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'Changing a Mindset'¹: From Recognition of Qualifications Towards Embedding Ethnic Reflexivity and Translational Positionality.

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Abstract

This article addresses the need for embedding a politics of diversity in the Irish third level educational system. This involves a move beyond the simple 'recognition and transfer of qualification' agenda already addressed in state policy. It engages in a reflexive re-reading of dialogues with 'translocating' people who were attempting to access Irish third level institutions or attempting to transfer their qualifications to the Irish labour market. On the basis of this reading it addresses 'ethnic reflexivity' (the critique and reflection on our ethnic placement in the world in terms of the power it bestows on us) and 'translational positionality' (the positionality of the translocator engaged in the translation of knowledges and actions) in Irish third level accreditation, knowledge production and work practices.

Keywords: third level education; translation; ethnicity; positionality; translocation; qualifications; access; reflexivity

Introduction

My purpose is to examine how translocating people - that is people who locate fluidly between and betwixt cultures and nation-states - fare in their interactions on the global/local interface in terms of accessing Irish third level institutions or

¹ This phrase and the data used in this article is derived from the co-authored 2005 study by Coghlan, D., Fagan, H., Munck, R., O' Brien, A. & Warner, R. *International Students and Professionals in Ireland: An Analysis of Access to Higher Education and Recognition of Professional Qualifications* (Dublin: Integrating Ireland). This study was carried out by Integrating Ireland in association with the Irish Refugee Council, Dublin City University, National University of Ireland Maynooth and the Dublin Institute of Technology who provided funding for the research and drafted the report. Rosemary Warner was employed as the researcher and Ann Kinsella as the research assistant. While the data in this article is derived from the study, the views expressed in this publication are the author's only.

transferring their qualifications to the Irish labour market. The article then moves on to draw the transformative implications from this examination for the third level education sector. It evaluates the past few years of Irish policy research on questions of access and transfer of qualifications to third level education. In particular it revisits a study carried out by *Integrating Ireland* in 2005, re-reading the qualitative accounts collected therein to argue for a move beyond a state policy approach which simply advocates a 'systematic' benchmark approach to transferring qualifications (which has to some extent been met through the 2003 establishment of the National Framework of Qualifications through the National Qualifications Authority, Ireland) and promoting greater access (which has yet to be meaningfully tackled in the policy arena). While any policy which addresses recognition of professional qualifications of migrants from non-EU countries is of course welcome, the argument made here is that there are whole dimensions lost when the issues are reduced simply to developing the NFQ and promoting greater access.

In order to develop this argument I centre the voices of those who engaged in discussions with *Integrating Ireland* in the 2005 study (on barriers to access to third level and barriers to transfer of qualifications to the Irish education and labour structures), placing them in a paradigmatic position to help move beyond a state policy approach. It reflexively reads these accounts, and in epistemological terms foregrounds those voices,² seeking to engage the ambiguities and prioritise the personalised accounts of those who to some extent were, or were almost, defeated by their encounters with the 'Irish system'. It attempts to critically engage with, rather than transcend those voices, in methodological terms using 'uncomfortable reflexivity' (Pillow 2003) which is not about using better methods, or about whether we can represent people better, but is about 'whether we can be accountable to people's struggles for self-representation and self determination' (Visweswaran 1994: 32), including our own selves (Pillow 2003: 193). The voices of the translocating agents are registered here where they name their needs, their motivations and their understanding of power relations. These are then employed to argue for reflexivity on the part of Irish third level academics and policy makers, an 'ethnic reflexivity' which could destabilise Irish national identity and lead to a reflexive interrogation of ethnic positionality in Irish third level institutions.

Motivation for this article is derived from the call by one 'translocator' interviewed who on encountering Irish third level from a non-EU positionality called for *changing a mindset*. To me this involves thinking about transformative institutional remaking within the third level sector, where translational positionality is recognised and also developed as a source of reflexive knowledge as befits the era of 'reflexive modernity' (Beck et al, 1994). The university in the knowledge society is, or should be, about a form of knowledge production that is characterised by reflexivity, transdisciplinarity and heterogeneity (Gibbons *et al* 1984). Further-

² For a comparable use of voice see Fagan (1999).

more, given, as Gerard Delanty argues, that the task of the university is to 'open up sites of communication in society' (Delanty 2001: 7) ethnic reflexivity around Irish social positionality, and the inclusion of the translocator's translational positionality (as opposed to excluding it) would, I argue, be a fruitful investment for the Irish third level system.

Ethnic Reflexivity and Translational Positionality

A keen debate in social theory that has taken place over the past twenty years, which has generated one key insight that is vitally significant for the work we do in forging critique and transformation, is that around the need for reflexivity. Its more sociological version of 'social reflexivity' refers to a reflection on our own social placement in the world in terms of our power *vis à vis* others needing to be inscribed within our social commentary. In this global era of translocations I am advocating for Ireland's third level educational system a politics of diversity that engages ethnic reflexivity, that is reflection on our own individual and group ethnic placement in the world in term of our power *vis à vis* others which we daily inscribe in our policy input, our research and our teaching.

Floya Anthias in her critique of the concept of hybridities develops the concept of 'translocational positionality' as an important corrective to the limits of a 'cultural' approach to ethnicity and identities. This notion is steeped in the political and power dimensions of social relations, in particular those of social inequality and exclusion (Anthias 2001). For her 'positionality' combines a reference to a social position (as a set of effectivities: as an outcome) and social positioning (as a set of practices, actions and meanings: as process) (Anthias 2001: 634). Building on these concepts I use her term translocators to describe the new migrant populations in Ireland in less cultural and more socially determined terms than the dominant intercultural model.

Homi Bhabha describes us as living in 'translational times' where globalisation and responding forms of nationalism operate in a dialectic and are in transitional and translational states at the moment (Bhabha in Chance 2001). Michael Cronin suggests that 'translation theory and practice can point the way to forms of coexistence that are progressive and enabling rather than disabling and destructive' (Cronin 2006: 3). More directly relevant to the question in hand is the approach of Boaventura Sousa Santos (Sousa Santos 2005), who develops a radical socio-political approach to what he calls the 'the work of translation'. He makes the point that global social justice is not possible without what he calls 'global cognitive justice' and to this end promotes the work of translation as it concerns both the translation of knowledges and the translation of actions. Global cognitive justice and the work of translation is central to the work of the university and its knowledge production, but the Irish university may need to reflect on *changing a mindset* before it can play its role in '*challenging knowledge*' (Delanty 2001) in an Ireland changing rapidly through migration. In this context, if the Irish university

simply follows the state policy of 'integration', it in effect will be following the most problematic variant of hybridisation described by Bhabha as one where the dominant culture authorises itself and de-authorises the culture of the Other (Bhabha in Chance, 2001: 4). Integration by definition assumes the hegemony of 'Irish' culture and de-authorises translocational culture. A progressive option for universities is to centre translation in their production of knowledge and in their social practices. Sousa Santos refers to 'the work of translation' as central, so that diversity is celebrated, not as a factor of fragmentation and isolationism, but rather as a condition of sharing and solidarity (Sousa Santos 2005: 15).

A further point that needs to be made to set the context of translocators attempting to access third level education in Ireland, is that as migrants they stand in 'liminal' spaces, those spaces that Bhabha describes as the 'in between space' - 'the cutting edge of translation and negotiation' (Bhabha 1994: 38). However, ethnic boundaries, differential access to resources, differential embodiment of power, differential access to the dominant language of English, leave them excluded in different ways from the third level educational system. Hence, the work of translation needs to be supported by a cognisance of the material reality or the social positionality of the translocator, and in this case by embedding that translational positionality within inclusionary politics and policies of third level education. Global cognitive justice and the work of translation that Sousa Santos refers to should be central to the work of the university and its knowledge production, but the Irish university may need to develop a more reflexive mindset on issues of justice and equality, in particular as they relate to translocators, before it can play its stated role in 'challenging knowledge'.

The Migration Context and Higher Education Policy Approaches

Global capitalism - its production and consumption relations in particular - provides for movement of people to many localities to work and, as an afterthought, to establish social relations other than those of work. Global political relations allow for a relatively small number of people to move, where violence and persecution have forced them into exile, to escape, to survive, to receive social welfare, to live and eventually work in countries other than their one of birth. People have arrived to, and departed from, this island of Ireland over the centuries precisely under globalising forces, whether they were religious, economic, social or political. In our nation's very recent past people have fled this island to escape persecution, poverty or whatever fundamentalism of the day encroached on their human rights or equality. They have gone to seek economic progress or equality progress elsewhere, shifting and moving through the flow of global traffic to labour destinations such as the United States or Australia, or to globalised Christian destinations in Africa or Asia. However, since the early to mid 1990's there has been a strong movement of people into this island for socio-economic and political reasons, and it is in the context of this particular global flow that this article examines contemporary race-formulations in Ireland in one particular socio

micro-process – that of access to Irish third level education and transferring of qualifications to the Irish locale.

According to Steve Loyal and Kieran Allen (2006) the flows of people into Ireland since the 1990's have been categorised by the state and its apparatuses into three different 'classes' - returning 'Irish', asylum seekers and refugees, and economic migrants. These categorisations allow differential treatment, returning 'Irish' with high status and pride invested in their status as symbols of the success of the 'Celtic Tiger', asylum seekers and refugees, with low status, treated to welfare and deportation but not work, and the economic migrants more recently with differentiated status, either as bonded labour in an unprotected workforce (low status) or as international professionals (middle status). While equality and justice should, arguably, form the main core of immigration processes with regards to work permits, basic rights, access to education and access to work, the reality is often very different when labour market driven differentiation is the order of the day. This is replicated in the third level sector, where Irish economic development, and specifically the labour market driven differentiations, currently drive policy, with equality and justice only appearing on the agenda in a rather tokenistic manner at best. While Loyal and Allen focus on class formation in the labour processes, these formations also take place in the educational processes, and in addition are more and more beginning to have a bearing on race and ethnicity formation within both the labour and educational processes. So while it is necessary to increase awareness of ethnicity and race as currently enweaving exclusions and partial inclusions in Irish economic and cultural life, it is now also necessary to reflect on the role of the third level institution and its personnel in this 'race making' (Knowles 2003).

How does the third level sector in Ireland fare on the issues of equality and justice, in its treatment of the translocated subjects of global capitalism? It will take much dedicated study to answer this question in any depth, and there has only recently been a call to the Higher Education Authority and the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education to collect at least some appropriate statistics on non-EU students resident in Ireland (Pobal 2006) and it will not be until the end of 2007 that disaggregated data from the 2006 Census³ will give a fuller picture of diversity in education in the Republic. There has been some under-funded initial research, however, that has sought to directly engage some fast emerging problems. The first of note is the 2005 Integrating Ireland Report, carried out with non-EU students and professionals. It can be seen as a scoping study by a number of third level based academics that came together in an Integrating Ireland working group. It is on the basis of my experience of participating in this preliminary study in Ireland that I raise the challenge to theorise beyond a policy framework. The approach taken there was to consult and engage those who were directly affected by barriers to participation in third level or the labour market in order to scope the depth and the nature of the problems they encountered. Later, in 2006, Pobal produced a further policy report on *Barriers to Access to Further and Higher Educa-*

³ For a critical appraisal of 'race' in the 2006 Census see King-O'Riain (2006).

tion for Non- EU Nationals resident in Ireland.⁴ Both of these reports offer a myriad of recommendations for policy change and much of this is in process. Recommendations from the Integrating Ireland Report call for access to education and the recognition of qualifications for those non-EU migrants living in Ireland. It calls for national consistency on the evaluation and recognition of qualifications, national standardised norms in relation to language proficiency, further support for those with refugee status trying to enter third level, revision of fees, recognition of previous work experience in non-EU country, and in particular further training and awareness building on the part of educational authorities in order that they can adapt and constructively respond to an increasingly diverse set of student constituencies (2005: 8-9). The recommendations of the Pobal Report (2006: 70-71) include a call for an educational integration policy to be developed in consultation with black and minority ethnic groups, significant changes in the fee regime that operates for non-EU students who are long term migrants, children of long term migrants, refugees, and people who have been accorded changes to their status. Other recommendations involve developing clear and consistent information for non-EU nationals resident in Ireland, access to grants, a consistent nationwide policy on teaching English, and financial support for refugees who are transferring schools and progressing to third level education.

More recently we have seen the 'Inter-cultural campus' initiative, building on these policy and practice developments. The idea of the Intercultural campus/university has been raised by the Higher Education Equality Unit since 2001, but most recently it has been supported and promoted as an important initiative by the NCCRI in conjunction with the HEA in roundtable discussions on March 22nd, 2007. Keen debate was engendered at the round table, where a substantial range of approaches to race and ethnic equality were seen to be blooming, ranging from a rather apolitical interculturalism to anti-racism. It remains to be seen if university campuses move towards a celebration of multi-culturalism or if the third level institutions take on board diversity as part of a politics of equality as whole and build a politics of translational positionality into their mainstream programmes.

Where recommendations are being implemented which connect with radical democratic or socialist traditions of social change, there is real progress being made. Theorists that focus on the intersections between race, ethnicity and socialist or radically democratic agendas, such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe on 'radical democracy' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), the work of Roberto Mangabeira Unger on 'experimental democracy' (Unger 1998) and Paul Gilroy's work on connecting the black imaginary to socialist traditions (Gilroy 2000) are particularly pertinent in this regard for providing a framework for assessing the

⁴ There is currently a further report under preparation by Integrating Ireland, specifically on the recognition of professional qualifications and the role of professional bodies in that process, which is due out later in 2007.

quality of progress. According to Unger there are alternative persuasive ways to define and defend group interests that are solidaristic, where we use a 'visionary element of inclusivity to outweigh nationalist and unidimensional demands for integration' (Unger 1998: 17). In particular, Unger advocates a reflexive relationship between understanding ideals or interests and thinking about practices or institutions in his concept of experimental democracy. Radical reform, in its transformative sense - where we change the formative structure of institutions and the surrounding enacted beliefs - necessitates constant theorising, constant praxis (Unger 1998). My suggestion is that the progress of policy initiatives around non-EU translocators can only be adequately monitored if we maintain constant theorizing and constant praxis. We can build on the policy progress being currently introduced in the third level sector by providing a reminder of the importance of the inclusion of equal voices which, of course, is not consistent with the integration of unequal voices.

Useful conceptual tools in this endeavour are ethnic reflexivity and the work of translation. In this instance what I mean by 'ethnic reflexivity' is that at a minimum we reflect on the social positioning of Irishness in our processes of inclusion and exclusion in the third level educational system and in our processes of knowledge production. By translation, I mean that we must engage in the work of translation (Sousa Santos 2005; Cronin 2006), in this instance to reflect on the issues raised by translocating peoples who have felt excluded and damaged on encountering the Irish third level educational system. The embedding of ethnic reflexivity and the recognition of translational positionality (not least for reasons of social justice) would be a fruitful addition to the university's production of knowledge if it is to be characterised by reflexivity, transdisciplinarity and heterogeneity and if it is to open up sites of communication. Operationalising ethnic reflexivity and the work of translation can also help us understand the role played by the Irish third level educational system in creating and governing exclusions, given that the key institutions at stake in the second modernity are those that govern exclusion (Lash 2003: 54).

In order to give substance to this proposal I now turn to a preliminary exploration at the micro and personalised level of people's lives as they approach the Irish third level sector. It takes an explicitly one-sided entry point into the issues - the perspective of, and efforts made by, hopeful entrants to the Irish third level system. It employs the voices of those translocators who participated in the 2005 Integrating Ireland research and policy initiative on access and transfer of qualifications as a tool to uncover biases and barriers seen by those translocating. These translations may have the power to engender a mode of ethnic reflexivity among those working in the sector - a necessary addition to the armoury of progressive policy initiatives. Furthermore, these voices represent a critique of higher education that responds robustly to Steve Fuller's concern that

[m]ost of what passes for 'criticism' in academia strikes the true intellectual as little more than *comfort thinking*, whereby criticism is cloaked in an esoteric jargon that amuses one's colleagues but goes over the head of its putative target and hence merely succeeds in comforting the converted (Fuller 2005: 6).

The Translocator's Experience

The phrase 'Changing a mindset' and the quotations used in this article are selected from the original qualitative data collected for the 2005 Integrating Ireland Report, *International Students and Professionals in Ireland: An Analysis of Access to Higher Education and Recognition of Professional Qualifications*. In order to find out the views of non-EU citizens, affected by problems associated with access to third level education and the recognition of qualifications for non-EU nationals in Ireland, seven group discussions were held during July and early August 2005. The groups varied in size from three to thirteen, and four individual interviews were also held to supplement the group discussions. Participants were invited to attend by circulating information through Integrating Ireland's contacts, and so self-selected on the basis that they had experienced barriers to access and transfer. The discussions were carried out in English, and so the initial work of language translation was done by the translocators themselves.

I propose to take as a starting point one of the most analytical statements made in the Integrating Ireland Report (2005) which comes from a newly arrived person who reflecting on their own encounter with the Irish third level system stated that

it is not a question of changing a few rules, or of tweaking the existing system. It is a question of changing a mindset (Coghlan et al. 2005: 25).

The view held by most participants was that the Irish authorities and people had not taken on board the fact that there are new people now living in Ireland, who were going to be staying, and whose inclusion in Ireland would have to be negotiated. In response to this the Integrating Ireland Report called for 'a new vision of where Ireland will be in future years, and how migrants will fit into Ireland in the future' (Coghlan et al. 2005: 25).

Privileging Translations?

The role of language as a barrier is a significant one and perhaps the most quoted one when it comes to questions of access and barriers to access. New comers indicated that a first step in integration was acquiring English language skills.

I think the language barrier is still the big problem, no matter what you want to do, even if you just want to buy something. The first thing is to solve this. I studied hard, because the culture is different and the communication skill is very different. Even though I'd been learning English since Grade 4 in elementary school – maybe 9 years old. That's a standard course in China, you must do it. They even start from 6 years old now (Coghlan et al. 2005: 16).

We should not underestimate the level of effort and the sheer amount of hard work that goes into this. It is something that the people participating in this study took most seriously as a concrete material and non-negotiable effort they must themselves make towards integration.

I am here nine months. When I come I can't speak English. Now I learn everyday English, alone. Everyday, everyday, everyday.⁵

However, when it comes to access and the third level institutions approach to certification of appropriate language skills, the confusion created in the sector itself became the barrier as opposed to English language proficiency. There was a particular problem with access to colleges in that the colleges had different requirements of proof of level of knowledge of English. Some asked for a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Test) certificate, others had their own exams, and some relied on interviews.

I did a course for four months in FAS and then I got a TOEFL cert, not the actual TOEFL cert online, but the certificate was issued by IILT [Integrate Ireland Language Training] and then it is written on the certificate that I qualified for third level education. Now in every college that I apply they ask me to sit an English test. While their English test is very easy, easier than TOEFL, because TOEFL is extremely difficult. And then I have other certificates from [various countries] and I have studied English for years. But when I send them, they would look at them, just like piece of paper, even at the certificate that I have got from IILT, which is a governmental language training body (Coghlan et al. 2005: 16).

Once students had managed to get into college, there were then a number of difficulties experienced by them in studying through English. For those trying to improve their English by paying to attend language schools, there were problems with high costs, but also of poor standards. Quite an interesting and innovative approach to the particular English spoken in the Irish third level institutions is evidenced in the following quotation where lecturers, rather than being experienced as a resource, were bypassed for the books themselves.

Most people coming from China, even though they speak English, for the first year they can't catch what the lecturer says, so most of them don't go to lectures very

⁵ Where the quotation is not cited in the Coghlan et al. report, it is taken directly from transcriptions collected for the study, but not quoted in the final report.

much, and don't go to tutorials at all. But the results are very good because they spend most time in the Library concentrating on books, because the word is the same.

The perception was that the assessments were not measured on quality of content, but on quality of the written English primarily, since lecturers did not have a way of distinguishing between the two and inevitably graded on the latter.

My friends said that in some colleges the teachers don't teach very well. My friend told me get very, very good English before going to college, because the teachers sometimes don't care about your lessons.

So integration was initiated by the individuals themselves but it is also required by the institution; that is, it occurs as 'structured agency' in sociological terms. Inclusion however is a thornier issue where a cohesive policy on language skills, which would accommodate, as opposed to disadvantage those with English as a second language, is yet to be imagined or implemented. Incoherence in institutional policy produces individual disadvantage, both educational and financial. Once in the system of third level education the evidence of accommodation of diversity in language is scarce, with English being prioritised over subject knowledge according to those who speak English as a second or third language. An active development of translation as principle and practice would help here (Cronin 2006: 71) where at a minimum the second language is integrated as a strength as opposed to a deficit. Rewarding bilingualism is part and parcel of the genesis of the Irish state, and the globalised state can readily gain economic and social advantage from multi-lingualism, but our system of education is not reformulating itself as the champion of language diversity, but rather the defender and purveyor of the dominant language of capitalism - English. Lost here are the positives of a politics of pluralism and diversity.

I believe that the task of re-envisioning or re-translating Ireland as a migrating nation - with in-migration as well as out-migration - would involve not just translation studies but the incorporation and presence of the newcomer, of their positionality, in the negotiation of that social transformation, whether the negotiation is occurring at the level of culture or the economy, or at both levels as is the case in the particular context of Higher Education. While Cronin (2006) provides a radical conceptualization of the work of translation, it is perhaps a predominantly literary based use of the term. Where he places particular emphasis on its cultural centrality for understanding interaction between the local and the global, I would suggest the need to build further on this, to balance this cultural understanding with an emphasis on the social relations of translocations, where ethnic boundaries and positions of dominance dictate the work of translation. I am thus advocating 'translational positionality', recognition of different positionalities being inscribed by unequal resources and power. This takes us back to the methodological requirement of 'uncomfortable reflexivity' where the researcher, or in this case the translator, challenges ethnocentric power and foregrounds issues of justice (Patai 1994).

Just Transfer?

Is there a smooth, technical and painless shift towards 'integration' of newcomers into the third level system of education? The majority of participants in the study described a range of difficulties in terms of getting previous educational attainment and qualifications recognised in Ireland. This applied to second and third level educational qualifications attained in their countries of origin, as well as recognition of prior registration with professional bodies there. Some had problems of lack of documentation to prove their qualifications or level of education. Others had degree certificates, but were then asked to supply full transcripts detailing all courses taken in each year of university, certified by the university. This was apparently required as a means of ensuring degree certificates were not forgeries, and also as a means of comparing course coverage in the different countries. In many cases the participants did not have such transcripts, and had extreme difficulty getting them from universities in their country of origin. Either the universities would not supply them, or else they requested large fees to do so. Very often there was a long delay before such transcripts could be supplied, if at all.

What were the transfer procedures these translocators faced at the time? There was a problem indicated by some participants with the translation of degree and diploma certificates, and with an understanding of the course level that a certificate indicated. One Romanian participant who had graduated with first class honours, and subsequently obtained a Masters degree had extreme difficulty persuading an Irish university that her certificate - which translated as 'graduation diploma' - was indeed a university degree certificate. A Chinese participant with a diploma had difficulty with the fact that in China a diploma course is three years, with a final year on the same course leading to the awarding of a degree. The general assumption in Ireland is that diploma courses involve a much shorter period of study, at a lower level, and he felt insufficient weight was being given to the extent of his studies. Similarly, those who had taken courses and only partially completed them in their country of origin found that the third level study they had done was generally ignored and they were not accredited with modules completed. As a result of these problems, participants who were applying for higher level college courses were often asked to repeat one or more years of an undergraduate course, while those who were applying at undergraduate level were often asked to do access courses or even the Leaving Certificate.

A number of participants made the point that other countries with more experience of immigration seem to have far fewer problems with establishing the equivalence of education and qualifications gained in other countries. They made the comparison with Canada, the USA and even the UK in this regard. They could not understand why there was not a centralised body charged with the job of establishing the level of qualifications gained in non-EU countries (only two participants had heard of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland which has been set up to deal with this issue). Participants stated that in many cases

whether or not someone from a non-EU background was accepted into a college or university seemed to be dependent on the attitude of the department concerned, or an individual within it, rather than any clear and consistent entry criteria. One participant told of going to visit one university department, being informally interviewed by a member of staff, and told he would have to repeat the final year of an undergraduate course to get into a Masters programme. On going to another college, and talking to another staff member there, he was told they would set an exam to test his level of knowledge, and that he could then enter the Masters programme immediately.

Justice and Equality?

None of the above decisions on transfer and accreditation can be divorced from global and social hierarchisations, where social and political distinctions are made in the arena of education. These distinctions are often seen to be determined by global inequities and people feel themselves victims of them.

Do I have to do a second degree to get accepted? Mass communications is mass communications., wherever it is in the world.' And some of them will tell you - ' Well, I'm told that Nigerian qualifications are not the best. They sometimes go on strike, they do this, they do that.' - that we're half baked'. One of the interviewers actually told me that the (Nigerian) universities are 'half-baked', and I was really angry about that. I said - ' You don't have that right. You don't have the right to tell me that. After all, I'm not stammering or stuttering. I'm actually looking you in the face and answering your questions (Coghlan et al. 2005: 18).

Those who are already victim of persecution in their previous country, still feel restrictions imposed in their new country.

I was stopped from going to college and they told me to go for a FAS course, a special FAS course for asylum seekers. I told them, you're taking me from Trinity College to do a FAS course, what's that for, like? And I had to do it, I had to go because if I didn't go they tell me to...they'll stop my payment (Coghlan et al. 2005: 22).

Previous educational qualifications, the chief generator of the 'meritocracy', were seen as cultural capital, qualifications which should be recognised for integration purposes.

If we are given a chance to stay in the country – like me, now I'm not just a refugee, I'm an Irish citizen – I think the best guarantee to make sure that we are really part of Irish society is to secure a good education – which I already have.

The denial of the existence of their qualifications was seen to be unjust and part of an exclusion agenda.

I'm sorry, nobody can prove to me that I don't have a good education. The second thing is to give me employment in the professional area I was trained in. If I'm prevented from practising in my professional area, how can I be integrated? How can I be socially included?

There are practices of race and ethnicity already ingrained in Ireland (see Lentin and Mc Veigh 2006) previous to this recent flow of people that are obviously having a detrimental impact on the education of translocators. Globally third level educational fees are applied to different categories: international, EU and national students are all charged different fees. The material issue of the application of international fees, which were seen to be exorbitant, to the non-EU student in Ireland, regardless of their status, merit, or their means, was seen as punishing.

They gave me the place, but I was recognised as an overseas student and the fees was around fourteen thousand and something. I had no choice, I went to the college for the first year.....I paid nine thousand something, but it was all loans from friends but I couldn't finish it so I left and went back after two years. After that they rang me and changed my status from overseas to European and it was only five thousand and they made up the balance so I'm continuing now (Coghlan et al. 2005: 20)

In addition to the unequal fees, gaining equal employment in the workforce seemed to be unusually difficult.

The few interviews that I've been to, most of them come back with a reply – 'Sorry, the competition for the position was very high', and unfortunately they can't offer me such and such position' Sometimes they tell you that they'll keep your CV on file, and when they have a suitable position they will call you. Sometimes I'm tempted to call and ask - What do you mean by suitable position?' I've done it once (Coghlan et al. 2005: 21).

There appeared to be an impossible local prerequisite to meet, namely to have work experience in Ireland before you can get work experience in Ireland.

And so, as for employment, nobody wants to employ you because you don't have the experience. I was thinking, where will I get the experience, if I don't start from somewhere? Even if we apply for a cleaning job, they say, 'where did you work last?. Where will I get the experience if I can't start somewhere? (Coghlan et al. 2005: 21).

In terms of employment, as these participants see it, they find themselves in a 'Catch 22' position – they cannot get the job because they do not have experience working in Ireland, and they cannot get experience despite their qualifications, so they cannot get the job.

Because most of the time, the people that I've been to – I mean when you're going for an interview, you're opportuned in a way to sit with some of the candidates as well,

and I've discovered that 99% of the time I have more qualifications, and better experience really to what it is they are applying for. But because I may not have the certificate of ground, or the Irish experience so to speak, I can't get that job (Coghlan et al. 2005: 21).

Many of the people in the study took up voluntary work to overcome this particular bind, once again showing the flexibility to move at great private expense towards 'integration', individually trying to overcome the structural blockages they encounter.

Prioritising embedding diversity can shift our mindset from an integration approach⁶ current in Irish third level policy (reflected in the pragmatic 'recognition of qualifications' approach to translocations) towards a more profound and reflexive approach to the inherent opportunities to be derived from the full inclusion of translocational subjects in the Irish educational systems. Put simply, there is an ongoing need to include diversity as a driver of decision-making in the third level educational sector and to operate the system on the basis that diversity and inclusion are both necessary and positive. The inclusion of those not born in Ireland in the Irish economic, political and educational landscape, and in particular their embedding in the third level sector, is about creating an economic and power dividend for/with translocators. Their employment in, their access to, and second generation access to third level, is not just about the inclusion of voices but a question of embedding new realities and new diversities in the Irish system at the level of the material and imaginary. Developing inclusion and equality of opportunity and opposing forms of exclusion,⁷ does not just involve a policy change, but also a politics of change that encompasses 'changing a mindset' and building one that is reflexive and inclusive of diversities.

Building an Inclusionary and Reflexive Mindset

To return to the initial plea that what is necessary is 'changing a mindset' and the thought that we need to renegotiate what Ireland means, the translocating voice - currently the 'subaltern voice' (Spivak 1988) in the Irish educational system - is calling for, not just integration but a full inclusion and its structural prerequisite, namely equality. In the sphere of education this means that:

you have to think not just of us, but of our children. If they do not get proper education, they will end up on the streets. (Coghlan et al. 2005: 24).

⁶ See Gilligan (2006) and Gray (2006) for two critiques of policy and research on integration.

⁷ See Cohen (2006) for a particularly helpful naming of seven forms of social exclusion of 'others' in the nation state context.

The current system is creating new victims –

People don't know where we should go, to whom we should share our frustrations. There is nobody to share, to share this kind of frustration, nobody at all. This is a kind of boiling pain inside me, there are so many problems. People don't know where to go to share our problems, who can raise the voice for us (Coghlan et al. 2005: 24).

The situation is now urgent, and recognized as such by government bodies (NQAI, 2006). One person in the study, having described their encounters with the Irish third level educational system and the labour market insist that there is not just exclusion of the individual, but also exclusion of the collective.

I lost my past. In a few years, if it continues like this, all of us will have lost our past. We talk about losing the past. It's psychologically very difficult to understand, to deal with. It is very, very difficult to lose your past. Why does Ireland, which needs the people, and lets us stay, let us lose our past? I don't see the point. Why does Ireland need people who don't have any past? It's very difficult to understand (Coghlan et al. 2005: 10)

At the state policy level Ireland is advocating, and working towards, integration. A step more radical, that of active inclusion, is also tentatively on the agenda but needs greater political backing. While a discourse of inclusion and an appropriate mode of delivery – the equality and justice legislation – are slowly edging their way onto the political landscape, the situation is still increasingly problematic given that the migration legislation directly contradicts the substantive principle of equality (Equality Authority 2006). As the Equality Authority puts it, '[c]urrent equality legislation affords limited protection in the field of immigration (Equality Authority 2006: 11). A simple call made by the Equality Authority for an equality requirement – that 'Irish immigration policy should reflect and comply with fundamental principles of international human rights law' (2006: 30) – seems unlikely to be countenanced in the drawing up of migration legislation, and seems radical and almost revolutionary in the current climate. Nonetheless, this initiative by the Equality Authority strikes at the heart of the matter, and is a move in the direction of answering the call for equality of opportunity expressed in the translocator's dialogues above.

Embedding Ethnic Reflexivity and Translocational Positionality

The voice of the translocated subjects, quoted above, should at a minimum spark a rethinking on the politics of ethnicity (Hall 1995: 227) on the need for ethnic reflexivity and in particular for reflection on the materially advantaged social positionality of 'Irishness' in the new 'Celtic Tiger' Ireland. The Integrating Ireland Report and the Pobal Report make clear proposals for change in the third level educational sector, many of which are already being put into place in the system

but others will be too radical and smack too much of 'open borders'⁸ to be accommodated. However, apart from making several policy changes in the third level sector suggested in these reports there is also a need for some rather subjective investments to be reflected upon by those of us in, subject to, or attached to the higher education sector. What would 'changing this mindset' involve for those of us employed in this sector? First of all the issue of ethnicity has to be acknowledged since as we can see from the translocator perspective race and ethnicity are vital sites of conflict over the structure of social relations. Many of those engaged in the discussions above perceive an unequal exchange, a subjugation, an exclusion, an 'othering' of the translocator and a favouring of the local. Suffering, some of it racial, is engendered in this context of accessing third level education and employment in third level.

The academics, intellectuals and *literati*, currently debating what Ireland is, and where their disciplines might go, should perhaps reflect on their own position in what amounts to a 'segregated labour market' where the so-called 'non-national' is simply not on an equal footing with them in terms of access and promotion. Too often confusion is generated when radical theoretical ideas on interculturalism and inclusion are proposed, but without the degree of social reflexivity that is necessary to achieve its implementation in a holistic way. In other words if the advantages accruing from the 'social positionality' of the Irish born academic are not acknowledged and critically engaged with explicitly then little progress can be made on inclusion and diversity. The default mode becomes a politics of 'localism' (who you know) and an unreflexive Irish 'ethno-nepotism' (Goodhart 2004) being reproduced in the third level educational sector.

The new migrant communities are barely now beginning to be 'integrated' into what it means to 'be' Irish and are still predominantly seen as 'guests' of a pre-established unified nation even among the proponents of the reinvention of 'Irishness' (See Kirby et al. 2002). Rob Stones (1996), a 'past-modern' sociologist, calls for the pulling together of ontology and its theorising (dreaming) with socially reflexive methodologies (how we play when we dream). Dreamer elements work to construct a better future for those of us living on this networked island, but more attention needs to be paid to the relationship between being dreamers and players in the game. A clear sense of the real (in all its complexity), and those of us who make comment on it as being real players, would be timely. The very local and contextual manifestations of social processes and events of migration and current race-making that are recreating Irishness, and our relation to it, are key starting points in the construction of ethnically reflexive guidelines for academics, knowledge production and work practices in the evolving third level education system.

⁸ See Marfleet (2006) for the argument to advance open borders since immigration control, racism and exclusion are inseparable in the current; see also Mac Éinrí (2006) and Munck (2006) for the debate in the Irish context.

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