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**‘I have not witnessed it personally myself, but...’: epistemics in managing talk on racism against immigrants in Ireland**

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**Abstract**

Social psychologists who study racism or prejudice argue that various versions of these are constructed in ways to suppress or minimize its relevance. However, researchers have not particularly examined how knowledge-claims about racism can also be variously made or negotiated in attending to the relevance of racism. We offer such an

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examination through a discursive psychological analysis of interview talk with Irish nationals on immigration, since in these settings issues of immigration and racism are not readily relevant. Findings show that participants treated how knowledge of racism can be accessed and who has the rights to make knowledge-claims about racism, as relevant. Epistemic access and rights were negotiated in ways that showed sensitivity to possibilities for suppressing alternative claims about racism. These findings are discussed in relation to current social psychological and discursive approaches to racism.

*Keywords: prejudice, racism, epistemics, witnessing, Ireland, immigration.*

In this paper we report findings on how epistemics of racism become relevant, and, are constructed and negotiated, in ways to manage talk on racism in the context of immigration into Ireland. These issues, while central to explicating racism, have rarely been the exclusive focus of examination. We conducted this study in Ireland, which offers unique opportunities to examine these issues. Our analysis focuses on how Irish nationals make relevant and negotiate epistemic issues in talk on racism against immigrants in Ireland.

Social psychologists interested in examining issues of prejudice and/or racism, routinely study migration (Verkuyten, 2017). Migration that is either voluntary or forced, such as enslavement or asylum/refuge-seeking, implicates concerns that are of central interest to social psychologists. One important concern is that of prejudice. Social psychological studies on prejudice trace their origins to Allport's (1954) text *The Nature of Prejudice*. Katz (1991) points to two noteworthy aspects of this seminal work. First, the relevance of prejudice goes beyond mere differences in phenotype (skin colour) in also attending to issues between ethnic or other social groups, such as migrants.

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Second that, both internal mental states (e.g.: personality) and external societal factors are implicated in 'ethnic attitudes or aversions', which were further posited as being central to the manifestation of prejudice in the form of discriminatory acts. These arguments continue to form the crux of much social psychological research in the form of examining social identity processes (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971) or perception in intergroup relations (Xiao, Coppin, & Van Bavel, 2016). Social psychologists who employ a discourse analytic perspective, however, point to several problems with such understandings of prejudice (Billig, 1985; Hopkins, Reicher, & Levine, 1997).

Alongside a central critique of the role of attitudes in explicating social behaviour (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), discourse analytic researchers point to particular problems with using the above outlined versions of prejudice. First, these notions of prejudice seriously limit empirical understandings and examinations of individuals' situated actions (Wetherell, 2012). For instance, this notion offers a limited view of what is an unprejudiced action and who is a non-prejudiced person, someone identified as a 'liberal' and/or 'rational' individual. However, Figgou and Condor (2006) show that individuals in academia and lay settings employ various versions of prejudice and prejudicial action. To use any singular notion of prejudice would then limit the analytical focus (also see Durrheim, Quayle, & Dixon, 2015). Second, Potter and Wetherell (1987) point to how the use of this concept can allow for structural, systemic, and other broader forms of oppression and discrimination to flourish, since problematic outcomes are attributed to few 'racist' or 'prejudiced' individuals. Third, researchers argue that lay persons in their mundane interactions employ similar ideas of prejudice and how it works, and use these for practical ends. For instance, Figgou and Condor (2006) show that such versions are used to exculpate certain actors from being held accountable for their problematic actions. Rather, discursive researchers argue that prejudice is better examined as a situated discursive accomplishment (Edwards, 2003; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). What this means is that discursive researchers examine discourse to explicate prejudice.

## **Discursive approaches to racism and/or prejudice**

However, analysing talk of racism is beset with difficulties because speakers generally do not make explicit issues of race, ethnicity, or prejudice (Augoustinos & Every, 2007a). Researchers then employ distinct discourse analytic techniques to examine prejudice, which implicate various positions on the relations between discourse and social phenomena (Whitehead, 2017). Broadly, one set of discourse analytic studies that are critical in their focus, proceed with a prior definition or conceptualization of prejudice or racism. Another set of approaches that take inspiration from ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), refrain from adopting such definitions and treat racism or prejudice as a concern for participants (in contrast to 'researchers') themselves. Proceeding from this, three relevant differences can be formulated. First, in the former approach, researchers proceed with the analysis in ways to identify or treat some parts of data as instantiating racism or prejudice (van Dijk, 2000). In the latter approach, researchers proceed with examining how it is that participants treat some utterance or event as racist (or not) and attend to relevant concerns that arise in doing so. Second, in the former, racism or prejudice is explicated in terms of broader socio-political contexts (Goodman, 2010), social structures (van Dijk, 2001), or power differences (Essed, 1991), whereas in the latter such behaviour is explicated through properties and features of discourse and social interaction (Buttny, 1997). Third, in the former approach researchers employ analytical concepts such as 'discourses' (Barker, 2001) or interpretative repertoires (Wetherell, 2003) and examine how it is that these serve to maintain and propagate racism and/or discrimination. In the latter, analytical concepts such as preference organization (Whitehead, 2015) or membership categories (Stokoe & Edwards, 2007) are used to examine how people themselves make claims to, challenge, and negotiate racism or prejudice. While this classification is bound to gloss over details in specific analytic instances, this shows that for studies on racism or prejudice, making claims on data, such as that a specific utterance or statement is 'racist' or 'prejudicial' is not a straightforward matter. Moreover, this is the case for participants themselves. Thus, research

shows that talk on racism or prejudice, that is 'race-talk' (Durrheim et al., 2015), is problematic in various ways (Augoustinos & Every, 2015).

### **Critical approaches to race-talk**

One central finding from critical approaches is that racism involves descriptions and categorizations of individuals as problematic 'others'. This process, called *othering* (Riggins, 1997), can involve making relevant ethnic membership (Reeves, 1982), citizenship (Goodman & Speer, 2007), or culture (Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010). Findings relating to migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers show that various versions of nation and national identification are made salient and the absence of this on their part is treated as a warrant for their exclusion or limited access to opportunities (Every & Augoustinos, 2008; Hansen-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010). Since these features are routinely made relevant in ways that are problematic, researchers (van Dijk, 2000; Billig, 1999) argue that these are accompanied by ways in which racism or prejudice on the part of those doing othering are managed.

First, practices of othering are accompanied by ways of obfuscating or minimizing issues of prejudice or racism (Augoustinos & Every, 2015). One of the earliest studies on migration in the United Kingdom (Reeves, 1983), shows that parliamentarians pointedly minimized issues of race in debates on Black peoples' migration into the United Kingdom. Reeves (1983) shows that British parliamentarians' warrants for exclusion and limited rights to Black peoples, cast reasons for exclusion as those aimed at preventing potentially problematic race relations than as an inherent problem with Black peoples. Reeves called this 'discursive deracialisation' (also see Goodman & Burke, 2010).

Second, researchers show how other means of suppressing and minimizing the role of prejudice or racism include disclaimers, such as 'I'm not a racist, but...' (van Dijk, 1992), denials of racist or prejudicial intent (Augoustinos & Every, 2010), and treating racism as a matter of the past (Bonilla-Silva, 2005). Social psychologists argue that a potential reason for this suppression and removal of explicit racial or prejudicial identification is that it is likely that making race relevant will

invite assumptions of irrationality and therefore opposition (Billig, 1988), or that there are social taboos (Augoustinos & Every, 2007b). Problematically this also extends to those who face racism. Verkuyten (2005) shows that those in minority groups in The Netherlands might themselves suppress issues of racism and discrimination. He argues that doing so allows for possibilities of social mobility and managing blame. The above findings are usually discussed under the thesis of 'new racism' (Barker, 2001), which argues that racism takes place in less explicit and more 'covert' ways.

However, there are issues with such an approach. First, in using some specific version of racism, analysts might make claims that are not always relevant in the data (Schegloff, 1988). Second, social psychologists (Condor, Figgou, Abell, Gibson, & Stevenson, 2006) note that prejudice-related actions are dialogic accomplishments that take place in particular interactions and that these implicate participants in various ways. Therefore, some researchers focus on examining how racism and attending implications are accomplished, challenged, and negotiated within interactions.

#### **Ethnomethodology inspired approaches to race-talk**

A central concern here is to examine how it is that speakers themselves orient to racism in interactions than to start with a prior definition of racism. For instance, researchers examine the various constructions of the very nature of racism, such as that it is "factual" versus merely "in someone's head" (Potter, 1996). Potter & Wetherell (1988) show how Pakeha speakers in New Zealand work to produce their accounts on Pacific Islanders' behaviours as factual claims through a range of resources. Another concern is to explicate the various resources that participants use in negotiating talk on racism.

Research shows that participants hold themselves as accountable in treating race or ethnicity as relevant for others' behaviours (Buttny, 1997). For instance, researchers show how *common-sense understandings* of people as members in ethnic or racial groupings are involved in engaging with racism. Here, analysts draw upon membership categorization analysis (Sacks, 1992), which examines how people categorize themselves and others as members in particular categories,

and the outcomes of this for the interaction. In examining such issues in South African settings, Whitehead (2011) shows that racial-categorizations of “self” and “others” become relevant in occasions where this need not be the case. The argument here is that the routine relevance of race in explicating social action in South Africa, allows for the use of these categorizations.

Findings also show that talk on race-related matters is an accountable issue for those who experience it. Kirkwood, McKinlay, & McVittie (2012) show that refugees in Scotland who were victims of racially-motivated violence, found it hard to attribute violence to racism or prejudice in research-interviews. The authors argue that doing so would risk accusing their host nation of being a problematic place. One way speakers might attend to these concerns of accountability is through the use of reported speech. Buttny (1997) argues that a central advantage of reporting what others may have said is that it allows for supplying context or sub-text in ways that offers particular inferences on what is being reported. In examining reporting of racism-related talk, Buttny and Williams (2000) show that African-American students employ reported speech to readily allow for the inference that the events being reported are indicative of racism.

For these two approaches then, a central concern is on how to establish or explicate the relevance of racism for some utterance or event. This is because racism is variously understood by researchers and participants alike in various social, historical, and political contexts (Figgou & Condor, 2006). While no single version of racism is ubiquitously applicable, several times race-relevant actions occur without making relevant race or ethnicity. It is then the case that social psychologists and other researchers have to address this in various ways. However, how might participants themselves address the issue regarding the relevance of racism? How, and when, might they make relevant and manage issues arising from making claims about racism? For instance, Essed (1988) discusses an issue where accounts of “covert” or implied racism given by Black women in The Netherlands risked being discounted for being “over sensitive” or lacking appropriate grounds. McKenzie (2003) in his examination of talk by American and British residents in Kuwait, shows how

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speakers made claims to having “become” racist by social *contagion*, in ways to mitigate inferences that they were already and always racist and to claim current entitlement to knowledge about racism. Issues of how it is that someone possesses or can make claims to knowledge about racism are then consequential for how these are taken-up in interactions.

Arguably issues of knowledge, such as access to it, are implicated in actions such as denials of racism (Augoustinos & Every, 2007a, 2015; Goodman, 2014), and reporting and/or accounting for personal experiences of racism. For instance, research shows that for those reporting their own experiences, these are not treated as relevant or sufficient grounds for claiming racism. Louw-Potgieter (1991) showed that Black students in a South African university similarly oriented to problems with accounting for what the author calls ‘covert racism’. Issues of how and who can make claims about or have knowledge about racism, then, are important concerns since an outcome of the negotiation of these issues could contribute to suppression of racism. To examine these issues a discursive psychological approach is particularly useful.

### **Epistemic issues in racism**

Discursive psychologists argue for re-specifying the examination of psychological phenomena (Edwards & Potter, 1992). They propose focusing on how traditional psychological concerns such as memory, cognition, and knowledge are oriented to by participants themselves. These arguments share common ground with ethnomethodology in so far as a discursive psychological examination focuses on participants’ own practices of constructing and making relevant psychological concerns. Thus, Potter (1996) shows disclaiming knowledge through utterances such as ‘I don’t know...’ are better examined for the actions these accomplish in interactions, such as managing stake, than as mere reflections of internal mental states (also see Hutchby, 2002).



Similar examination of attending to and making relevant knowledge claims, than the content of knowledge, is a concern for conversation analysts (Heritage, 2012a). Here, researchers show that issues of *epistemics*, that is access to, certainty of, and differential rights and responsibilities towards knowledge are displayed and negotiated in interactions (Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). The argument here is that access to knowledge is not only governed by social norms (for instance that 'doctors are treated as knowledgeable about medical issues'), but also that these issues are active concerns for people in interactions (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Further, certain forms of knowledge (and access to them) are treated as normatively allocated to or accessible by particular types of persons, either through their membership in social categories or other contingencies (Drew, 1991). Pomerantz (1980) classifies these either as Type I knowables, those that people have rights to or "own", or as Type II knowables, those that are available as a matter of contingency. Scholars argue that epistemics underlie not only social action in specific instances, but are also implicated in (re)producing and constructing social relations (Raymond & Heritage, 2006). Researchers then cannot assume that speakers' access to knowledge is unproblematic. Rather that knowledge claims are oriented to as bound-up with identities, group membership, and other forms of social organization and are matters for negotiation in interactions.

What this means for social psychological examination of racism or prejudice is that speakers' claims to knowledge of racism cannot be treated as unproblematic phenomena. Racism, either in the form of actions or utterances, is not self-evident. Rather it is constructed as such (Potter, 1996). Similarly knowledge about racism cannot be treated as instantiating unproblematic access to some stable state of affairs in the World. Rather these are open to negotiation. In particular, issues of identities and group membership become relevant in examining claims about racism (*cf.* Essed, 1988). It is then of much interest to examine how epistemic issues are involved in making claims about racism. We take-up such an examination in a setting where these issues are likely to be relevant: immigration into the Republic of Ireland.

### **The present study**

Scholars argue that in Ireland, owing to its complex migration history (Conway, 2007; Gilmartin, 2013), issues of racism and discrimination against migrants are also complex (Garner, 2003; Lentin, 2007). These features make Ireland a unique context in which to examine epistemic issues involved in racism.

Over much of nineteenth and twentieth centuries Ireland<sup>i</sup> was an ‘emigration nation’ (Crowley, Gilmartin, & Kitchin, 2008). Recently however there has been a notable immigration into Ireland mostly from countries within the European Union (EU) and also from countries outside the EU such as Nigeria, India, and Philippines (Gilmartin, 2013). In 2017, there was a net inward migration of 19,800<sup>iiiii</sup> (CSO, 2017). Gilmartin (2015) argues that examining migration in Ireland needs to focus on both emigration and the more recent immigration.

Researchers argue that on the one hand, policies in Ireland are just as exclusionary as those in other European nation-states (Honohan, 2010; Lentin, 2007). They draw attention to Ireland’s membership in ‘Fortress Europe’ and therefore promoting problematic exclusion of non-European others (Lentin & McVeigh, 2002). On the other hand, emigration of Irish peoples’ and their subsequent racialisation (Hickman, 1998) and exclusion (Ghail, 2000) offer sympathetic understandings of minorities and their exclusion (Garner, 2003). Conway (2006) for instance argues that despite an expectation that nationalist discourse in Ireland would involve antipathy towards migrants, media discourse between 1996 and 2004, rarely shows this. Conway (2006) contends that such inclusionary discourse is embedded in perceived ‘historical duty’ of Ireland, which in itself is grounded in experiences of Irish emigration during the Irish famine alongside a deep desire to be perceived as a progressive nation among other nations. In contrast, Burroughs (2015) in an analysis of Irish newspaper discourse between 2002 and 2009 shows prevalent problematic representations of ‘illegal immigrants’ and overt calls for ‘control’ of such migration. The argument here is that this problematic othering involved consolidating particular versions of belonging in Ireland, such as those

which include undocumented Irish migrants in the United States of America.. Alongside such research findings, broader public debate fluctuates between treating Ireland as a welcoming country for 'foreigners', and masking practices of discrimination and exclusion that are prevalent (Ryan, 2015).

Recent statistics also show pervasive instances of hate-crime and discrimination in Ireland (Ryan, 2015). The Central Statistics Office of Ireland recorded increasing numbers of hate crimes from 2013 onwards, where most involved racially aggravated assaults than homophobic or transphobic incidents (ENAR Ireland, 2016). A report by, iReport a hate-crime monitoring agency, notes 435 reported incidents in the year 2016 (Michael, 2016). Recent scholarship also shows various forms of ongoing discrimination. Joseph (2017) documents the operations of a 'racial hierarchy' that place Irish citizens at the top and Black migrants at the bottom, with other European migrants in the middle, in the Irish labour market. Other researchers points to pervasive 'anti-Muslim racism' (Carr & Haynes, 2015). However, issues of racism face neglect either in the form of denials of its relevance (Ryan, 2015) or official neglect as seen in the absence of effective hate-crime legislation (Carr & Haynes, 2015). Ireland is notable among nation-states within the EU in not having far right political parties. Garner (2007) argues that one reason for this is that the Irish state itself is racialized with the consequence that racism and exclusion of non-Irish others takes place without an explicit invocation of race or ethnicity.

For Ireland then, its history of migration and present relevance of racism both implicate a not-so-straightforward acceptance of immigration as problematic or racism as prevalent (Gilmartin, 2015). For Irish nationals then these issues are likely to be seen as ambiguous. This is in contrast to much research where immigration is routine and is likely to be treated as problematic through denials and disclaimers (Augoustinos & Every, 2007a). This sets-up two interrelated questions:

- a) How are issues of making knowledge-claims about racism in Ireland relevant for and oriented to by Irish nationals?
- b) How are these claims constructed and the accompanying issues managed?

These are the focus for the present study. While in naturally-occurring interactions these issues can become relevant in unpredictable ways and, given previous research, might not be explicitly mentioned, researcher-generated talk offers useful opportunities for such examination (Stokoe, 2010). Therefore, we conducted an interview study that topicalized issues of migration and racism.

### **Method**

In the present study immigration, discrimination, racism, anti-racism, and benefits of immigration were discussed by Irish nationals

#### **Data and Participants**

The data here are transcripts of 20 semi-structured interviews. The interviewers (n=2) [neither of the authors was an interviewer] and the interviewees (n=20) were both Irish nationals studying at a local Irish public university. One interviewer, J, a male postgraduate student is White Irish and the other interviewer, T, a female undergraduate student is a non-White Irish person<sup>iv</sup>. The interviewees were all ethnic White Irish, with an age range of 18-45, male and female, and, were studying various courses at an undergraduate or postgraduate level. The interviewees were recruited through convenient sampling techniques and the interviews conducted at various locations on the campus in the summer of 2015. They were informed that the interviews were part of a study examining lay perspectives on immigration in Ireland. Interviews involved discussions on immigration, contact, possibilities of discrimination, racism, possible redressals, and ended with discussions on benefits of migration into Ireland. In this way, the interviews covered a broad range

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of topics that routinely made relevant immigration and Ireland. This way of structuring the interview schedule allowed for mitigating possible issues with sensitivity of the topics being discussed. Both the interviewers were treated as participants and their informed consent was also obtained. The study in this form was given ethical approval by the university's relevant ethics committee<sup>v</sup>.

The interviews recorded were transcribed by the first author in accordance with the modified Jeffersonian system (Jefferson, 2004). These transcripts were read and thoroughly re-read to gain an intimate familiarity with the data. Subsequently, specific parts of transcripts were coded as dealing with Irish emigration and current immigration, ambivalence towards immigration, and negotiating views on racism in Ireland. Since the particular focus here was examining talk on racism, those aspects of the interview interaction where these became relevant were selected. These were subsequently read to identify specific features, such as denials of racism and disclaimers that are routine. This procedure brought into focus talk where participants negotiated knowledge-claims about racism in Ireland. These occurred in talk initiated by opening questions on "thoughts on racism, discrimination, or fair treatment". From these, particular question-answer sequences were selected for inclusion and fine-grained analysis as described below.

### **Analytical procedure**

Parts of the transcripts thus selected, were analysed using discursive psychological approaches (McKinlay & McVittie, 2008; Potter & Hepburn, 2008). This involves examining psychological concepts and concerns as discursive accomplishments in particular occasioned settings. The implication of this for social psychological examination is that issues of concern, such as prejudice, group membership, and intergroup relations are more usefully examined as constructions and orientations of participants themselves (McKinlay & McVittie, 2008). Analysts examine how it is that these are constructed and engaged with in particular interactions. In so doing, the analytic focus is

on the social action being accomplished in and through such constructions. This has specific implications for analysing interview data (Potter & Hepburn, 2005).

Interviews are routine social scientific data gathering techniques and, are designed and conducted in ways to work as “views-gathering” tools (Brinkmann, 2013). Data so obtained can be analysed in various ways, inclusive of those that provide insights into interviewees’ “thoughts” and “opinions”. For the present purposes however we treat interview interactions as sites of accomplishing social action. Following Talmy (2011), we treat these as unique speech events where both participants bring to bear particular resources and engage in accomplishing not just the ‘research interview’ but also various other social actions as they become relevant.

In the present case we also employ techniques and concepts of conversation analysis such as question design (Hayano, 2014; Raymond, 2003), preference organization (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2012), and epistemics (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b). Conversation analysts (Schegloff, 2007) describe several features of questions, such as that these generally form the first-pair parts in adjacency pairs and these set-up particular types of responses as second-pair parts (Sacks, 1987). In his seminal discussion on questions, Sacks (1995: 54) argues that questions effectively give the questioner control over the conversation. This is particularly so in the case of interviews not merely because the interviewer routinely asks questions, but also the fact that the interviewer asks pre-scripted questions as a matter of participating in the interview. Stivers and Robinson (2006) argue that in responding to questions, answers are systematically preferred over non-answers, indicating a preference for progressivity in interactions. That is, speakers work to offer some answer response instead of not answering or simply declaring ‘I don’t know’. Keevallik (2011) (also see Pomerantz (1984)) argues that “no knowledge” responses are problematic and routinely treat the question and its premises as problematic. This also implies that non-answers and ‘I don’t know’ responses then become analytically interesting (*cf.* Hutchby, 2002).

Heritage (2012a) argues that questions and responses centrally implicate differences across an epistemic gradient [with (K+) and without (K-) knowledge]. Routinely, interviews are conducted to “know more”, either about the participant(s) or about a topic. The interviewer then is in a markedly “K-” position and the interviewee in a “K+” position (also see (Rapley & Antaki, 1998)). Heritage (2012b) calls such knowledge access, rights to it, and expectations the *epistemic status* in distinction to *epistemic stance*, where the latter involves negotiating how matters of epistemic status become relevant and are negotiated in interaction. In that, the first is relatively fixed within particular epistemic domains (for instance in clinical settings the doctor’s knowledge is normatively different from that of the patient), whereas the second is the instantiation and negotiation of one’s status in specific occasions in the interaction (however patients might challenge and negotiate knowledge-claims offered by doctors of their symptoms). While the implications of this for analysing research-interview talk are being examined more thoroughly elsewhere, for the present case, the interviewees were treated as, and oriented to their participation as, those who legitimately possess knowledge of racism or prejudice. This procedure then allowed for a close examination of how it is that issues of knowledge-claims were made or became relevant and managed in the interactions, and the outcomes of doing so.

## Results

Given the vast and wide ranging social psychological research discussed above, and our own common cultural knowledge, we can expect that the interviewees would distance themselves from racist ‘views’ or as being racists themselves (*cf.* Pomerantz & Zemmel, 2003). Rather, we expect accounts about possibilities for discrimination and/or racism in Ireland. These are the focus of our examination here. The findings show that participants treated making claims about racism or prejudice as involving negotiation of access to certain knowledge based on which such claims could be made. This negotiation of epistemic access allowed them to manage issues in the ongoing talk on racism. Researchers (Hutchby, 2001; Wooffitt, 1992) note that speakers’ claims to *witnessing* allows

for establishing the factual status or authenticity of the claims being made. Here, issues of epistemic access to particular forms of information were made relevant in three ways: 1) they witnessed or had ready access in ways to demonstrate racism; 2) they witnessed or had ready access in ways to demonstrate anti-racism, however with epistemic limitations, and 3) they could not witness either because of circumstances or their non-migrant status. These are examined below.

### **Ready access to racism**

In this section, we analyze two extracts where interviewees offer witnessed accounts of instances that readily qualify as being racist. Extract 1 comes from the transcript of an interview with a postgraduate male student, labelled J10, with the interviewer J. The talk shown below comes after a generic discussion on racism.

#### **Extract 1.**

- 1 J yes (.) uh um an in Ireland uhm do you think racism ub is an issue (.hhh)
- 2 J10 yea a hundred percent uhm really think this ah just as a culture there of: you  
3 put >Irish people first< and then
- 4 J hmmh
- 5 J10 especially (.) u:hm black people the-you know they they come second you  
6 know uhm
- 7 J yea
- 8 J10 sometimes like you ca- you hear people shouting things on the street even  
inside Limerick when I was: (.) I I worked in work experience there on site in



9 Limerick there for eight months:: (.hh) and you'd have heard a lot of  
10 comments even as people pass (.) black people like ↑get out of our country  
11 or what the fuck are they doing there or you know I mean I do think that  
12 there is a certain element of that but  
13

The interviewer's question sets-up a yes/no involved response to the claim that racism maybe an issue in 'Ireland' (line 1). In asking the question at this stage of participation, the interviewer treats the interviewee as in a position to *have* knowledge about issues being discussed (K+). In addition, the polar question sets-up a "yes"-involving (or its variants such as "yeah"/"yea"/others) acceptance as the preferred response (Raymond, 2003). While, accepting this can be somewhat problematic since racism is problematic, the interviewee offers a type-conforming acceptance: 'yea a hundred percent' (line 2). The interviewee readily and emphatically accepts that racism is an issue in Ireland and shows affiliation with the agenda of the interviewer, indicating that talk on racism in Ireland can now proceed.

The interviewee starts with generic descriptions of 'just as a culture' (line 2): 'you put Irish people first and then' (line 3). The inference offered is that 'Irish people' are given preference over 'others'. This however is not readily accepted by the interviewer as fulfilling the task of responding to the question or is treated to show that more needs to come, as seen by the minimal acceptance/continuer: 'hmmh' (line 4). The interviewee then offers further descriptions on people who are not given preference.

In offering this as 'especially' (line 5) the case the interviewee treats the forthcoming to readily demonstrate racism (in lieu of attending to the interview tasks): 'Black people you know they'd be they come second you know uhm' (lines 5-6). This however, is presented as a generic

example of what would be racism: 'you know uhm'. To this, the interviewer indicates acceptance through his 'yea' (line 7). The reference to 'Black people' works to make relevant discrimination based on skin colour / ethnicity and readily *allows* for claims about racism. In sum, the interviewer and the interviewee jointly establish the appropriate content for making claims about racism in Ireland.

The interviewee offers such content at lines 8 through 13, which involves a series of claims about what were perceptually noticed – 'heard' (line 10) – in and around Limerick city. Here, the interviewee offers particular information on his own activities that present him as a witness: 'when I was I worked in work experience there on site' (line 9). Furthermore, claims such as that he had worked for 'eight months' (line 10) and that in that time he had 'heard a lot of comments' (line 10) similarly work to confer an unproblematic and stable witness status to the interviewee. The speaker thus establishes the authenticity of the claims being made (Hutchby, 2001; Wooffitt, 1992) through presenting himself as a witness.

The interviewee then reports what he had 'heard' as a witness. This reporting is interesting for it is prefaced with 'comments even as people pass' (lines 10-11), which shows that the to-be-reported content was in no way instigated by those at the receiving end of these comments and thus establishes the role of racism or prejudice in the comments that are purportedly made. The comments themselves are offered in a three-part listing (Jefferson, 1990) format: 'get out of our country' (lines 11-12), 'what the fuck are they doing there' (line 12) and 'you know I mean' (line 12). The last item is hearable as a list-completer, which shows that there are several items in the list that can be brought up if required. In being presented as a three-part listing (Potter, 1996) the interviewee treats the comments offered as similar in being hearably racist. In this way, the interviewee offers "appropriate" evidence for being able to make claims that racism is an issue in Ireland. In the next extract, we similarly see the use of witnessed-description in establishing that immigrants do face discrimination in Ireland.

Extract 2 comes from an interview with a female undergraduate interviewee, labelled J2.

The talk shown comes after discussions on immigration into Ireland and their treatment. Here we see J2 describing a violent event that is rendered as indicative of racial discrimination, in response to the interviewer's question on her 'opinion'.

**Extract 2.**

- 1 J uhm in your opinion would imm -migrants face discrimination
- 2 J2 e::m l: I'd say so (.) I think it's actually my: cousin no my aunt's ↓nephew he  
3 was called up for bullying in school like he punched some Polish kid and  
4 (unclear) the kid in the face because  
5 hmmm
- 5 J u:hm he said that >their fathers were taking his father's jobs<
- 6 J2 okay
- 7 J so I think maybe:: (.) they would face some discrimination because people  
8 J2 might view them as taking away money from the state that they actually want  
9 themselves or jobs that they want themselves
- 10 okay
- 11 J

In response to the question, the interviewee at line 2 offers a hedged acceptance: 'em I: I'd say so'. The initial 'em' indicates a forthcoming response that does not readily align with the question (Schegloff, 2010). In that her response is neither a ready affirmation nor disaffirmation of possibilities of discrimination. Rather, what the interviewee narrates before this is an account of violence presented as an instance of discrimination, at lines 2-5.

The narration describes a violent incident (*cf.* Kirkwood et al., 2012): 'punched some Polish kid and (unclear) the kid in the face' (lines 3-4) [although the audio here is unclear, it is likely that this is also a violent act]. The descriptor 'Polish kid' serves to establish that the narration is about discrimination of migrants. However, the subsequent descriptions of the reasons involved in this violent act attend to mitigating irrational impulses such as prejudice (Billig, 1988). These reasons attributed to the attacker, through reported speech (Holt, 1996), offer a *possibly* reasonable basis for the attack: 'their fathers were taking his father's jobs' (lines 4-5). Here however, the footing shift (Goffman, 1979) presents her as merely reporting the words of her nephew than as holding these views herself. This allows her to distance herself from the implications of stating that migrants do cause problems for Irish residents and treats the ongoing talk as unrelated to her own views.

The alternative explanation in the form of a routine or expected event in the institution of a school – 'called up for bullying in school' (line 3) – works to mitigate inferences that her nephew is prejudiced or is wanting in character. However, her subsequent narration and the latter conclusion or summary offers reasons for inferring discrimination, without prejudicial intent. She avows the occurrence of instances of 'some discrimination' (line 7), such as that those engaging in these might "view" migrants as dispossessing 'Irish' peoples.

In responding to interviewers' questions, the interviewees have given broadly accepting responses that endorse the claim that discrimination and/or racism are issues in Ireland for migrants or people of colour. These accounts attended to two issues: first that, the account being given is to be heard as an instance of racism or prejudice and not any other type of event. Second that, the

interviewee had direct access to such events, that is, they were witnesses to these (Hutchby, 2001).

In the next set of extracts, interviewees orient to issues with making these claims in cases where they describe the absence of discrimination against migrants.

### **Ready access to anti-racism**

Here, interviewees offer accounts that aim to demonstrate that racism is not an issue in Ireland. This however brought-up alternative epistemic issues, which are subsequently negotiated.

Extract 3 comes from an interview transcript with a female undergraduate student, labelled as T. The talk shown below comes after discussions of the interviewee's relations with immigrants.

#### **Extract 3.**

- 1 T and-uhm do you think they're fairly treated in Ireland
- 2 T1 u::hm (.) I think (1.3) <work wise> ↑yes I think I think they are u::m I know  
3 that my colleagues who I work with u:m the majority of the manager  
4 positions are filled by foreign nationals u::m who: >aren't Irish< so: I: don't  
5 think they're discriminated against in the workplace  
6 hmh
- 6 T but I do think that society still has a negative (.6) perspective on them
- 7 T1

Here the interviewee's response indicates a not-so-straightforward oncoming account, through delaying the oncoming type-conforming response: 'u::hm (.) I think (1.3) <work wise> ↑yes' (line 2). The delay indicates that her overall response is not merely an acceptance or rejection of the claims in the question, rather that it involves re-specifying the context within which she would offer the response: 'work wise' (line 2). Additionally, her slower enunciation and the marked emphasis on subsequent acceptance – ↑yes – indicate her re-specification of her abilities to align with what is required of her in this interaction. In this way, she negotiates her epistemic stance for the purposes of this interaction in offering her account on fair treatment of migrants.

Her subsequent account, at lines 2-4, offers evidence from employment settings that support her re-specified acceptance. This is done in ways that establish her access to knowledge about fair treatment. In that, she describes the goings-on and those involved as known to her: 'I know that my colleagues who I work with' (lines 2-3). The relational categorization 'colleagues who I work with' allows for ready inferences on relations between her and those others that she is making claims, namely that they work together. This then mitigates potential undermining of her knowledge-claims. Her claims about the relative proportions of 'foreign nationals' (line 4) in particularly prominent work positions – 'manager positions' (line 3) – as in the 'majority' (line 3), highlight the favourableness towards non-Irish persons in workplace. While this can be interpreted in several ways, she treats this to imply the absence of discrimination: 'I don't think they are discriminated against in the workplace' (lines 4-5).

Here however, the interviewee orients to a particular issue, namely that her access to such information is avowedly limited: 'workplace'. This is interesting in two ways: first, our knowledge is always 'partial' (Keevallik, 2011: 205) and therefore this avowal is analytically interesting. Second, in Extracts 1 and 2, interviewees could readily cite one or few instances in making claims about racism in Ireland. Together then, we see that in indicating that her knowledge is limited, the interviewee

makes relevant the limited-ness of her knowledge on racism or discrimination against migrants in Ireland.

Her subsequent speculative avowal that migrants do or can face discrimination from an unspecified 'society' through 'a negative perspective' (line 7), is in the first instance a more complete response in coming after the interviewer's minimal continuer ('hmmh' at line 6). It also works to mitigate issues arising from her limited access. In the next extract, we see that issues with limited access implicate epistemic rights.

Extract 4 comes from the interview transcript with a female postgraduate interviewee, labelled T7. The talk shown below follows discussions on her relations with migrants. Here again we see the interviewee orienting to the required response to the question as contingent on evidence.

**Extract 4.**

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | T  | (oh cool) andum (.) do you think they're fairly treated in Ireland       |
| 2 | T7 | (.tch) em <I would say> if I think about (.7) the particular people I'm  |
| 3 |    | thinking of I would say that they'd probably would say yes               |
| 4 | T  | hmmh   |
| 5 | T7 | I would say that they would say yes uhm but I'm (.8) probably aware that |
| 6 |    | there are probably a lot of others                                       |
| 7 | T  | hmmh   |
| 8 | T7 | who wouldn't feel that way   |

The interviewer's question starts off being informal and treats the response to be given as one in a series of views-generating questions: 'andum' (line 1). The interviewee does not offer the preferred type-conforming acceptance (or the dispreferred rejection), until after displaying potential non-alignment and disaffiliation (Stivers, 2008) with the interviewer's project – 'em I would say' (line 2) – and re-specifying the basis for giving a response: 'if I think about (.) >the particular people I'm thinking of< I would say yes' (line 3). This re-specification makes relevant that her response is restricted by limited knowledge or access to information and particularly that this takes the form of 'people' she knows.

The footing shift (Goffman, 1979) from presenting herself as reporting on treatment of migrants in Ireland to merely reporting what certain unspecified persons might say, treats the problem as one where the interviewee cannot accept or reject the claims in the interviewer's question with necessary certainty. In particular, the interviewee treats these unspecified persons as more appropriate in attending to the interview tasks: 'the particular people I'm thinking of I would say that they'd probably would say yes' (lines 2-3). Subsequent to a continuer from the interviewer, the interviewee partially repeats (Bolden, 2009) her earlier turn in ways to select what would be the 'answer' to the interviewer's question: 'I would say that they would say yes' (line 5). This again presents the interviewee as merely reporting (Buttny, 1997) what certain unspecified others would give as response to the interviewer's question. In identifying those who are more appropriately capable of responding to the question, the interviewee makes relevant issues with her epistemic rights to access the issues involved and negotiates this through introducing other unspecified actors as in a position to access such knowledge.

Subsequently the interviewee attends to implications about possibilities for her to make any claims about the issue. In particular, she treats it that while the individuals she's 'thinking of' might not treat racism as an issue, there could be unspecified 'lot of others' (line 6) who might offer



alternative accounts. For the interviewee then, responding to the question is oriented to as involving her epistemic rights to knowledge of discrimination.

In the above extracts, interviewees treat their epistemic status as limiting the possibilities for providing responses and manage such trouble. In that the interviewees treated witnessing instances of anti-racism as insufficient in making broader claims about racism or prejudice in Ireland. They were sensitive to possibilities that their claims could potentially suppress *possible* instances of racism or discrimination. In the following extracts, alternative issues with avowing limitations to epistemic access and status are negotiated.

#### **Issues with access to racism**

In our corpus we did not come across any participant making the claim that there was no racism in Ireland or that racism is not an issue in Ireland. Rather we see claims such as those examined below.

Extract 5 comes from the transcript of an interview with a postgraduate female student, labelled here as T9, with the interviewer 'T'. The talk shown below comes early in the interview subsequent to discussions on the interviewee's generic perspectives on immigration.

## Extract 5.

- 1 T cool andum do you think they're fairly treated in Ireland
- 2 (1.1)
- 3 T9: u::hm some might argue that they're not that um they kind a face a lot of  
4 racial prejudice and discrimination
- 5 T: mhhm
- 6 T9 u::m when it comes to the work place and stuff like that u:m
- 7 T: hm
- 8 T9 I have not witnessed it personally myself (.) but from listening to a couple  
9 of friends that have immigrated into the country
- 10 T: mhhm
- 11 T9 they do feel that there is an element of discrimination against them

While the interviewer's question sets-up a type-conforming acceptance with the claim that migrants are 'fairly treated in Ireland' (line 1), as the preferred response, the interviewee neither accepts nor rejects the claims in the question. The delay and the subsequent, 'u::hm' (Schegloff, 2010) prefaced response, shows an oncoming not-so-straightforward response. This is seen in her introduction of certain unspecified others as those who have an 'answer' to the question. The interviewee shifts her footing (Goffman, 1979) from being the person giving her opinion and therefore being held

responsible for it, to somebody merely reporting about it through others' opinions: 'some might argue' (line 2). She attributes to these unspecified others the argument that migrants 'kind a face a lot of racial prejudice and discrimination' (lines 2-3).

Similar to Extract 4, the interviewee here presents herself as epistemically in a K- (Heritage, 2012a) position relative to certain others who might attest to racism or prejudice. However, in contrast to the earlier extracts (3 & 4), she does not offer claims to have epistemic access to alternative knowledge that can attest to minimal or absence of racism or prejudice. Rather she accounts for reporting (Holt, 1996) others, through avowing issues with epistemic access: 'I have not witnessed it personally myself' (line 7). However, she goes onto contrast her epistemic limitations with the experiences of migrant friends: 'they do feel that there is an element of discrimination against them' (line 11). First, this manages implications that she uses knowledge that she has access to (or not) in making broader claims about racism. Second, experiences (*cf.* Edwards, 2003) attributed to her migrant friends are possibly weaker epistemic claims than witnessed events. However, in privileging those epistemic claims, she treats migrants as epistemically privileged or having epistemic rights to knowledge of racism. What this does in the present case is to manage claims that despite not having direct epistemic access to racism she will not participate in suppression of racism.

In Extract 6, the interviewee treats making claims about racism or prejudice as outwith her normative epistemic access. This comes from the transcript of an interview with a female postgraduate student labelled here as J8, with the interviewer J. Prior to this talk shown here the interviewee had discussed issues of racism in general. Here, the discussion relates to 'Ireland' in particular.

**Extract 6.**

- 1 J: okay and in Ireland u:h is racism an issue
- 2 J8 uhm I personally like don't (.) I ever witnessed racism to be honest
- 3 J: yea
- 4 J8: so I don't really think it's a problem but (.) then again like its different when  
5 you're at the immigrant (.) so I don't know how they see it like do they
- 6 J yea
- 7 J8: experience it in like I might like just mightn't notice because I probably don't  
8 spend that much time with immigrants

The interviewee's response starts with a hesitation marker – 'uhm' (line 2) – and treats epistemic access as relevant. In particular, she avows that she has no epistemic access: 'I personally like don't ever witnessed racism to be honest' (line 2). Here, the following are of interest. First, through the honesty phrase (Edwards & Fasulo, 2006) the interviewee treats her claim as possibly not taken up seriously and manages it. Second, the extreme case formulated (Pomerantz, 1986) description – 'don't ever' – allows for treating racism as a non-witness-able event. Together, her response treats it that access to events or instances of racism are beyond her abilities.

The interviewer accepts this formulation as relevant to the ongoing interaction through the continuer 'yea' (line 3). This allows the interviewee to make the conclusion – 'so' – that 'I don't really think it's a problem' (line 4). However, an issue with her avowal, and the conclusion offered, is

that her claims extend to issues that are perhaps outwith her rights to know. In that, she could be taken as denying possibilities of or dismissing complaints about racism. She resolves such trouble through first, nominating certain relevant 'others' as those who have privileged access: 'it's different when you're at the immigrant' (lines 4-5). This allows her for the inference that she is not denying such possibilities. Rather that, her foregoing account is to be taken as reflecting her abilities to make these claims. In particular, her avowal that 'I don't know how they view it like' (line 5) offers specific reasons why she is incapable of making claims about this issue. The interviewee works-up a self-categorization that is markedly different to those who can experience or see racism / discrimination. In that she treats her access to information on racism as contingent on her not being a minority or migrant.

The interviewer's 'yea' continues to treat the interviewee's account as relevant and allows for her ongoing speculative description on migrants: 'do they (yea) experience it in life like' (lines 5-7). Through this she offers the inference that migrants can legitimately access such information and therefore make claims. However, this would risk treating racism as merely an experience for migrants and similar others. Her subsequent descriptions account for her limitations to accessing such information: 'I might I just mightn't notice because I probably don't spend that much time with immigrants' (lines 7-8). In so doing, she mitigates treating racism or prejudice as merely a perception than as an 'out-there' occurrence.

In these last extracts then, interviewees avow issues with their abilities to access information on racism or prejudice in ways that go beyond mere contingencies. Rather they treat access to knowledge of racism as implicating rights.

## Discussion

In this study, we focused on epistemic issues in race-talk as attended to and managed by participants in the context of immigration into Ireland. Interview interactions among Irish students that involved discussions on several topics related to immigration in Ireland were analysed. The present analysis shows that speakers treated access to witness-able racism as relevant. This was centrally involved in their negotiation of epistemic rights to knowledge on racism or discrimination in Ireland in ways to manage arising implications.

Interviewees negotiated epistemic rights in three ways. First, in Extracts 1 and 2, interviewees offered ready evidential accounts that presented them as witnesses to instances of racism (*cf.* Hutchby, 2001). These accounts also attested to the nature of events being witnessed as constituting racism through claims about ethnic ('Black people' in Extract 1) or migrant ('Polish kid' in Extract 2) others (*cf.* Louw-Potgieter, 1991). Second, interviewees oriented to their claims about witnessing anti-racism as limited and inconsequential. While they described instances in ways to claim that racism is perhaps not a concern in Ireland, they oriented to issues with the relevance of their epistemic access. In that, in Extracts 3 and 4, we see interviewees orienting to the possibility that their avowals of access are perhaps incomplete. Third, in Extracts 5 and 6, this incompleteness is more clearly seen in interviewees' avowals that they do not have epistemic rights to such knowledge. The accompanying avowals that they have not witnessed racism were treated as of limited consequence in favour of (possible) accounts from certain others. These others, migrants, were treated as in possession of or with privileged access to knowledge about racism. In this way, interviewees negotiated epistemic rights to racism.

However, this negotiation of rights also involved orienting to concerns that are unique for racism or prejudice related issues (Goodman, 2014). A pervasive finding in discursive research on racism is that speakers attend to possible implications of coming across as those who are racist or prejudicial (Augoustinos & Every, 2007a). Scholars treat this as a central feature contributing to

pervasive suppression of racism or prejudice. In the present case, we see that interviewees are 'live' to these concerns. The ready description of certain events, describing anti-racism, and avowing not having witnessed racism, all attend to concerns over suppressing racism or race-related concerns. In particular, interviewees treated epistemics of racism as implicated in contributing to possible suppression of racism. For instance, in Extract 6 we see the interviewee being sensitive to possible implications of claiming that racism is merely an experience for migrants. While their witnessing allowed for claims about racism, their witnessing anti-racism and not having witnessed, brought-up issues of relative privileging of knowledge: their epistemic access versus rights to such knowledge.

In some ways, this distinction reflects Pomerantz's (1980) classification of knowledge either as Type I or II knowables. Her argument is that Type I knowables are those that individuals possess or expected to possess knowledge of as a matter of normative rights whereas Type II are those for which access to knowledge is given through occasioned contingencies. However, what the analyses show is that speakers themselves orient to the distinction between contingent access and access as a matter of right. This was negotiated in ways that had implications for social action, such as those of claiming that racism is an issue in Ireland or not, and the consequences of this. It is then the case that, of concern for participants was not merely on how it is that one can access knowledge of racism (being more perceptive for instance), but also on who it is that can be treated as in possession of legitimate rights to have access to knowledge about racism. These were negotiated in ways to make and manage claims about racism in Ireland.

In the present case epistemic issues were negotiated in interview interactions where the interviewer made relevant particular assumptions (*cf.* Potter & Hepburn, 2005) about the social phenomena being discussed. Primary among these is that racism is perhaps not widely accepted as relevant for Ireland (Gilmartin, 2015). Interviewees were being invited to offer assessments (Heritage & Raymond, 2005) on racism and/or discrimination in Ireland. Interviewee responses then broadly affiliated with such presuppositions in avoiding giving "no knowledge" responses, which

would indicate trouble with the question (Keevallik, 2011), and instead offering “no-access” responses, where relevant. Interviewers neither treated interviewees’ negotiation of epistemic rights as problematic nor challenged their claims about epistemic access. Interviewees and interviewers jointly treated negotiation of epistemic rights as relevant, in ways to privilege migrants as those who have better access to knowledge of racism.

These orientations resonate with findings from other studies that examine broader phenomena such as media discourses on migration and racism in Ireland (Burroughs, 2015; Conway, 2007). In settings such as Ireland, where it is routinely held that racism and anti-racism simultaneously occur (Lentin & McVeigh, 2004) and where complexities of migration (Gilmartin, 2013; 2015) upend the standard story of an inward migration that is unwanted or problematic, it is perhaps the case that issues of epistemic access and rights become available as resources for negotiating talk on racism. The experiences and accounts of Irish emigrants to the United Kingdom or the United States of America, and the subsequent racialisation and exclusion (Ghail, 2002; Gilmartin, 2015), while complex, could perhaps inform such explicit negotiation of rights. However, this is beyond the scope of the present study to affirm.

What the present findings do offer, however, is certain contributions to current social psychological and discursive psychological work on racism or prejudice. First, findings show that alongside negotiations of whether specific events or actions constitute racism (Essed, 1988; Potter & Wetherell, 1988), issues of access to events or actions are open to negotiation. Second, while previous findings show that claims about experiencing racism are either suppressed or are hard to report (Louw-Potgieter, 1991; Kirkwood et al, 2012), issues of how access to such knowledge are made relevant or negotiated have rarely been examined. The present findings show that in such cases, negotiation of epistemic rights could offer alternative warrants for claiming, or resisting challenges to such claims, about racism. Third, the present findings also show how epistemic issues can underpin denials and suppression of racism, such as through showing that claims to ‘owning’



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knowledge about racism are distinct from claims to not having 'access' to racism. Denials of racism on the behalf of others, such as minorities, could possibly implicate negotiation of rights to possess knowledge about racism. In that, avowing limited access or not having rights to such knowledge allows for possible claims that racism is perhaps not serious or relevant, which if made directly (e.g.: 'racism is not an issue anymore') would amount to an active suppression of racism (*cf.* Verkuyten, 2005). This alternative allocation and negotiation of epistemic rights shows that perhaps racism as oriented to by those in the majority is distinct from that oriented to by those in the minority or those who face it. In particular that, minorities have epistemic authority (*cf.* Stivers et al., 2011) in matters of racism. While participants could use issues with epistemic access and negotiate epistemic rights in ways to suggest that minorities have privileged access to knowledge on racism, we researchers and analysts could usefully take-up that lesson in focusing on minority accounts to enrich theory and/or at least take note of this distinction in informing future research.

#### **Limitations and conclusions**

The study involved research interviews with student participants where one of the interviewers was non-White Irish. The analysis shows that interviewees' responses were not notably different. Also, student participation in research and particularly on topics that are socially relevant is important to any healthy social environment. Their views then are neither marginal nor less important, but are rather as relevant as the views and talk of any other social group. While the data were researcher-generated (*cf.* Speer, 2002), our examination treated these as interactions between two participants: the interviewer and the interviewee. Also, it could be argued that epistemic issues are pervasively relevant anyway and particularly so in interview interactions. However, the present analysis and findings show that the relevance of epistemic rights and access was negotiated in ways to attend to implications and concerns over claiming or suppressing racism (Augoustinos & Every, 2015). These findings then are particularly relevant for an examination of racism.

To conclude, the present findings show that issues of epistemics are relevant in negotiating racism. While talk on racism and immigration is sensitive and this is attended to and managed in several ways, negotiation of epistemic rights and access, offers a meaningful resource in navigating this sensitivity. Rights to make claims about racism are differentially distributed in ways that give those who face racism authority. Social psychologists and discursive researchers can then incorporate this privileging of epistemic access in researching and theorizing racism

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<sup>i</sup> The overall population of Ireland in April 2017 is estimated to be 4,792,500 (CSO, 2017).

<sup>ii</sup> However, this is a decrease in immigration of non-Irish nationals from 2016 (CSO, 2016).

<sup>iii</sup> Gilmartin (2013) argues that while such statistics for immigrants are likely to be accurate, information on emigrants might obfuscate issues of whether those emigrating are Irish nationals or not.

<sup>iv</sup> This arrangement was not part of an intentional design, but was accidental as students were interning with the second author.

<sup>v</sup> The ethical approval obtained, prevents us from archiving and sharing our data as set out and encouraged by the EJSP. First, at the time of the study, the participants were not informed of the possibility of sharing their data with unnamed others who were not part of the research team (who were named). Second, the ethical approval was contingent on storing the data either on password protected university computers or personal computers of the PI and co-PI, only for 7 years from collection. Therefore, we cannot archive or share the data as set out and encouraged by the EJSP.