



Discursive representations of 'illegal immigration' in the Irish newsprint media: The domination and multiple facets of the 'control' argumentation

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Abstract

'Illegal immigration' is an intangible entity within Irish society and currently only minimal research has been undertaken on this topic. For multiple reasons, those referred to as 'illegal immigrants' are generally voiceless and have few opportunities for self-representation. Nonetheless, various portrayals of 'illegal immigrants' stem discursively through key Irish institutions. This article identifies the discourses that are disseminated by the Irish newsprint media and concentrates upon the most common argumentation (topos) forwarded – the 'control' of 'illegal immigration'. This specific argumentation is expressed through a variety of narratives, which are fused with both positive and negative ideologies. However, the majority of 'control' texts argue in favour of restrictions on 'illegal immigration'. Grounded within a Foucauldian and Critical Discourse Analysis framework, this article shows how the 'control' topos is linked to broader ideological conceptualizations of governmentality and national identity, which may contribute towards legitimized practices of inequality and exclusion in Ireland.

Keywords

Control argumentation, Critical Discourse Analysis, governmentality, illegal immigration, Ireland, national identity, newsprint media, representation, Topoi analysis, undocumented migration

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Introduction

The manifestation of immigrants becoming 'illegal'¹ or arriving in Ireland without permission has only occurred since the 1990s (Mac Éinrí and White, 2008: 153). Around this time, the country witnessed a rapid increase in immigration. The State was not fully prepared for this and reacted in an ad-hoc manner, especially towards non-European Union (EU) migrants and those claiming asylum. In many ways, this approach towards immigration continues today. Indeed, the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill was first introduced to the Irish Parliament in 2005, but is currently withdrawn and under review (Oireachtas, 2010). Placed within this context, confusion ensues about 'illegal immigration' and multiple links are created between irregularity, asylum, criminality and danger. Furthermore, basic and accurate information about 'illegal immigration' is significantly lacking on the part of the Government and the authorities, and research on this issue is mainly undertaken by non-governmental organizations (e.g. Coghlan, 2007; Crosscare Migrant Project, 2009). However, it is currently broadly acknowledged that the overall levels of 'illegal immigration' in Ireland are quite low, and the majority of 'illegal immigrants' actually come to the State legally (with permission) initially and become 'illegal'/'undocumented' over time (Quinn and Kingston, 2012: xi). Nevertheless, a substantial level of negative public attention has been focused upon these migrants, and the constructed negative persona of the 'illegal immigrant' is unsubstantiated. Although little is known about these migrants, many assumptions dominate understandings by parliamentary members, State agencies and members of the media. This article aims to deconstruct taken-for-granted conceptualizations of 'illegal immigrants' by examining representations expressed through one of Ireland's most influential institutions – the newsprint media.

The newsprint media in Ireland (and also worldwide) is currently undergoing a time of intense change and adaptation, with a decrease in the sales of newspapers, and the public's increasing consumption of online material. Nonetheless, the level of readership remains significant, as newspaper content is still read (either through traditional methods or electronically) by a sizable audience on a daily basis, and it attracts notable public attention. The newsprint media therefore remains an important institution that has the ability to wield considerable influence though ideologically infused discourses (Berger, 1972; Crespi, 1997; Fairclough, 1992; Fowler, 1991; Taylor, 2001; Van Dijk, 1991; Wetherell et al., 2001). These ideological conceptualizations can stem from: (1) broadly accepted societal 'norms'/'dominant' discourses, (2) discourses from those in positions of influence (elites) and (3) discourses from those that operate within various institutions (e.g. education/politics; Bell, 1991; Mautner, 2008; Tuchman, 2002; Van Dijk, 1987). As many elites have an organized relationship with members of the press, and in some cases, elites are in control of newsprint media outlets (Van Dijk, 1987, 1988), it is arguable that a predominantly elite view of the world becomes established in and through implicit ideological discourses produced by the newsprint media (Fairclough, 1995; Mautner, 2008; Van Dijk, 1987, 1991). Although the newsprint media cannot tell people what to think about a given topic, it can set an agenda and the parameters within which a topic is conceived. This can lead the public to think about a given subject in a particular way (Berger, 1972; Crespi, 1997; Hall, 1977; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

The way in which 'illegal immigration' is reported in the newsprint media indicates how it is understood (Mac Éinrí, 2001), how it is framed and how it is presented to the general public. These representations can form 'dominant' discourses about 'illegal immigration' – normalized, 'naturalized' and legitimized ways of thinking about it (Williams, 1962). This process can have tangible effects in society, such as influencing and/or legitimizing certain practices, for example immigration enforcement measures (Bauder, 2008b; Crespi, 1997; Hall, 1977; Van Dijk, 1991; Wodak and Menz, 1990). Consequently, ideologically laden newsprint media texts can operate as vague and implicit instruments of power (Van Dijk, 2009: 62–86). It is argued here that materializations of such power formations and rationalities of governance and national identity can be uncovered by examining newsprint media texts that refer to 'illegal immigration' (Haynes et al., 2010; McLaren, 2001; Van Dijk, 2009; Wodak et al., 2009). Indeed, newsprint media texts contain a large level of national rhetoric, which functions to reinforce the 'legitimate' identity of the citizen. Through this ongoing process, the 'subject' (the 'illegal immigrant') is placed into the role of the 'other' in order to justify practices of State control and exclusion (Hall, 2001; Jager and Maier, 2009; Van Dijk, 2009; Wodak and Krzyzanowski, 2008; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). This article aims to deconstruct common-sense understandings and 'truths' that are produced about 'illegal immigration' in the Irish newsprint media, in order to reveal broader rationalities of governance and national identity.

A significant amount of research has been undertaken on discourses of migration in the newsprint media from a variety of geographical contexts (e.g. Hier and Greenberg, 2002; Triandafyllidou, 1999). A small number of studies have examined discourses of migration in the Irish newsprint media (Conway, 2006; Haynes et al., 2006, 2008; Mac Éinrí, 2001). Of more concern here is research that undertakes a Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA) approach to analysing discourses of migration (i.e. Bauder, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d; KhosraviNik, 2009, 2010; Magalhaes, 2006; Richardson, 2007). A CDA of Irish and Spanish newsprint media discourses of immigration from the 1990s has been carried out by Prieto Ramos (2004). This article aims to both build upon this work and to address a gap in the literature by examining the next decade (the 2000s) and undertaking a CDA of discourses of 'illegal immigration' in the Irish newsprint media. This will be undertaken by revealing the 'dominant' discourses and key argumentations (topoi) that actively construct the identity of 'illegal immigrants' (Mautner, 2008; Van Der Valk, 2003). Irish broadsheet newspapers are under analysis here and this research identifies all articles published about 'illegal immigration' between 2002 and 2009. This time period is significant as there was an increase in the level of immigration to Ireland during this time (Mac Éinrí and White, 2008). Consequently, the number of newsprint media texts that refer to 'illegal immigration' also increased. From a significantly large cohort of texts (over 2500), this research found that a number of differing argumentations/topoi are evident, including 'control', 'economy', 'humanitarian', 'danger' and 'culture'. While all of these topoi are significant in their own right, there are multiple linkages between the differing topoi. In-depth analysis of all five topoi are part of a larger research project (Burroughs, 2012). However, what is of concern here is the key finding from this research: the 'control' topos occurred most often and dominates newsprint media references to 'illegal immigration'. In the following section, the research

design is relayed in more detail. This includes a discussion of the theoretical framework that informs this research, an explanation of Topoi Analysis, an outline of how the data were identified and collated, and a quantitative overview of the data. The main section of this article concentrates upon the multiple narratives that occurred within the 'control' topos.

Research design

Foucauldian approach to power and discourse

This research recognizes the important role that discourses can play in the formation, operation and maintenance of power networks. Therefore, it ascribes to a Foucauldian understanding of power (Foucault, 1991a). Foucault maintains that governmental power functions through a system of networks that aim to legitimize unequal power relations and social inequality. In many cases, these networks are difficult to identify, but Foucault argues that aspects of power formation materialize in ideologically laden discourses (Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Foucault, 1991b; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). As ideologies are abstract and unconsciously formed, those in positions of influence can attempt to mould them through discourses that are disseminated through various outlets. Consequently, institutionally produced discourses provide evidence of the enactments of underlying ideologies/belief systems. Discourses can be deconstructed in order to reveal implicit ideological power formations (Van Dijk, 2000b; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). One must be mindful that the aim of this deconstruction is not to reveal the falseness of ideologies, but to uncover the production of 'truthful' discourses (Dean, 2010: 5) that are generally accepted by the majority of the population.

The process of (re)producing implicit discursive ideologies can result in certain understandings of particular issues (Van Dijk, 2000b; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Discourses are used by those in positions of power (in this case, by those that operate within and through the Irish newsprint media) to disseminate legitimized 'truths' about 'illegal immigrants'. Through these 'dominant' discourses, particular attributes are assigned to migrants. Examples of this include descriptions of 'illegal immigrants' as criminals, as a threat to society, and as an entity that requires regulation and control. These representations foster an imposed, imagined and abstract identity of the 'illegal immigrant', an identity that is linked to conceptualizations of place, governance and national identity. This conceptual identity of 'illegality' is purposefully intangible and abstract in order to make the processes of regulating 'illegal immigrants' seem to be manageable. These constructed identities allow for migrants to be placed within an unequal position in relation to those seen to be legitimate (citizens) within the Nation State rationale of governance. Therefore, discourses and the 'knowledge' that they (re)produce are employed to (re)establish and maintain unequal power relations within society (Van Dijk, 2009: 62–86), which can lead to 'justified' practices of control and exclusion. Discursive identity formation plays a considerable role in the prevailing negative attitude towards 'illegal immigrants' (Mountz, 2003: 622–644). The deconstruction of these ideological discourses is an important task to undertake and this article aims to denaturalize common-sense understandings of 'illegal immigrants' that perpetuate within Irish

society and the multiple negative and unsubstantiated identities that are assigned to them (Van Dijk, 2000b; Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

Topoi analysis of the newsprint media data

Under the broad school of CDA, the specific methodology that this research employs is historical argumentation analysis (also known as Topoi Analysis). Firmly based in the work of Foucault (1991b) and his understanding of discourses as vessels of power formations, Maas (1984, 1989a, 1989b) pioneered the method of Topoi Analysis (topos is the singular form). A topos is a 'place' where arguments can be found in a text (Van Eemeren et al., 1996: 38). Topoi Analysis aims to identify discursive argumentation schemes and thought schemes that are implicitly embedded within a text. These topoi (argumentations) are evidence of power formations, as they represent common-sense rationalities relating to a body of collective knowledge (ideologies) shared among groups and communities (Bauder, 2008b, 2008c; Boke et al., 2000; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Van Dijk, 2000a; Wodak, 2011). Overall, a topos has two main elements. First, a topos is that which justifies a line of argument, but requires less justification itself as it is anchored in taken-for-granted attitudes. Second, a topos is tied to concepts rather than to specific words, and it can be phrased in a number of ways. Indeed, topoi are often inferred rather than explicitly mentioned in a text. By appealing to the common knowledge of the populous, topoi function to maintain and strengthen 'dominant' ideologies and ways of thinking. Multiple topoi may be identifiable within a single text. By employing a Topoi Analysis, a variety of perspectives, thought schemes and hidden premises of argumentation can be uncovered (Grue, 2009: 310–312).

A Topoi Analysis methodology is employed here in order to critique discursive representations of 'illegal immigrants' that were disseminated through the Irish newsprint media between 2002 and 2009. This research draws upon the work of Bauder (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d), Wengeler (2000) and Prieto Ramos (2004) in order to identify key discursive argumentations (be they positive or negative) that are employed in relation to 'illegal immigration'. As part of a broader research project (which analysed both parliamentary and newsprint media texts), a pilot analysis was undertaken in order to establish the argumentations that were evident in the Irish context (Burroughs, 2012). This analysis revealed five key topoi, namely, 'control', 'economy', 'humanitarian', 'danger' and 'culture'. This framework was subsequently applied to the main cohort of newsprint media texts and it was found to be an appropriate method of deconstruction. Each topos was also categorized as 'positive', 'negative' or 'neutral'. As this work examines texts that reproduce inequalities in relation to migrants, a text is viewed to be 'positive' if it supports human rights and equality. A text is viewed to be 'negative' and unjust if it violates human rights and contributes to social inequality (Van Dijk, 2009: 62; Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 1–2). If a text contains no clear mode of argumentation it is viewed to be 'neutral'.

How the newsprint media data were identified and organized

Newspaper articles were sourced from the online search engine *LexisNexis* and from individual newspapers' websites. As few Irish tabloid articles are archived electronically,

this research concentrated upon the broadsheet newspapers of *The Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent*, the *Irish Examiner* and the *Sunday Tribune*. A cohort of over 2500 articles were identified for the period between 2002 and 2009. These newsprint media sources are among Ireland's largest, most influential and reputable newspapers. Thus they are key vessels of 'discourses of influence' in the Irish context. Initially, an array of keywords were used to identify articles relating to 'illegal immigration'. However, not all of these keywords were fruitful and therefore the main keywords employed include illegal immigrant(s), illegal, migrant(s), migration, undocumented and irregular. This research did not use keywords such as asylum-seeker or refugee, as the aim of the article is to specifically focus on the topic of 'illegal immigration' – although, it must be noted that on occasion within the newsprint media non-EU migrants are represented as the same entity and 'illegal immigrants' are referred to as asylum-seekers/refugees and vice versa. This complexity in terminology will be discussed in detail within the 'Analysis' section of this article.

This research examined all types of news articles (of varying lengths) including news features, opinion pieces, editorials, short reports and letters to the editor. Once a text was read, analysed and the topoi were identified, the data relating to each text were recorded onto an excel file. This allowed for the collation of information about each text: the date of publication, the keyword(s) used to identify the text, the number of words within the text and the geographical location(s) that the text was referring to. Lastly, and most prominently, the mode(s) of argumentation (topoi) found within each text were recorded. In order to ensure reliability in the identification of the topoi and that a consistent application of the coding and recording scheme was undertaken, the data was rechecked twice. It was initially checked as the research was ongoing by comparing the findings with previous analysis. Finally, a full review was undertaken when the entire data cohort was completely analysed.

An overview of the data cohort and results

This research has found that the Irish newsprint media represent 'illegal immigration' through five key topoi (see Figure 1). It is to be noted that the individual Irish newspapers discuss 'illegal immigration' in a variety of ways and cover the topic to varying degrees. Nonetheless, these five over-arching arguments are a key feature of the discourses surrounding 'illegal immigration' in the Irish context. As these argumentations are (re)produced most often, they become 'natural' ways for the public to conceptualize 'illegal immigration' (Jager and Maier, 2009; Van Dijk, 2000b; Wodak and Krzyzanowski, 2008; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). It is clear from Figure 1 that one topos in particular dominates the data. The 'control' topos is the most prevalent and accounts for 52% (1934) of all topoi. This is followed by the 'danger' topos (12%), the 'humanitarian' topos (9%), the 'economy' topos (8%) and the 'culture' topos (7%). The 'other' topos constitutes 12% of texts. Texts were categorized as 'other' for a number of reasons: (1) the text lacked an argumentation scheme or it had no clear argumentation scheme, (2) 'illegal immigration' was indirectly mentioned or only referred to as a secondary item and (3) the text mainly referred to other types of migration, such as trafficking. On a point of clarity it is to be noted that the total number of topoi

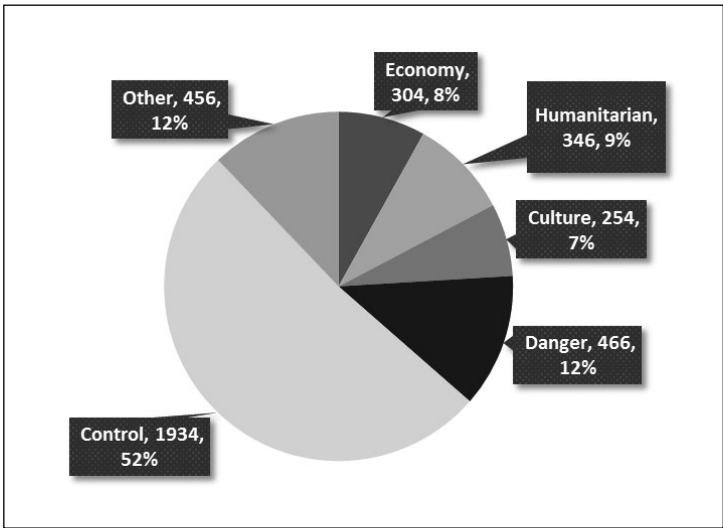


Figure 1. Frequency of topoi.

(argumentations) is higher than the overall number of texts, as a single text can contain multiple topoi.

This data can be deconstructed further by tracking the frequency of the topoi over time between 2002 and 2009 (in Figure 2). Once again, it is noticeable that the ‘control’ topos is the most prevalent of the topoi. There is one outcome of this analysis that is even more significant. In Figure 2, a clear pattern is evident – all topoi are consistently employed and reproduced between 2002 and 2009. Furthermore, the topoi maintain a similar level of occurrence during this time. It is argued here that this data provides evidence of the functioning of broader governmental powers (Dean, 2010: 18), as ‘dominant’ discourses about ‘illegal immigration’ are reproduced in a consistent manner over time through the Irish newsprint media (Mountz, 2003: 633–636).

A noteworthy characteristic of the Irish newsprint media is that the texts do not solely refer to ‘illegal immigration’ in the Irish context, but to several geographical locations, from Europe to the United States to Australia. As one can see from Figure 3 a significant proportion of texts actually refer to ‘illegal immigration’ in other geographical contexts (58%). In fact, the level of texts that specifically refer to ‘illegal immigration’ in Ireland (42%) actually decreases over time. A complex discourse of ‘illegal immigration’, featuring numerous geographical locations, is presented to the wider citizenry audience by the Irish newsprint media, and a comparison of these various representations highlights how exclusionary practices that are based on the nation-state rationale of governance can be constructed and legitimized through discourse. This aspect is quite significant and will be discussed in more detail in the following section, which examines the differing narratives that occur within the most prevalent topos – the ‘control’ argumentation.

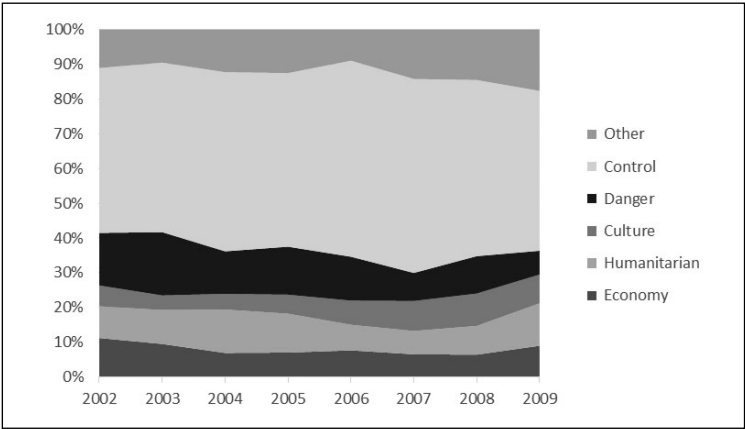


Figure 2. Frequency of topoi over time.

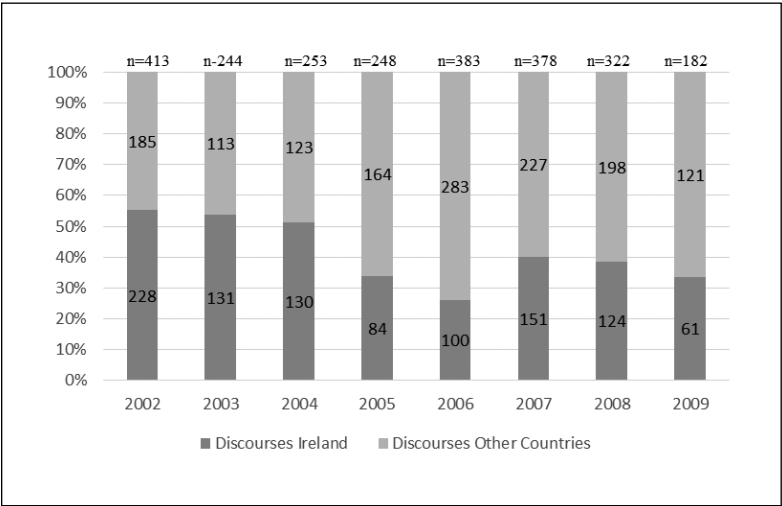


Figure 3. Geographic focus of the Texts.

The ‘control’ argumentation

This research has found that the Irish newsprint media is overtly ‘negative’ towards ‘illegal immigration’, and a significant proportion of texts refers to the topic of control and prevention (52%). Figure 4 breaks down this ‘control’ data further and details the number of texts identified to be ‘control-positive’, ‘control-negative’ and ‘control-neutral’ for each year between 2002 and 2009. This data clearly shows that the ‘control’ topos is significantly more ‘negative’ (71%) than ‘positive’ (27%). It is evident that the level of ‘control-positive’ texts increases from 2002 (13%) to 2006 (37%), but ‘control-positive’ texts decrease steadily over time to 26% in 2009.

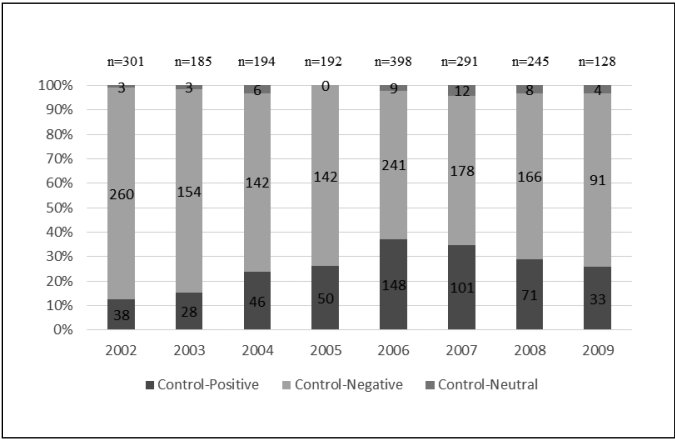


Figure 4. The ‘control’ topoi.

The various narratives that occur within the ‘control’ topos centre upon a number of key geographical locations, namely, Ireland, Europe and the United States. As a result, between 2002 and 2009 four distinct place-based ‘control’ narratives can be identified. The first narrative justifies the need to prevent and control ‘illegal immigration’ in Ireland. The second narrative represents European control measures against ‘illegal immigration’ as the standard for Ireland to follow. The third narrative contends that the regulation of ‘illegal immigration’ in Ireland is too restrictive. The fourth narrative contends that US immigration policies should be amended to accommodate and regularize the ‘undocumented’ Irish in the United States. Both the third and fourth narratives represent a smaller proportion of the data and are mainly ‘positive’ towards unauthorized immigration.

Justifying the prevention and control of ‘illegal immigration’ in Ireland

The main narrative disseminated about ‘illegal immigration’ within the Irish newsprint media between 2002 and 2009 argues that it must be restricted, prevented and controlled. This narrative is justified in a number of ways. In particular, the use of Government sources (which are generally considered to be reliable and ‘factual’) is one of the key legitimization tools used within the newsprint media. Indeed, the majority of narratives that justify the need to control and restrict ‘illegal immigration’ quote and/or refer to government/parliamentary sources. In this way, the newsprint media is an outlet for ideologically laden governmental rationalities. Over time, this restrictive attitude is echoed and reproduced through a variety of topics. First, an authoritative narrative is disseminated through the newsprint media (and thus to the populous) that the Government is taking a ‘tough line on illegal immigration’:

The programme for Government makes it clear that the new Cabinet will take a tough line on illegal immigration and seek to increase the rate of repatriation where asylum applications have failed ... The Coalition Government is anxious to devise a voluntary repatriation programme for illegal immigrants. (*The Irish Times*, 2002: 15)

The Government plans to enact new powers to clamp down on illegal immigration before the next general election, requiring non-EU citizens to carry biometric cards and allowing Gardaí to summarily detain and deport illegal immigrants. (Brennock, 2006: 8)

These texts relay the Government's continuing intent to 'clamp down' and 'deport' 'illegal immigrants'. Details of the multitude of resources and technologies that the Government intends on employing in the prevention of 'illegal immigration' are also disseminated through the newsprint media:

A hi-tech new border system is to be introduced to crack down on the increasing numbers of foreign migrants who illegally overstay their welcome in Ireland. The Government is preparing to establish an Irish Borders Operation Centre (IBOC) to monitor those arriving on holiday visas and work permits ... Mr. Ahern [Minister for Justice] said the EU saw technology as a key element for member states tackling crime and illegal immigration. There was already shared technology in the fight against organized and cross-border crime and illegal immigration, but this would take it a stage further. (Molony, 2009)

The language that is utilized to describe this restrictive approach towards 'illegal immigration' is noteworthy. It is stated that a hi-tech border system will 'crack down' on 'illegal immigrants' and will work to 'fight against organized and cross-border crime and illegal immigration'. 'Illegal immigrants' are represented as dangerous people and associated with criminal activities. Prieto Ramos (2004: 174–179) also identifies that immigrants in Ireland are represented through this criminality/illegality nexus and are portrayed as a threat and a dangerous group of people. The language used in the above text suggests notions of a frontier battle between border control and 'illegal immigration'. It is interesting how so much emphasis is placed on the prevention of 'illegal immigration' at the border, as it is now broadly accepted that most 'illegal immigrants' in Ireland come to the country through legal methods initially (e.g. with a student visa) and subsequently become 'illegal' over time (Quinn and Kingston, 2012: xi). This focus on border control seems to be misguided, but perhaps it is an attempt by those in positions of authority to be seen to exercise control over an entity that they are unable to manage in their preferred manner. Operation Gull was implemented by the Government in 2007 in order to prevent the entry of 'illegal immigration' into the Republic of Ireland through the border with Northern Ireland. The details of this operation were disseminated into the newsprint media in conjunction with various denials of racism (e.g. McKay, 2007: 8), which are a key feature of elite discourses (Van Der Valk, 2003; Van Dijk, 2000b).

In the Irish newsprint media, there is much confusion surrounding migration categorizations and terminology, quite often resulting in the misuse of migration terminology. Additionally, those seeking asylum in Ireland are sometimes referred to as 'illegal immigrants' and vice versa (see Burroughs and O'Reilly, 2013; Prieto Ramos, 2004, for further information on migration terminology used in the Irish context). The representation of non-EU migrants in this manner, as the following text exemplifies, is a method of justifying State practices of exclusion:

He [James Kennedy] pledged in the paper that, if elected, he would work to change the law on asylum-seekers, many of whom now living in Kerry were, he said, not genuine applicants, but

illegal immigrants and economic refugees from Africa and the former Eastern Europe who sought to abuse the system. (Fahy, 2002: 2)

This text argues for increased restrictions upon asylum applicants who are considered to be 'illegal immigrants' and 'economic refugees'. The proposed changes to immigration law are justified by referring to these immigrants as disingenuous people who 'abuse the system'. The description of those seeking asylum as non-genuine has been used for some time (since the 1990s) in the Irish context to defend stricter policies against 'undesirable immigration' (Prieto Ramos, 2004: 182).

A number of additional measures were implemented by the Irish Government (between 2002 and 2009) in order to prevent 'illegal immigration'. This included the Citizenship Referendum of 2004 (which was not necessarily directed at 'illegal immigrants' per se, but had an impact upon people becoming 'illegal'; see Quinn, 2005; Quinn and Hughes, 2004, for more details), the policy Carriers' Liability (see Quinn, 2003), and a *clampdown* on English language schools (e.g. McConnell, 2009) and *marriages of convenience* (e.g. *Irish Examiner*, 2008). These various measures were represented as successful barriers to the illegal entry of immigrants and as necessary steps in the deterrence of security threats (Healy, 2003: 4).

Representing European control measures against 'illegal immigration' as the standard for Ireland to follow

The 'dominant' narrative that normalizes and validates the control of 'illegal immigration' in Ireland is aided with a concurrent narrative that relays how the EU and individual European countries are attempting to control 'illegal immigration'. European immigration regulations are portrayed as 'good' examples of how to control 'illegal immigration', implying that Irish authorities should adopt these practices. Furthermore, cooperation between Irish and European authorities is represented as a positive step in the controlling, preventing and combating of 'illegal immigration':

Even closer contact of Irish immigration officials with their European counterparts should result in greater information sharing which will help in combating illegal immigration. (Holland, 2005: 6)

Certain European countries and their approaches towards 'illegal immigration' gain particular attention from the Irish newsprint media. France and Britain are two countries that feature prominently, and there is much reporting upon how these countries work together to prevent 'illegal immigration'. The following quotation refers to the unauthorized occupation of 'illegal immigrants' in a make shift site in Calais, France. During this time, many migrants made their way to the United Kingdom from this site. Boris Johnson (Mayor of London) said,

I welcome the swift and decisive steps that the French Government has taken today to close the 'Jungle' in Calais, action which will disrupt illegal immigration and people-trafficking routes. (*Irish Examiner*, 2009)

The word that was used to describe this site ('Jungle') holds quite negative connotations, implying that the place where these migrants resided was untamed and uncivilized.

Frequent references were also made in the Irish newsprint media to the Italian context and attempts by Italian authorities to prevent illegal entry:

3,000 soldiers will be deployed on the streets of nine major Italian cities including Milan, Naples, Rome and Turin as part of a drive by Silvio Berlusconi's government to tackle street crime and illegal immigration ... Last month the Government declared a state of emergency, giving police and local authorities increased powers to tackle immigration-related problems. (Agnew, 2008: 8)

Defending Italy's new policy of halting would-be illegal immigrants in the Mediterranean and then towing them back to North Africa, the prime minister seemed to suggest that he was opposed to the vision of a multi-ethnic Italy ... Replying to criticism of the maritime blockade policy of sending back immigrants without first screening them for asylum purposes, La Russa [Italy's Defence Minister] said: She (Laura Boldrini) [UNHCR] is either inhuman or a criminal. She is inhuman because she wants us to lock up the migrants for months before sending them back. Or she is a criminal because she wants to evade the law, so that the migrants escape in Italy and move all over the national territory. (Agnew, 2009: 12)

These two quotations clearly relay how 'illegal immigration' is depicted as a serious problem in Italy. It is so serious that soldiers are policing 'immigration-related problems', implying that immigrants 'naturally' come with a distinct set of problems. Immigrants are represented as criminals and dangerous people. In the second quotation, the practice of towing immigrants back to North Africa by Italian authorities is justified by stating that this is a more humane practice than imprisoning people. It is noteworthy that references to the Spanish context are distinctly different in tone during this time. This is because in 2005, the Spanish Government diverged from the broad European agenda to prevent and deport 'illegal immigrants' by offering an amnesty.

The controlling of 'illegal immigration' in Ireland is too restrictive and regularizations should be implemented

The occurrence of 'control-positive' texts between 2002 and 2009 in the Irish newsprint media are minimal. Some of these 'positive' texts argue for fewer restrictions on 'illegal immigrants' in Ireland and criticize attempts to control 'illegal immigration':

As an illegal, you can't study, you can't get a good job. You haven't got a chance. The air that you breathe is the air of illegality. (Staunton, 2003: 52)

The regularizing of the status of 'illegal immigrants' in Ireland is a contested issue. Nevertheless, in 2009 the Minister for Justice offered temporary regularizations to those who became 'undocumented' *through no fault of their own*; however, this regularization was not open to *those who entered the State illegally*. The texts that surround these regularizations account for a number of the 'control-positive' topoi:

Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern yesterday confirmed that foreign nationals from outside the European Economic Area who have become undocumented through no fault of their own would soon be eligible to apply for a temporary residence permit or bridging visa for four

months ... In a statement, Mr. Ahern insisted the programme was not a regularization but a temporary scheme that would be issued only to a specific category of undocumented immigrant. It would not be open to those who entered the State illegally. (MacCormaic, 2009: 4)

US immigration policies should be amended for the 'undocumented' Irish

The final 'control' narrative that occurs in the Irish newsprint media centres upon the 'undocumented' Irish in the United States:

The Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, yesterday signalled that the Government would be launching a new drive to resolve the issue of the undocumented Irish in the US ... Minister for Foreign Affairs Michael Martin would be in the US in September, he said, adding: 'He'll be lobbying on the Hill (Capitol Hill) on this issue. It's a priority for our administration to try and sort this out'. (De Bradn, 2008: 7)

Mr. Martin said it was a bit strange that given the long history and bond between us, there was not a bilateral immigration agreement between Ireland and the US. He said he hoped a Bill would include a reciprocal agreement that would allow some 10,000 Irish people to live in the US and the same number of US citizens to live in Ireland. (Marlowe, 2009: 12)

A clear message is disseminated through the newsprint media that the Irish Government is continually working to regularize and resolve the situation of the 'undocumented' Irish in the United States. The 'undocumented' Irish are said to be a *priority* for the Government, who hope to implement a *reciprocal agreement* with the United States. These 'control-positive' argumentations are clearly different in argumentation from the majority of texts that refer to 'illegal immigration' in Ireland and in Europe.

Conclusion

The Irish newsprint media has proven to be a rich resource of institutional references to 'illegal immigration' that are chiefly concerned with controlling 'illegal immigration' in both the Irish and European contexts. The issue of migration control has been a concern of the Irish newsprint media since the 1990s (Prieto Ramos, 2004: 83), and this article identifies that this theme of control is continued into the 2000s. Some counter narratives are evident, which are 'positive' in their argumentation. However, these narratives are few in number and refer both to 'illegal immigration' in Ireland and to the 'undocumented' Irish in the United States. Within the articles a number of discursive devices are employed that buffer implicitly racist statements, disseminate inaccurate information and create an overall negative depiction of 'illegal immigrants' (and arguably non-EU migrants in general). Whether these practices are carried out intentionally or not is debatable. Nonetheless, the attempt to defend discreet and subtle negative statements about 'illegal immigration' is regularly followed by denials of racism. These assertions are commonly assigned to others (usually the general public) and function to justify practices of State control over 'illegal immigration'. Furthermore, at times, different 'types' of migrants are referred to as the same entity – this was most especially the case in relation to 'illegal immigration' and asylum seekers. Referring to those who seek asylum as

'illegal' de-legitimizes and undermines the rights of migrants to claim asylum. The misuse of terminology (providing incorrect and/or inaccurate information) in this way creates confusion around immigration issues, a vacuum of misunderstanding, and can function in broader power structures. By keeping the populous ill-informed, those in powerful positions have the ability to 'manage' migration as they see fit, and it is therefore less likely that resistance in relation to the governance of migration will arise from the broader population.

Irish newsprint media texts that refer to 'illegal immigration' are highly significant. Due to the high amount of texts (over 2500) that were produced about 'illegal immigration' between 2002 and 2009, the Irish newsprint media had the ability to influence how elites and the public think about this issue. By representing 'illegal immigrants' in a variety of negative ways, and primarily as an entity that should be controlled, the newsprint media created an unsubstantiated milieu of anxiety over 'illegal immigration'. These migrants are represented as a distinct group of people, with no consideration given to either individual circumstances or individual identities. Instead, they are portrayed as a group of unlawful mobile bodies and are assigned to the role of the 'other'. In contrast, the 'undocumented' Irish in the United States are seen to be a part of the collective 'we', the Irish Diaspora, and as people who deserve fair immigration policies in the United States. This distinction functions in the continuous reproduction of national identity by classifying those who belong and those who do not belong to the national community (Guibernau, 2007; Wodak, 2012; Wodak et al., 2009). Consequently, the newsprint media played a key role in the operation of governmental power formations and the reproduction of national identity by disseminating a 'dominant' discourse that argues for the need to 'control' 'illegal immigration'. This all-encompassing representation became a 'natural' and taken-for-granted way of thinking about migrants, and these discursive 'knowledges' may have contributed towards legitimized practices of inequality and exclusion towards those labelled as 'illegal' in Ireland.

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Note

1. Numerous political connotations are associated with the term 'illegal immigration', and many researchers prefer to use alternative terminology. Although the author largely agrees with this practice, it is necessary for this article to explicitly utilize the term 'illegal immigration'. With the increase in immigration to Ireland in the 1990s, terms that denote a migrant's legal status (such as illegal/undocumented) began to be used during 1999/2000 (Prieto Ramos, 2004: 116). Since this time, key Irish institutions have been using the term 'illegal' to refer to immigrants who are residing without permission in Ireland, while the term 'undocumented' is mainly utilized to describe Irish citizens who are illegally resident/employed in the United States. Therefore this distinction must be maintained, and one has to engage with the term 'illegal immigration' in order to critique discursive representations of those referred to in this way.

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