New Irish in the News

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Introduction

THIS ARTICLE PRESENTS selected findings from the 'Media for Diversity and Migrant Integration' project (hereafter MEDIVA), a European Union funded project involving six Member States (Ireland, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and the UK), which aimed to assess the capacity of media to reflect the increasing ethno-cultural diversity of European societies. The specific focus of the project was on Third Country Nationals (TNCs) or persons without European Union citizenship. In this article we present the project's content findings for Ireland, focusing specifically on representations of TNCs in a range of national print and broadcast outlets.

The media's contribution to promoting more inclusive societies can be understood in terms of at least four interrelated roles: (i) promoting fair and polyphonic representations; (ii) presenting balanced portrayals of migration-related issues; (iii) engaging immigrants as media professionals (e.g. as journalists and spokespersons), and; (iv) raising awareness amongst media professionals and audiences about inequality and discrimination suffered by immigrants (MEDIVA Policy Brief, 2012: 1). In view of these broad (normative) roles the MEDIVA project had a number of distinct aims, foremost of which was to generate a set of media monitoring 'indicators' that could be used to assess different media in different states across four (diversity) dimensions: media content; recruitment/employment; news making/programme production and; training. In essence therefore the project attempted to interrelate media representations and production systems so that an overall score could be generated for any given media outlet. The timing of the MEDIVA project also warrants mention as this project was undertaken during a period in which European social cohesion policies were severely tested (and are still being tested) by an acute economic crisis. Like in many Member States, governmental emphasis on migration-related issues has diminished in Ireland, witnessed by the under-resourcing (and indeed folding) of a number of NGOs and pressure groups.[1] The MEDIVA project is therefore important insofar as it bucks a discernable trend during the years of economic crisis to shift away from migration-related research.

In what follows we examine the project's content findings for Ireland. First, however, we present a brief historical overview of migration to Ireland, followed by a theoretical elaboration of media representation.

Migration Nation

Ireland's transformation from 'emigrant nursery' (MacLaughlin, 1994) to a country of net immigration has been swift and complex. Rising numbers of immigrants

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[1] The collapse of the Irish journal *Translocations* can also be considered symptomatic of the diminishing interest in (and funding of) migration studies in the Irish context.

throughout the 1990s were a direct consequence of the 'Celtic Tiger' (however illusory) and the labour market demands of a booming economy. While the steady influx of immigrants to Ireland is hardly unusual – and indeed is the norm for wealthy Western countries – Crowley, Gilmartin and Kitchen (2006: 4) point out that Ireland's long experience of emigration marks a crucial difference with other Western countries. Ever since the time of the famine diaspora, Irish identity has been closely associated with migration. While on one hand Celtic Tiger Ireland enjoyed newfound confidence and the fruits of a thriving economy, immigration of an unprecedented scale created various difficulties, many of which were unanticipated and poorly responded to. Crucially, the speed at which immigration occurred in Ireland meant that the country lacked (and to a great extent still lacks) much of the necessary legislation, policy and support services that have been in place for decades in core European receiving countries like France, Germany, Britain and the Netherlands (Mac Éinrí, 2007: 214). Beyond immediate concerns with service provision and legislation, the combined forces of large-scale immigration and intense globalisation prompted intense debate about identity and difference in Ireland and crucially about what it means to be Irish. Much scholarly attention focused on the politics of the 2004 Citizenship Referendum, which Lentin (2007: 435) considers 'a major turning point in the racialization of Irishness.' For Lentin, the hegemonic view of Irishness as white and Catholic came into conflict with the labour market imperatives of Ireland's increasingly global economy (ibid. 448). (See also, Fanning and Mutwarasibo, 2007; Garner, 2007). Likewise, critics of recent Irish state integration policy – enshrined in two main documents: *Integration: A Two Way Process* (1999) and *Migration Nation* (2008) – argue that official responses are guided by neoliberal and managerial rationalities (Gray, 2011). Ostensibly championing diversity and promoting interculturalism, Munck (2011: 4) argues that the most recent document *Migration Nation* exudes 'a fairly unreconstructed assimilationism'. In their various ways these critics therefore reflect on the ongoing process of (re)constructing Irish identity. This 'representational struggle for Irishness', as Moriarty (2006) puts it, plays out chiefly in the media – which we direct our attention to in the next section.

While ethnic diversity in Ireland is still somewhat 'new' – evidenced by the fact that a question about ethnicity was only introduced in the 2006 Census of Population (Feldman et al., 2005) – the remarkable homogeneity of the Irish population has been radically and irreversibly ended. Even widespread use of the (somewhat pejorative) term 'non-national' to describe those resident but not born in Ireland has increasingly been replaced in public discourse by the more well-intentioned term 'new Irish' (see Munck, 2011: 10). The number of persons born outside of Ireland and yet living in the country increased by 25 per cent during the period 2006–2011, despite the deepening economic crisis (*The Irish Times*, 2012). Census nationality data confirm the predominance of immigrants from Eastern Europe. For example, Polish nationals have overtaken UK nationals as the largest non-Irish group now living in Ireland; the 2011 census found that 2.7 per cent of the population are Polish nationals (against 2.5% UK nationals). The most significant increases for TCNs in Ireland were for Indian nationals (+100.8%), Filipino nationals (+34%) and Nigerian nationals (+8.2%). The 2011 census also indicates a changing ethnic mix amongst the Irish population. Somewhat unsurprisingly, significant growth was recorded for the category 'Other White', which rose by almost 43 per cent over the intercensal period.

There was also an 87 per cent rise in the 'Other Asian' group, which includes people of Indian and Filipino origin (CSO, 2012).

The Politics of Representation: Migrants in Mainstream Media

Representation has been a subject of scholarly interest for considerable time, though the term itself is somewhat 'slippery' in meaning (Hall, 2009: 271). Media representations (and indeed all forms of representation) matter because they inform our understandings of self, other and society. Neither passive nor merely reflective, representations are active and constitutive; while not reality *per se*, representations are undoubtedly 'real in their effects' (Fiske, 1996: 214). Social groups with limited access to (and presence within) the sphere of media production invariably have limited input into how social reality is constructed within the public sphere, which can in turn reinforce experiences of social exclusion (Howarth, 2006: 22–3). Central to representation therefore are questions of power and ideology:

> Different representations speak to different interests and so silence, or at least muffle, others. They both extend and limit possibilities. Representations therefore support existing institutionalised relationships and so maintain relations of power in the social order … They are drawn on both to naturalise and legitimise exclusion and othering as well as to critique and challenge such stereotypes and marginalizing practices. To understand this fully we need to put the theory of social representations into an ideological framework (ibid., 27).

Stuart Hall's work has drawn attention to the ideological and linguistic structures of media texts as the primary resources for organising and 'patterning' people's experience (Hall, 1997). Yet while Hall maintains that media play a crucial role in stabilising certain forms of power relations, he argues that ideological power is never complete but rather an ongoing process of negotiation and contestation. For Hall, media are always a field of ideological struggle and media messages are always (to some extent) open and polysemic (Hall, 1980). Hall further insists that studies of media representation must be attentive to specific contexts and particular historical circumstances as these have a direct bearing on relations of power: 'Representation is only possible because enunciation is always produced within codes which have a history, a position within the discursive formations of a particular space and time' (Hall, 2009: 274).[2] Sarita Malik's (2012) analysis of the representation of British Punjabis in reality television, for example, is located within the context of contested multiculturalism in Britain (as well as genre developments in reality television and public service broadcasting). While in some respects the reality genre has progressive social tendencies, Malik nevertheless finds that it largely ignores structures of racism in favour of promoting an unproblematic and depoliticised multiculturalism. Likewise, the institutional basis of media is critically important as this directly informs the ways representations are framed (Georgiou, 2012). Siapera (2010), for example, explores the institutional practice of representation in global media, locating it within the traversing processes of production, circulation and reception/consumption. Siapera

2 See also Brunt and Cere's (2011) *Postcolonial Media Culture in Britain*, which focuses mostly on non-mainstream media produced by ethnic minorities.

advances the idea of 'regimes of representation' to signal the coexistence of different types of representation within the cycle of mediation.

News media are particularly important instruments of representation. As Haynes (2006: 44) suggests, news media 'set the agenda by choosing what to report and what not to report. They filter the statements of politicians, advocates and adversaries alike. They frame the issues for the population, inviting them to a particular interpretation of the given issue.' Several factors militate against mainstream news media focusing on minority issues and concerns in the current conjuncture. These include journalistic routines and time constraints; budget cuts, staff shortages and labour market flexibilisation, and a climate in which 'newsworthiness' increasingly aligns with advertising appeal and the interests of the corporate (generally white) elite. As early as 1979 Gans suggested that the news generally 'supports the social order of public, business and professional, upper-middle-class, middle-aged, and white male sectors of society' (1979: 61), a suggestion echoed in Greg Dyke's description of the BBC as 'hideously white' in 2001. Arguably transformation in the political economy of news (and most especially conglomeration) is the crucial factor. Media companies are increasingly becoming subsidiaries of non-media corporations, to which their overall income contribution is minimal. In such circumstances news can become a minor consideration: 'The conglomeration of the news business threatens the survival of the press as an independent institution as journalism becomes a subsidiary inside large corporations more fundamentally grounded in other business purposes' (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001: 32).

In recent times, scholars have turned their attention to the relationship between migration and digitalisation, examining *inter alia* how emerging technologies provide new grounds for conceptualising identity and belonging and how these in turn complicate understandings of space and time, home and community (e.g., Siapera, 2010; Titley, Kerr and O'Riain, 2010; Bailey, 2011). Gloria Macri (2011), for example, investigates how members of the Romanian community in Ireland use media (especially the internet) as sources of diasporic identification. Such studies also highlight that migrant communicative spaces are never fully distinct or wholly separate from wider communicative spaces (Georgiou, 2012). Nevertheless, stereotyping, simplification and essentialism remain clearly evident in mainstream media representations of migrants, both in Ireland and elsewhere.[3] Studies of Irish mainstream media (and news media in particular) suggest that migrants have at best been ignored and at worst stigmatised and othered. For example, a number of researchers have drawn attention to sensationalist news coverage of refugees and asylum seekers in Irish print media, and by the Independent Newspapers Group in particular (Pollack, 1999; Ging and Malcolm, 2004; Devereux, Breen and Haynes, 2006). Given that such immigrants are almost exclusively TCNs, the following conclusion by Devereux (2006: 37) is most pertinent to our analysis:

> This essay suggests that the representation of asylum seekers and refugees by the Irish print media poses serious challenges to the legitimacy of both groups and to the asylum process as a whole. Our analysis suggests that media fram-

3 See Bennett et al. (2012) for a comprehensive literature review of content and discourse analyses of media coverage of migration and integration in Europe since 2000.

ing identifies asylum seekers and refugees with social conflict and a wide range of social problems. Asylum seekers and refugees are linked with crime and the spread of disease in society. Their needs are juxtaposed with the needs of the indigenous Irish poor often with the assumption that their needs are somehow less important. The presence of these 'strangers in our midst' is constructed as representing a serious challenge or threat to hegemonic constructions of Irishness.

Media's power to represent and frame – by, for example, privileging, subordinating or occluding – informs arguments for structural reform of Irish media and calls for improved access to jobs for ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups. Kenny (2010: 313) points out that barriers to the employment of ethnic minority persons in the media can include such things as a perception amongst employers that such persons will be less well informed about Irish affairs or that their accents will be alienating or difficult to understand for many citizens. Regardless, at the present time the media industry in Ireland remains largely ethnically homogenous. The question posed in the headline of a recent news column by Dil Wickremasinghe, presenter of Ireland's only 'social justice' radio programme 'Global Village', is answered in no uncertain terms: 'What is wrong with the media?' 'All the faces are the same' (www.thejournal.ie, 20/03/2012).

In addition to calls for a more representative media workforce, some research suggests the need for greater provision of diversity training within Irish media organisations (O'Boyle et al., 2012), though it bears noting that the institutionalisation of diversity *as a solution* can also work to obscure racism (see Ahmed, 2012). Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that diversity training initiatives can sometimes be counterproductive (Campion, 2005). Nevertheless, diversity training in conjunction with other reforms may help to cultivate critical reflexivity amongst media workers and foster intercultural communicative competence (e.g., Downing and Husband, 2005). Ultimately, such training is aimed not simply at 'learning about 'others', but learning about the processes that *other*' (Howarth, 2011: 165, author's italics).

The MEDIVA Project

As noted above, the MEDIVA project examined a selection of European media outlets across four dimensions (content, recruitment/employment, news making/programme production and training) with a view to assessing the capacity of such media to reflect the increasing ethno-cultural diversity of European societies. The first phase of the research consisted of interviews with senior journalists and other news workers in six Member States of the European Union. A total of sixty-eight persons were interviewed (fifteen in Greece, twelve in Poland, eleven in Ireland, ten in the Netherlands, ten in UK, and ten in Italy). Following analysis of interview data, the project entered the second phase of research which involved a 'pilot study' using the MEDIVA Diversity Indicators. Thirty-one media outlets from the six Member States were analysed, with a view to including a range of public and private media, varying political orientations (left/right wing) and different media profiles (quality vs. populist), though without any claim of representativeness. The thirty-one media outlets included nineteen newspapers, nine television channels and three news websites.

The five Irish media outlets analysed were: *The Irish Times* (national daily broadsheet); *Irish Independent* (national daily paper published in both broadsheet and tabloid formats); *Metro Herald* (free urban-distributed daily tabloid); RTE's *Six-One News* (daily hour-long public service TV news bulletin from the national broadcaster); and TV3's *News at 5.30* (thirty-minute TV news bulletin from the national commercial broadcaster). The content under analysis in this article is derived from three separate sample periods totalling five weeks between the months of November 2011 and February 2012. This essentially comprised an examination of the extent and form of the coverage given to TCNs and was assessed in terms of the balance between positive and negative representations (e.g., labelling or stereotyping versus frames of harmony or positive differences) and the extent to which TCNs were framed as 'active' or 'passive' in these representations. In addition, it considered the extent to which immigrant views or concerns were represented in coverage of both mainstream news/issues as well as migrant-specific news/issues. To indicate the scale of this programme of research, we note that a grand total of 7,122 sample content items were analysed from a combined total of 150 editions/bulletins of the different publications/broadcasts (see Table 1). With the print media outlets, these sample articles encompass news stories, feature articles, opinion columns and readers letters. Sports news, business news and supplements are excluded. In the case of the broadcast outlets, all stories carried in the relevant news bulletins were analysed with the exception of sports news and business news.

The remaining sections of this article detail the most salient features of the representation of TCNs from within this sample. Kenny (2010: 314) points out that there are three ways in which Irish media cater for immigrants (in terms of content): reports about immigrants in the mainstream media; special supplements or programming for immigrants in mainstream media; and content largely produced by immigrants for immigrants (generally in their own languages). The research described here is concerned only with the first of these. The following theoretical insights drawn from studies of media representation frame our analysis:

- Subjects or identities do not exist prior to representation but are constituted in and through representation (Hall, 1990); consequently, absences are just as important as presences, what Gerbner (1972) refers to as 'symbolic annihilation'.

- Media representations frequently simplify and essentialise (or 'other') migrant identities, thereby ignoring and excluding many layers of their individual and collective experience. Furthermore, where migrants are concerned, journalistic conventions dictate that priority is given to the exotic, the sensational and the extraordinary (see Devereux, Breen and Haynes, 2006). Relatedly, studies suggest that journalists of ethnic minority background are often pushed towards 'minority' stories, with little encouragement to write about or report on 'mainstream' concerns (see Eide, 2010).

- As important as absence and marginality are trivialisation, simplification and 'passivity' in media representations i.e., being the object but never the subject of practices of representation (Hall, 2009: 270).

Table 1: Total Items Referring to TCNs Across the Combined Sample Periods

Outlet	Total items	Items with reference to TCNs	Items with reference to TCNs as %
The Irish Times	2,971	63	2.12%
Irish Independent	2,112	37	1.75%
Metro Herald	1,273	24	1.89%
RTE Six-One News	521	25	4.80%
TV3 News At 5.30	245	9	3.67%
Total	7,122	158	2.22%

MEDIVA Content Findings: Reactive Representations

The 'reactive' nature or characteristic of coverage devoted to TCNs in the five Irish media outlets analysed in this pilot study is illustrated on a number of different levels. In the first instance, a substantial percentage of this coverage relates to a very small number of 'extraordinary' or unique stories within which such migrants unwittingly feature as central actors. Had these particular events not occurred during the sample period, the already low level of visibility of non-EU nationals in this study would be significantly diminished. Beyond this, TCNs rarely if ever feature as commentators or spokespersons on mainstream topics or issues. Rather, they almost exclusively feature as victims of tragedies, or perpetrators or victims of crime. Beyond crime reporting, in some other instances coverage is given to TNCs who are charged with professional wrongdoing or malpractice.

Unique or extraordinary events

This reactive characteristic is emphasised by the relative level of coverage allotted to a small number of what we label 'extraordinary' (rare/unique) events which serve to increase the overall number of relevant news items across the periods sampled. The occurrence of specific (and unexpected) events at different points during the various sample periods has (possibly/probably) had the effect of skewing the overall level of coverage of TCNs in all of the five media outlets monitored. Three events in particular generated significant and recurring coverage:

1) The murder of Malawian woman Rudo Mawere (whose body was discovered in a suitcase on a public street in Dublin on 28th January 2012).

2) The search for the bodies of missing Egyptian fishermen off Glandore Harbour in County Cork (and subsequent related stories regarding the funerals and participation of Egyptian immigrants in the funerals of Irish crewmen who also died when the Tit Bonhomme trawler sank).

3) The resignation of Fine Gael Mayor of Naas, Darren Scully, following racist remarks made on local radio in November 2011. Scully said he was refusing to

any longer serve 'black Africans' in his constituency, describing them as 'aggressive', 'bad mannered' and 'playing the race card'.

These three stories constituted nineteen (almost 31%) of the total items that referred to TCNs in *The Irish Times*, and seventeen (almost 46%) of the total stories containing reference to TCNs over the three sample periods in the *Irish Independent*. In *Metro Herald*, the Darren Scully story alone accounted for six from a total of twenty-four items (25%). However, while gaining such significant coverage in print media, the Darren Scully story did not gain coverage in its own right on RTE News during the sample periods. Rather, it featured as one element of a broader discussion on the topic of immigrants during one bulletin of the station's *Six-One News*.[4] However, also with RTE *Six-One News*, items surrounding the drowning (and recovery) of Egyptian fishermen off Glandore Harbour in Cork in late January featured in five separate bulletins during the sample periods in question, representing 25 per cent of all items that make reference to TNCs.

Overriding themes in coverage of TNCs
In the coverage given to TCNs by the five selected outlets across the sample periods in question, crime is the most common and recurring theme.

Of those sixty-three items analysed in *The Irish Times*, over a quarter (eighteen items) relate directly to crime. These items offer accounts of immigrants as both perpetrators and victims of serious crimes: perpetrators of a variety of criminal offences including false imprisonment, fraud, conspiracy to murder and a range of major drugs offences; and victims of murder, violent assault, dismemberment, human trafficking and burglary. There are also accounts of such immigrants facing criminal charges in relation to labour exploitation and other related forms of abuse, and also victims of same. Likewise with the *Irish Independent*, crime is the most common and recurring theme with fourteen of the thirty-seven items (37.84%) offering accounts of immigrants as either perpetrators or victims of serious crime.

When letters are removed from consideration, only fifteen of the 1,273 items published in *Metro Herald* over the three sample periods make any reference to TCNs. Eight of these items relate directly to crime – two of which describe immigrants as the perpetrators of serious crimes, and six as the victims.

In terms of the broadcast news media the picture is slightly different. Crime features significantly less in RTE *Six-One News*, but nevertheless is central to a total of six stories (representing 24%) of the twenty-five items containing reference to TCNs. These, however, relate to just three separate serious crime stories (one on murder; one on violent assault; and one on dismemberment) in which TCNs were in all cases

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4 While this is not a recurring theme in RTE news coverage of immigrant issues, a two-item feature addressing racism towards ethnic minorities and a related 'good news' item (all contained in the *Six-One* broadcast on November 25th 2011) are of note. This happened directly in the aftermath of 1) the violent assault (and subsequent death) of Nigerian taxi driver Moses Ayanwole and 2) the racist comments made on local radio by Mayor of Naas Darren Scully. The three items combine to represent immigrants as 'positive' and 'active/good': One features calls from the black community for government action to tackle racism in Ireland; another features a lengthy 'in-studio' interview conducted by news anchor Bryan Dobson with the CEO of Akidwa (an organisation that works on behalf of immigrants) and; a related third item refers to coverage given to Alimzhan Nabiulin (originally from Russia) who received an award for bravery for rescuing someone who fell into a lake.

victims. Two of the nine migrant-related items carried by TV3 *News at 5.30* over the sample periods in question are murder stories. Other crime stories (such as fraud, card-skimming etc.) which gain minor coverage in daily broadsheets do not feature in national broadcast news.

One other minor recurring trend relates to the reporting of proceedings in cases of medical misconduct/malpractice. In *The Irish Times*, four news items describing three separate instances of misconduct and/or poor professional performance charges against TCN doctors were published across the three sample periods. Again, while not occurring in sufficient quantity or frequency to merit being labelled a trend, RTE *Six-One News* contained two items relating to charges of medical misconduct brought against doctors of African origin (representing 8% of items referring to such migrants). What is perhaps most interesting here is the 'comparative' framing of the case of Dr. Etop Samson Akpan relative to TV3 coverage of the same story. RTE carried the story as 'Hospital consultant found guilty of poor professional performance'; TV3 carried the same story as 'Consultant gynaecologist cleared of all allegations of misconduct'.

Polarised debate

Reflecting the trends illustrated in the two national daily broadsheets analysed in this study, crime and 'extraordinary' events explain the majority of *Metro Herald* stories where TCNs are represented. However one additional and notable aspect of coverage within *Metro Herald* is that the ratio between letters and news items is much higher than other publications when it comes to those items that make reference to TCNs. Of those twenty-four items that do refer to such immigrants, nine are letters (constituting 37.5% of such items). While these do, unlike the vast majority of news items analysed in this study, contain migrant voices and offer migrant perspectives, they ultimately serve to present a polarised debate on race/immigrant issues. For example, one letter refers to immigrants as 'job-robbing scum' which another (penned by a TCN) responds by labelling the Irish as 'lazy dole spongers'. Another letter states that 'all non-nationals have a homeland' and they should 'return to their fabulous country and stop annoying us'; this receives the response of 'be thankful' for the non-nationals who carry out the menial jobs that the Irish have grown to regard as beneath them (again penned by a TCN).

Invisibility and voicelessness

While the above sections detailed the general nature and some of the key characteristics pertaining to the coverage allotted to TCNs in selected Irish media outlets during the sample periods of investigation, the most stark or striking finding of all relates to the extremely low level of representation across these publications per se. Third country nationals are, to a large degree, 'absent' from news media content. Of the grand total of 7,122 items garnered across the three sample periods of this study, just 158 of these items make reference to non-EU nationals. This represents a mere 2.22% of the overall sample. Below, we consider some of the headline level statistics for each individual outlet.

The total number of editions of *The Irish Times* analysed for the purposes of this exploratory study was thirty-one. These contained a grand total of 2,971 items of which sixty-three made reference to migrants. This represents 2.12% of the total items analysed across the sample periods. The total number of editions of the *Irish Independent* analysed for the purposes of this exploratory study was also thirty-one.

These contained a grand total of 2,112 items of which thirty-seven made reference to migrants. This represents 1.89% of the total items analysed across the sample periods. A smaller paper with a smaller circulation, *Metro Herald* published twenty-six editions over the sample periods in question. These contained a grand total of 1,273 items. However, when letters are removed from the equation, only fifteen of the remaining items over the three sample periods make any reference to TCNs.

With RTE *Six-One News*, thirty-four bulletins were analysed over the three sample periods. The broadcasts contained a total of 521 items, of which twenty-five made reference to TCNs. This represents 4.79% of the total items analysed across the sample periods. The total number of TV3 *News at 5.30* bulletins analysed for the purposes of this study was twenty-four, which contained a grand total of 245 items. Of those, a total of nine made reference to non-EU nationals, representing 3.67% of the total items analysed across the sample periods.

Of the five outlets analysed, RTE news broadcasts the highest percentage of items referencing TCNs. In relative terms, it also outputs more items with immigrant voices than any of the other outlets (52% of items referring to TCNs). By 'voices', we mean that coverage actually includes statements (spoken or written) by TCNs (see Table 2).

Table 2: Representation of Migrant Voices Across the Combined Sample Periods

Outlet	Total items	Items with with reference to TCNs	Total items with TCNs voices	Items with TCNs voices on migrant issues	Items with TCNs voices on mainstr. issues
The Irish Times	2,971	63	14	12	2
Irish Independent	2,112	37	3	2	1
Metro Herald	1,273	24	2	2	0
RTE *Six-One News*	521	25	13	5	8
TV3 *News At 5.30*	245	9	5	1	4
Total	7,122	158	37	22	15

However, the RTE statistics (in Table 2 above) need to be considered in the context of coverage given to 'first world' or corporate class migrants that serve to enhance the overall level of representation in the findings. While thirteen of the twenty-five RTE *Six-One News* items that refer to TCNs were coded as positive, it must be noted that five of these items relate to:[5]

1) The financial Ombudsman, Bill Prasifka, who is originally from the United States and who spoke in an interview about introducing increased measures to tackle offences committed by financial institutions (one item)

5 By removing these five items from the analysis, the number of positive items reduces by 38.5%; equally, by removing these five items from the analysis, the overall number of items coded as active dropped by 44%, while the number of items coded as active/good dropped by 50%.

2) The Papal Nuncio, Charles Brown, who is originally from the United States (two items)

3) Director of Idrio Technologies, Jo Chang, who is originally from China and who was commenting on increased Chinese investment in business in Ireland (one item)

4) Science Gallery curator, Zack Denfield, originally from the United States (one item)

In the majority of cases TCNs are portrayed as passive subjects (i.e. people to whom things 'happen') rather than as active participants. In the articles and news items sampled during the course of this study across all five media outlets, just under 56% of the 158 containing reference to TCNs were coded as passive, with just over 44% coded active. However, of those seventy items coded active, 43% represented TCNs 'actively doing bad things', i.e. negative representations. As such, just over 25% of those 158 items portray TCNs as positive, active participants in Irish society. This figure diminishes further if we remove the aforementioned references to 'first world' TNCs who are dispatched to Ireland in the corporate, diplomatic or related spheres.

Discussion

Overall, the media space given to Third Country Nationals (TNCs) is extremely small. Equally, within those items that do reference TCNs, the representation of immigrant voices is very small, and where it does occur, it is usually in the context of an immigrant-specific issue/story. The representation of immigrant voices in debates or commentary around mainstream topics is miniscule. Crime and major 'extraordinary' events constitute the lion's share of coverage given to (and representations of) such immigrants across the five media outlets analysed. This implies that unless something significant (and usually bad) *happens to* a TCN in Ireland, the chances of them being seen (or heard) in the media are remote.

   Overall, television provides a higher ratio of positive coverage of TCNs than newspapers. This is primarily because the overall number of news items broadcast in news bulletins is significantly less than those published in newspapers on any given day. Consequently, 'positive' news stories are more diluted in newspapers than in TV news broadcasts. (This, however, is much more the case with RTE (public service) than with TV3 (commercial). As the data indicate, the quantity of RTE's overall news output is much higher than that of TV3). As a whole, positive news stories are enhanced by the inclusion of items that detail jobs announcements, investment initiatives etc. where corporate-class non-nationals from, for example the US, feature prominently as positive actors.

   Nevertheless, it is almost impossible to argue that any of the above findings constitute a 'trend' or 'pattern', given that the overall level of reference to (or representation of) immigrants is so small across all outlets analysed.

Conclusion

News media, such as the outlets examined in this article, can be seen to play a central role both in shaping the collective socio-cultural environment and in the performance and operations of political power. In this light, news media content and discourses, such as those related to TCNs (and immigrants in general) are central platforms in the real-

isation and expression of socio-cultural relations. As Gans and Luhmann and others have emphasised, outside our own orbit of daily life, we derive almost everything that we know or understand about the contemporary world from the media of public communication, not least from organised news media services. Equally, as noted earlier, media representations serve as fundamental actors in shaping our self-perception as well as our understanding of our social world. The small quantity and narrow range of representations of TCNs illustrated in the content analysis findings in this article provide a compressed picture of the role and characteristics of such migrants in Irish society. As noted above, the defining quality of much of the coverage given to TCNs in Irish news media is its reactive nature (revealed particularly by the prominence of crime-related stories). Such findings resonate with the 'media sensationalism' detailed in those earlier studies (mentioned above) that have examined media representations of asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland.

The empirical evidence drawn upon in this article does not claim to provide a definitive overview or understanding of the representation of TCNs in Irish media. Rather, we recognise these findings as representing an exploratory investigation conducted over a relatively short period of time. We are thus mindful of the dangers of extrapolating broader trends or claiming a more thorough or holistic understanding of the role of Irish media in representing TCNs based on such a pilot-level research study. Nevertheless, the study encompasses a range of mainstream and almost exclusively national media outlets. Overall, the content that has been analysed across the three separate sample periods (totalling five weeks) in late-2011–early-2012 combine to offer a series of insightful snapshots which enable us to form some useful initial impressions of the extent and nature of the coverage afforded to TCNs in Irish news media. Beyond these particular findings, we call for renewed attention to migration-related research on media at a time of diminished governmental interest in such research, both in Ireland and across the European Union.

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