction issued by the Department of Education as an explanation to what we see in the legislation [Constitution]... maybe something like that would help... (AS)

Similarly, the 2010 Guidelines to Catholic schools were not legally binding, as one interviewee acknowledges.

> ...these are guidelines... well, it's not the role of the JMB or me to... to make rules for schools... but we got all the... all the trusts on board so... this is for secondary Catholic schools so... new lay trusts have been formed in the last few years and we got... we got them in on this .. I think there's still some issues in here that I've left kind of open... for example the wearing of the school crest... I think the crest is also significant and it has come up... I've heard maybe of 4 or 5 cases now and I'm sure there's a lot more, these are just the ones I've heard anecdotally... situations where there might be a cross on the crest... and a student or a parent plucks out the stitching of the cross out of the crest or maybe the whole crest

altogether... and... that can be seen as a hostile... subversive act by management... so... again, people just come to me and said "what should we do in that situation?"... (AM)

One interviewee, whose five children have gone through the Irish education system, also gave concrete examples where schools simply refused to accept the hijab, refused to accommodate certain demands or, more 'subtly' ostracised Muslim students. She explained how her eldest girls were allowed to wear the hijab in their secondary school (after they had been refused in a previous one) but were 'not allowed in the school photo'; and her youngest girl was not allowed to take part in the school play because of her hijab. Finally she emphasised that the accommodation of Muslim pupils in secondary schools was not restricted to girls and that, despite the 'encouragements to accommodate' made in both sets of guidelines, some issues could still prove problematic and even 'backfire' if the challenge proved too great for the school:

> ...now my son went to a Christian ethos school... there was a lot of Muslims in the school, well a sufficient number... they made a request to have an area where they could pray during the lunch hour, not during school time, during the lunch hour... absolutely no... they approached the head of the mosque here and asked him if he'd kindly write a letter, to explain the reasons why... it was done on three occasions and refused every single time... [...] it would have been sent in 2010, the last letter, and it was refused again... definitely... and then they stopped taking Muslims into the school altogether... they didn't say 'Muslims don't get in', they said... 'primarily Catholics... and then Christians... and then none... non-Christian faiths'... (SK)

This leads us to the **third topos – the 'Religion in schools – and beyond' topos**.

As we have said earlier, the hijab debate is not *only* about religion, however, it is *also* about religion, about how faith and religious beliefs are expressed, acknowledged and valued/respected. Unlike France or Turkey where the state has consciously been constructed as secular, Ireland has always enjoyed a close relationship with religious institutions, notably the Catholic Church. This special history has resulted in rather unique arguments both *for* and *against* the hijab.

Articles 44 and 42 in the Irish Constitution have tended to be interpreted as making pluralism and tolerance essential; and the fact that 'freedom of conscience and freedom of profession and practice of religion' are guaranteed would seem to translate into permitting wearing Muslim headscarves and other religious symbols.

However, in order to fully understand the issues for students of minority religion in Irish schools, we need to consider the denominational nature of the education system. Within the secondary sector over half (57%) of all schools are denominational institutions (Lodge & Lynch, 2004). The majority are owned and controlled by the Catholic Church while the remainder is under Protestant management. Vocational schools and community colleges, while defined as multidenominational, in practice are Roman Catholic in ethos; while community schools are officially described as interdenominational, denominational bodies also form part of their management structure. All comprehensive schools are denominationally managed.

A significant example of the influence of the Catholic Church in education is the exemption from equality legislation for religious-run institutions, where schools can refuse admission based on ethos.[103] The Employment Equality Act 1998, while in general outlawing discrimination on the grounds of religion, also contains a provision allowing schools employing teachers to discriminate on

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103 Under section 7(3) of the Equal Status Act 2000 schools can discriminate by giving preference to in admissions to children of a particular denomination, or by refusing to admit a child where such refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

a similar basis.[104] These provisions can be seen as perpetuating a tradition of segregated education and thus, when a pupil of a religious belief other than Catholic is admitted into a Catholic secondary school, it can be regarded as a 'privilege' rather than a 'right'.

Thus, while the Education Act 1998 clearly outlines the rights and obligations of the state and of schools, these are somewhat 'qualified' by what has been termed the 'ethos let-out clause' (Lodge & Lynch, 2004). Almost all rights and obligations are subject to 'having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school', which Boards of Management are obliged to uphold, and which could involve potential conflict with the rights of parents and students whose of a different ethos.

It is clear the denominational nature of schools and the primacy attributed to the maintenance of ethos of religious institutions are significant factors which can conflict with the rights of religious minorities in Ireland and potentially lead to discrimination (Hogan, 2005). This was emphasised in the submission of the Joint Managerial Body (JMB), which stated that, while they are in favour of freedom of religious expression and the use of religious symbols in schools, this freedom is subject to the need to uphold the ethos of the school. According to Hogan (2005), the importance of maintaining the religious ethos of a school could be an argument to support a ban on the Muslim headscarf if a case eventually came before an Irish court.

The importance of maintaining the 'ethos' of a school was mentioned by some interviewees but, as we have seen earlier, the issue of the 'number' of Muslim pupils rather than their 'visibility' was perceived as potentially challenging:

> ...for example the girls, Islamic girls go to the Roman Catholic schools, particularly those with a religious ethos, particularly where there are nuns... even there, they're saying that... the balance is now changing... and if you have an Islamic minority in Catholic schools is one thing... as it grows it's changing the ethos of the school and it could become more difficult... (DM)

However the 'visibility issue' was also raised by two of our Muslim respondents: a mother (SK) who indicated that, in the (Catholic) schools her daughters had attended, the issue of maintaining the image/perception of the school as a *Catholic* school was often emphasised by the school management, and a student (Z), who recalled that her hijab had attracted attention while attending an open day at a (prospective) secondary school:

> ...I was sitting in the front and the Principal of that particular school she... like... kind of pointed towards me and was like 'this is a CATHOLIC school'... you know, and I was kind of like 'oh, I'm not going to this school' (laughs) ... you know, because you... the first time you get a bad vibe you just don't want to be there, you know... (Z)

The NCCRI has argued that those who advocated 'a ban on the hijab might not have fully considered the consequences of such a ban with regard to *all* religious symbols and obligations in the schools' (NCCRI, 2007; Hemani, 2008), highlighting the fact that banning the symbols of Christianity was not what those who opposed the hijab in Irish schools had in mind. Introducing rules against the hijab or other religious symbols is 'likely to result in tension with those communities where no tension existed before', said Philip Watt, adding that 'The banning of religious symbols or obligations solely aimed at one religious community or indeed all religious faiths is potentially discriminatory and likely to be tested in Irish law' (Neville, 2008).

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104 Under the Employment Equality Act 1998 'certain religious, educational and medical institutions may give more favourable treatment on the religion ground to an employee or prospective employee where it is reasonable to do so in order to maintain the religious ethos of the institution'.

Indeed, Catholicism, as the hegemonic belief system in Ireland, tends to be perceived as 'the normal way of life', whereas Islam, as a minority belief system, is perceived not only as religious, but also as ideological and somewhat backward, and construed as potentially 'divisive'. It can be suggested that it is not religion which is under attack by those who demand a ban on the hijab, but rather the presence of cultural and ethnic 'others' who, as we have seen in the previous section, are likely to be construed as 'outside what is considered normal and acceptable within Ireland'.

While one Muslim student compared her hijab with a religious emblem common in Irish schools, others in the Muslim community emphasised the distinctiveness of the hijab in Islam, in an attempt to 'exempt' it from the 'religious symbols debates' that have been raging in other European countries.

> ...with most schools in Ireland they have a crest... in the crest there's a cross... so if the crest has a cross that's kind of representing your religion, why can't we wear our... our thing... **(Z)**

Speaking at a lecture entitled 'From Mantillas to Hijabs: Are religious symbols acceptable in Ireland today?' in March 2007, Imam Hussein Halawa of the ICCI emphasised that the hijab was not just a religious symbol but 'an Islamic obligation'. He added: 'Just as nobody had the right to prevent people going to church, nobody has right to prevent Muslim women wearing the hijab'.[105]

Similarly for one interviewee:

> ...the hijab is not a religious symbol... hijab is an Islamic obligation, that's how Muslims see it... now if you ban an Islamic obligation, how do you expect us to react?... [...] they think that this is just to bring people closer to remove... but in fact you are dividing people with such a decision... because the hijab for Muslims is an essential component of their religious practices... if you deprive them of that, then what do you expect them to be... it's a horrible mistake... (AS)

However, some have used the debate to criticise the very presence of religion in Irish schools and argued that schools should be secular and ban all religious symbolism. In a letter to the *Irish Times*, Groarke (2009) argued that 'in a post-modern, multicultural Ireland, the time has come to remove religious teaching from our state education system' and explicitly included Catholicism within this argument. Similarly, one opinion article argued that the denominational system could force government to accept religious schools that might undermine democratic principles. The author advocated that 'the State… realise that the publicly funded education system is no place for the promotion of particular religions. Only a religiously neutral State education system can protect the education system from becoming a vehicle through which democratic values are undermined' (McCrea, 2009). More recently, Eoin Daly (2011) argued in the same paper that a 'universal model of non-denominational education' was needed in contemporary Ireland, and suggested that only such an approach could provide an effective protection of religious freedom in Irish schools. However, while the idea of a truly secular education system was mentioned by (only) two of our interviewees (JC & CB), neither of them could foresee such a development in Ireland in the near future:

> ...it might be lovely in theory, and I'm not saying I am opposed to it in theory, but the rights, the constitutional rights of the vast majority of the people at the moment, their rights are to have a denominational education if they want to believe in it... they do... that's constitutionally secure... and you would not... you couldn't do that without a constitutional referendum, you couldn't change that, and I don't think you would get a constitutional referendum passed on those lines in contemporary Ireland... and I think... talk like that is interesting... in an abstract way, an intellectual way, it takes you away... but in terms of practical politics, I don't think it is... (JC)

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105 *Irish Times*, March 16, 2007.

While such a strictly secular school system is unlikely to come about, the 2011 debate on the patronage of (primary) schools may however be accompanied by a reconsideration of the structure of post-primary education, including the development of 'multi-denominational' secondary schools and the possibility of a Muslim secondary school.

3.5.4. Concluding remarks on the case study

How the hijab is perceived is necessarily shaped by the cultural context in which it is worn, ideological traditions and prevailing perceptions, not only of Islam or even of religion generally, but also of women, of 'foreigners' and of 'difference'. Implicit within the opinions expressed are also nationalised notions of belonging and of the nature of Irishness and Irish values. Although the debate never gained the vigour of the headscarf debates elsewhere, Ireland's controversy provides an interesting angle on these interrelated issues and the more general conceptions of 'the new Ireland'.

The 2007 issue served as a touchstone for wider debates about Islam, identity and immigration in Ireland – until then the Muslim community in Ireland had been not only 'well integrated' but, in a sense, relatively 'ignored'; and this event sparked a questioning about the potential for controversy of Muslims and Muslim practices in Ireland. It also highlighted that, as Hopkins argues, Muslims in Europe are often placed in a difficult position as 'they are routinely viewed as 'in' Europe, but not 'of' Europe' (2011: 253). This was demonstrated in the Irish debate by the frequent conflation of 'Muslims' and 'foreigner/immigrant' and the tendency by both the opponents and the supporters of the hijab to overlook the existence of Irish Muslims (both Irish-born children and Irish converts). However, as the Muslim community is evolving and diversifying, and the second generation beginning to emerge, these kinds of issues are likely to develop.

While this issue primarily concerned the 'presentation of self and interactions in the school context', as the debate evolved it also touched upon issues about 'curriculum' and the 'structure of the education system' through the denominational nature of Irish education. With regard to 'levels' of tolerance it can be argued that this issue ranges from 'non toleration' of the niqab by all education actors (even though this particular issue has not yet emerged) to general 'tolerance' (level 2) of the hijab in Irish schools – even though, as we have seen, such tolerance can be conditional on each school's assessment of the situation.

4. The Embodiment of Tolerance in Discourses and Practices addressing Cultural and Religious Diversity in the Political Sphere in Ireland

4.1. Introduction – the social, political and institutional context

In recent years, one area that has generated a great deal of attention from both academics and policymakers in Europe has been participation in electoral politics (Fanning et al. 2003; 2004; Fanning et al. 2009; Fanning and O'Boyle, 2010). Representation and participation in politics through voting and running for office can be seen by migrant and minority communities as a way of ensuring that their voices are part of the political process, while it can be perceived by political parties as either an asset or an intrusion disturbing traditional ways of doing politics. However, electoral participation is not the only way in which migrants and minorities – in other words, 'diversity' – can either contribute to, or challenge, the civic and political sphere of a country.

The participation and representation of migrants in various public institutions, for example, is also an important element of inclusion, as is the simple acknowledgment of their cultural difference or religious values and needs by the various organs of the state. At every level, various actors and institutions can either assist or reduce their capacity to integrate and fully participate in Irish society.

4.1.1. Main structures of central and local government

Ireland is a unitary parliamentary, representative democratic republic with two houses of the legislature and a directly elected head of state, the President, who exercises a mainly ceremonial role.[106] Political power rests mainly in the Government, led by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), indirectly elected by the Dáil.[107]

The Oireachtas, the national parliament of Ireland consists of the President of Ireland and the two houses: Dáil Éireann (the lower house) and Seanad Éireann (the Senate or upper house). Dáil Éireann is the dominant House of the legislature. Members of the Dáil (Teachta Dála or TDs), currently numbering 166, are directly elected by the people at least once in every five years under the single transferable vote form of proportional representation from multi-seat constituencies. Membership of the house is open to all Irish citizens who are aged at least 21 and permanently resident in the State.

The political landscape has been dominated for decades by two parties, Fianna Fáil, traditionally the largest party, and Fine Gael, historically opposed and competing entities, in a political system in which the fundamental cleavage was based on Civil War divisions rather than socio-economic issues. Both occupy the traditional centre ground. Currently the other main political parties represented in Dáil Éireann are the Labour Party and Sinn Féin. Since the early 1990s no single party has had a majority in the Dáil, and therefore coalition governments have been the norm. In 2011 there was a major political realignment, in which Fine Gael replaced Fianna Fail as the largest party, Labour rose to

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[106] The President however possesses certain powers and has absolute discretion in certain matters - for example, referring a Bill to the Supreme Court for a judgment on its constitutionality

[107] Article 28 of the Irish Constitution states that the Government may consist of no less than seven and no more than fifteen members, namely the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste (deputy prime minister) and up to thirteen other ministers. The Taoiseach is appointed by the President, after being nominated by Dáil Éireann. The remaining ministers are nominated by the Taoiseach and appointed by the President following their approval by the Dáil.

second, and Fianna Fáil dropped to third place. There is also a significant number of Independent TDs who are not members of any of the main political parties.

There is a permanent civil service responsible for running Government departments. The broader public service includes Government agencies and bodies, such as local authorities, Vocational Education Committees and An Garda Síochána (the Police).

Along with the central institutions, local government is organised through local authorities: 29 County Councils, 5 City Councils, 5 Borough Councils, and 75 Town Councils. At regional level there are also eight Regional Authorities and two Regional assemblies. Local elections are held every 5 years and members of the local community elect Councillors to represent the community in local authorities. Compared with other European countries, local government has very limited independent powers, but provides a wide variety of services such as: planning, housing, waste management and recycling, libraries, roads and public parks.

4.1.2. Political participation and citizenship

Voting rights

In order to be included on the Electoral Register compiled each year, individuals need to be over eighteen and have been ordinarily resident in the State on the 1st September in the year before the Register comes into force (15th February) which means that they need to have been residents for only 6 months.[108] Irish citizens living abroad cannot be entered on the register of electors and therefore cannot vote in an election or referendum in Ireland (except Irish officials on duty abroad who have a postal vote).

In Ireland, individuals' right to vote depends on both their citizenship and the 'type of election':
  - *Irish citizens* may vote at *every election and referendum*;
  - *British citizens* may vote at *Dáil elections, European elections and local elections*;
  - *Other resident EU citizens* may vote at *European and local elections*
  - *Resident non-EU citizens* may vote at *local elections only*.

As all residents may vote in local elections, Ireland has among the most favourable conditions regarding political participation for migrants in the EU and, according to the latest Migrant Policy Index (MIPEX, 2011), on this indicator, 'Immigrants benefit from Ireland's traditionally inclusive political community, a strong point for its integration policy. Tying third with the Netherlands after Finland and Norway, Ireland leads on local voting rights'. Provisions for the participation of foreign nationals in local elections go as far back as 1963.

Standing for election

Eligibility to stand for election mirrors eligibility to vote:

To stand for local elections individuals need to be ordinarily resident in Ireland and at least 18 years old, but do not need to be Irish citizens. Candidates may nominate themselves or be nominated by a local government elector registered in the area. Individuals may be nominated to stand in more than one area.

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[108] http://www.citizensinformation.ie

To be eligible for election as a member of the European Parliament (MEP) individuals must be over 21, Irish citizens or resident EU citizens, and must be nominated for election. Candidates may either nominate themselves or one elector for the constituency may nominate them.

To be eligible for membership of the Dáil or the Seanad individuals must be over 21 years of age and must be Irish citizens.

Access to the civil and public service

Non-citizens can work in the public service and, unlike some other European countries, there is no list of occupations from which they are excluded. The Public Appointments Service is the centralised provider of recruitment, assessment and selection services for the Civil Service. They also provide recruitment and consultancy services to local authorities, the Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochána and other public bodies. The Commission for Public Service Appointments is a separate body which sets standards for recruitment and selection to the civil service. In 2007 the Commission published a Code of practice for appointment to positions in the civil service and public service.[109]

Access to citizenship

In Ireland, individuals can qualify for citizenship either through birth in the country, descent from a citizen, or naturalisation.[110] Foreign nationals are eligible to naturalise after residence in the state for five of the previous eight years. Their application is subject to a considerable range of conditions, however, several of which include discretionary elements. These include being of 'good character', having an intention to continue to reside in the State and making a declaration of fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State. Applicants are also usually required to have been 'self-supporting' (and this is interpreted as not having been dependent on social welfare for the three years prior to application). People who are granted Irish citizenship have to swear an oath of fidelity to the nation.[111]

The Minister for Justice and Equality has 'absolute discretion' in granting an application for a certificate of naturalisation and may choose to waive certain conditions for naturalisation.[112] At €950.00, the fees for naturalisation are among the highest in Europe and North America (MIPEX, 2011). The average time from the date of application to a decision has been rather long at 23 months, but is currently being reduced. Since 2011, large collective citizenship ceremonies, where new citizens make a declaration of fidelity to the Irish nation and loyalty to the State and receive their certificate of naturalisation, have replaced individual declarations before a court. Finally, Irish citizens may hold the citizenship of another country without giving up their Irish citizenship.[113]

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[109] Commission for Public Service Appointments (2007)

[110] See section 2.1.3 on Citizenship policy. Irish citizenship law and policy has changed significantly in recent years. Until 2005 Ireland granted citizenship to anybody born on the territory (the *ius soli* principle). After a referendum in 2004 on a Constitutional amendment, changes in citizenship provisions were enacted which mean that any person born in Ireland after 1 January 2005 to non-Irish parents will not be automatically entitled to Irish citizenship unless one of the parents was legally resident in Ireland for at least three out of the four years preceding the child's birth (Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 2004).

[111] Irish oath of fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State: "I, (name in full), of..., having applied to the Minister for Justice and Equality for a certificate of naturalisation, hereby solemnly declare my fidelity to the Irish nation and my loyalty to the State".

[112] For example, if the applicant is of Irish descent or is the spouse of an Irish or naturalised person.

[113] Naturalised citizens, however, are liable in principle to have their Irish citizenship revoked if they voluntarily take up another citizenship (Handoll, 2010).

4.2. Exploring challenges to representation and participation in Irish civic and political life

4.2.1. Intolerant discourses in political life

Ireland has not seen the emergence of any real right-wing, anti-immigrant party, or indeed any significant political campaign or protest against immigrants as a reaction to its recent large-scale immigration. This is not to discount the evidence for significant underlying levels of racial discrimination. One anti-immigration voice has been the Immigration Control Platform (ICP), a single-issue political grouping which put up candidates in the 2002 and 2007 Irish general elections. It is not registered as a political party; its candidates ran as independents in the 2007 Irish general election, and nationally, its three representatives received less than 0.1% of the total votes cast. No candidates ran on this platform in the election of 2011.[114] O'Malley (2008) observed that, while Ireland has some 'favourable conditions' for the growth of a radical right party (i.e., rapid and large-scale immigration, current economic crisis and unemployment, etc), the space usually taken by such parties in other European countries is taken in Ireland by Sinn Féin, as 'its anti-establishment position and its radical nationalism might be attractive to the type of voter which, in another country, with a different nationalist past, might support a radical right-wing party'. However, as O'Malley emphasises, Sinn Féin is rather leftist and in favour of immigrant rights, mainly because its historical nationalist discourse is supportive of minorities' rights - 'to espouse an anti-immigrant platform would be dissonant to its nationalist mythology' (p.961).

It is noteworthy, also, that there has not been a strong emphasis on the 'security' issue connected with migration and diversity, unlike in other countries (UK, France for example), by either political parties or Government. Nor has 'Muslim radicalisation' come to the fore so far in Ireland. The Muslim community in Ireland is quite different in terms of origins and socio-demographic composition from that in other EU countries.[115] This, and the fact that the Irish Government and institutions have sought to establish a dialogue with the Muslim community and have allowed for some accommodation of religious practices (i.e., accommodating the hijab in schools) might be seen as the two main reasons for the absence of either major claims or problems with regard to Islam in Ireland.

Instances of intolerant and even 'racist' discourses, however, have recurred over the years, involving most extensively the African community. Following his election in Portlaoise in 2007, Ireland's first black mayor, Rotimi Adebari, was targeted by race-hate websites (O'Brien, 2007a); four years later, while running as a candidate in the general election and despite having acquired Irish citizenship, he was still subject to allegations about his history as an asylum seeker (Phelan and Ni Bhraonain, 2007).

Most notoriously, in 2008 the ICI lodged an official complaint with An Garda Siochana and with the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) in relation to an article written by Kevin Myers for the *Irish Independent* newspaper, questioning whether the article, titled 'Africa is giving nothing to anyone - apart from AIDS' had breached the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) decided not to prosecute because of the weaknesses of the legislation; the Press Council however concluded that the article did breach Principle 8 (Prejudice) of the Code of Practice in that it was likely to cause grave offence. It did not, however, determine that it was likely to stir-up hatred or that there was any intention to do so, and concluded that there were no clear grounds on which to make any findings in relation to the complaints under Principles 1 (Truth and accuracy), 3 (Fairness and honesty) and 4 (Respect for rights) of the Code.[116]

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[114] Although a small voice, the ICP is still active through its website - http://www.immigrationcontrol.org/index.html

[115] Compared with other EU countries, especially the neighbouring UK, the Muslim community in Ireland includes a great variety of ethnic and national origins including Malaysia, Somalia, South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Libya, Bosnia and Pakistan. Muslims in Ireland also have a distinctive social and economic background (Honohan and Rougier, 2010).

[116] http://presscouncil.ie/decided-by-the-press-council-after-referral/complainants-and-irish-independent-.1132.html

In October 2011, the Immigrant Council of Ireland launched a report documenting high levels of racist violence and harassment endured by migrants living in Dublin (Fanning & al., 2011). Speaking at the launch, Denise Charlton, chief executive of the ICI, said: 'This report illustrates very starkly the price being paid for our lack of consistent, effective and strong action against racism'. On November 25, 2011 leaders of the black community in Ireland organised a press conference in Dublin to demand that the government take action against racism.[117] They argued that immigrants in Ireland are 'under siege', and that there is a widespread regime of verbal, physical and psychological attacks on immigrants and on Black Africans in particular. They highlighted several recent examples such as an attack on a black woman in Cork, and a black security guard attacked and left for dead in Coolock (both in September 2011), the rape of a 16-year-old black girl in Athlone in November 2011, and the death of taxi driver Moses Ayanwole following a racist attack in the centre of Dublin the previous week. Highlighting the racist remarks made by Cllr Darren Scully a few days earlier,[118] which resulted in his resignation as Mayor of Naas, they called on the government to act to end racism in Ireland. During the press conference, the Nigerian Embassy's deputy head of mission Georges Alabi also noted how he himself and his wife have been racially abused, including through phone calls to his house (McCarthaigh, 2011).

Such examples were replicated in other minority racial communities, as the case study of the Sikh community below will further illustrate.

4.2.2. Opposition to - and facilitation of - the political mobilisation of minorities

Travellers' claim to recognition as an ethnic group has been the leading issue of recognition in recent years. This is not a 'new' issue, but it represents the main socio-political claim by a 'native', ethnic minority, and has gained momentum since 2008. In December 2008 the Irish Traveller Movement launched the Traveller Ethnicity campaign (ITM, 2009). They are supported by the Equality Authority, which emphasises that the lack of recognition as an ethnic group 'has negative practical implications in the promotion of equality of opportunity for Travellers and in the elimination of discrimination experienced by Travellers' (Equality Authority, 2006, p.8). Amnesty International is also promoting the petition. However, the Irish government does not officially recognise Travellers as an ethnic group and refers to them as a 'cultural group'. It is interesting to note that the category 'Irish Traveller' is a Census category in Britain, where Gypsies and Irish Travellers have been recognised by the courts to be two distinct ethnic groups, and thus have the full protection of the Race Relations Act (Commission for Racial Equality, 2006). In Ireland, while travellers are specifically protected under the Equal Status Act, 2000, it defines them only as follows: '"Traveller community" means the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.'

In December 2009 The Combined Third and Fourth Reports by Ireland to the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination stated:

> '…The Irish Government's view is that Travellers do not constitute a distinct group from the population as a whole in terms of race, colour, descent or ethnic origin. (...) Whether or not Travellers are considered to form a distinct ethnic group in Irish society is of no domestic legal significance. The key antidiscrimination measures - the Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989, the

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[117] http://www.thejournal.ie/immigrants-in-ireland-are-under-siege-say-black-community-leaders-289470-Nov2011/

[118] Speaking to KFM, Darren Scully, Mayor of Naas, co. Kildare, stated that he would no longer represent people of African origin in the town because of the 'aggressive' attitude he experienced when representations were made to him by black Africans, and that he would refer any black African seeking assistance from him to another of his council colleagues (see: Carroll and Deeney, 2011; Carroll, 2011; Hough and O Cionnaith, 2011; Telford, 2011).

Unfair Dismissals Acts 1997, the Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts specifically identify Travellers as a group whose interests are protected in legislation'.

According to Catherine Joyce, chair of the ITM: 'Ethnic status would provide greater protection of Travellers cultural independence under law. This would include official recognition of Traveller culture in the provision of housing, education, health services. For example, nomadism would have to be properly catered for in housing provision. It also would have implications in terms of ensuring Traveller representation in the political system. Furthermore, there is also an important symbolic meaning of Traveller Culture becoming validated as both distinct and valued within Irish society' (ITM, 2009).

In August 2010, Mary White, then Minister of State for Integration, announced that civil servants were preparing a document on 'the practical implications of recognising Travellers as a distinct ethnic group' (Parsons, 2010) – nothing came of this. At the Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights in October 2011, Justice Minister Alan Shatter again stated that 'serious consideration' was being given to the legal recognition of Travellers as an ethnic minority group. The announcement was welcomed by Pavee Point and the ITM, the latter arguing that such recognition would mean a move 'away from assimilation to a cherishing of our largest indigenous minority' (Mac Cormaic, 2011). Questioned again on the issue in the Dáil in February 2012, the Minister stated that 'consideration is still ongoing and I intend that the question will be before the Government for decision as soon as possible'.[119]

There are several active Traveller organisations (i.e., ITM, Pavee Point), but apart from this claim for recognition, Travellers have not been extensively involved in representative politics. One member of the Traveller community, Rosaleen McDonagh has run unsuccessfully for election to Seanad Eireann on the Dublin University Panel (TCD) as an independent candidate three times (2002, 2007 and 2011).

In terms of 'conventional (electoral) politics', the opportunity both to vote and stand in local elections by non-Irish nationals has been taken up to a certain extent by members of some minority groups, with significant differences by country of origin. For instance, research commissioned by the Immigrant Council of Ireland found marked differences across four immigrant national groups in political participation. Of four national groups researched, 50% of Nigerians were registered to vote compared with between 10 and 20 % of the other three national groups (Chinese, Indian, and Lithuanian). Over 70% of respondents said they did not know that they could register to vote while 60% of the Lithuanians surveyed indicated that they were not interested in registering (ICI, 2008).

The various political parties have also reacted to Ireland's new diversity in different ways. In 2003 Fanning, Mutwarasibo and Chadmayo undertook a survey of the main political parties in Ireland and found an absence of measures aimed at encouraging immigrants and ethnic minorities to become involved in Irish politics.[120] In a follow-up study published a few months before the June 2004 local elections, the same authors noted that although some of the political parties had taken positive steps to remove institutional barriers to the participation of immigrants, the measures were insignificant, and described the level of immigrant involvement in the main political parties as 'abysmal', as neither of the two parties that made up the coalition government had nominated immigrant candidates to contest the elections on their behalf. The report linked institutional barriers to immigrant participation in Irish political parties to racism in Irish society and called for urgent measures by the party leaderships against racism: 'Racism in Irish politics is a reality. The mono-cultural character of Irish politics is part of the problem of racism in Ireland' (Fanning et al 2004: 8).

A survey before the 2007 General Election found that most of the political parties had postponed work on recruiting immigrant and ethnic minority members until after the election. This was interpreted as

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[119] Dáil Éireann, Vol. 755, No. 2, 14.02.12.
[120] Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Labour, Green Party and Sinn Féin. In 2004 the survey was also sent to the Progressive Democrats (now defunct).

'pragmatic indifference' to immigrants given that only Irish and UK citizens could vote or stand in General Elections (Chadmayo et al, 2007).

However, in their latest survey of Irish political parties in relation to immigrants and integration the authors detected some commitment to integration and 'tangible political efforts' to engage with immigrants. Prior to the 2009 local elections the Office of the Minister for Integration funded initiatives on voter awareness among immigrants run by Dublin City, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire and Rathdown and Cork County Councils (Fanning et al, 2009). Non-government organisations also ran a campaign to encourage more immigrants in 10 local authority areas to register to vote (New Communities Partnership and the Africa Centre, 2010). Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael appointed integration officers and both parties ran high-profile campaigns to attract Polish members. By April 2009 all the parties, with the exception of Sinn Féin, had selected a number of immigrant candidates to represent them in the local elections (Fanning et al, 2009). Four of these were elected.

In 2010, the Immigrant Council of Ireland developed a manifesto setting out priority areas of reform to assist political parties in the development of their election manifestos, and in September 2010 they undertook a 'Count Us In' campaign to remind political parties and candidates that thousands of those eligible to vote in the 2011 general election would be migrants who have been granted citizenship as well as second generation migrants. The campaign's other aims were also to raise awareness among naturalised Irish citizens of their right to vote in the General Election, and to remind political parties and candidates of the need to engage with migrants when canvassing. Four independent candidates of immigrant backgrounds contested the 2011 General Elections – none were elected.

Aside from conventional electoral politics, migrant communities have also engaged in active participation and representation through the development of a variety of community structures and networks. In May 2006 the Immigrant Council of Ireland published its first *Directory of Migrant Led Organisations* in response to a need for a centralised information resource on the location of these organisations and the services they offered. Over the years, some of these organisations ceased to exist while new groups have emerged, and in 2009 a second edition was published, listing 61 organisations, demonstrating a wide range of supports and activities in civic, commercial and community spheres (ICI, 2009).

4.2.3. Public policies of inclusion and exclusion

Contemporary concerns for equality and inclusion may be seen in current legislation that forbids discrimination in employment and services (in both the public and private sectors), on grounds including race (including nationality), religion (or lack thereof), and membership of the Traveller community. However, Ireland has not signed the European Convention of Nationality nor the convention on Minority Languages.

Since Ireland's migration turn in the late 1990s/early 2000s, the Irish Government has introduced several measures in response to the changes and increasing diversity in Irish society. These include a 'Know Racism' campaign, to stimulate awareness of racism and respect for cultural diversity in 2001, and the National Action Plan Against Racism (NPAR) 2005-2008, designed to provide a strategic direction for a more intercultural inclusive society in Ireland.[121]

In 2007 the Government introduced the post of Minister of State for Integration and established an Office of the Minister for Integration (OMI) to develop and co-ordinate integration policy across Government departments, agencies and services. In 2008, the OMI published '*Migration Nation: Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management*' setting out the key principles of state

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[121] The publication of the Plan was in fulfilment of a commitment given at the World Conference against Racism in Durban 2001. Ireland was one of the leading States putting a National Action Plan Against Racism in place.

policy with regard to integration as: 1) a partnership approach between the Government, non-Governmental organisations and civil society bodies, 2) strong links between integration policy and wider state social inclusion measures, strategies and initiatives, 3) a clear public policy focus that avoids the creation of parallel societies and urban ghettoes, and 4) a commitment to effective local delivery mechanisms that align services to migrants with those for indigenous communities (OMI, 2008).

A Ministerial Council was established in 2010 to advise the Minister of State for Integration on issues faced by migrants in Ireland. The Council consisted of 74 members and four regional fora.[122] Members of the Council were appointed for a period of five years and each regional forum was to meet two or three times a year. The inaugural meetings of the regional fora took place in October and November 2010, however, no subsequent activities have been reported since then, and it seems the Ministerial Council is no longer in operation.[123] Questioned on its activities in the Dáil in February 2012, the Minister for Justice and Equality stated that 'The position is that no meetings of the Ministerial Council on Integration were held in 2011 as the future of the Council is under consideration and I will make a decision on the matter shortly'.[124]

In 2011, the OMI became the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI), with a cross-departmental mandate to develop and co-ordinate integration policy across Government Departments, agencies and services. Its functions include the promotion of the integration of legal immigrants into Irish society, the management of the resettlement of refugees admitted as part of the United Nations Resettlement Programme, and the administration of funding from national and EU sources to promote integration. While the overall responsibility for the promotion and coordination of integration measures rests with the OPMI, no specific minister is in charge of the office and the actual delivery of integration services is the responsibility of mainstream government departments.

Overall, Ireland's new ethnic and cultural 'diversity' has been relatively well perceived, it has been seen as an 'enrichment' and a 'revitalization' of society and overall the experience of most migrant communities is a positive one. However, there are also concerns that there might be 'too much' diversity which has potentially negative implications for Irish society and 'Irishness' (Honohan & Rougier, 2010). Minorities' participation in Irish society is not always smooth and, as we will see, not every claim for recognition or representation in the political/civic arena has been accommodated, revealing variations in Ireland's policies of inclusion and exclusion.

Access to citizenship, a significant benchmark of inclusion in society and political life, may be seen (again in comparative European terms) as relatively inclusive in principle. For many years, the numbers of those naturalising were very low, due to small number of applications, slow processing and a rather restrictive approach. There was no focus on encouraging naturalisation. In recent years this has changed considerably. Increasing numbers are naturalising, and the process has been speeded up, though the numbers refused are still high, and there is no process of appeal. In addition the government has set up highly-publicised, large scale citizenship ceremonies as a sign of welcoming the 'new Irish'.

According to Department of Justice annual reports the number of applications for naturalisation has steadily increased in recent years. A total of 10,885 applications were received in 2008, a 36% increase on the previous year - 7,827 applications were processed and 3,117 certificates of naturalisation were issued. In 2009, 27,765 applications for a certificate of naturalisation were received, representing an increase of 155% on 2008 levels. A total of 25,582 applications were processed during 2009; of the 7,329 eligible applications processed, 5,868 were approved and 1,461

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[122] Close to 500 valid applications were received. Applicants were required to have been legally residing in the State for more than two years or to have acquired citizenship.

[123] http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/aboutus-ministerialcouncil-overview-en#more

[124] Dáil Éireann, Vol. 755, No. 2, 14.02.12.

were refused. A total of 4,531 certificates of naturalisation were issued during the year. Finally in 2010, 25,796 applications for a certificate of naturalisation were received - 20,723 applications were processed during 2010 with 15,083 deemed to be invalid or ineligible. Of the 5,669 eligible applications processed, 4,539 were approved and a total of 6,394 certificates of naturalisation were issued during the year.[125]

Although the above figures provide a certain amount of information, it is difficult to fully analyse them. The Department of Justice does not publish disaggregated data detailing the numbers of applications submitted in any given year, when those applications are actually granted or refused and, if refused, the reasons for the refusal (ICI 2011).[126]

4.2.4. Focus and methodology of the research on political life

In order to explore in more depth and details what the levels of acceptance: *intolerance – tolerance – respect*, mean in the area of political life in Ireland and how they manifest themselves, we have chosen to focus on a (relatively recent) challenge relating to religious and cultural diversity in Irish institutions.

We examine the controversies that emerged in 2007 when a member of the Sikh community applied for membership in the Garda (Police) Reserve. The applicant, who had taken part in the training process, was informed just before being commissioned that he would not be allowed to wear his turban with the uniform. The man refused to take off his turban and thus did not take up his post on the Garda Reserve. The issue sparked an important media and political debate. It involved a primarily religious (though also cultural), relatively 'new', and (almost exclusively) immigrant minority, and represents an issue of 'non-toleration'/'non-accommodation' of religious/cultural diversity in the exercise of public service in Ireland.

Our case study included both desk research and empirical fieldwork. The desk research consisted of collecting and analysing the available scholarly literature, statistical data, media coverage, internet blogs, parliamentary proceedings, consultation papers and policy documents related to the challenge explored. The fieldwork consisted of semi-structured qualitative interviews and a discussion group.

Seven interviews were conducted between November 2011 and February 2012 with representatives from the Sikh community in Ireland, former and current politicians, representatives from NGOs working with migrants, and migrant candidates. Interviewees spoke not only about the particular challenge of the turban but also about the general context of minorities' political participation and representation in Ireland. Some respondents agreed to be identified; but others preferred to be anonymised; accordingly, we decided to identify all respondents by acronyms only in order to maintain a balance amongst them. (The list of interviews is presented in Annex 4.)

An interview guide was developed from our initial desk research and adapted to each respondent (see Annex 6). The interviews started with a brief presentation of the project, the case study and the kinds of issues we were interested in, and a few background questions about the respondent. The interviews took place in the respondents' offices, in UCD, or, in some cases, in coffee shops, and lasted between thirty minutes and two hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

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[125] Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Annual Reports, 2008, 2009 & 2010.
[126] Although there are difficulties with the concept of naturalisation rates, and these are not fully comparable especially in societies with stronger ius soli provisions such as Ireland, some information may be obtained from the fact that Ireland's apparent rate is the second-lowest in the EU. According to figures published by Eurostat, the EU27 average was 23 per 1,000 resident foreigners, whereas in Ireland's the rate was only six. See http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat

We provided respondents with an explanation of the recording and transcribing process, and offered to let them see the transcript in case they wanted to add or correct anything – all requested to see the transcriptions and some sent back additional comments and clarifications, which were included in the transcriptions.

A discussion group was organised with experts and practitioners in the field of migrants' rights and political representation on Thursday 16 February 2012 in Dublin. In addition to the two researchers from the Irish ACCEPT Team, 7 people took part (see Annex 8). At the start of the session, we briefly outlined our research so far and gave them a list of topics for discussion (see Annex 10). With the participants' agreement, we recorded the 2-hour session.

Combining data from the secondary sources gathered during the desk research with the empirical data gathered through the interviews and the discussion group, this case study provides a comprehensive picture of a particular challenge to tolerance in Irish political and civic life in the case of a minority/religious group. The qualitative data were analysed using a critical discourse analysis approach (Wodak, 2001; Wodak and Meyer, 2009) and the main discursive topoi (argumentation strategies) are highlighted and discussed.

4.3. Case study 3 – The Sikh turban in the Garda Reserve

4.3.1. Sikhs in Ireland

Immigration of Sikhs to the island of Ireland goes back at least to the early 1900s. Sikh immigrants were noted in what is now Northern Ireland in the late 1920s. These were mainly former members of the British army, originally from India via East Africa and Britain. There were 219 Sikhs in Northern Ireland at the time of the 2001 Census,[127] most coming from the Punjab. The Northern Ireland Sikh Association was formed in 1990 and shortly afterwards the Northern Ireland Sikh Cultural and Community Centre was established in Derry.

It is impossible to find an exact number for members of the Sikh community in the Republic, as the category has not appeared in any population Censuses, and, while it is possible to 'write-in' a particular religion on the Census form, it does not seem that many do, as the term 'Sikh' does not appear at all in any Census results.

The Health Services state that there are approximately 2,000 Sikhs in Ireland,[128] while the website of the Irish Sikh Council gives a number of approximately 1,000. They are primarily of Punjabi descent, ranging from toddlers to the very elderly; the main community lives in the Dublin area, but there are also small communities in Cork, Clare, Limerick, Sligo and Roscommon. Sikhs work in the areas of medicine, IT, business, the hotel and catering industry. Most are first generation migrants, but there is also a small but significant second generation of Sikhs who were born and educated in Ireland.

The only Sikh public place of worship in the Republic – the Gurdwara (full name: Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar) – is in Dublin. Besides being a place of worship, it functions as an information and support centre for Sikh and Indian immigrants.

Although a number of Sikhs were living in Ireland since the early 1980s, the main growth of the community took place during the years 2000-2003. Concerns of parents looking for schools, patients

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[127] Census 2001 - Table KS07c: Religion - http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/census/2001/key%20statistics/district/KS07c.xls - The latest Census took place in March 2011 - The first results will be published in Summer 2012
[128] Health Services Intercultural Guide – Last updated on: 22.10.2009 - http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/services/SocialInclusion/InterculturalGuide/Sikhism/profile.html

in hospitals facing difficulties to explain their religious needs, and other such issues generated the need for a representative body for the Sikh community, and the Irish Sikh Council was established in July 2004.[129] Since then, the Irish Sikh Council has been involved in promoting cultural diversity, creating awareness about Sikhs in Ireland and advising public service bodies about their concerns and their needs. They provide a range of services including: information services, education and training, community awareness and cultural events. They provide guided tours to the Gurdwara for school children, and visit schools to give lectures on the Sikh way of life, engage with the media to generate awareness about the Irish Sikh community and have been involved in various cultural and sporting events. Among the most significant, the Sikh community participated in St Patrick's Festival Parades in 2007 and 2008 with performances in folk dances and Sikh martial arts. Over the years they also participated in the Dún Laoghaire Festival of World Cultures and a number of other cultural events across the country. The Irish Sikh Council has also been working in collaboration with Sports Against Racism (SARI), promoting intercultural sporting events.

In 2010, they collaborated with the Forum on Migration and Communications (FOMACS), Dublin Institute of Technology, to launch a photographic and life history project called 'A Sikh Face in Ireland'.[130] The multimedia exhibition was a collaboration initiated by an Irish researcher, Satwinder Singh, and photographer/oral historian, Dr. Glenn Jordan, and represented the first systematic exploration of the Sikh presence in Ireland.

Though small, the community is quite 'visible' in Ireland as baptised Sikhs wear a specific dress code, including the turban, bracelet and kirpan (or miniature sword), as part of their religious observance. Following 9/11, the (male) Sikh community in Ireland became more vulnerable to prejudice and racism because of their turban and full grown beard that often led uninformed people to equate Sikhs with followers of Bin Laden. Members of the Sikh community have not only faced verbal abuse but have also suffered physical attacks on the streets of Dublin and in other areas. In that regard the Irish Sikh Council also serves a support structure for victims and as an advocacy group in cases involving apparent discrimination or harassment, or as an intermediary between the community and state organisations/administrations in case of dispute. One such case is presented below.

4.3.2. The 'event' that sparked the debates

In 2007 a member of the Sikh community applied for membership of the newly instituted Garda (Police) Reserve, to which minorities were invited to apply.[131] The applicant, who had taken part in the training process, was informed just before being commissioned that he would not be allowed to wear his turban with the uniform. Initially he was told that wearing a turban would not be a problem, but later a senior officer warned him that if he wanted to go on duty in a station, he would have to remove his turban. The issue sparked a significant media and political debate. Sikhs argued that wearing the turban is a non-negotiable aspect of their faith – one which has been successfully accommodated by police forces around the world. The Irish Sikh Council criticised the Garda rules and warned it risked creating distances between immigrant communities and the indigenous population. They met with the Garda Commissioner and with the then Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan. Lenihan backed the Garda stance, saying that people who come and live in Ireland must respect the country's cultural requirements. The Garda explicitly denied that the turban ban was based on race or religion, but claimed that is was based rather on the imperative to provide an 'impartial police service' requiring,

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[129] http://www.irishsikhcouncil.com/default.aspx
[130] http://www.fomacs.org/projects/photography/A-Sikh-Face-In-Ireland
[131] The Garda Síochána Act, 2005 provided for the establishment of a Garda Reserve and in October 2005, an advertising campaign was launched by Minister for Justice Michael McDowell to attract ethnic minority applicants (*Breaking News*, 2005). The Garda Reserve is a voluntary unpaid body drawn from the community to assist the existing Service at times when extra personnel are required. The first recruits began training at the Garda College in September 2006.

among other things, 'a standard uniform and dress'. The Sikh man did not take up his post on the Garda Reserve.

This issue was hotly debated in the media and the political arena. It involves a primarily religious (though also cultural) minority, a relatively new and (almost exclusively) immigrant minority, and represents an issue of 'non-toleration' / 'non-accommodation' of religious/cultural diversity in the public service in Ireland.

4.3.3. Analysis of the debates

Combining data gathered through the desk research and the empirical study, our analysis employs a critical discourse analysis to highlight and discuss the main argumentation strategies – or discursive topoi (Wodak and Meyer, 2009) – through which the particular challenging event and the issues at stake have been constructed and debated. The desk research consisted of analysing the available scholarly literature, media coverage (newspaper articles, blogs, TV and radio recordings), parliamentary proceedings, consultation papers and policy documents related to the challenge explored. The empirical study involved seven qualitative interviews and a discussion group.

While mixed and intertwined within the different discourse, **three main discursive topoi** can be identified in the turban debate.

The first topos can be termed the 'This is a uniform' topos and encompasses arguments calling to the most basic, obvious, 'rational' arguments of the dispute: the very definition of 'a uniform', its justification/rationalisation and its meaning(s). The Garda (and opponents to the turban) emphasised the meaning of the (Garda) uniform, while the Sikh community (and their supporters) tried to counter these arguments on both principled and practical grounds.

The Garda position was summarised in a press statement released by Superintendent Kevin Donohoe, Head of Garda Press & Public Relations, in August 2007:

> The Garda Síochána has, historically, been seen as providing an impartial police service, policing all sections of society equally. By accommodating variations to our standard uniform and dress, including those with religious symbolism, may well affect that traditional stance and give an image of An Garda Síochána which the Commissioner feels the public would not want. The Garda Commissioner has set the required standards of dress and behaviour for An Garda Síochána and these standards are binding on all members of the organisation. Within the principles of an intercultural approach An Garda Síochána are not advocating one religious belief over another, nor are we, in any way, being racist. We are attempting to firmly retain an image of impartiality while providing a state service to all citizens. The decisions regarding our integration policy, including that of the wearing of a turban, were not made on a whim, but rather following extensive research and consultations.

The statement also emphasised the measures already taken by the Garda as part of their 'intercultural approach' including: the changes made to the entry requirements to the organisation to facilitate a variety of backgrounds and cultures;[132] the establishment of the Garda Racial Intercultural and Diversity Office (GRIDO) in 2001, the appointment of 500 Ethnic Liaison Officers (ELO)[133] in 2002, the setting up of special dietary arrangements (for choice, medical or religious reasons) at the Garda

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[132] The removal of the requirement of a proficiency in the Irish language and of Irish citizenship – see the Notes for Applicants & Conditions of Service at: http://www.publicjobs.ie/publicjobs/campaignAdvert/105/booklet.htm .

[133] The role of the ELOs is to liaise with representatives of the various minority communities in their division, and establish communication links with each of these communities

College, and the availability of spiritual and pastoral care across a number of religions for Garda members.

The statement concluded, however, by saying: 'The Garda Commissioner is satisfied that the intercultural approach and the decisions made within that framework, to date, is the right approach at this time for An Garda Síochána and the communities it is sworn to serve'.

The various arguments presented in the Garda statement were contested by opponents to the ban. On the basic point of 'uniformity', one of our interviewees argued that it was simply not possible to conceive of a complete 'homogeneity' of Garda officers and that slight variations in appearance were unavoidable (ISCRep). The argument that, when on duty, a Garda officer represents not only the police force but also the State, and that since the Irish Republic is secular, 'no crosses, veils, turbans, etc. should be visible on duty', was contested in several ways.

One counter argument which appeared strongly in both the media and political debate and in our interviews was that Ireland is not truly a secular state. Many newspaper columnists and individual contributors highlighted that every session of the Dáil and the Seanad starts with a Christian prayer, that public hospitals are decorated with Catholic symbols, that the Army runs an annual pilgrimage to Lourdes, that the preamble to the Irish Constitution itself states: 'In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, from Whom is all authority and to Whom, as our final end, all actions both of men and States must be referred, We, the people of Éire, Humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ...', and that the Garda itself organises masses to mark the opening of police stations (i.e. O'Toole, 2007, McGrath, 2007). As one of our respondents argued: 'there is an undercurrent of Catholicism that permeates public life in Ireland' (GPP).

One of our interviewees argued that, in a way, every officer was carrying both his cultural background and religious beliefs on the job, whether this was 'visible' or not, and therefore that, in effect, 'being a Sikh Garda' was no different from being a 'Catholic Garda' or indeed a 'Black Garda' or a 'Chinese Garda' (ISCRep). He questioned the Commissioner's view that the public would not want to see and engage with a 'Sikh Garda' and suggested that the sections of the public who might take offence to him were also likely to react in the same manner to a 'Black officer' or perhaps even to a 'female officer', suggesting that potential prejudiced views are unavoidable and should not represent an argument against 'visible diversity' within the force. These arguments also challenged the interpretation of 'the impartiality of the police force' on the same grounds (that a Sikh Garda would in no way be more or less impartial than a Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Black, Chinese, male or female Garda).

The fact that many Garda officers (like the Taoiseach in the Dáil) wear ashes on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday was also highlighted by many – even though it can be argued that Lenten Ashes do not 'technically' form part of the uniform, they do represent a 'visible religious symbol' which clearly contradicts the Garda's 'religious neutrality'. Pressed on whether Lenten Ashes should be allowed, Superintendent Donohue stated that the issue would be examined as 'the whole movement of diversification in Irish society has forced us to look at the practices and policies that we have. And certainly the issues like crucifixes, like pioneer pins, likes ashes on Ash Wednesday, they are certainly in the pot' (Holland, 2007). For one of our interviewees, to be truly secular the state should be 'above all religions and cater for all religions', and, regarding the display of religious symbols in the police force, he said: 'we have raised these issues... we don't want them to stop other... like, for example, we don't want them to stop, asking Gardaí to not wear the ashes and all those sorts of things... we, on the other hand, are asking for equal rights, let them follow their beliefs, let us follow our beliefs' (ISCRep).

This notion that all religious and cultural backgrounds should be equally recognised and equally respected in the police force was also argued by many throughout the media debate and in our

interviews. Arguments, on the one hand, emphasised that, as Ireland has become a religious and culturally diverse society, its police force *should* reflect this diversity. On the other hand, others expressed the view that individual religious and cultural background should be irrelevant.

> 'It is important in the context of community policing that we encourage minority communities and foreign nationals to join the police service. I welcome them. I urge the Minister and the Garda to be more open on the question of Sikhs serving in the Garda Síochána. (...) It would send out a positive message that they respect all cultures and all religions' (Finian McGrath, Independent TD)[134]

> ...a person applies to join the Irish Garda or the Irish civil service, is joining the Irish civil service and is joining the Irish Garda, it may be a person who is non-Irish but ... I don't think it's overly unfair to suggest that if you want to become a member of the Irish Garda or if you want to become a member of the Irish civil service... I mean... it's not your background you should be concentrating on, or that we should be concentrating on, it's the job that you sign yourself up to do... (FGPM)

The 'specificity' of the job and its practical requirements were also debated as the Garda raised the 'practical' issue of wearing a turban while on duty as an issue of 'effectiveness', arguing that Garda officers wear a cap for both practical and security reasons. This argument was contested by the Sikh community and their supporters on the basis that the wearing of turbans instead of caps or hats has been permitted by several other police forces around the world, most notably by the PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland) (McAleese, 2007). Ciarán Cuffe, the (then) Equality spokesperson for the Green Party, called on An Garda Síochána to reverse its ruling - in a press release posted on his website he said:

> 'I am calling on the Garda authorities to review this ruling, and have written today to Commissioner Noel Conroy requesting him to do so. I informed him that in my opinion it does not meet with international best practice. This decision is in complete contrast to the positions of other reserve forces, such as the London Metropolitan Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who allow Sikh members to wear their turbans. Police forces in the UK, USA, Singapore, Malaysia, Pakistan and India have no problem in allowing the wearing of turbans'.[135]

The London Metropolitan Police Sikh Association strongly criticised the decision, arguing that Sikhs have been wearing turbans as part of the uniform in the Metropolitan Police since the early 1970s, reflecting the community the force serves. They argued that 'Ireland's police force is 40 years behind the Metropolitan Police Service and the other civilised countries that recognise that Sikhs need to wear their turbans as part of their religion whilst officiating in public roles' (O'Brien, 2007b).

The Garda emphasised that they sought the advice of UK police forces and met with representatives of the Sikh community in Ireland before making their decision. Speaking at the Humbert School on August 24, 2007, Garda Commissioner Noel Conroy said that some UK police forces which permit uniformed Sikh colleagues to wear the turban had told Garda representatives that 'if they could put the clock backwards they would like to' (McGarry, 2007).

Within the 'uniform' topos, this specific argument was indeed the main 'counter-argument' advanced by the opponents to the turban ban and, as they perceived it to be a very difficult argument to justify and sustain - this leads us to **the second topos – 'discrimination and rights' -** encompassing

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[134] Dáil Éireann, Vol. 638, No. 4, 03.10.07.
[135] http://www.ciarancuffe.ie/PR/2007/PR070821J.Cuffe.Calls.Reverse.Turban.Ruling.htm

arguments that the uniform issue was in fact an excuse to avoid more contentious issues, and that the decision in fact amounted to religious discrimination.

The Irish Sikh community received messages of support from Sikh organisations around the world as the story appeared in the *Times of India*, the *Hindustan Times*, and the *Irish Voice* newspaper for Irish emigrants in New York, among others. As the turban has been accommodated in the police and army forces of several other countries many argued that there was 'no good reason' not to accommodate it in Ireland. This, in turn, was countered by the simple argument that the fact the turban had been accepted elsewhere was not a valid reason to adopt it in Ireland.

Some even hinted that the UK especially should not be regarded as a 'good example' of integration as its multicultural model had engendered segregation, ghettoisation and the creation of parallel communities – for Devlin (2007), 'The argument that Britain allows Sikhs to wear turbans as part of their police uniform is irrelevant. That's akin to contending we should have a royal family because Britain has one'. Interestingly, it was the London Metropolitan Police Sikh Association which ignited the controversies when they accused the Garda of racial discrimination in relation to the matter, stating: 'The MPSA is dismayed to learn that Ireland's police force, An Garda Síochána, has racially discriminated against the Sikhs in their refusal to allow a Sikh officer to wear a turban as part of his police uniform' (O'Brien, 2007b). The Gardaí strongly rejected the suggestion that the decision was in any way based on race or religion and suggested that Sikhs – like any other members of Ireland's ethnic and religious minorities – were welcome in the force, provided they abide by the (uniform) rule, that is to say, provided they take off their turban. However, as it was emphasised over and over during the debate, taking off their turban is impossible for baptised Sikhs. Harpreet Singh (then) President of the Irish Sikh Council explained that 'asking Sikh community members to get rid of the turban is like asking a Sikh to remove his head' (Irish Independent, 2007).

The specific 'religious' aspect of the perceived discrimination was emphasized by Dr. Jasbir Singh Puri who explained that he has worked in operating theatres in Ireland for more than 20 years, and not once has he removed his turban. He argued that the Sikh applicant to the Garda Reserve 'has been denied his freedom to practise his religion, and that is a conflict of his constitutional rights. We all feel that we have a fundamental right to equal employment, and in this way, the gardaí have acted at the forefront to deny this right' (Reilly, 2009). Articles 44 and 42 in the Irish Constitution have tended to be interpreted as making pluralism and tolerance essential; and the fact that 'freedom of conscience and freedom of profession and practice of religion' are guaranteed would seem to translate into permitting wearing a turban (or indeed other religious symbols) in the police force. However, as one contributor highlighted on one of the Facebook pages dedicated to the issue,[136] while the turban has a strong spiritual significance, it is not itself a 'religious requirement' as it is not part of the 5Ks, that is to say, the five articles of faith worn by practising Sikhs.[137] While this point was debated in the 'turban dispute' in France (where Sikh children were asked to remove their turban in order to comply with the ban on 'conspicuous religious symbols' and argued themselves that, unlike the uncut hair, the turban was not a religious symbol and therefore should be allowed), it was not actually used in the Irish debate as the distinction between the Kesh (unshorn hair) and the turban was never highlighted by those advocating the ban, perhaps revealing a lack of knowledge and understanding of the Sikh faith and customs.

The issue of equality of rights between religious groups was, however, brought up by the Sikh community and justified through references to the PSNI's accommodation of the turban. Refusing to allow the turban was presented as going against the 1998 Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, which ensures 'equivalence of rights' in Northern Ireland and the Republic and 'This equivalence,

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[136] http://www.facebook.com/groups/4907550329/

[137] The 5 Ks are: Kesh (unshorn long hair); Kangha (a small wooden comb worn in the hair at all times); Kara (a circular iron or steel bracelet worn around one or both wrists); Kirpan (a sword/dagger usually worn at the waist); and Kachera (cotton underwear with cord string).

particularly in matters of religious discrimination was presumed to require greater vigilance in the protection of religious minorities' (Mullally, 2011). Most significantly, the ban was perceived as going against Ireland's own policies as set out by the government in the National Action Plan Against Racism (2005-2008) and later in Migration Nation (2008), both of which called for the 'reasonable accommodation of diversity' and emphasised integration as a 'two-way' process.

The NCCRI in particular expressed their concern at the approach adopted by the Gardaí and put forward suggestions to the Commissioner, demanding that the dress code policy 'be reviewed to allow for some compromise from the present inflexible position' (NCCRI, 2008). In their 2004 submission to the Democracy Commission, the NCCRI had defined 'institutional racism' as '(what) happens when the practices, policies and attitudes of institutions result in the systematic exclusion of some minority ethnic groups, again either consciously or unconsciously' and emphasised that, as the model chosen by Ireland, 'Interculturalism is essentially about interaction, understanding and respect. It is about ensuring that cultural diversity should be acknowledged and catered for. It is about inclusion for minority ethnic groups by design and planning, not as a default or add-on. It further acknowledges that people should have the freedom to keep alive, enhance and share their cultural heritage' (NCCRI, 2004).

When asked to justify or explain the decision, government representatives tended to revert to the force itself as sole authority on the matter. In 2007, in the Dáil, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Brian Lenihan was asked twice about the issue of the turban in the Garda. Each time, his response was the same: 'The Garda Síochána Uniform and the wearing of any items of clothing as part of that Uniform, for either the full time Force or the Reserve, is a matter for the Garda Commissioner'.[138] The then Taoiseach (Bertie Ahern) was also asked (by the current Taoiseach) to clarify his position on the matter – similarly, he replied that 'The Garda Commissioner is responsible for the turban issue as it is an operational matter for the force'.[139] The supreme authority of the Garda Commissioner was also emphasised by our respondent from the Garda whose main 'answer' on the question was: 'we have to follow the rules set by the policy makers and passed on by the Commissioner' (GRep).

Finally, some discourses hinted that the Garda issue was indeed symptomatic of the way Sikhs are perceived and treated in Ireland. Several incidents where Sikhs have encountered problems or been victims of harassment or discrimination because of the mere 'visibility' of their 'religious difference' were brought to the fore. The media reported incidents related to the wearing of a beard, mandatory for male Sikhs, as some Irish restaurants refused to employ bearded Sikhs, despite the fact that the hairnets commonly utilised by female employees would resolve hygiene issues. In November 2008 a 12-year-old Sikh boy in Ashbourne, Co. Meath, was told by the referee during a football match that he had to remove his turban. The boy refused to play the second half of the game; he had worn his turban during matches without any difficulties for four years before the incident.

Our Sikh respondents also reported various instances of intolerance, harassment and discrimination in their daily lives. Several issues in the area of work were mentioned – a few dealing with blatant discrimination and many more highlighting a more 'subtle' or 'masked' kind. These included various forms of favouritism of 'native' Irish workers over 'immigrant' ones, lack of training opportunities or flexibility in hours; disregard for the real 'value', 'competence' or 'seniority' of Sikh/immigrant employees. One of our respondent highlighted that many issues had arisen in schools with regard to boys wearing the turban and starting to grow a beard (the school demanded they shave it) but that these were definitely under-reported and relatively ignored (SkRep). Our other respondent emphasised that many discrimination and harassment incidents were not in fact reported, first because it was extremely difficult to 'prove discrimination' in the work domain, especially when this was an isolated

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[138] Dáil Éireann, Vol. 638, No. 1, 26.09.07; Dáil Éireann, Vol. 638, No. 5, 04.10.07.
[139] Dáil Éireann, Vol. 642, No. 3, 27.10.07.

case, but also because the community had grown disheartened by the lack of interest and follow-up of the authorities when case of harassment were indeed reported (ISCRep).

Both our Sikh respondents also emphasised the paradox/challenge faced by the Sikh community in Ireland in that they represent perhaps the most 'visible', 'visibly different' (ethnic and religious) minority and at the same time, they still seems to be one of the least known and understood. Instances of verbal and physical abuse as a result of mistaken identity – as Muslims and/or 'followers of Bin Laden' – have increased after 9/11 and the 2005 London bombings and recurrently increase whenever the media report on related events, or even simply present a documentary on related topics. As early as the 4 October 2001, the *Irish Times* had reported several individual attacks on Sikhs in a piece titled 'Sikhs in Ireland confused with Muslims and become victims of racist attacks' (Cullen, 2001). Over the years, this has led many members of the Irish Sikh community to change their appearance (i.e., abandon the turban and shave their beards) and/or hide their identity to 'blend in' and enjoy an easier and fuller access to and participation in Irish society (ISCRep) – this has also led many (mainly young) Sikhs to simply leave Ireland for other, more 'Sikh-friendly' countries such as the UK, Canada or Australia (SkRep).

As one of our Sikh interviewees highlighted, pre-9/11, there had been some 'positive interest', mainly brought on by 'curiosity' about the Sikhs' visible identity in Ireland; he recalls how children in particular were fascinated by the turban and the long beard:

> ... I have seen kids sometimes coming and shouting at me 'look at the alien!'... or coming at me and saying 'Aladdin', those sorts of things... like somebody from a fairytale... and during Christmas time a lot of kids, like young kids, would come and say 'look mum, Santa!' because of the beard...' (ISCRep)

However, it seems that the interest has faded away and, as he observed, never reached the political arena, perhaps because the community remained small and never reached a sufficient 'critical mass' to make it 'attractive' to either political parties or other decision makers but also, and perhaps mainly, because of a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the political and civic sphere to fully include (some of) Ireland's minorities and to acknowledge both their participation and their concerns in their conception of Irishness.

This leads us to **the third topos identified in the turban debate: the 'This is Ireland – how far do we have to go to accommodate?' topos**.

This topos encompasses arguments dealing with the 'recognition', 'representation', 'inclusion' and 'support' for diversity in Irish society as conceived and implemented by Irish political and civic institutions, as the issue of the turban developed into a broader reflection on the perception and accommodation of religious (but also cultural/ethnic) minorities in Ireland and on the definition/nature of Irish interculturalism.

As defined by the NCCRI and promoted in the NPAR (2005-2008) and Migration Nation, the Irish 'intercultural model' should have allowed Sikhs to wear turbans in the Garda as an example of 'reasonable accommodation', however, arguments advanced by the advocates of the ban highlighted significant contradictions in the Irish conception of 'interculturalism'.

The (then) Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan, backed the Gardaí's stance and commented: 'If we are to take integration seriously, people who come here must understand our ways of doing things. When the President and ministers travel to the Middle East, they accept cultural requirements of the country and the culture they are operating in. It is a vice versa situation, I would have thought, with regard to Ireland' (*Irish Independent*, 2007).

That statement was widely relayed by the media and became perceived as the 'official' government stance on the issue of immigrant and minorities at the time. Public opinion appeared relatively split.[140] Some applauded, emphasising the need for the Garda (and hence Ireland) to maintain its public image as a religiously neutral (state) organisation. As one of our interviewees summarises it:

> 'A lot of Irish people were worried about tradition and continuity and they felt 'yes, we are happy to accommodate difference, but how far do you want us to go?' and they felt... I think Irish people felt they were being taken out of their comfort zone on this issue...' (GPP)

Others saw the decision as a regrettable desire to impose a secular monoculture. For one of our Sikh respondents, the Minister's statement was an alarming indication of the government's take on diversity and of its potential repercussions in the broader society.

> ... how can that person integrate... who doesn't even understand different beliefs and systems?... who just thinks that because I'm wearing a turban I'm from the Middle East, because if you read his statement very carefully he does quote the Middle East, he made the same mistake that every other person who would have abused, attacked or called names a Sikh person on the street as 'Bin Laden'... equalise that with a Sikh turban... that statement itself shows the ignorance of the politicians, how much they know about the fabric of the new Irish society... (ISCRep)

In an article in the *Irish Times*, Breda O'Brien (2007c) summarised the perplexity generated by the overall issue and, most significantly, by Conor Lenihan's statement:

> 'If the Minister understands our way of doing things he should be giving tutorials, because most of us find living in this grand little country bewildering at the best of times. (...) Perhaps the Irish way of doing things is to be able to happily ignore irreconcilable realities. Our policy on immigrants is going in several incompatible directions at once. We want a more inclusive police force, but a Sikh cannot wear his turban in the reserve. Allegedly, dastaar-wearing will lead straight to what used to be known as ban gardaí legging it in burkas after burglars, and you couldn't have that. In a similar vein, the Government publishes a worthwhile document called Integration – A two way process, but the Minister with responsibility for integration decides only to emphasise one half of the process – the others understanding us. (...) A turbaned garda will not threaten our way of life but a failure to genuinely attempt to understand the diverse cultures that now co-exist in Ireland certainly will'.

Several issues were identified as contentious. First, it was argued that the Minister's statement emphasised – and indeed 'focused' on – the 'novelty' of diversity as associated with the large immigration wave to Ireland in the last 20 years ('people who come here'). This discourse highlighted the persistence not only of the idea that diversity is a relatively 'new' phenomenon in Ireland but also that it is somehow 'temporary' and that eventually, most immigrants will 'go back'. Exemplifying this frame of mind, one of our interviewees mentioned the 'New Irish' and 'long-stay visitors to our country' in the same sentence when discussing the future (2014) local elections (FGPM). However, this perspective represents an obvious denial of a growing 'second generation' in Ireland and, as was emphasised by the Irish Sikh community, the ban affects not only Sikhs coming from other countries, but Irish-born Sikh children, thus limiting their future job opportunities and full participation in Irish public life.

The second contentious issue – as highlighted in O'Brien's article – was the perception of an underlying 'fear' that (religious and ethnic) minorities were 'bringing' (and almost trying to 'force on

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[140] See for instance the hundreds of entries posted on the main blogs which debated this particular issue at: http://www.politics.ie/forum/culture-community/19648-sikh-member-reserve-banned-wearing-turban.html and http://www.boards.ie/vbulletin/showthread.php?s=b898736aba7f9c45b4992fdf30d44b66&t=2055135729

Irish society') their culture, religion and customs, and therefore that allowing the accommodation of one specific religious symbol into the Garda uniform risked 'opening the floodgates' of requests, not only in this particular organisation, but more broadly in every facets and institutions of Irish society.

Sikhs emphasised the need for dialogue to allay fears and misconceptions. The president of the Irish Sikh Council, argued that: 'Although we strongly believe and accept that as an immigrant community we should respect and adopt cultural values of the Irish community, we would like to stress that integration is a two-way process. Integration can never be brought about by asking the migrant communities to give up their basic beliefs... Better integration is achieved by better understanding and mutual respect of each others' beliefs in a multicultural society' (*Metro Eireann*, 2007).

Nevertheless, suggestions that the hijab and, most significantly the burka, 'could be next' emerged in media commentaries and internet blogs (Devlin, 2007). Our two Sikh respondents also highlighted the strong and recurrent conflation of (any) demand for religious accommodation with a fear of Islamic customs and potential danger of radicalism. As with the issue of the Muslim veil in Irish schools, the issue of turban in the Gardaí raised not only questions around the Irish approach to cultural difference but also debates about the definition of Irishness and fears about a dilution or even a loss of identity – and the Garda uniform was construed as representing a strong symbol of that identity. In the various discourses that presented accommodating diversity as a potential 'identity threat', Ireland's small size and insular nature was highlighted by some:

> I guess a small country like Ireland, there's always that worry about... having to... worry about the fact that... there's a lot of other people out there and protecting your image is quite difficult when... Ireland is a country of five millions in the European Union of 500 millions, it's important to maintain your own identity and is this the beginning of a loss of identity for Ireland... (GPP)

Others emphasised that Ireland had to somehow maintain some 'sovereignty' and certain norms while keeping its door open but also learn from European states with a longer experience of dealing with similar issues:

> ...without sounding harsh, I mean this is Ireland and you know I think we have a certain entitlement to have at least minimal rules and regulations as part of our open door to the world... the European Union is not a singular country, the world is not a singular state, I mean the people who choose to come to Ireland... and I think in the vast majority of cases they are very welcome... I think they must also try to respect as far as possible our culture and our traditions... we must also try to learn from other European countries who may have thought they were making progress... I'm thinking of France or Germany or even Britain... but they seem to have ended up with a very divided, segregated society... (FGPM)

In most of these discourses, again, diversity and its (potential) hazards were equated with a relatively recent, most likely 'temporary', and definitely 'alien' population – the growing numbers of Irish-born 'ethnic minority' children and the naturalized 'new citizens' were largely overlooked.

The Sikh community and opponents to the ban emphasised that the Garda decision risked creating even more distance between the different religious/ethnic communities and the indigenous population and therefore preventing not only the smooth and successful integration of the newcomers but also the full participation and representation of the second generation. Loyal (2007) recalled that in October 2005, as part of the Gardaí's attempt to recruit individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds, it was stated that the force was committed to adapting uniforms, diet and working practices to suit recruits from various backgrounds and that the (then) Minister of Justice, Michael McDowell, had emphasised the importance of recruiting minorities: 'In five or ten years, teenage kids from ethnic minorities will be growing up in our cities and towns and the issue is whether they are going to look at our police

force and see faces and hear voices which reflect the communities they come from, or are they going to regard it as a force with which they have little to do'.

It is also interesting to note that just weeks before the turban issue reached the news in July 2007, the (then) Minister for Justice, Brian Lenihan had expressed his 'concern' and 'disappointment' at the low number of people from ethnic backgrounds joining the Garda (RTE, 2007b). At that time, more than 1,000 recruits were in training but only 11 were non-Irish nationals. The Minister said he did not accept that the policy for recruiting foreign national applicants had failed, but said he was reviewing the regulations to try and increase the numbers.

It was widely acknowledged – both in the media debate and in most of our interviews – that Ireland had, so far, a relatively good record in accommodating a variety of minority requests. Interestingly, the Garda had often been cited as one of the most 'proactive' organisations with the creation of its Racial Intercultural and Diversity Office (GRIDO), the appointment of Ethnic Liaison Officers, the introduction of varied dietary options in the Garda College, and its efforts at recruiting members from diverse minorities.

One of our interviewees, however, argued that, considering that Ireland's 'new diversity' was already over 20 or even 30 years old, 'it should have done better by now' (SkRep) and many other voices emphasised that most of the 'accommodation' and 'efforts to engage' with the ethnic and religious minorities had been mainly superficial. In particular, some aspects of the 'Garda's promotional campaign' were harshly judged by some of our interviewees. They maintained that ELOs were absent in many Garda stations and that many officers were still unaware of the existence and role of the GRIDO (NGO). One respondent hinted that some aspects of the Garda's 'diversity strategy' could be seen as somewhat ironic:

> 'On the outside, everything looks good... I don't want to be unfair for those but... but what is that?... just by allowing different food in the training college, what's that going to achieve if I'm not even allowed to be part of that college... (laughs) Like, you give me one thing and take away the other thing... so you still leave me out' (ISCRep)

Similar observations were made with regard to a wide range of organisations and state institutions by all our interviewees and many acknowledged the 'abundance of good intentions' but the lack of in-depth action and concrete, practical, measures. Our minority respondents emphasised in particular the proliferation of 'diversity officers' or 'integration units' in various local and national organisations but also maintained that, more often than not, the whole 'diversity strategy' and 'integration approach' of these organisations was effectively limited to the one person responsible, which considerably restricted the scope of positive action. One interviewee summarised the situation as follows:

> ...this is a very tricky area because you see most of them are, especially in 2005 when this whole National Action Against Racism stuff came up... and people went around developing their own diversity strategies... it came out to what we call the intercultural strategies, everybody was using that as a template to develop something within their institution...well... it doesn't really change anything, it is a piece of paper... but the organisations themselves or the institutions themselves haven't really done any change... so there are pieces of paper all across... everywhere displaying, you know... intentions about diversity... promoting equal opportunities and all these kinds of things but... it's difficult to really see real change within the way the institutions are structured so... there's still a lot to be done in that area and I don't think... most institutions are still, you know, dealing with... the way they used to deal with their own people say 20 years back... most institutions have not REALLY got the grasp that the society has changed... (NGO)

Embodying the various issues and questions raised in the debates around the nature of contemporary Irish multiculturalism, two articles in the *Irish Times* proposed two different ways of resolving the underlying questions pervading the turban debate: How much – and what kind of – accommodation should Ireland contemplate and (potentially) strive for? – or, in other words, what does interculturalism as a model really mean in the Irish context?

For Steven Loyal (2007), it was a question of facing the reality of a contemporary diverse Ireland and 'Getting our heads around reality of multiculturalism':

> 'Migrants have made a major contribution to our economic growth... they have adapted and contributed to Irish society, socially and culturally. Now that it is the State's turn to act, one of its central institutions is unwilling. It is time Ireland stopped talking about integration and interculturalism and actually started doing something to make them a reality. It entails language classes, allowing family reunification, easier pathways to citizenship and enforcing anti-discrimination laws. It also involves making small compromises to uniforms in order to allow some religious freedom' (Loyal, 2007).

For Fintan O'Toole, (2007), it was time to make a choice, cast off the ambiguities of Irish Interculturalism and take a firm stand and for him: 'The choice is simple: All or nothing'

> 'The State can allow every public servant and every public institution to display and proclaim every lawful expression of religious identity. Or it can allow no public servant or institution to display any expression of religious identity. Either of these positions is sustainable'.

While he did not believe that the turban should be allowed in the Garda in order to preserve the neutrality of police officers, he contended that the state had no legitimate right to refuse it:

> 'So long as we evoke a specific religious belief system in every aspect of our system of governance, we have no right to tell anyone that they have to keep their religion separate from their public function. Unless we are to practise naked discrimination, the logic of our current system is that our police officers can wear turbans, hijabs or Jedi light sabres – anything that is required by their faith. We also have to provide a range of religious schools in every community, all paid for by the taxpayer. We have to start Dáil sessions not with one prayer, but with at least 25 – one for each of the main religious groupings in the State – and with an atheist evocation of humanist principles. Or we could just cop on to ourselves and start creating a public realm in which religions are respected because none is invoked'.

4.3.4. Concluding remarks on the case study

There was no 'back-down' from the Garda – the Sikh applicant did not take up his post. The case is still under review with the Equality Tribunal. The Sikh community is eagerly awaiting the outcome of the case not only as it would allow members of the community to apply to the Garda now and in the future, but also because it would send a broader positive message to Sikhs that Ireland can also be perceived as a 'Sikh-friendly country' offering a variety of opportunity for those already living here and those contemplating moving in. Significantly, such a decision could also reduce the emigration of Sikhs which has been observed by the community since the outbreak of the turban issue in 2007 (SkRep). However, as one of our respondents also emphasised, there are worries that, should that particular case reach a positive outcome, it could be limited to a 'one-off', as the applicant in question had already completed part of his training and therefore, represented a 'special case', but that the institution could still, as he puts it 'come up with some sort of laws' to prevent the integration of a greater number of Sikh applicants (ISCRep).

In 2009, two years after the emergence of the turban issue, the Garda launched its Diversity Strategy & Implementation Plan 2009 – 2012, which had the subtitle 'Beyond Legal Compliance'. In its foreword, the then Commissioner Fachtna Murphy stated that, taking its lead from the government's 'National Action Plan Against Racism (NPAR) 2005 – 2008' and 'Migration Nation', 'For An Garda Síochána, Diversity is about recognising, acknowledging, and respecting *difference*. (...)This Diversity Strategy, however, goes much further, in that it aims for action, beyond *mere legal compliance*. It sets out how An Garda Síochána will deliver on its commitment to champion, value and accommodate, where possible, all aspects of Diversity. Treating people objectively on merit, as individuals, rather than just as members of minority or majority groups, will pay rich dividends in our corporate vision of 'Excellent people delivering policing excellence'' (An Garda Síochána, 2009).

It can be argued that the position of the Gardaí was ambiguous, as were the arguments they used to justify their decision: after launching a campaign to attract members from ethnic and religious minorities, and recognising that Sikhs have a proud and valuable history in police and army forces around the world, they denied a Sikh applicant (already in training) the opportunity to join the force wearing his turban. In addition, while arguing that they had consulted widely (including other police forces which have allowed the turban and the Irish Sikh community), they set aside the recommendations of the NCCRI, the government's advisory body on issues of immigration and integration at the time, which strongly advocated 'reasonable accommodation' with regard to the turban issue in order to send a positive and more inclusive message to the various minorities in the country.

Throughout the debate, the majority of politicians somehow avoided taking part in the dispute, leaving full responsibility to the Garda on the matter; responses to his attempts to reach out to politicians in relation to the turban issue recounted by one of our respondents exemplify the general attitude:

> ...we went to every single TD asking for their support, 90% of them replied back saying 'talk to the Minister of Justice, we can't do anything on this'...(...) one of the common responses that politicians would give us is that 'the majority of my local electorate are making representations against giving this'... they are looking for the votes... they think that if we allow this, we lose votes because a lot of people will stop voting for us because of this reason, this becomes a negative issue for them... (ISCRep)

This tendency by the political arena to 'disengage from minority issues' was recently further revealed by the findings of a survey carried out by the Integration Centre,[141] and the lack of debate around immigration and integration issues during the campaign for the last General Election in 2011 will be discussed further in the next section.

In interpreting the Sikh turban case in terms of the spectrum of non-toleration, toleration, respect/recognition, the ban may initially be understood as exemplifying the limits of recognition or accommodation of diversity in Ireland, in not adjusting a policy which creates an obstacle to full participation of a minority in public institutions. It may be argued, however, that it also involves the border between toleration and non-toleration. To the extent that the turban is a non-negotiable aspect of the Sikh faith, and banning it thus effectively prevents any Sikh from joining the police force, the ban constitutes a policy of exclusion, limiting the rights and career options not only of 'new migrants' but also of their Irish-born children. It thus represents a case of non-toleration of the practice, and non-accommodation of religious/cultural diversity in the public service in Ireland.

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[141] Attitudes towards Immigration and Immigration Policy Among TDs, 1st February 2012 – Available at: http://www.integrationcentre.ie/The-Integration-Centre.aspx

5. Conclusion - Tolerance and Cultural diversity in Ireland - Concepts and Practices

5.1. Context and discourses

Ireland's experience of large-scale immigration and cultural diversity began later than in most other west European countries – taking place only in the last twenty years – and immigrant minorities still represent a relatively new phenomenon. In 1996 Ireland reached its migration 'turning point'; a decade later, in 2006, non-Irish nationals represented approximately 10% of the population and, at the time of the last Census in April 2011 they represented 12% of the population. While this change has posed certain issues of integration and accommodation, many of the claims and challenges deriving from cultural diversity have yet to arise.

The pattern of diversity emerging in Ireland is distinctive in a number of ways. Its long history as a country of emigration and recent transformation into a destination of choice for immigrants distinguish it from most EU member states. Ireland has never been a colonial power; its migrants do not come from countries it had previously occupied, although some come from regions in which Irish missionaries were active, arguably participating in the western colonisation enterprise. Ireland did not have a guest worker programme in the 1950s and 60s, and therefore did not go through a process of coming to terms with the fact of a permanent migrant population that this entailed. As immigration is still a recent phenomenon in Ireland, the main focus is still on 'newcomers' or 'new communities' rather than second and third generations. The immigrants include a significant contingent of returning Irish, and most migrants come from within the European Union. The newcomers are predominantly of working age, and tend to be well educated and highly skilled.

It is also notable that increased immigration initially coincided with a period of economic prosperity, so that economic competition between the native population and migrants may have been less evident than under the conditions of recession that later came to prevail, and less liable to arouse fears of the potentially negative impact of the newcomers. These factors may account for the fact that Ireland has not seen the emergence of any real right wing, anti-immigrant party, or indeed any significant political campaign or protest against immigrants as a reaction to its recent large-scale immigration. This is not to discount the evidence for significant underlying levels of racial discrimination.

It is noteworthy, also, that there has not been a strong emphasis on the 'security' issue connected with migration and diversity, unlike in other countries (UK, France for example), by either political parties or Government. Nor has 'Muslim radicalisation' come to the fore (so far at least) in Ireland. As we have seen, the Muslim community in Ireland is quite different in terms of origins and socio-demographic composition from that in other EU countries. This, and the fact that the Irish Government and institutions have sought to establish a dialogue with the Muslim community and have allowed for some accommodation of religious practices might be seen as the two main reasons for the absence of either major claims or problems with regard to Islam in Ireland. Some issues concerning the hijab in schools have arisen, but, as we have seen, these issues have, for the moment at least, been resolved broadly on the basis of accommodation.

Among the new religious minorities, Sikhs have encountered some difficulties and lack of understanding regarding the observance of their religious practices; as we have seen, the issue of the turban in the Garda (Police) Reserve in particular made the headlines in 2007, gave rise to considerable debate and was not accommodated. But perhaps the most recurrent challenge to principles of toleration and acceptance arise with respect to Ireland's indigenous cultural minority, the

Travellers, in connection with their status as an ethnic group, the issue of halting sites and educational provision.

Ireland has had to generate immigration and integration policies against a background of rapid change, limited experience, and, until recently, a largely monocultural society. There was no official 'planning process' regarding immigration, and it has been argued that, initially, and for a number of years, Ireland lacked a coherent integration policy and that 'the dominant economic ethos of *laissez faire* translated into an amalgam of piece-meal policy statements and reactive policy responses to immediate issues' and to a certain attitude of 'welcome if you fit our national interest' (Boucher, 2008, p. 22).

The language of toleration has not been prominent in discussions of diversity. From a historical context in which the toleration of diversity as permission was seen as suspect, Ireland has evolved to a situation in which 'mere' tolerance as permission, or even respect, are seen as inadequate responses to diversity. The official emphasis was for some time on integration of diverse religious and cultural communities, framed in terms of 'interculturalism', defined in Ireland by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism as:

> *the development of strategy, policy and practices that promote interaction, understanding, respect and integration between different cultures and ethnic groups on the basis that cultural diversity is a strength that can enrich society, without glossing over issues such as racism* (NCCRI, 2006a, p. 29).

This emphasis on interculturalism as a strategy for integration and social cohesion distinguished Ireland from other EU countries whose focus has been on either assimilation or multiculturalism. Yet the development of institutional and practical toleration, as well as attitudes of toleration, has been mixed. It may be speculated whether the late arrival of immigrant cultural diversity will or will not allow new approaches to tolerance, and lessons from other countries' experience to be applied.

It is also important to note that people have very different definitions and views of tolerance and what it stands for. In the Irish context, the term itself is widely regarded as inappropriate or undesirable; if associated with 'political correctness' it is perceived as weak, or, if associated with 'permission' it is perceived as 'condescending' and accordingly negative.

Most of our interviewees (especially in the *Education* study) disliked and even rejected the term. Some argued that in Ireland the concept was outdated, and suggested terms such as integration or partnership as more appropriate. For instance, 'the NCCRI completely rejected the concept of tolerance being put forward' in favour of an intercultural approach that recognises the limitations and even failures of both multiculturalism and assimilation (PW). The Irish definition of interculturalism would effectively seem to go beyond mere tolerance to represent respect/recognition. Nonetheless, those who embrace the idea of being more accepting do not necessarily identify the areas or groups in need of respect/recognition in the same way, or see these necessarily as requiring special treatment. Likewise, rejecting the *word* tolerance does not always mean rejecting the idea that strictly equal treatment is an adequate form of acceptance.

In order to explore in depth what the levels of acceptance – *intolerance/tolerance/recognition-respect*[142] – mean in Ireland and how they manifest themselves in practice, we have presented and discussed three challenges relating to religious and cultural diversity which have emerged in recent years in two important spheres of Irish society: Education and Political Life.

These illustrate and explore different facets of the management of cultural and religious diversity in Irish society and highlight different ways in which 'tolerance' is conceived of and discussed by

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[142] See Dobbernack & Modood (2011)

different actors. We now attempt to reflect on them comparatively to consider any lessons to be learned.

5.2. Similarities and differences between the three diversity challenges

Both the issue of the hijab and the removal of funding to Protestant schools represented touchstones in the contemporary debates on school diversity in Ireland – debates on both the new diversity *within* schools and the growing diversity *of* (types of) schools. Both involved not only practical but also legal challenges, and were hotly debated in the media and the political arena. At the same time, these two issues represented very different diversity challenges to Irish education. While both engaged with primarily religious minorities, one involved an historical 'native' minority (Protestants) and the other a relatively 'new' and largely immigrant minority (Muslims). While both engaged with the recognition of religious minorities' rights in education, they embodied significantly different demands, and it is notable that the frame of religion was more prominent in the headscarf case, while respect for plurality and diversity was more prominent in the Protestant schools case.

In both cases there was a significant level of acceptance to begin with, and there is relatively little change. Schoolgirls were and are widely allowed to wear headscarves, and there is no public prohibition of such dress. Separate Protestant schools still receive a block grant and otherwise are treated the same as other fee-paying schools, even if they have lost some of their special funding. The only element of intolerance that emerges is a virtual consensus that the niqab/face covering (for either pupils or teachers) would *not* be tolerated in schools, if and when this arose. However, both cases also revealed some tensions at the margins of this acceptance, highlighted in our interviews by references to instances where the hijab proves problematic in some schools and by the difficulties now encountered by some Protestant schools in terms of curriculum provision.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the two cases engaged with two very different conceptions of 'school autonomy'. In the hijab case, the focus was on the autonomy of each school to decide how best to deal with requests regarding the hijab, emphasising their freedom of action on the matter. In the Protestant schools case, the focus was on the need and capacity of the schools to be self-sufficient as custodians of their community's heritage.

The turban debate also represented a touchstone in debates on diversity in Irish institutions. In comparison with the previous cases, the level of acceptance displayed with regard to this issue was however much lower. Non-accommodation of the turban was based primarily on arguments about fundamental principles rather than practical reasons.[143] While its advocates considered that including the turban in the Garda uniform was not such a big step to accommodate, for its opponents allowing such a visible marker of 'difference' within a state institution was not only demanding too much but was potentially perceived as a threat.

The controversy over the turban in the Garda represents an interesting contrast to the case of the hijab in schools. In both cases, a request from members of a religious (and migrant) minority challenged existing rules on uniforms in state institutions. In both cases, the request led to a certain confusion in the responses of the institutions concerned. In the case of the turban, the Sikh applicant was initially told that the turban would not pose a problem, and the campaign to recruit minority candidates to the Garda Reserve had also led minorities to believe that accommodation was part of the Garda's agenda (*Breaking News*, 2005), before he was denied going on duty in a station unless he removed a visible symbol of his religious affiliation. In the case of the hijab, the Department of Education initially decided not to issue a formal directive on the issue, leaving the onus on each individual school to decide their own policy, before issuing a statement and recommendations on uniforms.

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[143] As we have seen, the Garda's attempt to advance 'practical' (operational/safety) reasons was quickly and efficiently dismissed by the fact that the turban has been accommodated in many police and army forces around the world.

In all three cases, the 'support discourses' were relatively similar, emphasising acceptance of religious minorities and support for their practices and presenting the 'other' as an equal to be respected and accommodated. We can observe, however, that, in contrast with the hijab case where the issue was discussed *mainly* in terms of respect for religion and acceptance of religious beliefs, the religious aspect was, surprisingly enough, *not strongly emphasised* in the turban debate. The 'counter-discourses', on the other hand, similarly focused on 'difference' and sought 'integration' in both the hijab and turban cases, while they emphasised self-reliance and autonomy as a remedy for the Protestant community's claims.

It is interesting to note that in all three debates, some reference was made to Northern Ireland and the spectre of the division to which religious separation and boundaries can lead, emphasising that this is an issue that has been all too familiar in Ireland in the past, and one to be wary of in the future. Interestingly, in the case of the hijab and the Protestant schools, Northern Ireland featured as the (sectarian) example to avoid, while in the turban case, it was presented as the 'positive' (accommodating) model to emulate.

Finally, and importantly, all three cases generated broader debates about larger issues currently discussed in Irish society – mainly the role and place of religion in Irish institutions, but also to a lesser degree, the status of minorities in general. All three engaged with the general perception of 'Irishness' and what it stands for in terms of values, traditions and customs. In all three cases there was an underlying concern that minorities may not be adequately 'recognised' or incorporated into the contemporary definition of Irishness, and that they are not sufficiently recognised as 'adding value' to Irish society.

At the time these debates emerged, interculturalism was the official government agenda in Ireland. Its official definition and interpretation as developing policy and practices that promote interaction, respect and integration between cultures were in some way reflected in the way both the hijab and the Protestant schools issues were handled and could have allowed for 'reasonable accommodation' of the turban in the Garda Reserve. This particular issue thus highlighted potential contradictions in Ireland's understanding – and 'mainstreaming' – of interculturalism.

5.3. *The conception of acceptance in education, civic and political life in Ireland*

Here we examine where the responses to the three challenges fit on the spectrum of non-toleration/toleration/respect-recognition and what they reveal about the Irish conception of acceptance. This leads us to conclusions on how Irish interculturalism is really interpreted and translated in practice.

While the Irish hijab issue did not prove as controversial as in other EU countries, it represented a touchstone in discussions on the new diversity in Ireland and on the growing Muslim presence. The debate was welcomed by many people (though perhaps less by the Government), including many interviewees, and can be seen from the level of media interest.

With regard to this debate, there appeared to be a broad acceptance of difference and tolerance of diversity in most schools. This level of acceptance of Muslims is also clear in the recognition of two state-supported Muslim primary schools (the first established in the early 1990s).

Some element of 'nationalist intolerance' emerged in the hijab debate, however, in views expressing that certain cultural and religious practices lie beyond what is appropriate and acceptable in contemporary Ireland. These were seen as potentially undermining core national values of Irishness and eventually the identity of Irish society (e.g. 'Irish girls don't wear hijabs'). Some of these views

drew on 'liberal values' to oppose the hijab, reflecting an element of 'liberal intolerance' in the media debate in comments interpreting the hijab as oppressing Muslim girls and women.

Tolerance of the hijab was based on both pragmatic and principled reasons. It was recognised by most that wearing the hijab in schools was not a big step to accommodate as long as it was in school uniform colours, while the constitutional requirement not to discriminate on religious grounds was emphasised and supported by warnings that a ban on the hijab could have unwelcome repercussions on other religious symbols widely present in Irish schools. Intolerance of the niqab was also based on both pragmatic and principled reasons, as it was emphasised that it would be impractical in an educational setting, and that it was also 'too different' to be accepted and integrated in Irish society.

As we have seen, the issue was discussed mainly in terms of respect for religion and acceptance of (other) religious beliefs and religious minorities, and the focus was on integration through inclusion. However, the issue of the *relative numbers of Muslim pupils* (and thus of their 'visibility') in any given school may give us a *first indication the nature and limits of such acceptance*. The arguments that a growing number of Muslim pupils can 'challenge the ethos of a school' and affect 'the perception of the school as a *Catholic* school', for example, could indicate that *acceptance of religious diversity is somehow limited to a certain extent of diversity and conditional on the consequences of such diversity* for the schools' self-perception.

This could be an interesting indication of *the kind of diversity Ireland is prepared to deal with*. The fact that some schools do not accept the hijab could be perceived as a strategy to avoid having to deal with such issues by *limiting diversity* within the school, and thus rejecting or denying diversity.

Another important aspect of the debate was the apparent tendency to overlook the existence of Irish Muslims, as most debates seemed to focus on Muslim immigrants; hence the contrasting views of 'they should adapt if they want to live here' and 'we should be welcoming and work on integrating people'. This could be construed as an indication of *(mere) tolerance* in this case; while Muslims are well accepted in Ireland, they are still not perceived as being part of the Irish nation.

The issue involved both a legal and a practical challenge. While the 'practical' side was dealt with through accommodation of the hijab in most schools, the legal aspect was not clearly addressed. The 2008 government guidelines and the 2011 JMB guidelines have no legal standing. For Hogan (2011) 'Individual Muslim students now face uncertainty as a result of the unwillingness of the Government to take a firm stand on the issue of the headscarf, and the spectre of disputes with individual school boards of management is a very real prospect'. This led to criticisms by the ICCL (2010) and by some of our interviewees who have been directly affected by this. On the other hand, there could be a concern that legally binding guidelines could be used to express intolerance by some actors, and that the law can send a signal of exclusion to some sections of the population.

While mere tolerance was an issue in the hijab case, where the question of a possible ban, or non-tolerance arose, the Protestant case highlighted an even more complicated and more nuanced approach and conception of acceptance.

Here it may first more simply be seen as lying *on the border between respect/recognition (level 3) and tolerance (level 2)* – the removal of the special funding representing a retreat from recognition of 'particular minority needs' established in 1967, to equal treatment, or mere tolerance. But, given the structure of Irish education, which in some sense recognises all religions (at level 3) by financially supporting separate schools and their distinct ethos, this could, in a more complex sense, be seen as *a change within the third level of respect*, and thus as a reduction, but not a withdrawal of recognition.

Some people had difficulties talking about this issue in terms of 'tolerance' of the Protestant community, but had no problems about talking about 'discrimination'. Some of our interviewees

expressed the difficulty of discussing the needs of the Protestant community in Ireland in terms of 'acceptance' or 'tolerance', and the complexity of defining what is required to recognise and address the needs of minority communities. For one of our interviewee in particular: '... you have to make an effort to be tolerant and I think that the effort is to go one step further for minority groups... you have to provide a little bit more for them...' (CW)

If the argument that minorities require more than equal treatment to sustain themselves is accepted, a strictly equal system of recognition for *all* religions, majority and minority, is arguably not sufficient in practice to constitute effective respect and recognition for minorities (level 3).

There was a general recognition of the need for, and value of, the Protestant schools, as they were described not only as the custodians of the Protestant heritage in the Republic but also as providing 'a space of tolerance' for those of other religious backgrounds or of no-religion, and even the discourses involving an economic justification for the cuts acknowledged that these were affecting more than educational provision for Protestant children. While overall the perception was that the Protestant community is generally well perceived and 'well integrated' in Ireland, here again, however, if more substantial respect/recognition involves providing special treatment, withdrawal of such special treatment implies that *the current respect for minorities does not stretch that far into level 3*.

Whether identical treatment for all or special accommodation for minorities are the appropriate ways to deal with diversity was a particularly live issue in the realm of education in Ireland at a time when the primarily denominational structure of schools came under serious reconsideration for the first time. In March 2011, the Minister for Education, Ruairi Quinn, established a Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector and called for submissions on how to provide for diversity of patronage in primary schools. The issue of the denominational structure of education has been on the agenda for some time, and the possibility has increasingly been raised that schools should be run by the State, and should be multi- or non-denominational. The general view appeared to be that an overwhelmingly secular model is unlikely to come about, mainly because of the historical frame of Irish education and the weight given to parents' choice and rights in the education of their children. The report of the Advisory Group to the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector was published in April 2012. It highlighted an increased demand for new forms of multi-denominational and non-denominational schooling. While the report recommends achieving diversity of patronage by using the existing stock of schools, it also cautions against a 'big bang' approach and advises that change of patronage should happen in a phased way, taking account of the preferences of parents. In June, the report's recommendations were broadly accepted by the Minister for Education who requested that the process leading to divesting of patronage begin immediately. Surveys of parents will begin in the autumn and a formal call for submissions from education stakeholders and any other interested parties will be issued in September 2012. Following the consultation process, a White Paper will be drafted in early 2013.

Similar consideration of the need for diversity in the secondary sector does not appear to be on the agenda yet, although in May 2011, the Minister for Education announced the formal recognition of Educate Together (the patron body to Ireland's multi-denominational primary schools) as a second-level patron and there have been talks about establishing a Muslim secondary school for some time.

As in the issue of the treatment of Protestant schools, the *non-accommodation of the Sikh turban in the Garda Reserve* also highlighted the existence of nuances and differentiations in the accommodation of religious minorities in Irish institutions. In particular, it leads us to the following question: Why was a religious (Muslim) symbol accommodated in schools and another religious (Sikh) symbol not accommodated in the police force? We may indeed see here *a second indication of the kinds of diversity Ireland is prepared to deal with*, and identify in this instance a strategy to *accommodate diversity within certain areas* and to reject - or at least minimise - it in certain

(emblematic) institutions. An exhaustive analysis and interpretation would require a more in-depth investigation than is possible here, however, some elements of response can be presented.

First, in Ireland, schools are not technically 'state institutions' and therefore, they do not represent the state in the way the Garda does. However, as they are mainly religious (and mainly Catholic) institutions, accommodating a different religious group might have seemed to present a greater challenge than accommodating a less widely controversial religious symbol in an organisation that is not itself religious. Despite the underlying fear of Islamisation in Europe, Ireland has so far integrated its growing Muslim community without any major difficulty. However, as was reported by our Sikh respondents and various media reports, prior to 2007, the Sikh community in Ireland was also establishing itself despite issues of 'mistaken identity' generated by 9/11 and the 2005 London bombings. One element of response may thus lie in the lack of knowledge of the Sikh faith and community compared with Muslims, and reveal a mistrust of the unknown stronger than Islamophobia. For our Sikh respondents, the community in Ireland has always been too small to be interesting or even potentially dangerous enough to attract media or political attention and thus public interest.

Another potential element of response might be that, while Ireland has had so far a relatively good record of integrating diversity, it can also be quite selective in the nature and amount of diversity accommodated. For instance, in March 2011, attending the St Patrick's Parade in New York, Irish Foreign Minister Eamon Gilmore stated: 'We need to celebrate Ireland as it is, not as people imagine it. Equality is very much the center of who we are in our identity in Ireland... This issue of exclusion is not Irish, let's be clear about it. Exclusion is not an Irish thing... I think that's the message that needs to be driven home' (O'Doherty 2011). He was, however, specifically criticising the organisers of the parade for excluding LGBT participants. One of our interviewee also emphasised that 'positive discrimination' for people with disability in the civil service had been well perceived and strongly supported by people **(GPP)**, although one activist during our discussion group suggested that, in this particular area too, *integration was also very 'selective'* as '[people] have to have a certain type of disability, minimise it, control it... let's be clear, it's very narrow and it defines disability in a very specific way'.

These examples and this 'selectivity' in openness to, and accommodation of, diversity tend to indicate that *there are 'scales of tolerance'* in Ireland, depending on *who* or *what* is tolerated, *where* it's tolerated and *why* it's tolerated. According to our respondent from the Garda, the minorities the most discriminated against – or least 'tolerated' – in Ireland are (in that order): Travellers, then Roma, then 'Black people' – there was also a general consensus from participants in our discussion group on that classification.

Another important issue – mainly evoked by politicians generally and highlighted by one of our interviewees – is the perception of whether or not minorities are 'making a contribution to Irish society'. As one of our interviewees put it:

> 'The best integration of all will come from work and jobs, involvement and contribution... we need to use everybody's talents whether they are Irish, British, Muslims, Eastern Europeans to help create economic activity, to play their role in putting the country back to work... to be participants in the economic side of the equation, not just recipients' (FGPM)

This perception of the active participation and contribution of migrants and minorities to Irish society can be seen as closely associated with their relative value to society. Thus, in the context of our question above, we can envisage that, as important agents of socialisation, schools can be perceived as appropriate, even favourable, spaces where diversity can be accommodated, and children going through the Irish education system as the future actors and 'contributors' to Irish society, while An

Garda Síochána, as a 'guardians of the peace'[144] in the Irish state can be conceived as a protector of certain specific values, traditions and customs.

The notion that children going through the school system will constitute the future of Irish society was strongly emphasised by all our interviewees, but especially by our minority respondents, some of whom worried about the limitations they perceived on their children's future aspirations and opportunities because of certain (more or less visible) barriers such as the turban ban in the Garda Reserve. Issues relating to the lack of positive role models for minority children were also highlighted in our interviews and during our discussion group with migrant and community activists. The difficulties encountered today by the first generation, the hardship endured and battles fought in order to gain both more visibility and greater access and participation in every corner of the civic and political arena were often mentioned by minority parents. While acknowledging that such a process was relatively common in the history of the first (migrant) generation in every country, they also expressed serious concern about the lack of engagement from the government, and more generally the civic and political sphere, for migrant and minority issues.

As suggested earlier, the tendency of elites in the political arena to 'disengage from minority issues' was recently demonstrated by the lack of debate about immigration and integration issues during the campaign for the 2011 General Election. This was further revealed by a survey carried out by the Integration Centre.[145] Its findings grabbed media headlines and were mentioned by many of our respondents. It revealed that, despite the fact that TD's were aware of racist attitudes (60% having encountered racism while canvassing for the 2011 General Election), 1 in 4 were unfamiliar with anti-racism and diversity strategies in their own constituencies and more than a third also felt that speaking up on behalf of migrants would damage their electoral support. In addition, while a majority of TDs agree that changes need to be made regarding training and integration, 1 in 5 did not agree with mandatory training of frontline public sector staff in the area of diversity.[146] Killian Forde, CEO of The Integration Centre argued that 'at the moment (...) there is neither a Minister with the remit of Integration, as there was with the last government, or a national integration plan. This laissez faire attitude will have ramifications. The biggest challenge to Irish society at the moment is around integration, get it right and we can be a model to the rest of the world, get it wrong and we will struggle for generations to come with a disenfranchised, excluded minority and all the associated problems this leads to'.[147]

With regard to the absence of debate about immigration and migrant issues in elections, we have seen earlier that Ireland has no real right-wing, anti-immigrant party. It may also be worth noting that, prior to the 2011 Election, ENAR Ireland updated and circulated the Anti Racism Election Protocol first developed by the (now defunct) NCCRI.[148] The Anti Racism Election Protocol has played an important role since 2001 in ensuring that elections are conducted in such a way that they do not incite hatred or prejudice on the grounds of 'race', colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religious belief and membership of the Traveller Community.[149] However, as was mentioned in our discussion group, while the absence of heated debate about immigration in Ireland can be seen as a positive factor, it also reveals a relative lack of any debate on the subject, which in turn highlights a lack of interest from both government and political parties.

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[144] The literal translation/meaning of 'An Garda Síochána' in English is 'The Guardians of the Peace'.

[145] The Integration Centre (2012)

[146] This was further corroborated in our Discussion Group as one participant related an event in recent months where a Labour councillor had put forward a motion to his Town Council asking for diversity training to provided for councillors and he was 'voted down'.

[147] http://www.integrationcentre.ie/Media/Press-Releases/2011/WE-UNDERSTAND-THE-ISSUES--NOW-WE-NEED-TO-ACT.aspx

[148] The protocol was originally developed in 2001 by the NCCRI in partnership with all political parties, see: http://www.nccri.ie/pdf/pol-protocol-info.pdf. Political parties that have already endorsed the protocol include: Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Green Party, Labour Party, Sinn Féin, Socialist Party, Workers' Party, Libertas, People before Profit.

[149] The categories defined in the Equal Status Act (2000) and the Employment Equality Act (1998).

5.4. Concluding remarks and lessons to be learned

In a short period of time, Ireland has had to develop policies for a population that has become increasingly diverse, and the debate on how best to respond to this change is still in the early stages.

The official approaches that prevailed for some time can be understood as going beyond toleration to some more substantial respect, if not full recognition. Thus, interculturalism as an approach was increasingly being incorporated into key policy documents such as the National Action Plan against Racism[150] which aimed to 'develop a more inclusive, intercultural society'. On foot of this, several 'Intercultural or Diversity Strategies' were developed in various areas (i.e., health, arts, work, childcare, the Garda). Intercultural guidelines for schools in particular were developed 'to ensure reasonable accommodation is made for cultural and ethnic diversity' (NCCA, 2005, 2006). However, in the latest policy document developed by the (previous) government, *Migration Nation* (2008), the key theme throughout was 'integration', representing ***a first shift from interculturalism***.

This shift towards integration can be perceived to reflect at best some confusion, or at least some hesitation on the government's part, at worst a retreat from recognition/respect (level 3) to basic tolerance of diversity (level 2).

The closure of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism in 2008, the cuts to the budget of the Equality Authority soon after, and, more recently under the new government, the dissolution of the Office for the Minister for Integration also raise questions as to successive governments' commitment and approach to diversity.[151] In July 2011, the new Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter, stressed the importance of integrating minority ethnic groups into Irish society. 'I reject the notion of parallel societies and believe that integration and not multiculturalism is the approach we have to take', he said, 'It is imperative that we encourage immigrants to be part of mainstream Irish society and not to perceive themselves as outsiders living apart from it' (Coulter, 2011).

We can observe now ***another slight shift*** in interest – particularly visible in the government's media strategy – ***towards increasing the naturalisation of the 'New Irish'***, the message conveyed being that becoming citizens represents the main path to integration and therefore full participation in Irish society.

In 2011, reforms were introduced to the processing of citizenship applications to tackle the backlog of applications that had arisen due to the huge increase in the volume of naturalisation applications in recent years. The new measures introduced aimed to deal with almost all new citizenship applications within 6 months. According to the Department of Justice, these measures have already resulted in a significant increase in the number of cases decided with double the volume of valid applications being decided in 2011, some 16,000, compared with 2010 when fewer than 8,000 were decided.[152]

In 2011 Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Alan Shatter also introduced citizenship ceremonies for the first time in the State to 'ensure that the granting of citizenship is marked by a sense of occasion for our new citizens'. Persons from 112 countries attended twenty eight citizenship ceremonies in 2011; on Thursday 14 June 2012, 4,000 people were granted citizenship in ceremonies on one day (*Irish Times*, 2012b). The impressive media coverage of these ceremonies is strongly emphasising the atmosphere of festivity and merriment of these events as new citizens are 'welcomed to the national family' and, once again, the government's message emphasises the specificity of the

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150 Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2004)

151 The Office of the Minister of State for Integration has now been renamed to the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration. The operations of the Office have been transferred from the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs to the Department of Justice and Equality.

152 http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/AXBN-8Q7F24115444-en

Irish - interculturalist - approach to diversity, as is evidenced in Taoiseach Enda Kenny's speech at one of such ceremony on February 2, 2012 in Dublin:

> 'As a people, the Irish know what it's like to be far from home, to leave everything we have known and make a new life in a new world. Which is why, today, we welcome you and your families so warmly. As citizens of this country, you are coming 'home'. (...) Since you arrived on these shores, you have enriched your communities, enhanced your workplaces, bringing new light, new depth, a new sense of imagining, to what it means to be a citizen of Ireland in the 21st century. This is the day we recognise your commitment. This is the day we welcome you with all your hopes, your dreams all the devices of fate or fortune that brought you to us. This is the day we honour you by making you a citizen of our Republic (...) Welcome to your Irish family' (Kenny, 2012)

However, once again, the relative 'superficiality' of certain measures and the gap between the good intentions at the top and the lack of subsequent practical measures on the ground persist, as was highlighted by M. Kavanagh in a letter to the *Irish Times* newspaper (2012) relating how, following an 'impressive' citizenship ceremony, one of his friends presented herself at a Garda station to apply for her Irish passport. When the officer on duty demanded proof of citizenship, she proudly produced her certificate of naturalisation. The certificate was then carefully examined, even 'held up to the light', however, as it was all in Irish, the officer declared that he could not fully understand it and requested further proof of citizenship which, of course, she did not have at this stage. Such incidents reveal that the mainstreaming of top-down policies pertaining to migrant and minority participation and representation still represents an important obstacle to the success of the government's integration ambitions.

Interaction with the state and its various representatives has an impact on what Bloemraad (2006) calls the 'interpretive dynamic of citizenship' and can affect 'understandings of citizenship, especially of immigrants' legitimate political standing' (2006: 4). These interactions can happen in many different ways: interaction with immigration officials, schools, local councils and even the police force can all shape immigrant political participation and feelings of belonging. As Bloemraad notes, 'the story of citizenship is not just about the immigrants we receive, but also fundamentally about the reception we give them' (2006: 2).

In that perspective, the turban ban definitely represents not only a significant negative experience but also a negative signal - not only for the Sikh community but more generally, for religious and ethnic minorities attempting to carve a niche in Ireland's civic and political environment. It can also be seen as an example of ***a failed opportunity to achieve the actual mainstreaming of 'Irish interculturalism' through its institutions*** while indicating that integration can sometimes be a one-way process in Ireland also.

In January 2012, outlining the broad elements of his immigration programme for 2012, Minister Shatter said that he would be working on developing a comprehensive policy approach to family reunification or settlement and on the long-awaited Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill (2010). However, he also announced the development of an English language/civics test for naturalisation applicants, arguing that the ability to speak the language together with some knowledge of the way business is conducted in Ireland was an essential part of the integration process for immigrants and should form an integral part of eligibility for naturalisation. This latter element would bring Ireland in line with other EU countries' immigration policies, and towards policies more closely aligned to toleration than recognition.

On the positive side, we have seen that the Irish educational system has been able to offer a level of structural accommodation to religious and cultural minorities, though its capacity to extend respect and recognition to all minorities, including the non-religious, is currently in question.

The hijab debate suggests that ***the level of acceptance of Muslims in education is dependent on a number of factors***, including the limited nature of the claim, and the prosperity and relatively small numbers of the minority. A further indicator will be the treatment of the proposed Muslim secondary school. How the acceptance of Muslims will evolve may depend on the development of the Muslim community, increasing numbers of Irish Muslims in the next generation, and whether or not geographical or cultural segregation emerges.

The case of the Protestant schools shows the extent to which ***substantial recognition of minorities is subject to a variety of pressures***, including economic constraints. It also shows that the long-established place of religious groups in Irish education is increasingly open to question. The current debate on the patronage *of* schools and associated discussion of the place of religion *within* schools is likely to affect the way in which existing minority faith schools (mainly Protestant but also Muslim, Jewish and Quaker) are considered and financially supported. While their existence is not in danger or even in question, the recognition/respect allocated to them is likely to be affected by the debates and potential reforms in which the Irish education system is now engaged.

As we have seen earlier, ***the Irish political arena has also been open to migrants and minorities in the area of electoral participation and representation*** (voting and standing in local elections) and this opportunity has been taken up by members of (some) minority groups. As in other countries, however, newcomers and minorities face important barriers to participation, including a lack of information about the rules and practices, a lack of access to established political networks, sometimes the burden of previous history of political involvement (depending on their country of origin). Another obstacle comes from a potential lack of motivation as, for non-citizens, participation is restricted to the local level, while their main interests might lie in having a say in the development and implementation of the immigration and integration policies themselves, and these are determined at the national level. Some communities also prioritise their needs and ambitions – in the case of the Sikh community for example, the priority at this stage is simply to be 'accepted' and political ambitions are a far-away prospect (SkRep).

Electoral participation, however, is only one – important though not sufficient – way in which migrants and minorities contribute to (and challenge) the civic and political life in Ireland. Despite significant lack of encouragement, resources and support, the Irish Sikh Council and other migrant-led associations are working actively and being pro-active in the area of integration. Providing support to their communities, information and outreach to the wider society, through advocacy, lobbying and cultural events, they create their own opportunities to participate in and engage with the Irish civic and political sphere, emphasising – and demonstrating – that successful integration comes from bottom-up rather than top-down initiatives and activities, they work on their own 'self-integration' or, 'integration from below' (Lentin, 2012).

From our exploration of levels of acceptance of cultural and religious diversity in Irish society, we can draw some conclusions relevant for policy and for future reflections on non-tolerance, tolerance, and respect/recognition of diversity in Ireland.

In the area of education:

- Whatever the shape of future Irish education, teachers need to be equipped to deal with religious and cultural diversity within schools. While there has been some training made available, there is a clear need for more compulsory training for teachers in this area.

- Following on from this, minority groups need to be facilitated in interacting with institutions and government, with mediating bodies filling the role previously performed by the NCCRI - similar to, for example, the Garda Intercultural Office.

- More broadly, these debates display considerable support for policies of interculturalism, and suggest that this language and policy could usefully be maintained by government, rather than adopting the language of a more assimilatory approach to integration.

In the area of civic and political life:

- Current voting and standing rights for foreign nationals at local level are an important catalyst for integration but they are not enough – representation and participation in every organ of the civic and political system would make possible a more adapted response to the needs of an increasingly diverse Irish society and greater accountability in the decision-making process.

- If ethnic and religious minorities were to use existing opportunities to stand for local elections, they could make a greater mark on the Irish political landscape; the political elite could promote and encourage their participation, and use it as a gateway to foster more fruitful interactions between policy makers and their changing constituencies.

- In addition to electoral participation, although the initial Ministerial Council on Migrant Integration has been discontinued, formally constituted public consultative forums of migrants at national or local levels (as defined by the Council of Europe 'consultative body of foreign residents') could provide a useful avenue for the equal participation and representation of migrants and minorities in a variety of societal debates.

- Stronger national political leadership could facilitate the mainstreaming and dissemination of positive initiatives throughout institutions and administrations, at every level and in every part of the country. Government intervention *can* mitigate both formal and informal barriers to migrants and minorities' political integration and acceptance, as we have seen in the case of the speeding up of the naturalisation procedures; such initiatives could benefit other facets of the integration process.

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7. ANNEXES

Annex 1. Usually resident population by nationality, 2006 and 2011 (full list of nationalities)

	2006	% change since 2002	2011	% change since 2006
All Irish	3,706,683	3.4	3927,143	5.9
Non-Irish	419,733	87.2	544,357	29.7
EU27 excluding Irish	284,440	92.9	386,764	36
Austrian	583	5.4	720	23.5
Belgian	910	15.3	1,071	17.7
Bulgarian	969	65.4	1,759	81.5
Cypriot	60	87.5	83	38.3
Czech	5,159	367.7	5,451	5.7
Danish	729	15.5	801	9.9
Estonian	2,272	390.7	2,560	12.7
Finnish	926	5.7	868	-6.3
French	9,046	42.2	9,749	7.8
German	10,289	42.6	11,305	9.9
Greek	412	62.8	516	25.2
Hungarian	3,440	741.1	8,034	133.5
Italian	6,190	64.2	7,656	23.7
Latvian	13,319	641.2	20,593	54.6
Lithuanian	24,628	1070.5	36,683	48.9
Luxembourger	26	62.5	35	34.6
Maltese	139	71.6	180	29.5
Dutch	3,990	28.4	4,313	8.1
Polish	63,276	2879.1	122,585	93.7
Portuguese	1,798	161.7	2,739	52.3
Romanian	7,696	54.6	17,304	124.8
Slovak	8,111	2631	10,801	33.2
Slovenian	130	188.9	192	47.7
Spanish	6,052	36.4	6,794	12.3
Swedish	1,742	38	1,713	-1.7
UK (1)	112,548	8.8	112,259	-0.3
Other European	15,760	73.5	16,307	3.5
Russian	4,495	66.3	3,896	-13.3
Ukrainian	3,122	119.9	3,343	7.1
Other European	8,143	64.1	9,068	11.4
African	35,326	68.4	41,642	17.9
Nigerian	16,300	81.7	17,642	8.2
South African	5,432	29.8	4,872	-10.3
Mauritian	641	856.7	2,844	343.7
Other African	12,953	66.9	16,284	25.7
Asian	46,952	115.6	65,579	39.7

Indian	8,460	233.9	16,986	100.8
Filipino	9,548	144.8	12,791	34
Chinese	11,161	91	10,896	-2.4
Pakistani	4,998	70.1	6,847	37
Malaysian	2,979	76.7	3,295	10.6
Other Asian	9,806	101	14,764	50.6
American	21,124	37.3	24,884	17.8
American (US)	12,475	9.6	11,015	-11.7
Brazilian	4,388	303.7	8,704	98.4
Canadian	2,343	21.3	2,384	1.7
Other American	1,918	95.7	2,781	45
Australian	4,033	8.8	2,849	-29.4
New Zealander	1,756	7.3	1,394	-20.6
Other nationalities	7,984	321.5	4,098	-48.7
Multi nationality	2,358	0.8	840	-64.4
No nationality	1,318	55.6	1,487	12.8
Not stated	44,279	-8.5	52,294	18.1
All nationalities	4,172,013	8.1	4,525,281	8.5

Source: Central Statistics Office (2007, 2012)

Annex 2. Population usually resident and present in the state who speak a language other than English or Irish at home (number) by language spoken
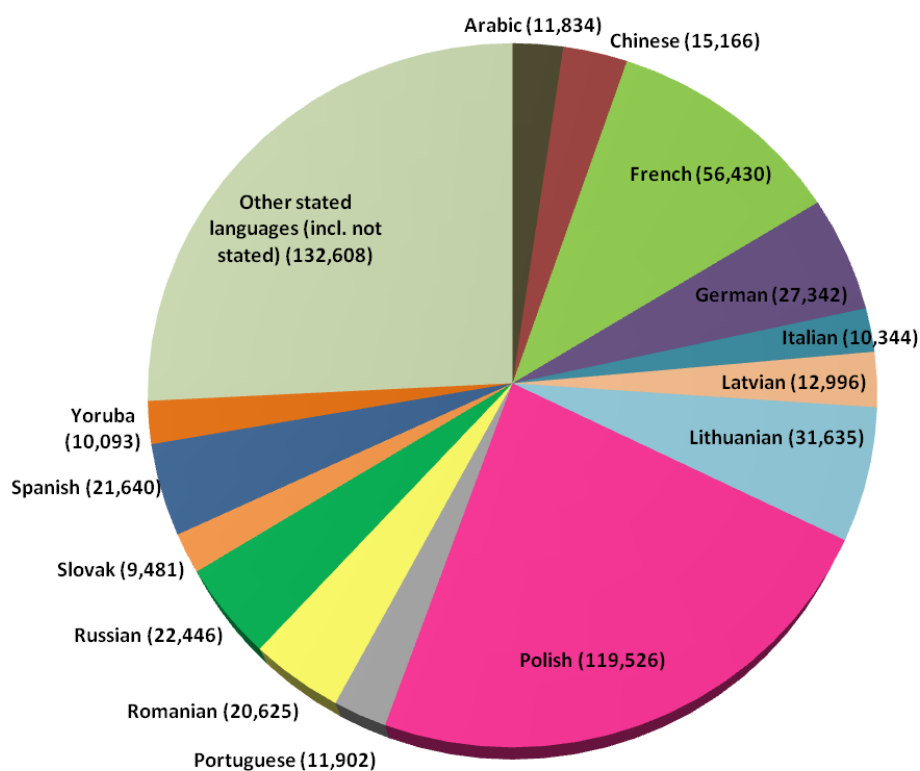
Annex 3. List of interviews for the EDUCATION study (in chronological order)

AM - Aiveen Mullally – Religious Educationalist; Author of the 2010 *Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of Other Faiths in Catholic Secondary Schools* – Interview 22.03.11, Dublin

PW - Philip Watt - Former Director of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) (1998-2008) – Interview 23.03.11, Dublin

AS – Ali Selim – Spokesperson for the Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland (ICCI) – Interview 24.03.11, Dublin

SK - Summaha Kenna - Spokesperson for the Women's Department at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Ireland (ICCI) – Interview 24.03.11, Dublin

CB - Clive Byrne – Director of the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) – Interview 29.03.11, Dublin

BH - Brian Hayes - Fine Gael politician, was party spokesperson for Education and Science from 2007–2010 – Short telephone interview with only note taking, 31.03.11.

DK - Rev. Donald Ker - Former President of the Methodist Church in Ireland – now Secretary of Conference – Interview 06.04.11, Belfast

GL - Rev. Gordon Linney - Former Archdeacon of the Church of Ireland; had been very vocal in the media about the cuts – Interview 07.04.11, Dublin

Z – 'Zakhia' – Student at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI); born and raised in Ireland, parents from Pakistan – Interview 09.04.11, Dublin (not her real name)

M – 'Mouna' – Student at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI); from the Middle East and has arrived in Dublin in the last few years to study – Interview 09.04.11, Dublin (not her real name)

EP - Eleanor Petrie - Public Relations Officer of the National Association of COMPASS; also a Governor of Wesley College – Interview 13.04.11, Dublin

CW - Christopher Woods - Principal of Wesley College, Dublin , the only Methodist Secondary school in Ireland – Interview 14.04.11, Dublin

DM - Archbishop Diarmuid Martin – Catholic Archbishop of Dublin; patron of Mater Dei Institute of Education, College for the formation of teachers of Religion – Interview 24.05.11, Dublin

JC – John Coolahan – Emeritus Professor of Education, National University of Ireland, Maynooth; Chair of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector – Interview 31.05.11, Dublin

SM – Sinead Mangan - School Principal of St Attracta's National School, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon – Interview 07.06.11, Ballaghaderreen

Annex 4. List of interviews for the POLITICAL LIFE study (in chronological order)

FGPM – Fine Gael Senator (male) – Interview 22.11.11, Dublin

GRep – Representative from the Garda (Police) (male) – Interview 24.11.11, Dublin

GPP – Green Party politician, former TD and former Minister (male) – Interview 30.11.11, Dublin

ISCRep – Representative from the Irish Sikh Council (male) – Interview 09.12.11, Dublin

NGO – Representative from an NGO working on behalf of migrants (male) – Interview 25.01.12, Dublin

MgC – Ethnic minority candidate in the 2009 elections (female) – Interview 21.02.12, Dublin.

SkRep – Representative of the Sikh community in Ireland (male) – Interview 22.02.12, Dublin

NB – In this Case Study, participants preferred to remain anonymous

Annex 5. Interview guides for the EDUCATION study

5a. CASE STUDY 1 - Issue of the removal of funding to Protestant schools

Can you recall how the issue of the removal of funding for Protestant schools came out in Ireland?
How did it start? When? Where?
How did you hear about it the first time?
Can you tell me what 'happened' exactly?
What did you think about it initially?
What was the issue really about for you? Did it have to do with strict budgetary issues or with something else? (religion, culture, traditions, education system, school rules, laws, etc?)
In what kind of context did that come out?
Do you remember how the issue came to the fore? Were there any indications of this before the budget was made public or was it a total surprise?
Who discussed it – who got involved in the debate – what were the main arguments on both sides?
Did you think it was an important event / debate?
Did you discuss it a lot? With whom?
What was your own position on it?
How did this issue evolve? In the media, in the political arena, in the education arena?
What do you think were the actual 'repercussions' of these budget cuts? For the schools? For the families, teachers, etc… for the Protestant community in general?
What kind of 'measures' were taken by Protestant schools? By the Department of Education?
Who did what exactly – on both sides? Did people compromise, adapt, stick to their position?
What really happened – changed?
What did you think about that? Did you think the issue was dealt with in an appropriate manner?
What do you think could have been done and/or argued differently on both sides of the debate?

Why do you think each side reacted the way they did? Was it because of beliefs, principles, laws, etc?

What do you think it means for Protestants in Ireland?

Would you say it shows that Protestants are 'tolerated', accepted', 'recognised', 'respected' by the Irish education system / the Government? How about in Ireland/Irish society more generally?

What do you think about the Irish education system overall – do you think it's a good one, an open one?

What kind of values do you think it conveys and tries to transmit to children in Ireland?

Would you say Irish schools respond in an appropriate way to cultural and religious diversity – do they acknowledge it, tolerate it, accept it, respect it, encourage it?

If yes, Can you give me examples of principles or practices that demonstrate that – what do you think demonstrate 'tolerance/acceptance/recognition' of diversity in Irish schools?

If not – do you have example of this? What would you like to see change in the current system?

Are there still tensions remaining with regard to that particular issue?

Are there other (potential) issues for Protestants with regard to education these days? Which ones? How about in society in general?

5b. CASE STUDY 2 - Issue of the hijab and school uniform

Can you recall how the issue of the headscarf came out in Ireland?

How did it start? When? Where?

How did you hear about it the first time?

Can you tell me what 'happened' exactly?

What did you think about it initially?

What was the issue really about for you? Did it have to do with religion per se or with something else? (immigration, culture, traditions, education system, school rules, laws, etc?)

In what kind of context did that come out?

Do you remember who brought it up? Who discussed it – who got involved in the debate – what were the main arguments on both sides?

Did you think it was an important event / debate?

Did you discuss it a lot? With whom?

What was your own position on it?

How did this issue evolve? Was the problem 'solved'?

What kind of 'measures' were taken to deal with the issue of the headscarf in school?

Who did what exactly – on both sides? Did people compromise, adapt, stick to their position?

What really happened – changed?

What did you think about that? Did you think the issue was dealt with in an appropriate manner?

What do you think could have been done and/or argued differently on both sides of the debate?

Why do you think each side reacted the way they did? Was it because of beliefs, principles, laws, etc?

What do you think it means for Muslims in Ireland? For you, what kind of 'message' does it convey to them?

Would you say it shows that Muslims and Islam are 'tolerated', accepted', 'recognised', 'respected' in Irish schools? How about in Ireland/Irish society more generally?

What do you think about the Irish education system – do you think it's a good one? An open one? What kind of values do you think it conveys and tries to transmit to children in Ireland?

Would you say Irish schools respond in an appropriate way to cultural and religious diversity – do they acknowledge it, tolerate it, accept it, respect it, encourage it?

If yes, Can you give me examples of principles or practices that demonstrate that – what do you think demonstrate 'tolerance/acceptance/recognition' of diversity in Irish schools?

If not – do you have example of this? What would you like to see change in the current system?

Are there still tensions surrounding the issue of headscarves in school now?

Are there other (potential) issues for Muslims in Irish schools these days? Which ones? How about in society in general?

Annex 6. Interview guide for the POLITICAL LIFE study

Can you recall the first time you have heard about the Turban being an issue in Ireland? Was it at the time of the issue with the Garda Reserve or before that?

If before that, in what context was it an issue? How was it handled / resolved / not resolved?

Re. the issue with the Garda Reserve - Can you tell me what 'happened' exactly?

What did you think about it initially?

What was the issue really about for you? Did it have to do with strict 'uniform' issues or with something else? (religion, culture, traditions, laws, etc?)

Were there any indications of the turban being an issue in Irish society before or was it a total surprise that it turned out to be an issue there?

Who discussed it – who got involved in the debate – what were the main arguments on both sides?

Did you think it was an important event / debate?

What was your own position on it?

What did you think of the main arguments on both sides – how 'strong', 'realistic', 'reasonable', 'debatable', 'pertinent', etc did you think they were?

How did this issue evolve? In the media, in the political arena?

What do you think/know were the actual 'repercussions' of the decision made? For the Garda? For the Sikh community in general?

Did you think the issue was dealt with in an appropriate manner?

What do you think could have been done and/or argued differently on both sides?

Why do you think each side reacted the way they did? Was it because of beliefs, principles, laws, etc?

What do you think it means for Sikhs in Ireland? For you, what kind of 'message' does it convey to them?

Would you say it shows that Sikhs are 'tolerated', accepted', 'recognised', 'respected', 'integrated' in Irish society more generally? And how about (religious) minorities in general?

What do you think of the political life / political context in Ireland?

Do you think it is 'open to minorities' in terms of participation in it and in terms of 'interest for minority issues and minority rights'?

How about various political / public institutions and administrations?

Are minorities sufficiently represented in political life and public institutions / administrations in Ireland?

How do you think they could be involved more? How?

Would you say public institutions / administrations respond in an appropriate way to cultural and religious diversity – do they acknowledge it, tolerate it, accept it, respect it, encourage it?

If yes, can you give me examples of principles or practices that demonstrate that – what do you think demonstrate 'tolerance/acceptance/recognition' of diversity in political life / public institutions / administrations?

If not – do you have example of this? What would you like to see change in the current system?

Do you think minority rights are recognised / respected / ignored in Ireland? Which ones? To what extent?

How could this be addressed?

Are there still tensions remaining with regard to the particular issue of the Turban in the Garda?

Are there other (potential) issues for Sikhs (religious minorities) with regard to political and civic participation in Ireland these days? Which ones?

Annex 7. Discussion group for the EDUCATION study - List of participants

Audrey Bryan	Education Department, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin
Eoin Daly	School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
Daniel Faas	Department of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin
Roja Fazaeli	School of Religions and Theology, Trinity College Dublin
Tom Hickey	School of Law, National University of Ireland Galway
Claire Hogan	School of Law, Trinity College Dublin
Iseult Honohan	School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin
Sarah Miley	Department of Education and Skills
Lia O'Hegarty	Irish Human Rights Commission
Nathalie Rougier	School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin

NB – While we include their professional affiliations here, it should be noted that the Discussion Group participants talked to us 'in a personal capacity' and not as representatives of their respective institutions.

Annex 8. Discussion group for the POLITICAL LIFE study - List of participants

Charlotte Bohl	Banlieues d'Europe, Lyon
Iseult Honohan	School of Politics and International Relations, UCD
Richard King	Crosscare Migrant Project
Rosaleen McDonagh	Pavee Point Travellers' Centre
Karen McCormack	Labour (Party) Intercultural Group
Fidèle Mutwarasibo	Immigrant Council of Ireland & Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Brussels
Emmanuel Okigbo	School of Sociology, UCD
Nathalie Rougier	School of Politics and International Relations, UCD
Peter Szlovak	The Integration Centre

NB – While we include their professional affiliations here, it should be noted that the Discussion Group participants talked to us 'in a personal capacity' and not as representatives of their respective institutions.

Annex 9. Discussion group for the EDUCATION study – Questions/issues to be discussed

What is the state of tolerance for religious and cultural diversity in Irish education?

Identifying groups where tolerance is an issue

Our case studies

The headscarf in schools

Funding for Protestant Secondary Schools

Issues of religion in education and the patronage of primary schools

Diversity *of* schools or diversity *in* schools?

Integrated curriculum

Place of religious education

Recent initiatives
       IHRC Report on Religion and Education
       ICCL Consultation on the Headscarf
       Forum on Patronage

General conclusions

Annex 10. Discussion group for the POLITICAL LIFE study – Questions/issues to be discussed

How would you define tolerance? Is it just acceptance of the fact of diversity (of people, cultures, customs, beliefs, practices, etc), some 'acknowledgment' of these groups, or more substantial 'accommodation' or 'equal treatment' or 'special treatment' or...?

Do you think the Irish political sphere is 'open to minorities' in terms of participation in it and in terms of 'interest for minority issues and minority rights'?

How about various political / public institutions and administrations?

Are minorities sufficiently represented in political life and public institutions / administrations in Ireland? How do you think they could be involved more?

Would you say public institutions / administrations respond in an appropriate way to cultural and religious diversity – do they acknowledge it, tolerate it, accept it, respect it, encourage it?

What kind of 'practical' issues have you encountered in your work / personal experience?

Would you consider that the issue explored in our case studies – the turban in the Garda Reserve – can be discussed in terms of 'tolerance' of religious/cultural minorities in Ireland? Do you see it as representing a 'challenge to tolerance' in the public/political sphere in Ireland?

If NOT – can you think of any particular issue/problem that has represented/represents now a 'challenge to tolerance' in the political arena in Ireland?

How did you think this particular issue (turban) was 'handled' by all the parties involved (Garda, politicians, Sikh community, etc...)? What do you think was done right and/or could have been done differently/better?

What does it mean for them to 'tolerate' cultural diversity within political life / various institutions?

Do institutions adopt specific practices or norms that inform the accommodation of cultural diversity?

What was the issue really about for you? Did it have to do with strict 'uniform' issues or with something else? (religion, culture, traditions, laws, etc?)

What did you think of the main arguments on both sides – how 'strong', 'realistic', 'reasonable', 'debatable', 'pertinent', etc did you think they were?

What do you think were the actual 'repercussions' of the decision made? For the Garda? For the Sikh community (and other minority communities) in general?

Would you say it shows that Sikhs are 'tolerated', accepted', 'recognised', 'respected', 'integrated' in Irish society more generally? And how about (religious) minorities in general?