

# Modern Ireland: multinationals and multiculturalism

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## Abstract

This paper examines the end of Irish monoculturalism and the changes which gave birth to the multicultural Dublin of today. It critically explores the reasons for the delayed industrialisation of Ireland, including the role of the Catholic Church and the specific nationalist forces which dominated the polity and economic thinking during the early years of the new Independent Irish State. The specific forces which gave birth to the Celtic Tiger and oiled the boom decade are outlined and the role of the EU, US multinational corporations and petro dollar recycling are evaluated. Ireland, historically the subject of emigration, has now experienced immigration for the first time in its history. The small and developing ethnic media are examined, along with the wider cultural engagement by the 'new Irish'.

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## Changing Ireland: the end of monoculturalism

In 2006, when the census was taken in Ireland, about one in ten of the population was born outside the state. This is a recent phenomenon for Ireland, traditionally a source of large scale emigration. This change in the makeup of the population can only be understood in terms of the dramatic changes which have occurred in the Irish economy, culture and politics during the past two decades when the Celtic Tiger was born and Ireland became another branch of the 'globalised world economy'. Additionally, the politics, culture and identity of Ireland have been fundamentally reshaped and renegotiated over the last half century, creating the environment for the beginnings of a multicultural Ireland: the last country in Western Europe to change in this way.

A combination of key developments during the latter half of the twentieth century lay the groundwork for the erosion of Ireland's isolationism: the internationalisation of the Irish Economy begun in the 60s and given a significant boost during the wider liberalisation of the 1980s and the 1990s; the reshaping and renegotiation of Irish identities, including national identity; the decline of the role of the Roman Catholic church, which has gone from being referred to as a 'state within a state' to being marginal; developments in Historiography which have challenged key representations of history and in turn undermined the dominant nationalism and forged the acceptance of the idea that polity and culture do not have to be congruent; the change in the relationship with Northern

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Ireland which resulted in the negotiation of an internal settlement by the end of the twentieth century.

The position of immigrants in Ireland, hitherto the most monocultural in Europe, can only be understood in the context of these wider changes. Ireland has 'welcomed' immigrants at a higher rate per head of population than any country in the world.<sup>2</sup> Ireland has been described as the most globalised in the world<sup>3</sup> in terms of its economy, however, an analysis of that economy is crucial to understanding the current fault lines and decline. What will happen in a recession? Will the 'new Irish' be welcomed or will they even stay? Are the fortunes of the 'new Irish' tied in to the most vulnerable sectors of the Irish economy? What is the focus of immigrant's engagement with information and communications?

### ***Political, social and economic roots of change***

The roots of the current changes in Ireland can be traced to the 1960s and 1970s when, it is argued, Ireland was dragged screaming and kicking into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the late 50s and early 60s the political environment was created to internationalise the economy; the dominant notions of Irish history, always a contested field, began to be seriously challenged and scrutinised by historians; new social forces such as the women's movement took root and began to challenge laws and institutions; and the trade unions and other organisations in civil society began to challenge existing power structures and cultures; political forces in the Republic of Ireland began to put distance between themselves and the forces of nationalism in Northern Ireland (part of the UK), specifically regarding the old irredentist notion of Irish unity; Ireland's membership of the EU presented the citizens not just with alternative (to the UK) markets for exports but also access to new laws and institutions which could provide respite from the anti-libertarian institutions at home; the dramatic decline of the catholic church itself and of its control of education in particular, among other dimensions of Irish society .

### ***Emigration and the failure of protectionism***

Ireland, from the founding of the state in the 1920s, had been poor and dependent on a specific form of agricultural organisation<sup>4</sup> and the products of agriculture for most of its exports and trade. This specific shape of the Irish Economy was forged, it is argued, by political forces including the elites that dominated from Independence. There was the notion that Irish economic development could provide for its people with extensive protectionism and state directed industries: economic nationalism. As many studies now

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<sup>2</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007).

<sup>3</sup> O'Toole, F. (2003), p.13. He notes that, The Index of Economic Freedom, which is compiled by the neo conservative think tank The Heritage Foundation, places Ireland fifth after Hong Kong. In this table the UK, model of free market economics is ninth and the US is sixth!

<sup>4</sup> See for instance Fintan O' Toole discussion of the type of agriculture pursued by Ireland in The Beef Barons. This view is echoed in Garvin, T. (2005) Both these analysis focus on the type of agriculture that was pursued by the new state and contrast this unfavourably with Denmark which pursued more food processing and higher vale added activities; and consequently more employment in agribusiness.

indicate, the economy which was dynamic at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had stagnated and failed, by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, to deliver economic prosperity for its citizens.<sup>5</sup> This period is oft referred to as De Valera's Ireland and was summed up in a St Patrick's Day speech given in 1943 and oft quoted by historians among others. In this de Valera articulated a vision of an ideal Ireland which would be frugal and whose citizens would be satisfied with things of the spirit, "...that ideal Ireland that we would have. That Ireland which we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as the basis for right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to things of the spirit...It would, in a word be the home of a people living the life that God desires that man should live"<sup>6</sup>

This economic scenario in Ireland was accompanied by emigration, including spurts of what has been referred to as mass emigration, in particular during the 1950s when 500,000 Irish emigrated to aid the reconstruction of England in the post war era. Historically, Irish had emigrated to the US among other countries; however, this avenue was cut off from the 1930s when the US introduced limits on numbers of immigrants and so was not available as a route during the post war economic recession in Ireland. In the words of McWilliams "In the 1950s half a million of us emigrated to the country that the mullahs who ran our banana republic told us was the great Satan"<sup>7</sup> ; that is English factories and building sites provided a home for unemployed Irish and, it could be argued, Ireland once again exported its discontent to the factories and building sites of England.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Popular rejection of official policies and the arrival of the multinationals***

By the 1960s, following the large-scale emigration of the 1950s, the dominant ideas of 'being satisfied with things of the spirit' was clearly not feeding people or providing jobs. Indeed, Garvin has argued that the very project of political independence looked fragile in the context of economic decline. "...Something rather deeper than an elite decision to reverse the decisions of the previous thirty years was actually going on...an underground, rather inchoate popular rejection of the official policies of the previous thirty years was actually taking place, a rejection that was increasingly being ratified by the children and successors of the revolutionary elite generation itself. Elites had little choice but to embark upon a new departure; the very legitimacy of their ideology, even of the regime itself, was becoming vulnerable in the 1950s."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance O'Toole, F. (2003) or Garvin, T. (2005).

<sup>6</sup> Cited in MacDermott, E. (1998) p. 87-88.

<sup>7</sup> Mc Williams, D.(2007) p. 37.

<sup>8</sup> A BBC programme on folk music in the UK highlights the degree to which this generation of Irish emigrants contributed to the revival of folk music in England. See for instance, studies of Ewan McColl.... It could be argued that one of the most powerful songs of 'dream' of the emigrant was written by the Kilburn Irish singer, Shane McGowan in: Fairytale of New York.

<sup>9</sup> Garvin, T (2005) p. 10

It is in this context that the Irish state began to dismantle many of the protectionist measures<sup>10</sup> for the economy, which had been put in place over the previous decades, and invited in the Multinational Corporations. These Multinational Corporations would, by the end of the century, have come to dominate the economy of the Celtic Tiger. For instance it is noted by Rockett et al<sup>11</sup> that this internationalising of the economy resulted in 400 multinational corporations being established in Ireland in the 60s alone and today, according to the Industrial Development Agency (IDA), there are over 1,000 multinational corporations that have ‘chosen’ Ireland as the most appropriate geographic location for their manufacturing outlets. This change was accompanied by a major shift in the population from rural to urban, accompanied by a corresponding shift in social attitudes.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Irish identity and Irish nationalism – unfinished business?***

The 60s also witnessed the beginnings of an undermining of dominant notions of Irish identity and Irish nationalism. The ‘imagined community’ of traditional nationalist discourse was constructed as Catholic Irish versus Protestant England and its central political project was the unfinished business of getting rid of partition or the ‘border’. Specifically, political forces in the Republic began to recognise that Protestants in Northern Ireland had the right to their identity, culture and politics. Traditional Irish nationalism, which had its own constructed history, culture and religious underpinning, was the polar opposite of the history of Protestants in Northern Ireland and indeed Protestants in the Republic. Radical forces in the Republic began to move away from the notion of reuniting Ireland to the notion of an internal settlement in Northern Ireland: an internal settlement between cultural Catholics and cultural Protestants. This project was realised by 1998, when the Belfast Agreement was signed and a referendum in the Republic voted by over 90% to remove from the Constitution of the Irish Republic the claim to the territory of Northern Ireland.<sup>13</sup>

These changes were reflected in the cultural outputs in both television and film as indicated by studies of Ireland’s cinema and television.<sup>14</sup> Commenting on the degree to which nationalist notions of history were contested in the audio visual sphere, Rockett wrote “The catalysts for that development were the social and cultural changes brought about by the internationalisation of the Irish economy from the late 1950s onwards. Rather than displace all Ireland’s wrongs onto the old enemy, England, as in the past, filmmakers began to interrogate internal social and cultural divisions.”<sup>15</sup> Sheehan’s study of television drama maps these changes and notes how the representation of these

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<sup>10</sup> For a detailed political discussion of these changes in Ireland, see Garvin, T. (2005).

<sup>11</sup> Rockett, K. et al (1988).

<sup>12</sup> See, for instance, Sheehan, H. (1988) for a discussion of the impact of this change on culture and the urban environment.

<sup>13</sup> See Patterson, H. (2002) for a full discussion of these changes. See O’Doherty, M. (1998) for the argument that the project and thirty years of killing by the provisional IRA in Northern Ireland was primarily to prevent an internal settlement.

<sup>14</sup> See for instance Sheehan, H. (1988).

<sup>15</sup> Rockett, K. (1998) p. 11

changes were vigorously contested by the Catholic Church organisations within broadcasting.<sup>16</sup>

## **An Environment for Economic, Cultural and Political Change: The decline of religion**

Some analysts<sup>17</sup> argue that we would not be witnessing a changed Ireland, modern and globalising, if it had not been for the decline of the grip that the Roman Catholic Church had on all aspects of Irish society: its economy, through its control of the education curriculum; its politics through the power it had over the politicians<sup>18</sup>; its culture through various laws which banned many leading Irish writers. The decline of the Roman Catholic Church during the last 50 years can, perhaps, best be understood by the contrasting of two events. In 1951, a new radicalising government attempted to introduce a state supported programme regarding health: The Mother and Child Scheme. This was opposed by the Catholic hierarchy; in particular the archbishop of Dublin and the government was defeated. By contrast, more than 50 years later in 2007, a retired archbishop Dr O'Connell, attempted through the courts, to prohibit access to files regarding the criminal activity of paedophile priests in the Dublin Diocese. He withdrew his attempt following clear evidence from civil society that the citizens no longer considered the Catholic Church either the law or above the civil law...

The Roman Catholic Church establishment in Ireland dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with particular expansion after the 1840s. It has frequently been referred to as operating like a State within a State in the newly independent Ireland. It was the organisation that was overwhelmingly responsible for education and the provision of social welfare, with often disastrous consequences for those in its care<sup>19</sup>. It played a significant, though less dominant role, in the provision of healthcare. Additionally, it played a key role ideologically in wider society and culture: a role that was to imbue that society and its institutions, including the state, with conservatism. This conservatism was in particular evident in attitudes to the role of women, sexuality, industry, literature and the arts and the role of education itself.

The Catholic Church dominated in the provision of education and the content of education until recently: this dominance included denominational third level education institutions<sup>20</sup>. The model of education provision was developed with the churches and the British Government in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and inherited by the new Independent state.

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<sup>16</sup> Sheehan, H. (1988).

<sup>17</sup> Garvin, T. (2005).

<sup>18</sup> Patterson, H. (2002) p. 95 reproduces the correspondence between Sean McBride and the Archbishop of Dublin. In this, Sean McBride indicated to the Archbishop that he would welcome the advice of 'His Grace'. This correspondence was hand written and hand delivered, so unavailable for public scrutiny until the death of the said Archbishop in the late 1990s. It indicates that even a politician venerated by radicals, deferred rather too much to the Bishops.

<sup>19</sup> See for instance Foster, Roy (2007).

<sup>20</sup> See Patterson H. (2002); Garvin, T. (2005).

Indeed, the model of funding and ownership of schools today are very similar in the two states. Garvin<sup>21</sup> argues that this key dimension of Irish history was responsible for the slow development of Irish industrialisation until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: "...perhaps, the most pervasive legacy of British government in Ireland was the partnership that had developed between the Catholic Church and the British State, giving the religious organisations the tasks of education of the young, running much of the health system and controlling much of the civic life of the society. This partnership was inherited by the fledgling Irish democracy in 1918-1922. In effect, this made the Catholic Church in independent Ireland a powerful and autonomous agency which for many purposes operated like a second government or a state within a state"<sup>22</sup> He argues that the content of education was anti industrial and ill equipped citizens for innovation and failed to develop the technical and scientific skill required for industrialisation.

### ***Women's movement and secularism, patriarchy and Catholic orthodoxy***

The emergence of the women's movement and feminism during this time has also played a major part in reshaping the culture and polity of Ireland during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, one historian<sup>23</sup> places feminism and its challenge to Catholic orthodoxy as one of the crucial foundation stones of the changed society which eventually gave birth to the Celtic Tiger and the 'delayed' development of a multi-cultural Ireland.

This domination, by the Catholic Church, of Irish society and culture was progressively undermined during the final three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The forces of feminism, among other social forces, which viewed the Catholic Church as an obstacle to liberation and modernisation won through with divorce and abortions referendums by the 1990s. According to Foster, "Those thirty years saw a transformation of cultural expectations, based not only on a new confidence in the wider world, but also on the rejection of old authoritarian formations: patriarchy and the Catholic Church. These two great monoliths came under siege from secularism and feminism after 1970..."<sup>24</sup> Foster argues that all these changes have resulted in the population of Ireland resembling more their Protestant neighbours and there is some evidence for this in the type of reform which has occurred. McWilliams points out that Irish representatives in the EU may socialise with their Catholic friends from Portugal, but are more likely to vote with their Protestant counterparts from Scandinavia.<sup>25</sup>

Garvin argues, on the other hand, that what we are witnessing in Ireland is more the secularisation associated with a society that is modernising and industrialising. He contends that we are witnessing the declericalising of Ireland and indeed the emergence of a phenomenon some have called 'a la carte' religion. Garvin sees the process more in

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<sup>21</sup> Garvin, T. (2005).

<sup>22</sup> Garvin, T (2005) p 3.

<sup>23</sup> Foster, R. (2007).

<sup>24</sup> Foster, R (2007) P. 37.

<sup>25</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007).

line with European development and permanent “Ireland is not so much becoming secularised in the sense of possessing a culture of unbelief or atheism, although there are many unbelievers or atheists, rather it is that Ireland is becoming declericalised; the laws and rules of behaviour laid down by priests for lay people to conform to became defied and afterwards simply increasingly ignored”.<sup>26</sup> An indication of how slow and arduous this process became is indicated by the fact that a referendum on divorce in 1983 was defeated, though passed in the late 1990s.

### ***Catholic institutions and the state: revelations, scrutiny and decline***

The most visible movement which has challenged, and is still challenging, the Catholic Church in Ireland are the adults who were placed in Catholic Institutions as children, and suffered various and extreme forms of abuse at the hands of the clergy. Catholic Church institutions/religious orders, such as the Christian Brothers and the Convent of Mercy nuns, were for more than 50 years of the new Irish State the main providers of social and welfare care. For instance, a film ‘Magdalene Sisters’ which has received international exhibition, indicates that women were condemned to these institutions for various reasons, including any expression of female sexuality. These religious orders and institutions were contracted by the Irish Sate to provide welfare which would have been provided by, say, a local authority in the UK.

Revelations of abuse convulsed the Catholic Church in other countries such as Canada, the US and Australia where Christian Brothers ran similar institutions. Indeed, it is argued, that revelations in these countries helped drive the process of critical scrutiny in Ireland. Changes in the law such as Freedom of Information facilitated access to key records. The media played a crucial role in the exposure in documentaries, books and film. One particular documentary, ‘States of Fear’ was transmitted on Irish television in 1999. This was followed by the Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) accepting responsibility for the abuse, apologising and providing an assurance that the state would compensate those victims. Despite this, many of those victims are still frustrated at every turn by the Catholic Church. A high court decision in November 2008, which extends compensation to those who were not minors when abused, is indicative of the ongoing struggle to provide recompense to the many victims of this regime.

In sum, the declining power of the Catholic Church is important not only for the economy, but also for culture and politics in that it removes one of the pillars of an exclusive Irish national identity: to be Irish you had to be Catholic. This growing secularisation of the Republic should mean that Ireland is more open to the acceptance of ‘others’ and their religious and cultural differences.

The decline of the Catholic Church and of its dominance of culture and politics is crucial if Ireland is to become genuinely integrated. Immigrants who now wish to engage with other faiths would have found themselves even more excluded from key aspects of the Irish cultural landscape in the old Ireland. Studies of the experiences of Protestants in Ireland indicate how narrowly defined Irishness was and how exclusive.<sup>27</sup> However, so far, immigrants have known an Ireland of growth and occupied jobs that the Irish

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<sup>26</sup> Garvin, T. (2005) op cit p. 268.

<sup>27</sup> Patterson, H. (2002).

would not or could not economically engage with: the new economic climate is revealing a more hostile environment for immigrants.

## **The Birth, Roar and Death of the Celtic Tiger: Globalisation and Neo-Liberalism**

“Output in the decade from 1995 increased by 350%, outpacing the per capita averages in the UK and the USA, personal disposable incomes doubled, trade surpluses doubled, exports increased fivefold, trade surpluses accumulated into billions, employment boomed, immigrants poured into the country”<sup>28</sup>

There is abundant analysis of the outcomes of the Celtic Tiger, such as unprecedented growth in the National output of Ireland, increased disposable incomes and consumption; labour shortages which required Ireland to actively recruit workers from other countries. This is impressive when we examine some of the figures but we also need to analyse more closely why this expansion occurred when it did; what are the key factors which led to such growth and how deep are the roots of this economic miracle? It is only by examining the key motors of this change that we can understand the current severe downturn and its potential impact on immigrants in Ireland. The concern with this latter dimension is underlined by the fact that Immigrant/migrant organisations in Ireland have produced some of the most critical analysis of the current downturn in the Irish Economy; they are concerned that migrants will be made the scapegoats<sup>29</sup>. This is very specifically related to the sectors of the economy which migrants are engaged with and which are the most vulnerable, it is argued, in the current economic ‘crises’. Globalisation, in one interpretation, is the levelling of the wages globally of those in low paid employment: those at the sharp end of a reliance on the sector that is mobile and flexible<sup>30</sup>.

### ***The Celtic Tiger: Green Backs and Black Gold***

The key forces providing the oxygen for the Celtic Tiger lie in a combination of old policies and new development: the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and its establishment of a tax friendly environment for multinational corporations; the dramatic expansion and changes in education; the expansion, development and modernisation of communications including telecommunications as a result of EU structural funds; the availability of cheap money since the liberalisation of financial markets and the petrodollar cascade.

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<sup>28</sup> Foster, R. (2007), p. 7

<sup>29</sup> MRCI (2007a) and (2007b); ICI (2008).

<sup>30</sup> Stiglitz, J. (2006).

## ***Membership of the European Union***

Membership of the European Union (EU) has been crucial in reshaping Ireland's economic, political and cultural landscape.<sup>31</sup> It provided access to the EU's structural funds for facilitating key strategic investments. It gave Corporations based in Ireland access to markets of the EU countries: Ireland, so long dependent on being the 'larder of England', could now export goods further afield and became highly attractive to US based Multinational Corporations wanting to gain access to the markets of Fortress Europe.

One unintended consequence of membership was that, culturally and politically, the economic resources provided by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy helped undermine or buy out rural conservatism.<sup>32</sup>

In particular, membership provided access to the resources necessary to invest in the infrastructure of telecommunications. The ability to attract inward investment to Ireland would not have been possible without fundamental shifts and developments in Ireland's communications infrastructure. Indeed, it has been argued that the lack of a communications infrastructure was crucial in restricting the development of industry exclusively to the old heartlands.<sup>33</sup>

Ireland's telecommunications and road infrastructure were both woefully inadequate to meet the challenges of the IDA's initiatives until major programmes were undertaken in the 1980s. In 1975, there were 16 telephone lines per 100 of the population by contrast with 39 and 69 in the UK and Sweden respectively.<sup>34</sup> EU policies, which also benefited Greece, Portugal and Spain among others, transformed this scenario in the 1980s.

These EU financed programmes enabled Ireland to leapfrog into the digital age. It did not have the problems of updating old mechanical switches, since they did not have very many in the first place, but could go directly to the installation of digital switches. By 2008, according to the Department of Communications, the overwhelming majority of the population have access to Broadband. However, recognising that the private sector is unlikely to complete this map, the department is engaged in a joint venture with the EU structural fund to do so.<sup>35</sup>

## ***Industrial Development Agency***

The IDA, though established formally in 1949 and engaged in policies to attract inward investment into Ireland with varying degree of success since then, only came into its own in the recent and belated industrialisation of Ireland. The IDA's remit was the creation

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<sup>31</sup> Ireland joined the EU in 1973 and the EMS in 1987.

<sup>32</sup> O'Toole, F (2003)

<sup>33</sup> Hobsbawn, E. in his seminal work *'The Age of Revolution'* argues this regarding the empires.

<sup>34</sup> Foster, R. (2007)

<sup>35</sup> See <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Communications/Communications+Development/National+Broadband+Scheme.htm> for a full map of the current and future broadband connections. Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008

of an environment (through tax breaks and other financial and political inducements) which would entice multinational corporations to site in Ireland.

By setting a corporation tax rate of only 12.5%<sup>36</sup>, way below its competitors, Ireland provided a crucial inducement to multinational corporations to establish outposts in Ireland. This compares with 28% in the UK, 30% in Germany, 39.5% in the US and circa 34% in both France and Belgium. China and Japan have corporation tax rates of 25% and 41% respectively.<sup>37</sup> Corporation tax is the tax on profits of a company and it is clear that when these taxes are not harmonised, the country with the lowest taxes has a competitive advantage when attracting multinational investment. This, together with other tax incentives (such as bi-lateral agreements on double taxation) and other factors (such as Ireland's use of the English language), encouraged numerous MN corporations to set up in Ireland. O'Toole<sup>38</sup> notes that the United States was the primary source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) during the 1990s and that over 50% of this manifested itself in inward investment in the EU countries. Ireland has been a beneficiary of some of this bounty.

### ***The Celtic Tiger: Feeding on Green Backs not Green Grass***

US multinational corporations, primarily as a result of the tax friendly policies of the Irish State, established themselves in Ireland. This happened over a period of some forty years but predominantly in the 1990s: 75% of all FDI in Ireland was accounted for by US multinational corporations.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, we can see a bigger historical shift in the pattern of exports away from agriculture and towards pharmaceuticals, software and microelectronics, away from the UK/Ireland/Europe axis and towards the key transatlantic link. Though part of the larger European family, Ireland frequently resembles a region of the US economy.

A closer examination of these multinationals and the sectors is necessary to understand the degree to which their presence may be transient or vulnerable to factors beyond the control of Irish based institutions, including the state. While multinational corporations may be positive for an economy, in the first instance, in terms of FDI, bringing employment, new skills, etc, and benefits in tax revenue, in the longer term, these corporations will start to repatriate profits to the home country.<sup>40</sup>, without any other lasting loyalty to the host country. Examples cited by Foster, among others bear this out.<sup>41</sup> As O'Toole wrote "The Irish boom was never quite as impressive as much of the analysis, based on comparisons between Irish GDP and that of other countries seemed

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<sup>36</sup> Many studies refer to a 10% corporation tax rate which was in place until recently. It is now 12.5%

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.idaireland.com/home/index.aspx?id=659> Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008.

<sup>38</sup> O'Toole, F. (2003).

<sup>39</sup> Foster, R (2008).

<sup>40</sup> See Hills, (1996) for a full critical analysis of this phenomenon when multinational corporations engaged in African countries.

<sup>41</sup> Foster, R (2007).

to suggest. Because of the size of foreign direct investment in Ireland, and the associated repatriation of profits to the home countries of transnational corporations. No EU country and only one OECD country, New Zealand, approximates the magnitude of the Irish difference between GNP and GDP<sup>42</sup> this view is echoed by O'Hearn in his study when he also notes that growth and output were growing, but investment by multinationals falling.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Ireland and the world economy***

In other words, Detroit may have more say in the economy than Dublin; Chicago than Cork; Pittsburgh than Paris and Boston than Berlin. Ireland is inextricably linked to the fortunes or otherwise of the US economy. Whilst many of the Public Relations (PR) accounts point out and spin the notion of the knowledge economy, in fact we can see that manufactured goods are the key exports and that these multinationals have not shifted the high value-added knowledge activities, such as R&D, innovation and product development away from the core of the US. Yes, there is development of services, but these are primarily limited to those that oil the wheel for the multinationals.<sup>44</sup>

Recent figures confirm this scenario: In 2006, 90.2% of exports were accounted for by foreign owned firms and of this 73% was accounted for by manufactured goods and 27% by internationally traded services.<sup>45</sup> Ireland is still a net importer of services: its export of services is concentrated in the computing sector, whilst Ireland's import of services is dominated by royalties, licences (i.e. intellectual property) (25%) and the business services sector (43%)<sup>46</sup>. Additionally, over 94% of all the output of goods and services of the foreign owned multinational corporations were exported. A recent example cited by analysts is indicative of the overall map of Irish trade and industrialisation: only 6.7% of Ireland's exports to China in 2007 were accounted for by indigenous Irish companies, as distinct from multinational corporations which accounted for 93.3%<sup>47</sup>.

### ***Saints and scholars or Viagra and breast implants?***

According to McWilliams<sup>48</sup>, Ireland can boast, (or guiltily hide) the fact that it is now the site of 13 of the top 20 drugs companies in the world. This industry alone accounts for 50% of all exports and about 17,000 employees. The key multinational is Pfizer which is

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<sup>42</sup> O'Toole, F. (2003).

<sup>43</sup> O'Hearn, D. (1997), the Celtic Tiger: The role of the Multinationals, in *Under The Belly of the Celtic Tiger*, eds Crowley, E et al, Irish Reporters Publications, Dublin.

<sup>44</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007).

<sup>45</sup> [http://finfacts.ie/irishfinancenews/article\\_1012368.shtml](http://finfacts.ie/irishfinancenews/article_1012368.shtml) Accessed 10th October 2008.

<sup>46</sup> [http://finfacts.ie/irishfinancenews/article\\_1012368.shtml](http://finfacts.ie/irishfinancenews/article_1012368.shtml) Accessed 10th October 2008.

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.finfacts.ie/irishfinancenews/article\\_1015020.shtml](http://www.finfacts.ie/irishfinancenews/article_1015020.shtml) Accessed 6th November 2008.

<sup>48</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007).

the world's largest pharmaceutical company and accounts for one tenth of the global £500 billion industry. This company makes Viagra and its substitute Lipitor: both made in Ireland: 40 million Viagra tablets are produced in Ireland annually and according to McWilliams, this is one of the top selling drugs on the internet. The alternative, Lipitor is also made in Ireland.

Ireland is also the home of the Allergan factory which produces Botox, generates £1 billion per year and employs 800 in the County town of Mayo.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, another division of Allergan was established in 2003 which produces silicone breast implants. The second most popular drug sold on the internet, a diet drug is also produced in Ireland. In effect, Ireland's pharmaceutical industry is producing a cocktail of Viagra, Diet pills and Silicone breast implants. Ireland's impressive growth in terms of trade in the recent past, it has been argued, will be subject to the vagaries of forces beyond the control of not only Irish institutions, but cannot be impacted by decisions in Brussels.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Photocopying the game plan***

“There is nothing going on in Ireland that can't be copied better by Singapore. We have 10% corporation tax, Estonia responded with 0%. We invest in education, but Slovenia does likewise as does Malaysia, Scotland and Portugal. We speak English-well, the rest of the world is becoming bi-lingual very quickly ....when once we thought we had a comparative advantage, we are now only seeing a temporary monopoly. Where once we were the only country at the multinational game, now India, China and Indonesia can photocopy the game plan, implement it and execute it at a fraction of the cost”<sup>51</sup>

In sum, one pillar of the Irish globalised and neo liberal economy is highly vulnerable to the fortunes and decisions made in America. Indeed, research conducted by the Irish State, and only revealed due to critics utilising the Freedom of Information legislation in November 2008, indicated that almost 50% of US Multinational Corporation say they would choose other destinations, if they were making decisions in 2008. Eastern Europe and India were cited as the preferred destinations by respectively, 43% and 25% of those corporations. That is, in the long term, this industrialisation on the backs of MNs may be transient. Moreover, a new President and new political approaches in Washington may pursue policies which entice these corporations to halt what is known as outsourcing to cheaper labour economies.

### ***Cheap money, deregulation and the casino economy***

Growth in the Irish economy, and in particular consumption, land and housing speculation (and inflation), have been fuelled by cheap money. Initially, in the 1990s, the surpluses that were recycled in Ireland were German and latterly, as with other countries

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<sup>49</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007) pp 66-67.

<sup>50</sup> O'Toole (2003); Foster (2005) McWilliams (2007).

<sup>51</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007) p. 229

in the international economy: petrodollar recycling.<sup>52</sup> The link between Irish savings and lending (and its concomitant determining of interest rates) were decoupled when Ireland joined the much larger economic zone of the European Monetary System and the Euro. This enabled Ireland to access a much larger pool of savings and in addition that money was cheaper due to German citizens' propensity to save. As McWilliams points out, the two million citizens of Ireland were not likely to push up the interest rates in a country with forty million citizens: Germany.<sup>53</sup>

Latterly, the pool which Ireland has borrowed from in the International Capital markets has been augmented by the surpluses of the oil producing countries rather than German savers. The countries which produce oil get a bonanza on each occasion when the price of oil escalates. Analysts<sup>54</sup> have noted a number of significant periods in this process: In 1974 oil prices almost trebled and oil export earnings for the oil producing countries leapt from \$24 billion in 1972 to \$117 billion by 1974; again, in 1979-80, the price of oil more than doubled and export earnings from oil reached \$258 billion. Oil revenues have again rapidly increased from \$300 billion in 2002 to \$970 billion by end of 2006. In addition, non oil revenues (including natural gas) have increased from the same countries to give an estimated \$1.500 billion in 2006 or an increase of \$960 billion since 2002.

These figures do not take account of the rapid increase in oil (and other energy) prices during the past year. However, the key analysis has not changed. The oil exporting countries cannot absorb, in their own countries, these surpluses so they are recycled to those who need to borrow through the international capital markets. Much of the 70's petrodollar recycling went to poorer countries in the shape of loans and the consequences of this have been outlined by Hills<sup>55</sup>.

Cheap money led to an explosion of development in the construction industry in Ireland coupled with a dramatic increase in house and land prices<sup>56</sup>. That is, a large part of the growth in the Irish economy in terms of employment; income; and tax returns to the state was based not on production but on the casino economy of borrowings for housing and land speculation (both at home and overseas). McWilliams cites the official figures for 2006 which indicate that "the typical middleclass home in Dublin cost nine times

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<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of the degree that German surpluses provided oxygen for Irish spending, see McWilliams, D. (2005), *The Popes Children*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin. For a full discussion of the degree to which petrodollar recycling has fuelled more recent consumption and speculation see McWilliams, D. (2007) ; See also, Higgins, M., Klitgaard, T., and Lerman, R., *Recycling Petrodollars*, in *Current Issues*, Federal reserve Bank of New York, Volume 12, Number 9, December 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Mc Williams, (2005).

<sup>54</sup> Higgins, et al (2006). Note, all of the figures on petrodollar recycling in this paragraph are from this Federal Reserve Bank of New York report on Petrodollar recycling.

<sup>55</sup> Hills, J. (1996), *The Silent War: Debt and Africa*, in *Invisible Crises*, eds Gerbner, G et al, Westview Press, NY.

<sup>56</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007) indicates that two thirds of the construction industry is housing related as distinct from infrastructural projects for instance.

more than the same class of house in Houston, Texas, three times more than in Amsterdam, twice the cost of Sydney and almost twice the price of Tokyo”.<sup>57</sup>

Further, the state is heavily dependent on this one sector for its tax revenues. McWilliams estimates that about one Euro in every three collected by the state, in taxes, is related to construction: 17% of all direct income tax is derived from property and about 28% of the final price of a house is accounted for by various taxes.<sup>58</sup> Construction activity is now in serious decline, and it is argued, this decline will have serious consequences for the finances of the state: a state which already spent less as a proportion of GDP on its redistributive functions than the majority of European states<sup>59</sup>.

### ***Consumption, speculation and the propensity to borrow***

This propensity to borrow for investment in housing has left the citizens of the country with the headache of massive private debt and an abundance of empty property; the collapse in prices (or price adjustment as economists refer to it) is expected; Ireland’s banks exposed to the winds of change and recklessness of the international financial system. The 2006 census found that one in six Irish houses was empty and it is argued that “a ludicrous 59% of all residential building in Ireland today has been bought for speculation or for holiday home investment with equity released from a first home”<sup>60</sup> It is estimated that private debt has now reached levels in relation to income which were characteristic of the public debt of the 1980s: the last period of high levels of emigration from Ireland.<sup>61</sup>

Irish banks did not fund this spending spree from savings of the citizens within the state but rather borrowed from the International Capital markets, which in turn was fuelled, in part, by petrodollar recycling. McWilliams, writing in 2007, referred to this exposure of the Irish banks as follows: “Certain well known Dublin banks are now little more than out of control hedge funds leveraging themselves and clients into property. When the market goes belly up, these outfits tend to go belly up. At the very least their share prices will fall so much as to make their net asset value negligible”<sup>62</sup> In October 2008, following such a run on Irish banks, the state agreed to guarantee all deposits held in the banks. This is at an estimated cost of 400 billion Euros or the equivalent of twice the total annual output of Ireland. This guarantee was extended to cover British owned banks based in Ireland, which added a further 200 billion euro to the guarantee. That is, the Irish state is financially exposed to the tune of three times the annual national output of the country. This exposure is not quite on the scale of Iceland, however, there is a real possibility that the Irish State may need to approach external institutions in the event of

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<sup>57</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007) pp 51-52.

<sup>58</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007) p 53.

<sup>59</sup> O’Toole F. (2003).

<sup>60</sup> McWilliams D. (2007) p 54.

<sup>61</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007).

<sup>62</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007) p 52.

this financial ‘promise’ being called on. It is clear that the crisis has already led to the government severely cutting social expenditure and social programmes. For instance a budget in October 2008, a response to the banking crisis, cut education expenditure so as to shift Ireland from having the second largest primary school classes in Europe to having the largest.<sup>63</sup>

The impact of so much Irish resources being in the construction industry is crucial to understanding the current ‘crisis’ and its wider impact on immigrants among others. Until the economic crisis which enveloped the Irish economy in 2008, this industry alone accounted for 13% of all employment and it will be noted later, one of the largest employers of immigrants. At time of writing (October 2008), it is estimated that over 19% of those employed in this industry will be unemployed by year end.

### *The Oligarchs*

During the past fifteen years, as with globalisation elsewhere, there have been winners and losers. Ireland created its own brand of Oligarchs who have become rich through hyper-speculation in land fuelled by borrowing, coupled with ‘clientelism’ of Irish political relations<sup>64</sup>. This speculation was not only in Ireland, but also further afield such as the UK and Europe<sup>65</sup>. For instance, O’Toole<sup>66</sup> underlines the degree to which Irish speculators expanded into trophy buying in the UK by noting that much of the commercial property in New Bond Street in London (a street of exclusive shops) is Irish owned: in the past, he suggests that this may have been built by Irish building workers. McWilliams<sup>67</sup> notes the richest 1% of the population have assets equivalent to about half the GDP of the country as a whole. In fact, he notes that wealth concentration is much greater than in the US, and primarily accumulated over the last decade. He contrasts this with the Kremlin style oligarchy “Our boom is based on land; theirs on what is under the land. Ultimately, both are extractive industries. Our oligarchs live off-shore and pay no tax; their oligarchs live off shore and pay no tax. Some of our oligarchs are accused of bribery and corruption; some of their oligarchs are accused of bribery and corruption. Our oligarchs come home for sporting events, so do Russia’s, and ours prefer the PR opportunities to nominate charities and good causes rather than the grubby drudgery of paying tax. So too, do the Russian speaking versions...Our oligarchs live in walled residences with security, so do theirs; our oligarchs buy football clubs, their oligarchs buy

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<sup>63</sup> See Fintan O’Toole in the Irish Times, October 21<sup>st</sup> 2008.

<sup>64</sup> See reports of the many tribunals which were set up to examine ‘corruption’ regarding planning in Ireland at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/02/ireland-corruption-tribunal>, accessed 4th December 2008.

<sup>65</sup> For a full discussion of the degree to which Ireland’s wealthiest individuals resembled those created in the boom years of Japan’s economy, see McWilliams, D. (2005). McWilliams discussed the key stages of the process and suggested that Irish oligarchs were in the final stage of the cycle: trophy buying, such as the Irish purchase of Wentworth golf course among other trophies in England.

<sup>66</sup> O’Toole, F. (2003).

<sup>67</sup> McWilliams (2007).

football clubs; our oligarchs compare Ireland to a communist state, their oligarchs compare Russia to a communist state”<sup>68</sup>

By contrast with the fortunes of the Oligarchs, O’Toole<sup>69</sup> points out that Ireland collects a lower proportion of its GDP in taxation than any comparable European country and consequently commits less expenditure to social programmes, education, health or infrastructure i.e. the redistributive functions of the state. This, it is argued is a universal phenomenon associated with globalisation and liberalisation “Not only does liberalisation require removing tariffs, which are an important source of public revenue.....but to compete a country may have to lower other taxes as well. As taxes are lowered, so are public revenues, forcing cuts in education and infrastructure and expenditures on safety nets such as unemployment insurance at a time when they are more needed than ever, in order both to respond to the competition and to help people cope with liberalisation”<sup>70</sup> A key theme of all the reports on the conditions of immigrants living in Dublin refers to the inadequacy of public services and in particular language education for all citizens, but more specifically for children in schools.

### ***Competition and the low paid***

Stiglitz has elaborated on this phenomenon. “Even if they do not actually lose their jobs, unskilled workers in advanced industrial countries see their wages decrease. They are told that unless they agree to lower wages, the reduction of benefits, and the weakening of job protection, competition will force the firm to move the jobs overseas”<sup>71</sup> This is crucial for immigrants in Ireland, many of whom are single or supporting families in their home countries and overwhelmingly work in unskilled and low wage occupations. That is, they are working for wages which can reproduce labour power generationally at the lower living costs of Poland, Lithuania or the Philippines, but not in the context of the much higher living costs of Dublin.

The concern expressed by analysts is not that borrowing and indebtedness has occurred, rather that this investment was essentially on consumption, land speculation and housing rather than investment in production, innovation and product development. For instance, Stiglitz<sup>72</sup>, in a critique of this type of borrowing and spending on subprime in the US, argues that if these borrowings had been invested in production, this would have added \$1.5 trillion to the US economy.<sup>73</sup> It is pointed out that Irish speculators are the second highest investors in European commercial property and spend more annually on

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<sup>68</sup> McWilliams D. (2007) p 124.

<sup>69</sup> O’Toole, F. (2003).

<sup>70</sup> Stiglitz, J. (2006) p.69.

<sup>71</sup> Stiglitz, J. (2006) p. 68.

<sup>72</sup> Joseph Stiglitz has argued that if the borrowings that were used for house mortgages in the US, had instead been used for different economic activities, the economy would not now be in a state of crisis.

<sup>73</sup> Stiglitz, J. (2008) in *The New Republic*, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008

this activity than venture capital investment in Ireland.<sup>74</sup> That is, this type of economic development has proven itself as stable as quicksand.

### ***Migrants and the end of the economic miracle***

To sum up, two pillars of the Irish 'economic miracle', FDI and a construction industry led boom based on debt are now vulnerable to the cold winds of change: the former is still somewhat secure, though, there is increasingly job losses in the computing sector, and the latter is in the full throes of an Irish wake and primarily responsible for the crisis facing the Irish banks.. The vulnerability of the former was summed up by a journalist who spent time in the US during the recent elections "I switch on CNN to hear Barack Obama fingering Ireland as one of the countries to which the USA exports labour. He specifically brackets us with India and the old Eastern block.... Corporate taxes are his target. Ireland is specifically in his sight.....Any move by Barack to coerce US multinationals home could be devastating for Ireland. The first leg of the Celtic Tiger – construction - is already amputated. The removal of the second leg—multinationals—would cripple Ireland"<sup>75</sup> It could be argued that the US will continue to represent a high cost base for multinationals, and that they are more likely, in the long term, to engage in capital migration to much lower cost economies such as Eastern Europe or Asia. The collapse of the construction industry is already impacting immigrants in Ireland as this was one of the highest employers of immigrants from Eastern Europe.

### ***Multicultural Ireland: from Green to Rainbow***

From 1996 to 2006, the population of Ireland increased by, on average, 1.6% annually: the highest population growth of any EU country<sup>76</sup>. From about 2000, there was a clear labour shortage in Ireland and the Government began to actively recruit workers from other countries. A visa system was put in place and this is reflected on here later in this paper. In addition, asylum seekers had begun to choose Ireland as a destination from the late 1990s. However, the statistics indicate that the majority of immigrants are recently arrived from the new EU countries. The census of 2006 reveals that Ireland's population had increased from 3.9m in 2002 to 4.2m in 2006; the number of non nationals living in Ireland had increased to 420,000 from 224,000 in 2002.<sup>77</sup> To put this figure in context, 1996 was the first year in history (with the exception of a brief period in the 1970s) when there was net immigration; and Ireland was the last West European country to arrive at this situation.<sup>78</sup> This figure amounts to just over one in ten of the population: this is a

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<sup>74</sup> [http://www.finfacts.com/irelandbusinessnews/publish/article\\_10008821.shtml](http://www.finfacts.com/irelandbusinessnews/publish/article_10008821.shtml) Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2008.

<sup>75</sup> Shane Ross, in Sunday Independent, November 9<sup>th</sup> 2008.

<sup>76</sup> MRCI, (2007).

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/non-irish/nonirishnationalscomplete.pdf> : Census 2006, Non Nationals Living in Ireland, Accessed October 2008 Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

<sup>78</sup> Ruhs, M. (2004), Ireland: A Crash Course in Immigration Policy, Centre on Migration Policy, Oxford University.

higher ratio than even the United States of America<sup>79</sup> These immigrants come from 188 different countries, however, 82% are from just ten countries.<sup>80</sup> However, these figures may be very much an underestimate of the numbers of immigrants in Ireland and in particular in Dublin. There are large numbers of un-documented immigrants in Dublin and, it is argued, these immigrants are more prone to exploitation and lack even basic legal protection<sup>81</sup>.

An interesting statistic in terms of the history is the fact that the largest single group of immigrants in Ireland are UK nationals, accounting for 27% of the total number of non nationals living in the state in 2006<sup>82</sup>. This group differs in key respects from other groups in that they are more likely to reside in rural Ireland, whereas the Nigerian population, for instance, overwhelmingly moved to live in Dublin.

The greatest expansion has come from the accession states of the EU: that is citizens of EU countries that joined this organisation in 2004. It is noted that 44% of non nationals living in Ireland arrived in 2005 and later<sup>83</sup>. Ireland, in common with Sweden and the UK liberalised their labour markets and allowed full free movement of labour from 2004.

### ***Migrant labour: sub-contracted out, low paid and short term***

A number of key characteristics of the non national populations must be examined to understand how they fit into Irish society and how they engage with economic activities, culture, politics and communications. See table below from the census of 2006 which provides data on the sectors where the majority of immigrants work. Research carried out by the Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland (MRCI);<sup>84</sup> Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI);<sup>85</sup> Trade Unions and academics note a number of key problems faced by immigrants: these studies consistently reveal that immigrants not only work in lower paid jobs but increasingly work in the sector that is being 'subcontracted out' in line with economic strategies to cut labour costs: cleaning, manual labour in the construction sector, hospitality and care work; though the retail sector revealed more positive experiences, there was noted an increasing use of short term contracts. These studies also found immigrants being denied their legal rights regarding contracts compliance and pay; denied promotion in favour of Irish; working in employment below their skill level

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<sup>79</sup> McWilliams, D. (2007).

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/non-irish/nonirishnationalscomplete.pdf> Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008

<sup>81</sup> MRCI (2007a).

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/non-irish/nonirishnationalscomplete.pdf> Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/non-irish/nonirishnationalscomplete.pdf> Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

<sup>84</sup> MRCI (2007a).

<sup>85</sup> ICI (2008).

and encountering general prejudice. It is clear from these figures that unemployment in the construction industry will have a major impact on those from the accession states. Additionally, cuts in public spending on health will have a major impact on those from outside the EU i.e. those who need visas. Many of these are from the Philippines.

**Table 1: Workers by Industrial Group and Nationality: % of each group working in a sector**

Industrial Group	Irish Nationals %	United Kingdom %	EU 15 (excl. Irl & UK)%	EU 15-25 Accession States %	Rest of World %
Manufacturing Industries	13.1	13.8	14.9	21.4	11.7
Construction	11.7	11.6	4.4	20.8	8.3
Wholesale and retail trade	14.4	15.3	9.7	17.0	11.7
Hotels and restaurants	4.3	6.2	14.2	16.5	17.0
Business Activities	9.6	12.8	24.3	9.0	12.9
Health and social work	10.8	11.8	5.7	2.4	20.8

**Source:** Irish Census 2006<sup>86</sup>

Additional key issues identified in these studies are worth noting: immigrants have little contact with the host society except through engaging in work such as the retail and catering trade. “Very few immigrants had Irish friends. Many reported a lack of free time or regular days off; insecurity and employer intimidation concerning renewal or status of their work permit; low salaries in relation to their living expenses in Ireland; increasing economic pressure to provide money to send back home; and very little if any recognition of qualifications and skills attained back home”.<sup>87</sup> Immigrants encounter racism and racist abuse both in work and in the social environment; often immigrants cite lack of information about their rights as a key issue, however, a study by academics found that the problem was fear and unequal power due to status which was problematic, as indicated by their study: “the image of a Celtic Tiger holds very little reality for thousands of Immigrant workers. Many are alienated from the social and economic boom evident over the last 10 years. Instead, many non-Irish workers are subject to extensive employer control and exploitation in both their working and personal lives”<sup>88</sup> Additionally, immigrant workers have often accrued a substantial debt

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/non-irish/nonirishnationalscomplete.pdf> Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

<sup>87</sup> Dundon, T. (2007).

<sup>88</sup> Dundon, T. (2007) p. 507.

to just enter the Irish labour market “we found that it takes an average 27 weeks working an average of 45 hours per week just to pay the recruitment expenses to work in Ireland”<sup>89</sup>

The census of 2006 reveals that 129,000 of the total number of non nationals living in Ireland have a third level qualification i.e. 31%<sup>90</sup>. This is 42% for Asians and reflects the fact that Ireland has recruited medical professionals from India and Pakistan and nurses from the Philippines among others. However, when we examine employment profiles in the table above, we find non nationals working in some of the lowest paid employment.

## Irish Communications

### *Competition and the small media market*

Communications in Ireland, in particular its television and newspapers, are shaped by its proximity to the UK and the sharing of a language with its larger neighbour. Additionally, during the past two decades, broadcasting in Ireland has been impacted by: changes in technology which enable an increased number of channels; liberalisation and marketisation policies which facilitated new entrants to the Irish market and increased fragmentation and segmentation of the audience. Overall, the small revenue base of the Irish market was further divided between additional channels and by the new channels competing for the advertising base of this already small market. In addition, from 2003, the state set aside 5% of the license fee revenue in a broadcasting ‘Sound and Vision Fund’.

This Sound and Vision fund is managed by the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) and television channels (public and private) and radio broadcasting stations (public, commercial and community) can access this fund in a bidding process for specific programmes that deal with Irish culture; Irish heritage; Irish experience; adult literacy and Irish language. This fund has proved important for community radio and other local radio and television. Indeed, some of this money has been recycled back to public broadcasting when they conform to the themes outlined in the policy. However, there is also criticism of the distribution of the fund as this also goes to profit making commercial television stations. For instance, to date, 19% of the total has gone to TV3 (a commercial television channel): this is criticised as this Channel makes an estimated profit of 20m Euro per year.<sup>91</sup>

Ireland, in addition, publishes national and regional newspapers, is engaged with small scale, and state aided, film production; popular music, newspaper publishing. Public, commercial and the recently developed community radio are also important parts of the media landscape of Ireland<sup>92</sup>. Irish newspapers are competing with English tabloid and

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<sup>89</sup> Dundon, T. (2007).

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/non-irish/nonirishnationalscomplete.pdf> Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

<sup>91</sup> McCreevy, R. ‘Spreading license fee around’ in Irish Times, October 20<sup>th</sup> 2008.

<sup>92</sup> See later for the role of community radio and immigrants.

broadsheet newspapers which are distributed in Ireland. The way this ‘slicing thinner’ of the small media revenue base of Ireland, and its impact, can best be understood by the situation regarding television.

A closer look at the broadcasting landscape and the specific situation of the public service broadcaster indicates the financial constraints under which it operates and the degree to which its programming has shifted to cheap imports or imported formats. The public broadcaster in Ireland, Radio Telefis Eireann (RTE), is funded by two sources of income: a license fee and advertising revenue. Dual source funding of public service broadcasting is common among small countries in Europe that do not have large populations to facilitate the full funding of broadcasting exclusively by licence fee. Historically, until liberalisation, RTE had a monopoly of the license fee and the television advertising revenue base of the Irish market.

RTE’s revenue for 2007 was 195.7m Euro from the license fee and 245.5m Euro from Advertising and Sponsorship. That is, a total revenue of 441.2 m Euros or about £359.54m.<sup>93</sup> To put this in context, we can look at the resources of the UK broadcasters, who are competing for this small market and audience, but do not have to meet the public service duties as outlined by the Irish state. The BBC income for the year ending March 2008 was £4,414.8 billion. Income from the BBC’s commercial arm alone, BBC Worldwide, was £916.3m<sup>94</sup>. Channel 4 (UK public service channel) had income of £936.9 million for 2006.<sup>95</sup> As indicated in the table below, these channels are fragmenting the Irish audience.

**Table 2: All day Channel Share for 2007**

Channel	% All Day Share
RTE One	25.0
RTE Two	12.1
TG4	2.7
TV3	12.2
BBC1	5.4
UTV	4.8
Channel 4	3.8
BBC 2	3.2
SKY One	2.1
SKY Sports One and Two	1.6
E4	1.2
SKY News	1.3
Nickelodeon	1.0
Other	23.6

**Source:** RTE Annual Report 2007

<sup>93</sup> Source: RTE Annual Report 2007.

<sup>94</sup> BBC Annual Report April 2007-March 2008.

<sup>95</sup> Channel 4 Annual Report 2006.

The RTE monopoly was broken by the establishment of a fully advertising financed television channel (TV3) in 1998. Additionally, RTE is competing with UK based channels which are redistributed either by cable, satellite or from digital platforms. The table below gives a brief overview of the shares of the market of the television channels which are now available via terrestrial or other transmission methods. These figures indicate the public service broadcaster accounts for 37% of the audience share.

It is clear from these figures that the public service broadcaster (RTE One and RTE Two accounting for a combined 37% of viewing) dominates, though not as dominant as one would find in the UK for instance. However, a closer examination of the programming output indicates that the public broadcaster's dominance is accounted for by its factual or 'faction' programming rather than domestic productions of fiction. The table below indicated that the top viewing figures for a drama were achieved by an imported fiction programme: a soap opera from the UK, Coronation Street.

**Table3: 10 most watched programmes in 2007**

Rank	Programme	Channel	Origin	% Share
1	Late Toy Show	RTE One	Dublin	67.8
2	Six Nations Rugby: Ireland v England <sup>96</sup>	RTE Two	Dublin	67.8
3	Prime Time	RTE One	Dublin	63.3
4	The Rose of Tralee 2007	RTE One	Kerry	58.1
5	Coronation Street	TV3	UK	47.2
6	Eurovision Song Contest 2007	RTE One	Dublin	53
7	Kilnascully: the Last Round	RTE One	Dublin	45.5
8	All Ireland Football Final	RTE Two	Dublin	68.6
9	All Ireland Hurling Final	RTE Two	Dublin	66.7
10	RTE News Nine O'clock	RTE One	Dublin	46.2

**Source:** RTE Annual Report 2007

The lack of resources means that RTE output is heavily dependent on imports of entertainment, and cheap programming such as chat shows and reality TV: this is consistent with studies of television in Europe since liberalisation where El Bens found that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of hours of imported fiction transmitted.<sup>97</sup> TV3, the new commercial broadcaster, is essentially retransmitting imported programming from the UK commercial channels. For instance, it retransmits the soap Opera: Coronation Street and Emmerdale. It, additionally, brings many of the reality TV shows such as XFactor.

UTV is the Ulster franchise of the UK ITV commercial television system. Together with Channel 4 (UK) and the BBC these channels erode the audience share of the public broadcaster. Each of these channels has much more resources to make high quality

<sup>96</sup> This game was the first ever Rugby game held in the stadium of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), at Croke Park, in Dublin. A note later in this paper explains the role of the GAA in Ireland.

<sup>97</sup> El Bens (2002)

television programming when we take the economics of television into account: high first copy and negligible reproduction costs one can explain the low production of fiction by RTE...

In sum, Ireland is a very small media market and the revenue is further eroded and segmented by liberalisation. This broadcaster played a key role, with its drama, in providing Ireland with a reflective mirror during some of the period it had a monopoly. It was, in addition, the site of many of the conflicts between the forces of conservatism and progressives during the decades of change<sup>98</sup>. However as noted later, it is simply unable to provide the type of critical drama which could now engage the wider society with the project of integration of immigrants.

## Dublin and the Diasporas

“Migrant workers are playing an important role in maintaining the economic vitality of cities both by filling sectors of the labour market considered to be undesirable by the local population and through a transfer of innovation, ideas and experiences”<sup>99</sup>

Dublin can now be classified as a global city in that it is integrated into the global economy and host to almost 100,000<sup>100</sup> immigrants: that is the city with about 25% of all immigrants in Ireland. Polish, Nigerian, Lithuanian, Philippine, Slovakian, Latvian, African, Chinese and Indian citizens reside in this city and have brought colour and culture to mix with traditional Dublin<sup>101</sup>. They have introduced shops and cafes that, in the past, Irish travelled abroad to witness or taste. It is clear to all visitors that shops and restaurants would not function without Polish, Slovakian and Chinese workers among others. A visit to the hospitals finds nurses from the Philippines or Doctors from Iraq, Pakistan or India. The MRCI<sup>102</sup> report recognised that Dublin would not function without immigrants and it would be a duller place.

However, it is clear from the work profiles indicated that the pattern, currently, is very different to cities that have had long histories of immigration where communities have settled, contested racism, established the notion of belonging and found their space. For instance, London, Liverpool or Birmingham have dynamic diasporas (including Irish)

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<sup>98</sup> Sheehan, H. (1988).

<sup>99</sup> MRCI (2007a).

<sup>100</sup> It is probable that the numbers are much higher than the Census figures of 2006, which generally are believed to contain a number of underestimates. For instance, the Census figures suggest that there are 11,000 Chinese born nationals living in Ireland. However, an article in *Metro Eireann* suggests a figure much higher. That is, many Chinese born nationals, who live in Dublin, may be undocumented. See MRCI (2007b) for a fuller analysis of the problems encountered by this group of immigrants in Ireland.

<sup>101</sup> Note Brazilians in Ireland have tended to move to Counties Galway and Roscommon and work in the meat processing industry. That is, they are not one of the key groups that have chosen Dublin.

<sup>102</sup> MRCI (2007b)

who have settled and indicate their distinctiveness, yet Britishness, through cultural products such as literature, and television programmes among other activities. By contrast, immigrants in Dublin reside in a city with very high housing costs; low pay and little spare time. Over 40% live in the North West inner city of Dublin: an inner city area which is characterised by social and economic deprivation. Further, 50% of children in the schools are the children of immigrants.<sup>103</sup> Immigrants in Dublin have been highly focused on fuelling the profits of the Celtic tiger and a high proportion are engaged in remittances to their home country<sup>104</sup>. This financial struggle was a key point made by the immigrants in all the studies, but the pressure to provide for families in their home country was heavily focused on in the ICI study.<sup>105</sup>

There is engagement with communications, but as will be outlined later, this is highly focused on the circulation and transmission of information in the context of their specific experiences of immigration in a city and state that are dealing with this phenomenon for the first time in its history. In general, these information and communications projects are not traded, but rather, represent engagement with many forms of communications as a way of transmitting information to the host community and campaigning against racism; as a way of accessing information and entertainment from their home countries; as a way of creating internal solidarity among communities and as a conduit to information about their rights as citizens within Dublin and the State.

### *Dublin and communications*

Dublin has, historically, been a city which has a vibrant and dynamic cultural life in its theatres, literature and music. Citizens of New York, Melbourne or Chile are likely to have engaged with a virtual Dublin through the literature of James Joyce; the plays of Sean O'Casey<sup>106</sup> or Brendan Behan; the music of the Dubliners among others. A study of Brendan Behan by Ulick O'Connor suggested that the role or mission of Ireland was not just to be the 'pantry' of England, but to periodically reinvigorate its theatre. For instance, it has been suggested that this Irish attachment to the written word militated against Ireland developing a film or audio visual industry. However, Rockett,<sup>107</sup> points out the degree to which the small size of the Irish market was and is the crucial factor which militated against the development of a significant independent audio visual sector in Ireland. However, Dublin with its use of the English language and the potential to engage an Irish Diaspora ought to be ideally placed to increase its output of cultural product. Immigrants living in Dublin City have not engaged with the Irish media in the same way one might find in London or Miami, though there are some seeds such as a

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<sup>103</sup> Ken McCue of SARI in interview November 2008.

<sup>104</sup> ICI (2008).

<sup>105</sup> ICI (2008).

<sup>106</sup> An interview with the granddaughter of the murdered Israeli leader, in a UK glossy magazine some years ago was revealing in that she indicated that a major influence on her life were the plays of Sean O'Casey.

<sup>107</sup> Rockett, K. (1990)

Latvian music group or a Moldovan film director who is going door to door to get funding for his project.<sup>108</sup>

Sport, publishing, music, visual arts, radio and audio visual sectors are all engaged with by immigrants in Dublin, though mostly on a small scale. Nonetheless, these are crucial not only for information circulation within communities, but also as a conduit to the host society and the institutions of governance. That is, the primary focus of the communications and culture that is engaged with by immigrants in Dublin is associated with campaigning against racism and engagement in the project of 'Integration': Integration is defined as social inclusion.

## **RTE: the public broadcaster**

In the context of media engagement, the public broadcaster comes in for criticism: it only provides some time on RTE radio for spectrum radio, but little evidence of integration with its television station<sup>109</sup> in terms of its fiction or drama production. RTE may have small resources by contrast with the broadcasters of the UK; however, it is still the one in Ireland with relatively large resources and a public service remit. There is one key role it has played however, in its news programmes and documentaries which is positive and illuminating. For instance, *Prime Time*, which is a very popular documentary style programme that engages in serious investigative journalism on central political and economic issues in Ireland, has played a role in throwing light into the dark corners of the employment conditions of immigrants in Ireland. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2008, this programme focussed on the haulage industry among others and highlighted the degree to which employers in the industry engaged in unlawful activity regarding the number of hours worked by immigrant drivers. Indeed, in a similar critique of public television two decades ago, Sheehan<sup>110</sup> noted that a producer in the documentary department of RTE had offered to do the drama department's job: that is the news and documentary department were providing the critical reflection of Irish society that the drama department were failing to provide. Additionally, there have been a number of strikes by immigrants in the construction industry and the reporting of these in news programmes has been important in terms of providing information to the wider citizenship on the ongoing exploitation. For instance, there was trade union mobilisation in support of Turkish construction workers who were, illegally, not being paid. There was also the case of a Philippino woman working on Irish Ferries and paid below the minimum wage: she was contracted by a company in Brussels. A strike by all those on the Ferry forced the company to accept responsibility and remunerate the employee. A consequence of the representation of these on the news is to indicate to other immigrants, in similar situations, that Trade Unions are accessible and supportive. There is now anecdotal evidence that some immigrants, when encountering problems, contact the Trade Unions. The viewing of these strikes and demonstrations, as represented on television screens, and the support which one writer described as similar

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<sup>108</sup>[http://www.metroireann.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1434&Itemid=50](http://www.metroireann.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1434&Itemid=50) Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2008.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Ken MCue, November 2008.

<sup>110</sup> Sheehan, H. (1988).

to the trade union mobilisation of the 70s<sup>111</sup>, shone a light into the dark corners of the boom for many citizens of the Republic.

## Sport: a dynamic project for integration

An organisation in sport has played one of the most constructive roles in terms of anti racism and integration: Sport Against Racism in Ireland. This organisation was set up 12 years ago by two ‘dogged’ activists and is now recognised across Europe as playing a key role in integrating immigrants. They organise sport events and engage with youth and schools in the North Inner City area of Dublin. They organise an annual ‘soccerfest’ which provides one of the few opportunities outside school or work when Irish and immigrants mix. European recognition of the role played was illustrated by the EU sponsorship of Soccerfest in 2008, which had 42 teams involved, in addition to women’s and youth teams. Media reports of these events, including in the UK Guardian suggest that Irish youth find them an illuminating experience: then, they are probably enjoying the privilege of playing against a Brazilian team. Ken McCue, who had a record of campaigning against religious sectarianism, was one of those dogged individuals. In an interview, he indicated that some of their teams from Romania and other Eastern European countries are now being decimated by the unemployment in the construction industry. That is, the immigrants are becoming emigrants.

## Publishing: good goods in small parcels

In publishing we find two key developments: one which can be considered ‘below cost’ publishing as represented by Metro Eireann. The other development is Ethnic Media, which represents a recognition that the immigrants to Ireland represent new niche markets or segments of consumers.

Metro Eireann is a weekly newspaper which was established in 2000 by two Nigerian journalists. This newspaper contains sections devoted to Indian, Polish, African, Philippines and Lithuanian immigrants in Ireland. This newspaper is essentially continuing to publish ‘below cost’ in that it does not pay market wages to its contributors; however, it plays a crucial role in the integration project. The paper represents a key conduit for information to the specific communities regarding, for instance, legal rights and changes in the law. Additionally, it is frequently used by the Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan, to transmit views to immigrants and the wider Irish audience. For instance, we find the Minister responding to the views of an opposition politician, who argued, that Polish children in Irish schools should be educated separately if their English was not equal to their Irish counterparts or, following, a racist incident at a Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)<sup>112</sup> game.

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<sup>111</sup> Dundon, T. (2007)

<sup>112</sup> The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is the largest sports organisation in Ireland with over 2,500 clubs. This is an amateur organisation, but very wealthy and owns sports facilities and grounds in every parish of Ireland. They own a stadium, Croke Park, in Dublin which can accommodate over 80,000 spectators. The purpose of the GAA is to promote all Irish sports and act as a bulwark against, what are referred to as foreign sports. Among these foreign sports are soccer (who do not have a national stadium) and Rugby who do have a national stadium (Lansdowne Road). The rules opposing an accommodation with foreign sport have been temporarily suspended to allow rugby to be played in a GAA facility whilst the Lansdowne Road site is being refurbished. This was a highly controversial decision and is temporary. The first

The paper is also the site of critical debates and discussions with other forces when, hostility to immigrants or racism rear their ugly head. For instance, some columnists in the broadsheet press have directly engaged with debates around definitions of racism; common sense views of immigrants among other debates. That is, there is here a small version of a public sphere in which debates around issues can be explored, though they are not always friendly.

Additionally, immigrants use this newspaper to publish articles about their experiences of various institutions or processes, often satirical. Irish contributors such as the novelist Roddy Doyle, provides a short story in September 2008. The central character is an unemployed Polish building worker, living in Dublin. This fiction, in fact, draws on universal experiences of immigration: the only difference is the character writes emails rather than letters home.

Ethnic Media, by contrast with Metro Eireann, “provides a multi media platform to meet the evolving demands and needs of Ireland’s newest consumers”<sup>113</sup> Ethnic Media was established by an Irish entrepreneur who recognised there was a commercial opportunity provided by these ‘New Irish’. They publish glossy publications aimed at the Chinese, Lithuanian, Russian, Latvian, Polish, Philippine, Pakistani and African communities. These publications variously published weekly, fortnightly or monthly. They have as their primary focus the organisation of immigrants in accordance with market segment criteria and view immigrants as consumers as distinct from citizens. Nonetheless, these publications are visible evidence that Dublin is a changing space.

## **Community Radio: A small light at the end of the tunnel**

There are now almost twenty, non profit making, community radio stations in Ireland, including a number in Dublin. These radio stations are providing small spaces for immigrants to have a voice by variously providing slots for immigrants to play music and engage in discussion. In the words of Ken McCue, these stations are much more proactive than the public broadcaster. For instance, RosFM, a community radio station based in a rural town where many Brazilian workers reside, provides a slot of one hour per week for groups to share on a rolling basis. In Dublin, for instance where Near FM transmits to the East coast and is available in the inner city, there are slots provided for immigrant’s music, news and interviews. Similarly, Dublin City Radio (formerly Anna Livia radio) provides opportunities for talk radio and discussions. However, these are overwhelmingly non professional and maintained on a voluntary basis. For instance, the strict guidelines of the Sound and Vision fund would not appear to lend themselves to programming for immigrants. Nonetheless, some programmes have been funded in this way.

## **Access to Home Media**

The Internet and the World Wide Web have proved crucial for immigrants in Ireland in terms of keeping in touch with their home communities. All the research points out that

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game played in Croke Park, between the Rugby teams of Ireland and England, did have very high television viewing figures.

<sup>113</sup> Sales information from [www.ethnicmedia.ie](http://www.ethnicmedia.ie) accessed 25<sup>th</sup> October 2008

access to email; television; newspapers and magazines from home are crucial for immigrants<sup>114</sup>. Immigrants use library facilities; private computers and broadband, as well as internet cafes, to keep in touch both with their Diaspora and home television.

The Visual Arts provide another conduit for immigrants to 'present' themselves to and engage with the host community. For instance, a multimedia exhibition by domestic workers has been organised by MRCI; and there are, also, facilities in colleges which offer media training.

## Conclusion and some reflection

Ireland's industrialisation and rapid economic change resulted in the country requiring new sources of labour which the Irish state recruited from many different countries of the world. This late industrialisation meant Ireland was the last country in Western Europe to shift from being monocultural to multicultural. However, the key sectors of the economy such as construction and unskilled jobs in the service sector are now vulnerable to the harsh wind of economic change. Moreover, the dependence on US multinationals means key decisions regarding the economy will more likely be made in Boston than Berlin and as indicated, corporation tax rates can be matched by other countries. Unemployment in the state had reached 7.8% by the end of November 2008<sup>115</sup> and Ireland is once again experiencing emigration. Layoffs are occurring in the construction sector alongside shrinking employment in the hotel, leisure and catering sector. This presents problems for immigrants, since their primary reason for coming to Ireland was economic.

One cannot predict how the situation will develop for these 'new' residents and citizens; however, we can note those developments which suggest that constant vigilance in campaigning against racism is warranted. Anecdotal evidence finds two key phenomena: firstly, there is now more competition for those low paid jobs which the Irish did not engage with just five years ago. Secondly, there is also anecdotal evidence that employers may prefer to employ immigrants who are not as aware of their legal rights as say Irish or UK nationals. Moreover, as outlined earlier, the visa system for those workers from outside the EU tilts the very unequal power relations decisively in the direction of the employer. This can lead to the polarisation of society, particularly in inner city Dublin. Increased competition for jobs and resources can lead to increased racism. While there is evidence<sup>116</sup> that some immigrants have already left Ireland, the report of the MRCI note that immigrants overwhelmingly set down roots and adapt to their new surroundings. That is, multicultural Ireland is here to stay.

The economic crisis and the banking crisis<sup>117</sup> outlined here, are also having a serious negative impact on public sector revenues, followed by cuts in public expenditure. Education has already been targeted for cuts and this will have a very negative impact on

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<sup>114</sup> MRCI (2007a).

<sup>115</sup> Irish Independent, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008, paints a bleak picture of the increase in unemployment in Ireland and notes that this is now higher than the EU average.

<sup>116</sup> Ken McCue of SARI indicated that two football teams were decimated by unemployment forcing immigrants to move on. Interview November 2008.

immigrants: both on children in schools and on those in work who wish to upgrade their skills or pursue courses to convert qualifications to Irish equivalents. Cuts in public expenditure are also impacting immigrants' information channels in more indirect ways: many voluntary sector organisations are indirectly funded by state sector organisations.

Engagement with communications and culture by immigrants is primarily related to their engagement with their new society: presenting themselves to the host society; campaigning against racism and prejudice; keeping in touch with home and involvement with state and other integration projects. There are some positive developments regarding radio and publishing. However, these are primarily dependent on volunteering and what is formally below cost communications. The Community Radio Forum of Ireland want ring fenced resources available to community radio. The Sound and Vision fund, referred to above, is positive in that it makes resources available but not on the scale of the near twenty percent of the total which went to a profitable commercial television broadcaster: such an input would, no doubt, have made the community media sector significantly more dynamic. The specific themes of Irish projects which form part of the remit of the Sound and Vision fund (Irish heritage, etc.) do not lend themselves to development of projects specifically for immigrants, although some have been successfully funded by Sound and Vision.

There is little visibility of immigrants (who account for one in ten of the population) on either the commercial or public television channels in terms of fiction or drama. Indeed, Ken McCue suggested that immigrants simply ignore this broadcasting in favour of watching entertainment on the web from their home countries. He<sup>118</sup> gave an interesting example of going to a pub in central Dublin to watch an English soccer team and sat with two Romanians: he realised they were using their laptop to watch soccer, but not the same as he watched as they were watching a live game from Romania.

However, the documentary and news departments of the public broadcaster have an excellent record with investigative journalism such as the one referred to as transmitted on Prime Time. This is even more important as this programme is one of the most viewed in the state and perceived to play a key part in the Irish public sphere. Further, news reports of strikes by immigrant workers and the fact that they are frequently underpaid or even not paid, have brought their plight to the attention of the wider community and encouraged other immigrants to seek support from trade unions.

There are now a wide range of civil society organisations and small ethnic media which engage directly with and challenge ideas of racism and others with experience of campaigning against religious sectarianism<sup>119</sup> who are playing a crucial role. This debate has been informed, in part, by those Irish who had direct experience of racism in England and of campaigning against discrimination there. While Irish identity has tended to distinguish itself from 'those across the water' and considered the notion that racism is English, hard times are forcing the Irish to confront these issues in their own environment.

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with Ken McCue, November 2008.

<sup>119</sup> See comment on Sport Against Racism Ireland.

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