The role of Irish and Irish-themed media in the formation and maintenance of Irish cultural identity in Britain.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploration of the role of Irish media in the formation and maintenance of Irish cultural identity in Britain. Cultural identity is understood as a discursive construct formed and maintained by social interaction inflected by media in all its forms. The Irish in Britain are conceptualised as a media audience that engages with Irish and Irish-themed media content in Britain to negotiate, strengthen and maintain their Irish identities there.

Thirty interviews were carried out with participants across Britain who self-identified as Irish and who considered Irish media or Irish-themed media content to be a significant feature of their everyday lives. The interviews reveal the complex personal histories that underpin self-identification as Irish in Britain but two main narratives emerged allowing for division of the participants into first-generation migrants who arrived in Britain as adults and second- (and later-) generation migrants who grew up there. The interviews are analysed using a constructivist grounded theory approach to reveal the rich and complex relationship between media and Irish identity in Britain.

It is concluded that the media audience habits of first-generation Irish migrants to Britain play a key role in passing on Irish identity and Irish media use to subsequent generations of the Irish in Britain. First-generation Irish migrants to Britain seek out familiar media content from Ireland as a means of maintaining and validating Irishness while there and as an investment in possible future return to Ireland. The second- (and later-) generation Irish in Britain also seek out Irish media made familiar during childhoods in Britain in order to engage with, and strengthen Irish identities and are also keenly aware of the role such media plays in passing on those identities to the next generation. Both groups articulate their Irishness with increased confidence in Britain due to knowledge and experience of Irish and Irish-themed media content. The implications of these findings, the contribution they make to media studies and how they might inform future research is also discussed with a particular emphasis on the continuities between different migrant generations.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

SITUATING THE RESEARCH

I grew up in Limerick city during the 1980s in a house with two radios. One large 1950s style tube radio on the kitchen counter was permanently tuned to RTÉ Radio One. A smaller portable transistor model stood in front and was usually tuned to BBC Radio Four. Throughout the day my father, who grew up in Kerry but had left for England in 1936 at the age of fifteen and returned to Ireland in the early 1970s with my Limerick-born mother to raise the family they had started in England, would continuously switch between the two. In the summertime, he would fill the portable set with batteries and carry it outside where he would switch between them again, making the odd detour to a Limerick pirate radio station as he worked in his vegetable garden. While these memories are wholly associated with my childhood in Ireland, I noticed many years later on a visit to my father, who had on his retirement decided to once again divide his life between Ireland and England, was switching between the two national radio stations there too. When I mentioned this to my cousins in England, they shared similar stories of growing up with their immigrant Irish parents enjoying media from both countries. I was surprised to find that my aunt, who had emigrated from County Clare and had been living permanently in Derby since the 1950s, was an avid listener to Joe Duffy's afternoon radio show on RTÉ Radio One as well as a regular reader of the *Limerick Leader* newspaper, which she asked relatives (eventually including me) in Ireland to post to her every now and then along with a box of her favourite Barry's Tea.

A few years after discovering this connection to Irish media among my Irish relatives in England, I found myself reading academic research on diasporic media audiences as part of an MA course in Media Studies. It was the similarities between what my Irish relatives in England were doing and what Marie Gillespie (2000), Annabelle Sreberny (2000) and Myria Georgiou (2006) had discovered the South Asian, Iranian and Greek diasporic communities

in London and elsewhere were doing with media from their 'home' countries that set me on the path that has culminated in this thesis.

RESEARCH AIMS

The aim of the thesis is to investigate the role Irish and Irish-themed media plays in the formation and maintenance of Irish cultural identities in Britain. It conceptualizes the Irish in Britain as a media audience and the members of that audience it has engaged with are people who self-identify as Irish in Britain and who consider Irish and Irish-themed media as significant in their everyday lives. The research is underpinned by the theoretical frameworks of diaspora and identity studies, and it builds upon existing research that has been conducted with other diasporic media audiences and with the Irish in Britain. While diasporic audiences have been the focus of academic research since the 1990s, that work has primarily focused on ethnic groups from outside Europe and the United States who migrated to those destinations in the post-war period.[1] This study looks at a long established diasporic group comprising of multiple generations originating from the multiple waves of migration from Ireland to Britain that were a significant characteristic of the relationship between the two islands since the beginning of the modern period (Trew 2018). It is also the first study to conceptualize the Irish in Britain as a media audience. While the academic discipline of Irish studies has contrasted the invisibility of the Irish with other racially marked diasporic groups in Britain and engaged with the concurrent high visibility in British media content of Irish personalities, this project brings a unique perspective to bear through a focus on the lived experience of members of the Irish media audience in Britain.[2] The project has taken methodological inspiration from the interpretative ethnographic approaches of diasporic media audience research and has engaged with project participants based on understandings gained from the sociological and historical literature on the Irish in Britain.

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[1] The exception is Myria Georgiou's work on the Greek diaspora in London but the distance between home and host nations in this case adds credence to the sense that this study of the Irish as a diasporic media audience in Britain is unique.

[2] I am indebted to Denis Condon who made this point at a conference at which I had presented preliminary findings related to this research.

It adopts a constructivist grounded theory approach to data analysis, an approach that initially grew out of the symbolic interactionist tradition in American sociology and was later re-invigorated under the influence of poststructuralism (Charmaz 2014). The use of this approach to analysis along with the choice of interpretative qualitative interviews with "ethnographic intentions" for data gathering fits with the poststructuralist conception of cultural identity as a social construction facilitated and constrained by structural factors that include the media and their discourses (Gray 1992:21). The key findings point to the significance of Irish and Irish-themed media in validating and bolstering Irish identities in Britain in the context of a perceived lack of engagement with and understanding of Irishness in the British public sphere. Irish migrants in Britain use Irish media to maintain the 'imagined community' they were familiar with in Ireland as well as to promote positive engagement with Ireland and Irishness in Britain (Anderson 2006). The second- (and later-) generations of Irish in Britain use Irish and Irish-themed media to maintain an alternative imagined community initially made available to them by previous generations of their families in Britain and to validate their cultural identity there. These findings are grounded in thirty qualitative interviews that were analysed to reveal the role of Irish and Irish-themed media in everyday Irish lives in Britain. They serve to strengthen diversity and inclusion in definitions of Irishness and point the way to fruitful areas of future research.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is divided into six chapters with the first serving to introduce the main themes and project aims. Chapter two reviews the theoretical and research literature which underpins the study and chapter three outlines the methodological approach undertaken. The interview data collected for the study is analysed in chapters four and five and a theory grounded in that data is developed in both. Chapter four deals with 'first-generation' participants who are loosely defined as those participants who spent their childhoods in Ireland and moved to Britain as adults while chapter five focuses on 'second- (and later-) generation' participants who are loosely defined as having spent their childhoods in Britain

having developed and maintained an Irish identity there. This differentiation was prompted by the different experiences of Ireland evident in the interview data and was made despite the blurred boundaries between such generational labels which is discussed at the end of chapter three. The final chapter summarizes the research, identifies the main findings and indicates potential areas for future research. The following sections briefly outline the contents of each chapter.

The theoretical literature of diaspora and identity studies is summarised at the beginning of chapter two with an emphasis on the particular insights that resonated with and guided this project in all its stages. Theorizations of diaspora that unsettle traditional assumptions about national identity and enable diversity within group identities to be acknowledged were useful starting points in constructing the project and its goals. Scholars had, by the end of the twentieth century, come to understand identity as a social construct that was fluid, negotiable and complex. Identities have come to be seen as emanating from social worlds that are themselves constructed by discourses in which media are heavily implicated. The evolution of these understandings is outlined in the chapter which goes on to survey the research on diasporic media audiences and how it revealed the importance of media in the negotiation of transnational identities in the metropoles of Europe and the USA. That research, based on ethnographic approaches to the study of audiences and including significant canonical projects in the British context, provided the initial inspiration for this project as it opened up the potential of conceptualising the Irish in Britain as a media audience and pointed to effective methods for engaging with and understanding that audience.

The chapter continues with a review of the sociological and historical research on the Irish in Britain which emphasises the heterogeneity often obscured by negative and stereotypical representations during the long historical period of Irish migration to Britain. This literature validates the inclusion of people of Irish descent alongside migrants from Ireland in this study and provides important contextual information for engaging with the participants as

members of an Irish media audience in Britain. This includes evidence of the role of media in the negotiation of Irish identities which can be found throughout that literature and point to the need for more focused study on diasporic audiences for Irish and Irish-themed media.

Chapter three outlines the methodological approach adopted for the project beginning with a review of the approaches already used in diasporic media audience research. The focus on ethnography evident there is then situated in its historical contexts of anthropology and the particular qualitative sociology developed at the University of Chicago during the inter-war period. Ethnography in the latter context was part of a wider interpretative approach to understanding society which would become known as symbolic interactionism and contain striking similarities with later developments in Media Studies research (van Zoonen 1994). The qualitative interview was one of the primary methods of data gathering used in the symbolic interactionist tradition and grounded theory was developed in the post-war period as an effective method of analysing the data generated. As these developments predated the poststructuralist turn of the late twentieth century that would become essential to Media Studies approaches it is important to understand the ways grounded theory was subsequently adapted to the constructivist iteration adopted for this project (Charmaz 2014). The chapter links this methodological history with the pioneering qualitative audience research conducted in America and Western Europe from the 1980s. The ground-breaking research Janice Radway conducted by interviewing romance fiction readers in the American Midwest had been influenced by a move toward anthropological approaches in many American universities at this time (Sonnet 2003). On this side of the Atlantic, British cultural studies had begun with a strong focus on textual analysis of the media against which audience interviews were used to assess ideological power, but the interview method would soon become a primary means of understanding audiences in this tradition also (Schrøder *et al.* 2003). Many of the now canonical audience studies research projects of the late twentieth century were wholly interview based and did not use the full ethnographic method of participant observation alongside interviews, and the chapter highlights the argument of some media scholars that research relying solely on interviews can be

considered ethnographic (Morley 1986, Gray 1992). Although these and other developments in Media Studies methodologies came about independently from symbolic interactionism, van Zoonen points out how they had the same basic principles and these similarities validate the use of the interpretative qualitative interview for data gathering and the constructivist grounded theory approach to analysis in this project (1994). Chapter three concludes with an account of how the fieldwork for this project was conducted and the methodological approach was applied, emphasising the iterative nature of collecting and analysing and writing up the interview data.

Chapter four analyses the interviews conducted with the first-generation participants in the project beginning with the ways that an Irish identity taken-for-granted during childhood in Ireland can be thrown into uncertainty and require ongoing maintenance in the migrant setting. The first-generation participants discussed are either coming to terms with a new life or looking back at a long period spent in Britain, but all are doing so with the resources provided by Irish and Irish-themed media. Those resources give participants a sense of not being too far from home and facilitate social connections with Irish friends and family both at home and abroad. For some participants, they offer knowledge about how Ireland is changing and how citizenship might continue to be practiced or future return secured. Regular rituals of engagement with Irish media that were familiar during life in Ireland are re-enacted in Britain helping to keep an imagined Irish community alive in the minds of participants. The maintenance of Irish identities through media becomes more important as other identities and experiences of everyday life present themselves and threaten to negate Irishness. Irish media and its content becomes an important antidote to a perceived lack of engagement with Ireland and the Irish by British media and is a resource for first-generation migrants to articulate and promote Ireland and Irishness in Britain. This pressure on a previously taken-for-granted sense of Irishness forces a new engagement with cultural identities undergoing the transition to diaspora. The desire to maintain Irishness in the migrant setting challenges notions of assimilation in favour of a hybrid identity that may be emerging.

Chapter five analyses the interviews carried out with the 'second- (and later-) generation' participants and shows that Irishness remains an important part of their identities in Britain and Irish and Irish-themed media are resources used to bolster it. The chapter opens with a discussion of how these participants articulate hybrid identities that in the light of the political history of Britain and Ireland are difficult to label but are experienced through and reflected in their audience practices around Irish and Irish-themed media. For many in this group, media from Ireland was present in their lives from early childhood as their first-generation parents (or earlier migrant generations in their families) sought it out in Britain. The media memories of these participants reveal the significance of such audience practices to the passing of Irish identities from one generation to the next and is reflected in how their own practices are shared with their children. Many of these participants are keenly aware of the negative representation of the Irish in the British public sphere they had experienced growing up and of the ways this has changed over time. Despite this change, however, they maintain a nervousness about the potential of the British media to revert to old stereotypes with ease. Those who actively engage with media channels and content from Ireland and other non-British sources often do so to compensate for an absence of informed engagement with Ireland in the British public sphere. The knowledge of contemporary Ireland made available through Irish media can also broaden understandings of a country first experienced within the narrow context of their own immediate families. Regular access to Irish media facilitates the maintenance of an alternative imagined community to that constructed by British media while knowledge of Ireland and of its media output is useful in the potential development and everyday maintenance of Irish social connections both in Britain and in Ireland.

Chapter six draws the main findings together and takes a comparative view of the two participant groups. The chapter emphasises the social uses of Irish and Irish-themed media by both groups as well as the importance placed on acquiring knowledge about contemporary Ireland. The kinds of imagined communities that Irish media construct for the participants are emphasised alongside the similar justifications each group makes for

keeping Irish media in their lives. Their common frustration at the perceived attitudes of British mainstream media towards coverage of Ireland and Irishness is also discussed. Finally the intergenerational continuities of media audience practices among the Irish in Britain is underlined in the similarities between the first-generation accounts of contemporary media use and the second- (and later-) generations accounts of childhood media memories in migrant families. These findings are based on an analysis of interviews informed by the literature of diaspora and cultural identity theory, media audience studies and the study of the Irish in Britain themselves which is reviewed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: Diaspora, cultural identity, media audiences and the Irish in Britain

INTRODUCTION

This project seeks to understand the Irish in Britain as a diasporic media audience and is underpinned by the theoretical frameworks of diaspora, cultural identity and transnational media audience studies. It also builds on sociological scholarship on the Irish in Britain as an ethnic group. Each of these areas are reviewed in this chapter in order to highlight the insights that inspired this research and guided it to completion. The term diaspora is widely used to describe the Irish outside Ireland but as this chapter will show, its meaning in Ireland is anchored to a rather narrow definition reflecting the specific aims of the Irish state at particular points in time (Gray 2002). Meanwhile the concept of diaspora has been theorised by international academics as having the potential to be an open and inclusive means of capturing the diversity inherent in migrant groups and their descendants, and it is this understanding that has inspired the project. The idea of diaspora as a socially constructed historically constituted and diverse solidarity is indebted to wider understandings of cultural identity which are also summarised in this chapter. Of particular importance is the understanding of identity as a social process and the idea that identities are embedded in discourse. The role of media as enablers and distributors of discourses and thus identities is contained within this understanding and given the focus of this project, the insights of those who have focused on the relationship between media and identity are also discussed. An important and relevant research area is that of media audience studies and specifically the substantial strand of this work that focuses on diasporic audiences. A summary of this work is introduced as the guiding basis on which the investigation of the Irish in Britain as a media audience in this project was initiated. Finally the chapter looks at how the Irish in Britain have been made known in the sociological and historical research on Irish ethnic identity and point to how the relationship of media to that identity was often made explicit. The chapter begins with an overview of the concept of diaspora.

DIASPORA

The meaning of the term diaspora has undergone considerable change from its original use as a term to describe the migratory colonization carried out by the ancient Greeks. In the modern era, it was used to describe the global migrations caused by the persecution of Jews, Africans, Palestinians and Armenians but by the end of the twentieth century had been adopted by many other groups who maintained a collective identity while living away from a common origin (Cohen 1997). In his typology of diasporic groups, Robin Cohen used their historical starting points as a means of distinguishing them. These ranged from the victim diasporas listed above (and to which he added the nineteenth century Irish migration caused by famine), the labour diasporas of the Indian subcontinent, the trade diasporas from China and Lebanon and the imperial diasporas of the European colonising nations. Cohen included the mid-twentieth century migration from the Caribbean of labour diasporas that were initially brought from Africa and India by European colonisers and categorised it as a cultural diaspora due to its significant global impact on music and literature (1997).

The strength of Cohen's approach is in showing that foundational identities endure over time but, as revealed in the Caribbean case, it is not well equipped to deal with the complexities of subsequent waves of migration either from the diasporic origin or from within a diasporic group itself. It was poststructuralist reappraisals of the concept of identity in the late twentieth century that problematized once "primary conceptual and organizational categories" and led Cohen to label the Caribbean diaspora as cultural, typified as it was, by fragmentation, postcolonialism and hybridized identities (Bhabha 1994 in Cohen 1997:129). This label and its characteristics can be ascribed to other diasporic groups at different junctures in their histories, and this is also the case for the other labels in his typology. As Cohen acknowledges, this situation reflected wider debates about the usefulness of diaspora as a way of understanding the complexities of identity in the globalised world of the late twentieth century (1997).

In his outline of the two extremes which diaspora could be used to describe, Stéphane Dufoix

pointed out that it could either demarcate a ‘private club’ based on a set of defined characteristics or be a means of capturing the diversity of humanity. His dynamic typology set out to differentiate the characteristics of diasporic configurations rather than the diasporic groups themselves. The centroperipheral, enclaved, atopic and antagonistic modes of diaspora he described are based on commonalities of historical trajectory and of relationship to a place of origin across different diasporic groups. Crucially for Dufoix, the modes vary across space and time with any one diasporic population having the innate potential to reconvene under a different mode as their circumstances change. Drawing on the work of anthropologist Christine Chivallon, he points to how debates around diaspora have centred on three conflicting conceptions: a ‘pure’ continuity with the homeland and/or ‘race’, a mixing of two worlds leading to the formation of a new one or a sense of alienation from both (2008). His discussion of what those identifying themselves as members of the African diaspora might have in common shows it could be: “[C]ontinuity with or rupture from the origin; or to the contrary, the absence of an origin and the development of a common culture precisely formed on hybridity” (2008:14). The concept of diaspora had become part of a wider debate on identities in the era of globalisation at the turn of the twenty-first century, and the next section will look at insights relevant to this research project from some of the major contributors to that debate.

DIASPORIC IDENTITY

Stuart Hall pointed out the central conundrum of diasporic identity; that it can be seen as a constant emanating from ‘race’ or ethnicity or as an ongoing production in which the hidden histories of colonialism are not simply rediscovered but produced in an act of imaginary reunification. For Hall, such a production not only reveals the common ground on which identity is built but also shows up the fundamental differences that exist across any group: “Difference … persists – in and alongside continuity” (2007:238). Hall’s conception of diaspora is not the fixed (old and imperializing) form of ‘ethnicity’ that leads to the forced removal of the Other but one:

> [D]efined, not by essence or purity but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of "identity" which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference (2007:224).

For Avtar Brah, diaspora holds a potential for solidarity which depends on an understanding of the origin as itself historically constituted rather than an essentialized purity that can only lead to antagonism between those who left and those who stayed behind. For Brah, "the concept of diaspora places the discourse of 'home' and 'dispersion' in creative tension, inscribing a homing desire while simultaneously critiquing discourses of fixed origins" (1996:192-3). In their working out of the political implications of contemporary understandings of Jewish group identity, Daniel and Johnathan Boyarin suggest a privileging of diaspora as the primary social structure for cultural identity in today's interdependent world but emphasize that this should dissociate itself from ethnicity and political hegemony based on a physical homeland in favour of a transnational imagined community that configures genealogical origin and homeland as elements within a wider repertoire which neither privileges nor excludes (2007).

Paul Gilroy also makes the case for diasporic identity as an alternative to rigid conceptions of identity based on rootedness to a land or on primordial kinship. His argument rests on the definition of diaspora as a hybrid identity "...that is indebted to its 'parent' cultures, but remains assertively and insubordinately a bastard ... divorced from purity and its special allure" (1997:323). It is not ".. some cheap, pre-given sameness, but [based] on will, inclination, mood and affinity" worked upon over time by individuals drawing on and mixing the communal histories and struggles made known to them through family and migratory ties (Gilroy 1997:339). The importance of recognising the past is emphasised by R. Radhakrishnan as first-generation migrants in particular are easily 'isolated' and 'privatised' by western capitalism which leads them to reject their history in favour of modern

individualism. Rather than rejecting a messy history deemed too awkward to fit with an idealized present, he advocates active engagement with and openness to the different perspectives and ideas that come with an identity shared across groups and generations without the need to hold up one version as being the truest (2007). A diaspora actively engaged in discussion of identity and its meaning has "... to think through the politics of why we are here" and an understanding of the complexities of diasporic identity can create the possibility of common ground within and between diasporas whose:

> ... histories have taught us that identities, selves, traditions, and natures do change with travel … and that we can achieve such changes in identity intentionally. In other words, we need to make substantive distinctions between 'change as default or as the path of least resistance' and 'change as conscious and directed self-fashioning (2007:125-6).

These conceptions of diasporic identities as actively fashioned by engagement with the past, with the similarities and differences inherent in and across diasporic groups as well as with the changes brought about by physical and temporal movement are reflected in contemporary debates about cultural identity more widely which will be drawn upon later in this chapter. Firstly it is important to take a look at the ways the concept of diaspora has been put to use in the Irish context.

DIASPORA IN THE IRISH CONTEXT

Breda Gray has contrasted the theorising of diaspora at the end of the twentieth century as outlined above with the simultaneous adoption of the term by the Irish state as a way of symbolically reaching out to the global Irish community. She points out how international academics envisioned diaspora as a way of "unsettling traditional assumptions about migration, nation, state, identification and belonging," whereas official discourses in Ireland used it as a means to broaden the meaning of the nation, bring a neoliberal understanding of globalization to bear upon it and simultaneously compensate for the huge cultural change

wrought by those very forces (2002:123). These discourses would ultimately have the effect of "... reproducing a global Irish identity that incorporates cultural specificity and continuity" (123) . While the adoption of the term in Ireland in the early 1990's was initially a way of challenging nationalism and reimagining an inclusive Irish nation, Gray concludes that it failed to catch on as the 'imagined community' of the Irish in Ireland and actually led to contradictory impulses which were mainly used to further ideas of neoliberal globalisation and unite the Irish at home and abroad in a predominantly economic endeavour. For Gray, this not only reproduced and elided inequalities in Irish society but also lead to a 'banal globalism' whereby the everyday utterances of politicians and state institutions led to a normalising of Ireland's role in global capitalism and a somewhat detached non-committal identification in Ireland with the broader diaspora. Subsequent representations of the global Irish diaspora as the repository of a more traditional Ireland led to a confusing debate about the authenticity of 'Irishness' as projected from within Ireland or from within the diaspora. For Gray, the concept of diaspora ultimately served as symbolic comfort for a country undergoing rapid change and in contrast, she points to the work of the many 'diasporic academics and intellectuals' who had theorised diaspora as a way of understanding identity in a world of migrations and hybrid identities. Even in this milieu, attention is drawn to the dangers of the term with some seeing it as a progressive way of moving beyond land ties and ethnicity to include heterogeneity, and others warning of its potential as a non-progressive reinforcing of the opposite. This critical engagement with the term supports Gray's argument that while diaspora has the potential to be used progressively, it can be too easily synergised with neoliberal capitalism making it: "… a particularly humbling category that keeps knowledge and political possibilities open, while … vulnerable to appropriation by various modes of power" (2002:135). She concludes, however, that diaspora does have the potential for a critical engagement with immigration, globalization and Ireland, and it is in this spirit that the term is used in this project.

Mary Hickman has argued that the Irish diaspora is crucial to the understanding of Ireland and Irishness and has been understudied in both the social sciences and Irish studies,

particularly by scholars in Ireland. She points to how the 'heterogeneity' of the Irish diaspora had been hidden historically in the national formation strategies of the two main destinations for Irish emigrants, the U.S.A. and Britain. In the U.S.A., initially undesired Irish migrants came to be seen as racially white although ethnically distinct due to the momentous changes that occurred around race during the American civil war (2014). Noel Ignatiev showed how the Irish in nineteenth century America adapted to racial stratification along colour lines in order to secure advantages for themselves over African-Americans there (1995). Hickman points out that in Britain, however, 'race' and ethnicity were conflated in the official narrative of a once homogenous British state transformed by an influx of 'coloured' peoples after the Second World War. This narrative rendered the Irish invisible despite their continuous migration to Britain since the early modern period. It was not until 2001 that the census of England and Wales would even include a category for those with an Irish identity entitled (tellingly for Hickman) 'White Irish'. Similarly to Gray, Hickman points out that the Irish State primarily conceives of the diaspora as a potential 'resource' while simultaneously sponsoring initiatives that appear to validate emigration as a practical 'safety valve' for Ireland's economy (2014).

The concept of the Irish diaspora is widely used both within and outside Ireland despite, as Gray argues, being appropriated by the Irish State to frame policies primarily aimed at building neoliberal global connections while acknowledging the generations who had emigrated in a mainly symbolic manner. Theorizations of the concept that unsettle traditional assumptions and enable group identities to embrace diversity while retaining a common solidarity are important tools in gaining a deeper understanding of Irishness and, crucially for this project, the Irish outside Ireland as a media audience. This project is concerned with the ways that Irish media is intertwined in the identities of the diaspora in the context of a media landscape continually transforming while also characterised by a long history of transnational media use. The engagement with Irish media evident in the findings chapters resonates with the acknowledgement of personal histories and the active fashioning of identity emphasised by the theorisations summarised above. The next section

will look more broadly at understandings of cultural identity and how it came to be conceptualized as a sociologically constructed and fluid set of attributes that are continuously under the influence of "... trans-national flows of capital, commodities, information and people", a conceptualization that has major implications for understanding Irishness in the diasporic context (Seweryn and Smagacz 2006:17).

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Margaret Wetherell's survey of the field of identity studies points out that identity only entered the social sciences and humanities as a core concept during the 1950s but has since produced a "rich history" comprising of "great theoretical and methodological complexity" while remaining a site of "continuous unsettled argument" (2010:4). This section utilises Wetherell's account to show how understandings of identity developed during the course of the twentieth century and draws on the work of Stuart Hall in this area to set the scene for the role of media in identity formation.

As Wetherell points out, understandings of identity were relatively stable until the last two decades of the twentieth century when, under the influence of poststructuralism, they became much more complicated. Initially the most prominent scholar was Erik Erikson who, in the mid-twentieth century, conceptualised identity in terms of a universally applicable and wholly personal project worked on by an individual over the course of the life cycle. However, contemporaries of Erikson focused on individual identity as derived from wider social groups, and this understanding had been anticipated in the work of Norbert Elias who, as early as 1939, had pointed to how structural differences in society affected individuals. The development of this approach focused on how identity was bound up in the social differences between groups and how these differences organised multiple facets of an individual's life from their physical appearance to their perceptions, interests and motivations:

> What emerges strongly, too, is a more complex notion of the ways identity slots might pre-exist the individual, so that minds, psychologies and senses of self are formed in dialogue and in conflict with what is ready-made and handed down (Wetherell 2010:8-9).

While some of the early identity researchers focused solely on this social aspect, others such as George Herbert Mead brought social and personal identity together in a dialectic relationship between the individual and society. As Wetherell observes,

> Mead famously distinguished, for example, between an 'I' which marked out agency and unique individuality, and a 'me' formed from the internalized attitudes of others. In this way people can be seen as agents, as free to change, but also as deeply exemplifying and mirroring the expectations and views of caretakers, significant others and the surrounding social world. Richard Jenkins (2004) argues that Mead and the symbolic interactionist tradition he spawned are most persuasive when they frame the 'I/me' in dialectical terms, understanding self and identity as a never-ending synthesis and process of accommodation between internal self-definition and the external definitions of oneself offered by others (2010:12).

The economic and cultural changes wrought by globalisation in the late twentieth century would make identities more complex and difficult to categorize and hybrid identities were increasingly articulated, in diasporic communities in particular. Increased cultural interconnections between regions and nations coupled with the 'discursive turn' of poststructuralism led to a new foundational basis for understanding identity. This was that human experience is constructed in discourse and therefore language is not a neutral expression of a pre-existing identity but talk and texts build the social worlds which produce identities:

> Even when entirely alone, the individual is in fact always in the company of others, rehearsing past conversations, accompanied and infiltrated by communal meaning-making. … [W]hat in past decades of identity research had been loosely described as socialization and internalization … became understood as the processes through which the developing child moves the external discursive world 'inside' to form the 'voices of the mind' (Wetherell 2010:15).

Earlier researchers of identity had understood that sources of identity were multiple and often contradictory, but the focus now shifted from single individuals or groups to the multiplicity of identity possibilities in any given context and "… to the implications of what endured among this plurality, what became invisible, what was hegemonic and with what consequences" (Wetherell 2010:15). Wetherell points to a number of scholars who developed understandings of identity at this time, including Judith Butler whose concept of performativity showed how repetitive acts sustain identities and make them appear natural, and Avtar Brah, who was drawing on the work of early identity scholars such as Erikson to point out how their understandings had been underpinned by social constructionism in ways that saw identity as "simultaneously subjective and social … constituted in and through culture" (Brah 1996:20-1).

Stuart Hall framed his understanding of cultural identity with an account of the three distinctive ways in which the human subject has been conceived since the early modern period. These range from the rational *Enlightenment subject* initially envisaged, who was born with an 'inner core' that remained essentially the same; to the *Sociological subject*, a concept reflecting the increasing complexity of the early industrialised world and in which this inner core was formed in relation to others and to the cultural meanings of the world around it; to the *Post-modern subject* of late-modernity that had "... no fixed, essential or permanent identity... formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us" (1992:277). Hall

described some articulations of postmodernism as ‘troubled and provisional,’ he emphasised its potential for opening up new possibilities around identity and for the creation of new subjects (1992:279). As Wetherell points out, he also felt it might be better to describe moments of identification rather than identities given that individuals are not only ‘hailed’ by discourses but also actively invest in them (Wetherell 2010).

Importantly for the focus of this project, Hall brought these understandings to bear on a discussion of national identities. He pointed to these as “one of the principal sources of cultural identity” and although taken for granted “...are not things we are born with, but are formed and transformed within and in relation to representation ... a nation is not only a political entity but something which produces meanings - a system of cultural representation” (1992:292). For Hall, the nationalism that took hold in the modern era was a new focus of allegiance which took the place of premodern connections to tribe, religion and region. Not only was it an identity forged in the discursive realm but its strength was the way it worked to elide differences within a society. The ‘imagined community’ of any nation, as theorised by Benedict Anderson, is built on a common narrative told in multiple ways which unifies by subsuming differences into a single cultural identity (Hall 1992). In response to fears that the globalization of the late twentieth century was disrupting hitherto bounded and dependable national identities, Hall emphasised the differences of class, gender and ethnicity that always existed within them:

> Instead of thinking of national cultures as unified, we should think of them as constituting a discursive device which represents difference as unity or identity ... They are cross-cut by deep internal divisions and differences, and ‘unified’ only through the exercise of different forms of cultural power ... Modern nations are all cultural hybrids ... when we come to consider whether national identities are being dislocated, we must bear in mind the way national cultures help to ‘stitch up’ difference into one identity (1992:297-99).

Hall was of the view that hybrid identities had been taking the place of a declining sense of national identity since the 1970s. As national identity was dependent on systems of representation the implications of the changes wrought by globalisation were profound, resulting in subjects who imagine hybrid and fluid identities rather than a unified single self. Hall points out that the 'places' of late modernity are often under influences not physically present and are often defined from afar:

> Cultural flows and global consumerism between nations create the possibilities of 'shared identities' – as 'customers' for the same goods, 'clients' for the same services, 'audiences' for the same messages and images – between people who are far removed from one another in time and space (Hall 1992:302).

Hall disavowed the notion that identity must be either a return to roots or a disappearance of the local through assimilation as being "too simplistic, exaggerated and one-sided" and wrote of "counter-tendencies" in which there is the potential for new 'global' and new 'local' identifications, each influenced by the other, across and within established nations (Hall 1992:304). Migration to the West in the post-war era had led to a generation of peoples who kept links with their origins and cultural traditions but in the context of the new places in which they now lived. They were "irrevocably translated" with at least two identities, two cultural languages and, crucially for Hall, the ability to negotiate between them. Such "cultures of hybridity are one of the distinctly novel types of identity produced in the era of late-modernity, and there are more and more examples of them to be discovered" (1992:310).

Such pivotal interventions in understandings of identity at the close of the twentieth century have permanently challenged the notion that identities are based on natural or essential differences. Rather than being automatic, identity is now understood as negotiable, contestable and more fluid and varied than had been previously appreciated (Wetherell 2010). The Irish in Britain, invisible in the narrative of a homogenous nation disrupted by a

wave of post-war migration from former British colonies are another example of a group negotiating hybrid identities in their everyday lives. Migration was always a feature of the relationship between the islands of Ireland and Britain, but the fact that it continued in very large numbers after the Second World War would mean a generation of people born in Britain with diasporic Irish identities from the 1970s onwards. This period coincided with the golden age of the broadcast era, and the role of media discourses with which these Irish could identify became more significant as media diversification and access to new technologies increased from the last decade of the twentieth century. The next section will look at how media and identity are intertwined in a relationship that has important implications in the conceptualization of the Irish in Britain as media audience.

MEDIA AND IDENTITY

Helen Wood points out that media is now understood as integral to any cultural identity and contemporary identity research engages with "… a more richly textured and locally contingent notion of cultural identity, whereby media forms are understood as offering modes of ontological security in the globalized epoch" (2010:262). While acknowledging a strand of academic thought, developed by scholars such as Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck, that sees the potential of media technologies to isolate the individual and disempower group identification, Wood points to other interventions, such as that of bell hooks, to argue for a contrasting view in which media bolsters collective identities (2010). She also points to the dangers of an overly simplistic differentiation between 'old' and 'new' media in terms of connectivity and collective identity given that reception research had, since the 1980s, convincingly established the "ways in which supposedly old media have embedded themselves in daily social interaction, or the ways in which they serve particular functions of social integration, and collective forms of belonging" (2010:268).

Wood highlights James Carey's proposal that American communications scholars needed to address what he termed the 'ritual' mode of media rather than maintain their singular focus on the transmission mode which only served to lead them to the limited insights of media

effects theory and uses and gratifications research. The ritual mode repositions researchers so they understand media to be part of a wider cultural repertoire through which individuals and groups make sense of the worlds in which they live:

> A ritual view is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs. If the archetypal case of communication under a transmission view is the extension of messages across geography for the purpose of control, the archetypal case under a ritual view is the sacred ceremony that draws persons together in fellowship and commonality. (Carey 2009:15).

For Wood, Carey's challenge was convincingly taken up in the work of Nick Couldry. Couldry's concept of 'media selves' highlights how the self is a *mediated* phenomenon and that the thought processes underlying media rituals takes our everyday thinking far beyond the local context of the ritual itself into multiple discourses or 'rhetorics' of social togetherness. As Wood points out, his argument "reaffirms the media's power in that it ritualizes a 'myth of the mediated centre'" (2010:268). His argument also critiques the poststructuralist notion that social reproduction is being destroyed by the global flow of information, money and people as that view "ignores the extent to which principles of order remain, not just as compensatory devices for an underlying disorder, but embedded at the heart of our notions of who we are and where we belong" (Couldry 2003:11). Wood's own research on media and identity draws on this view, and on those of Carey, to bring out the ways media are embedded in the social and to make explicit the 'continuities between interpersonal and mediated communication' which show media audiences as engaging in 'identity practice' (2010:269):

> [W]e must see how media have become ritually involved in processes of identity, both in terms of how media address audiences, but also in terms of how they engage us in activities of identity, whether that is through watching television or blogging on the Internet (2010:273).

In their argument, made at the close of the twentieth century, for a new paradigm with which to conceptualise audiences, Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst pointed out that being a member of a media audience could no longer be conceived as separate to but rather had become constitutive of everyday life (1998). Building on the work of Anderson they saw imagination as central to interactions with media and drew on insights from the corpus of audience research to argue that media provide the imaginative resources around which audiences build ways of being in the world. One of the modes of engagement of particular importance to this project is the 'referential' form of talk about media, conceptualized by Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz, through which audience members interpret their own realities through conversations about media and their content. Also important is the insight of Joke Hermes that not all media and their texts are equally meaningful in imagining the self:

> What audiences are doing … is drawing from the endless media stream that passes them by a set of diverse elements out of which they can construct imaginative worlds that suit them. … People will build particular imagined worlds around their previous experience and existing lives in the worlds of work, family and household and general social relationships (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998:107)

The importance of previous experience of media in the formation of generational identities has been emphasised in the work of Göran Bolin, who, by comparing intergenerational and cross-cultural data sets, found that childhood and 'youth' media memories have a formative dimension in the self-construction of generation across the life-course (2014).

> An important component in Karl Mannheim's (1928/1952) theory of generations is the 'fresh contact' with objects, events and phenomena during the 'formative years' in youth. Through fresh contact, generational experience is formed, and these experiences are held to impact on all later experience (2014:108).

The ideas that come to the fore in the discussion of media and identity above, in particular, that identity is socially constructed, that media is constitutive of everyday meaning-making and identity formation, and also that media memories impact on later identity construction have clear implications for research on diasporic media audiences. These are further explored in the following consideration of how media audience scholars engaged with transnational media by conducting empirical research with diasporic audiences around the world.

DIASPORIC MEDIA AUDIENCES

The conception of the media audience as diasporic opened up new ways of understanding audiences which, before increased global migration and new digital technologies at the end of the twentieth century, had been primarily investigated within the boundaries of nation-states. Starting with Arjun Appadurai's reconceptualization of the role of imagination in a world defined by migration this section looks at David Morley's work on the concept of home in a mediated globalised world and summarizes insights from the body of existing diasporic media audience research that offer clues as to the relationship between media and the Irish in Britain.

Appadurai made the case that the role of the imagination had a new significance in a world of migratory movement in which ordinary people, many of them on the move or part of a diasporic population, use the media resources available to them to construct identities in their everyday lives:

> Those who wish to move, those who have moved, those who wish to return, and those who choose to stay rarely formulate their plans outside the sphere of radio and television, cassettes and videos, newsprint and telephone … a mass-mediated imaginary that frequently transcends national space (1996:6).

Diasporic public spheres, based on the symbolic "mediascapes" of native, host and diasporic media in combination with the "ethnoscapes" of geographical mobility are indicators of:

> ... the incapacity of states to prevent their minority populations from linking themselves to wider constituencies of religious or ethnic affiliation … [and] suggest that the era in which we could assume that viable public spheres were typically, exclusively, or necessarily national could be at an end (1996:22).

Using the insights of George Marcus on the difficulties of mapping traditional notions of community onto contemporary localities, Morley argues for a more complex understanding of how identity works. He builds on the insight of Appadurai that any locale is inflected both by migration and the media in all their forms to argue that rather than resting on the activities within any single locale, identity is constructed simultaneously across a number of different locales both within and without a national territory. A locale or 'neighbourhood' can be formed in the spatial or the virtual realms of cultural connection, such as in the form of diasporic public spheres which "are increasingly part of many people's everyday lives" (2000:11). He also argues that it is often media audiences themselves that retain older versions of national public spheres and police the borders around them pointing to both the complaints of white American television viewers around the increased Black presence on their sets during the 1960s and those of Australian Aboriginals in the 1980's who argued against unrestricted satellite television as it would 'be like having hundreds of whitefellas visit without permits, every day' (2000:151). Predominantly white soap operas have been popular in both Britain and Australia for audiences with a need for a nostalgic view of a mythical racial past, and migratory groups in such texts are often seen as contaminating the host country. Ironically, immigrant communities themselves often view a host country as a threat of contamination also. Materialistic values, a lack of ties with or care for extended families and a lack of a religious faith are examples of this, and groups such as Senegalese and Nigerian immigrants in Italy self-represent in the research as better-travelled, more experienced, more cosmopolitan and more educated (in the things that *they* feel matter) due to the fact of their migrant journey and experiences in comparison to their sedentary hosts (Morley 2000). Morley also highlights media audience research that illuminates the questions of immigrant assimilation into a host community pointing to the work of Kevin

Robins on the Turkish diasporic audience in Europe which shows the complex nature of diasporic cultural identity and its relationship to media content:

> ...the question is not an 'either / or' of whether immigrants have withdrawn into their own cultural space or are assimilated into the host culture. Rather … the question is one of how these migrants are … engaged in constructing various forms of hybrid identities which enable them to participate simultaneously in both ... which allows them to be both assimilated *and* withdrawn at different times, in relation to different topics and issues (2000:167).

Access to Turkish media allow this diaspora to gain the social, cultural and economic capital (through their ongoing connection to home) denied them in Europe. A trip home may happen only once a year and often be continuously postponed, but monetary wealth gained working in Europe is more easily converted to social status in Turkey which remains "a symbolic space of display for their achievements" (Morley 2000:168).

In his review of international research on diasporic media audiences, Andy Ruddock summarised the diversity of findings of audience researchers such as Durham (2004), who showed how South Asian immigrants in Florida used Western and home media to mediate the different worlds they inhabited, and Mai (2004), on the way media became implicated in 'projects of the self', enabling Albanians to leave or imagine leaving their homeland (2007:73). Other research showed that "access to media from a 'putative' home can also be a source of anxiety" such as when Korean subscribers to Korean satellite services in the U.S.A. were exposed to the tendency of news to focus on conflict leading them to wonder if, in any sense, 'home' still exists for them (Lee 2004 in Ruddock 2007:74). Yu Shi's research with Chinese students in the US found they used native Chinese media as a foundation on which to build 'an imaginary of the home', necessary because their aspiration to return was effectively unrealisable (2005 in Ruddock 2007:74). Another group of Chinese students, enrolled at an American university, preferred American to Chinese media, and used it as a

tool to learn language skills and cultural cues to help them fit into their host society (Yang et al. 2004 in Ruddock 2007). Similarly, a study of Latino audiences in the USA showed their disdain for the telenovelas so popular back home. Feeling the genre was dismissed in the USA they also feared being dismissed were they to become part of its audience (Rio 2003 in Ruddock 2007). Ruddock concludes that media can be understood as resources that help members of a diaspora mediate the different worlds they inhabit, understand their own ethnic identity and negotiate dual identities: "Media are tools that audiences use to manage the cultural consequences of political and economic dispersion by maintaining collective identities that geography and governance repress" (2007:78).

In her overview of transnational audience research with a focus on cultural and ethnic identity, Mirca Madianou pointed out that such identities and their differences have long been studied at the level of representation but recent global migrations in parallel with increased transnational media have led audience studies to engage with them (2011). She argues that:

> [A]part from empirical reasons, there are strong theoretical reasons why it matters to study questions of ethnicity, identity, and difference from a bottom-up, or an audience-centred, perspective: this is the only way in which the dynamic nature of ethnicities and identities … can be captured. A bottom-up perspective guards against essentialising the "ethnic" or "national" audience, and against assuming one overarching cultural or ethnic identity that is shared by all its members (2011:444).

Madianou argues that the plethora of host, home and transnational media that became available around the turn of the century allowed for increased negotiation of media representations by audiences and their increased ambivalence and reflexivity was characteristic of the findings of early diasporic audience research (2011). For her, "[I]t is impossible to research ethnically and culturally differentiated audiences without theorizing the concepts of culture and identity" (2011:445). Important is the boundary-making role of

the media because the best way to understand identity and culture is to look at where its boundaries are defined rather than its actual content and this is seen in how it is articulated by members of a group. Two discourses can exist, the dominant reification of identity and a discourse that challenges it, and participants can flit between the two as the context suits. This is often the case with news media content and reveals the power of the media in setting boundaries and making identities available as well as getting identities wrong (Madianou 2011).

In a groundbreaking audience study of the South Asian diaspora in London Marie Gillespie emphasised that diasporic communities are internally complex and argued that the use of the term diaspora can help avoid the pitfalls of essentialising an ethnic group by acknowledging the transformation of identities through relocation, cultural exchange and interaction (2000). Gillespie points to the significance of media as a vehicle for creating a national culture and how this was explored by scholars such as Anderson whose emphasis on ritual around media shows how “The fact of engaging, in private isolation, in a joint public ritual with significant though absent others, may be as important culturally as any information conveyed” (2000:167). While ideas of national culture and belonging in Britain were challenged by post-war migration and globalization, Gillespie feels that Appadurai was premature to write off the nation-state and the move toward a transnational or diasporic conception of the public sphere, the beginnings of which are evident in her own research, should not be exaggerated or romanticised (2000). Her engagement with teenagers brought out the differences between the first- and second- generations in ways that reflect but also complicate Bolin’s work on generational identity formation. She found that transnational media do play a significant role in sustaining South Asian diaspora formations and consciousness in London but that British, Australian and American popular culture was also a significant part of younger peoples’ interaction with television. It was clear they made:

> … shared use of the increasingly transnational array of TV programmes and video films available to them, not only to lubricate their daily social interactions, but also

> to compare and contrast, judge and evaluate the culturally different social worlds that appear on their TV screens" (2000:164).

In this way, second-generation South Asian youth used media to "engage in a process of ongoing negotiation and creative reinvention of their identities" (2000:166).

A similarly complex picture of diasporic media engagement and negotiation of identities emerges from the research conducted by Annabelle Sreberny on 'Iranians living in London' and from Myria Georgiou's study of the Greek Cypriot community in the metropoles of London and New York. Sreberny found that "... diasporic media can help Iranians relocate within the British cultural space ... can exacerbate feelings of dislocation and intense involvement with affairs inside the Islamic Republic … or … bind Iranians to the emerging transnational Iranian community" (2000:193). She also discerned tensions across "a generational divide" with older immigrants trying to instil a sense of Iranianness in their children and the teenagers already "immersed in British culture, being avid consumers of British media, at the same time as they also acknowledged racism and a sense of imperfect fit into the cultural mainstream" (Sreberny 2000:190-1).

Georgiou shows how Greek Cypriots construct diasporic identity at the domestic, urban and national levels as well as on a transnational level of mediated spaces. Based on the premise that culture survives through mixing, she argues that in a globalised and technology mediated world diaspora becomes increasingly important with media and communications technologies as the tools and the context for the construction of identity (2006). Her study found that diasporic media, and particularly those in the Greek language, became more important to the second- (and third-) generations when they grew older and began to have families of their own. Having rejected such media in their youth they now turn to them to reconnect with the diasporic community and it's values:

> Unsurprisingly, cultural symbols connected to ethnicity, such as language and religion, become reassuring values and bonds with their children and to a community

> parents imagine their children becoming part of. Media expose children to those cultural references and the language their parents seek to reproduce. And they do it in the mundane, unpressured way that fits everyday life (Georgiou 2006:78-9).

The relationship that diasporic groups have with media has become an important aspect of media audience research and paints a dynamic and complex picture of the role that media and media content plays in the formation of diasporic identities. The research summarised above contains important insights into contemporary diasporic identities and points to the importance of transnational media flows to diasporic populations. The findings complicate simplistic conceptions of the relationship between media and diasporic audiences and reveals how transnational media become implicated in everyday lives with resulting consequences for identity formation, maintenance and even re-invention (Gillespie 2005). Transnational media are understood as being able to empower the imagination and encourage engagement with the complexity of diasporic identity in a host society as well as having the potential to reinforce narrower understandings of belonging (Gillespie 2006). The research also suggests that transnational media do more than simply maintain ties with home countries, but are a means with which to create new connections in places of current abode (Sreberny 2000). As Georgiou's work suggests, cultural symbols of ethnicity can become more important to the second- (and later-) generations as they mature and have families of their own. All these insights are crucial to the aims of this project in which the everyday engagement of the Irish in Britain with Irish and Irish-themed media content is studied to reveal the complex ways such media facilitates understanding of and becomes implicated in how Irish identities are lived in Britain. Before engaging with the Irish in Britain as a diasporic media audience it is important to review the scholarship that has endeavoured to situate and understand them in their full historical and social context.

IRISH IDENTITIES IN BRITAIN

Research on the Irish in Britain reveals a complex picture that emphasises intergenerational and intra-generational differences. This section surveys the main insights from scholarship

on the Irish in Britain in order to draw out nuances and set the scene for the interpretation of the research interviews conducted with members of the Irish media audience in Britain. It begins with Hickman's analysis of how migration narratives in Britain skewed understandings of the Irish there and goes on to summarize the work of other scholars whose work helps to delineate the heterogeneity of the Irish diaspora in Britain. The section concludes with the difficulties of portraying the complexities of diaspora in the media as described in Breda Gray's analysis of a major Irish television series on the Irish diaspora. This example serves to highlight the gulf between attempts to generalize or unify narratives of the Irish diaspora and the complex reality conveyed in Gray's own research and that of the others summarised here.

A 2014 report sponsored by the Irish government defines the Irish in Britain as a large and diverse population spanning many generations that is best described as a "... patchwork of communities shaped by (various and differentiated) socioeconomic and cultural factors of emigration and settlement" (Kennedy *et al.*:24). Such a nuanced description was not always the official perception of the Irish in Britain. Hickman's work on the Irish in the British education system showed how they had been rendered invisible in the narrative of a 'homogenous' British nation that only gave way to a multicultural society after the Second World War. Hickman problematized migration narratives that stressed inter-European migration in the period of Empire and migration from former colonies to Europe in the post-colonial period. She pointed out that the Irish had migrated (as a colonised people) to Britain throughout the period of Empire and although they continued to do so throughout the twentieth century, they were, from 1922, migrants from a newly independent European state. The elision of the Irish from engagements with migration in Britain was premised on the belief that the Irish had assimilated by the post-war period, but Hickman argues they had been incorporated into British society via State and institutional intervention. In particular the English Catholic Church provided an outlet for community gatherings that safely subsumed Irish identities into religious and educational practices and related social activities. While the Irish were encouraged to participate in practical ways to the building of

parish infrastrucutures, the school curriculum followed by their children avoided any mention of Ireland and its history. This strategy ensured that Irish identity had a low public profile and was only engaged with in the privacy of the family home and during the extended periods spent in Ireland that were common to many Irish families (Hickman 1997).

Similarly, discussions of racism that came to the fore in post-war British society were a direct response to migrations from other former British colonies and excluded the Irish in spite of the fact that discrimination and prejudice against the Irish in British society had been evident historically. Hickman sees the political violence that erupted in Northern Ireland from 1968 onwards as leading to a continuity of anti-Irish attitudes rather than, as is widely asserted, the catalyst for the Irish to become less public in their Irish identities. As the following testimony from an Irish immigrant who came to England in the 1960s shows, such prejudices were experienced in face to face social interactions and also through the media:

> I could not understand the hostility I received – I was not prepared for it. For example I had to listen to people telling me how thick and stupid the Irish were. I was always told – and made to feel – that I was different. The jokes on the telly and everywhere reinforced this negative attitude (London Irish Women's Conference Report 1984 in Hickman 1997:215).

Hickman also shows that by the 1980s, fault lines had emerged both among second-generation adults some of whom wanted to forge a newer Irish identity independent of Catholicism but also between the second-generation and newer waves of migrants from Ireland who did not feel a resonance with migrants of the 1950s:

> The invisibility of the Irish … and the denial of the specificity of Irish culture in Britain, can give rise to a situation where, in the words of one recent migrant: 'You're like an extension – not allowed to have a separate identity' (1997:248)

In this context, Marc Scully's recent work on discourses of authenticity and national identity among the Irish diaspora in England is prescient as it points to the ways that kinship networks and proximity to Ireland means second-generation and longer term first-generation articulations of identity vie for authenticity with those of more recently arrived migrants (2012).

Mairtin Mac an Ghaill and Chris Haywood outline how the predominantly male images of the Irish in Britain have shifted over the years. In the 19th century, the 'navvies' were racialized Irish immigrants, culturally visible and portrayed as dirty, drunk, lazy and violent while "... their resistance to colonial exploitation was underplayed" (2014:145). From 1945, the Irish started to be less visible as they established themselves as low-skilled manual workers and by the 1970s, they were "... culturally invisible as a result of the adoption of an American model of race-relations that argued that colour was the key defining characteristic of racism in Britain" (2014:145-6). During this decade, IRA bombing campaigns in England meant that the Irish continued to be pathologized by the British state and that they participated in their own lack of visibility by not emphasising Irishness. They were then put back on "the ethnic and racial map" through the work of community workers and academics in the 1980s and began to demand "... public recognition and affirmation of their difference", demands tied up with ongoing political events in Ireland and Britain (2014:146). Differences within the community were elided, however, and it was once again male images that dominated despite "... the fact that Irish-born women outnumber Irish-born men in Britain since the 1920s" (2014:146). When the more educated and middle-class Ryanair generation of Irish emigrants came (predominantly to London) at the end of the 1980s they distanced themselves from the existing Irish community there, and the Irish in Britain became more visibly differentiated. The peace process of the late 1990s along with President Mary Robinson's redefinition of Irishness to include 'the diaspora' heralded the greatest change in the visibility of the Irish community, with the Irish in Britain actively engaging with the new definition. These changes were reflected in the representation of Irishness on British media at this time which moved 'from race to ethnicity' as Irishness came

to be seen as a ‘high-status cultural icon’ in Britain and across the globe (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2014:147).

Mac an Ghaill and Haywood carried out extensive sociological research on different generations of Irish male emigrants in Britain starting in the 1990s and draw on it to outline how Irish male identities in Britain have been performed and understood over time. A study they conducted in Birmingham gives an overview of the Irish male trajectory from casual labour on building sites to some men becoming financially well-off but most becoming part of a marginalized underclass. Irish men conducted their everyday social lives in all-male environments (including the hierarchical Catholic church and Irish nationalist politics) and by the 1990s, the Irish had begun to demand recognition which led in 1998 to the first St Patrick’s Day parade in the city in over twenty years. A second study on the health and social care needs of ‘older Irish men’ in Birmingham showed how “... migration was institutionalised in their youth in the local areas of Kerry, Monaghan, Clare etc., becoming a rite of passage to an adult masculinity that would be lived out on the margins” (2014:150). In the 1980’s, further fragmentation took place with the more established Irish moving to outlying suburbs leaving those who did not put down roots (as they had never originally intended to stay) to be further marginalized, with many ending up homeless. A third study of Irish gay men in London showed significant differentiation along class lines, with the working-class group accentuating their Irishness and feeling more at home with the established Irish community. For gay men among this group, the potential homosexual overtones of the military stance adopted by the Irish during renditions of the Irish national anthem (‘The Soldiers Song’) were a welcome antidote to not being able to openly display their sexual identity. In contrast, middle-class Irish gay men mixed freely and openly in the broader gay culture in Britain which they saw “... as part of a broader contemporary identity politics based on middle-class values of individualisation, consumption patterns and cultural lifestyles” (2014:152). Mac an Ghaill and Haywood conclude that “... Irish men’s experience in Britain is not a nothing but the same old emigrant story ... [but] a multi-layered story of continuities and changes driven by global change” (2014:153).

James Moran's survey of Irish connections to Birmingham from early 1800s to the present day shows the resurgence of Irish cultural visibility in Birmingham from the late 1990s on, most clearly in the revived St Patrick's Day parade in the city, and following a long period of fear and invisibility which was a direct consequence of the IRA pub bombings of 1974 (2010). The author points out that Birmingham has had a more troubled history for the Irish than other British cities with the bombings but also with racist attitudes towards the Irish and Irish travelling community which were prevalent before them. The success of the Republic of Ireland soccer team from 1988 along with the work of community representatives and the release of both the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four all helped transform the reputation and visibility of the Irish in Birmingham, and Irish identity began to be emphasised and celebrated as part of a multicultural city where media and new technologies made connection with Ireland much easier. However, Moran also notes the invisibility of women in many narratives of the Irish community in Britain and how attempts to define the different generations are easily problematized "given the complex cross-generational 'patterns of migration that led to family members' births in England and lives in Ireland, and births in Ireland and lives in England'" as highlighted by the human geographer Catherine Nash (2010:18). Such insights warn against making reductive generalizations about a diverse group such as the Irish in Britain. Moran also adds that Irish priests, in Birmingham in particular, who were often the community representatives at the forefront of the positive transformation of Irish identity in the late twentieth century, have since suffered from the changed attitudes toward the Catholic Church brought about by the many scandals that were revealed to an increasingly secular Ireland during that time (2010).

Through a review of the extant literature on Irish women in the diaspora globally from 17th Century to the late 1960s, Mary Daly shows the complex nature of women's diasporic experiences, including the motivations and driving forces behind Irish female migration. The tendency of Irish women to go into domestic service, nursing or teaching rather than take up other forms of work was not simply women asserting independence through emigration to a better life but also reflective of how they "... conformed to the social and cultural

preferences of respectable rural families ... continuing to respect family goals and expectations" (Daly 2014:27). Daly finds that the culture and politics of the country to which they migrated allowed Irish and Irish religious women teachers in the USA and Australia to transmit some forms of Irish or hybrid-Irish culture to their pupils but that this was not the case in Britain where, as Hickman has shown, assimilation into British culture was the goal of educational structures. Daly suggests that changes in Irish society since the 1960s in terms of greater prosperity, the welfare system and the changing aspirations of younger generations have set contemporary experiences of women in diaspora apart from those covered in her review:

> The overall impression is one of complexity; [and] the need to avoid overly schematising female emigrants or their motives, which undoubtedly varied widely, depending on the individual migrant and her personal and family circumstances, the destination and the time of departure (2014:30).

Breda Gray's account of Irish emigration to Britain in the 1980s problematizes the generally accepted view of that period as a 'brain drain' of the well-educated from Ireland, pointing out that significant numbers of male emigrants with low levels of education continued to go into stereotypical low-skilled work in the UK at this time. She also points to the repressive social legislation of that decade in Ireland as a push factor for the increased levels of educated women who emigrated even though female employment opportunities in Ireland were rising. The Irish would have negotiated identity in the UK under the predominant framework for understanding ethnicity there at that time, that of multiculturalism. Alongside its left-leaning anti-racist concerns this framework also fostered positive celebrations of ethnicity across the different migrant communities but Gray argues that British multiculturalism is not as useful a framework as that of diaspora for understanding the internal complexities of the Irish in Britain, as it leads to a hegemonic celebrations of narrow and conservative forms of ethnicity. In contrast, a diasporic view should be better

able to deal with the internal differences "... in relation to religion, class, generation, region of Ireland, gender, sexuality and many other factors" (Gray 2014:74).

Gray had articulated the problem of essentialist diasporic narratives previously in a critical analysis of the broadcast television series *The Irish Empire* (RTÉ, 1999), which was an attempt by the national broadcaster to highlight the importance of diaspora to modern narratives of Ireland and the Irish (2003). In her critique, this series began by constructing a liberal and heterogeneous view of the Irish diaspora but fell short of engaging with the resulting tensions by giving way to a traditional patriarchal view of Irishness as the often unattainable ideal of Irish migrants abroad. A key motif of the third programme, which focused on female migrants to Britain, was that of cultural discontinuity, with immigrants shown as caught in an 'in-between' state rather than celebrated as a hybrid identity that mixes two national identities. For Gray this:

> … can be read as the failure of the promise of cultural belonging in diaspora. ... Any identification with Britishness or Englishness suggests a potential Irish subject lost to British/English culture. The multiple implications of past and present Irish/British intercultural contact are not readily available as cultural resources for diasporic Irishness in the 1990s … The [subsequent] failure of the patriotic desire to reproduce an Irish family in the diaspora becomes another form of national 'wound' or loss (2003:171).

However, the visibility to viewers of the series' inability to meld the voices of Irish diaspora into one overarching traditional and patriarchal view of Irishness gives Gray hope that a new 'politics of becoming' around the positive potential of diaspora could yet be conceived (2003).

Contemporary accounts of the historical trajectory and sociological make-up of the Irish in Britain emphasise intergenerational and intra-generational differences not visible in the

narrow stereotypes often found in popular culture and media portrayals. A focus on gender in particular has led to more complex understandings of the Irish in Britain as a group and are useful for problematizing more traditional accounts. Gray's textual analysis of a national television series on the Irish diaspora reveals the difficulties of representing the complexities of the Irish abroad and draws attention to the importance of representation itself (2003). Understanding the role of Irish media and its representations in the formation and maintenance of Irish identities in Britain is a primary aim of this project, and the next section will look at some examples of where it was touched on by existing research.

MEDIA AND IRISH DIASPORIC IDENTITY

While the theoretical case for the significance of Irish media to the diaspora can be convincingly argued on the basis of the diasporic audience research reviewed above, it is also bolstered by evidence drawn from the literature on the Irish diaspora. The influence of the diaspora themselves on representations of Irishness is evident in an account of the contemporary practices of genealogy among members of the global Irish diaspora. Nash argues that genealogy changed from being merely a foundation for cultural expressions of Irishness to become

> ... a cultural practice in itself through which senses of Irish diasporic identity are explored and enacted … a practice that is simultaneously situated in a contemporary social context in which the positive associations of Irishness feature so heavily in popular culture and enframe a diverse range of commodities (2008:9).

Given that media can be understood as a constitutive element in the social interconnections that reinforce identities, it is useful to note Enda Delaney's argument that the social networks of Irish migrants to Britain existed well before those advances in communications technologies at the end of the twentieth century that led social scientists to conceptualise their effect as transnationalism. Delaney found that, throughout the post-war period, "informal personal networks transcended the borders of the nation state and the Irish in

Britain existed in a transnational social space which spanned the Irish Sea and included fellow-migrants, and family and friends living at home" (2005:425). While Delaney emphasises the personal letters and physical journeys of Irish migrants during this period newspapers and radio are also likely to have played a key role. The significance of media to the maintenance of Irish identities within social networks is evident in much of the research conducted with the Irish diaspora and strengthen the case for a deeper understanding of the ways media and Irish diasporic identity interact.

Researching 'illegal' Irish immigrants in New York in the late 1980s, Mary Corcoran looked at the structural factors affecting, and personal motivations of, her participants. In her analysis, she confirmed the role of the Irish bar as a "forum for political and social discourse … [and] a newsstand for the dissemination of oral and written news" (1993:91-2). Newspapers and video cassettes from Ireland facilitated the maintenance of connections with home so that "despite the geographical distance … psychological identification with Ireland and the international Irish community is maintained through the ready availability of transnational cultural goods" (1993:104).

In a study of the Irish living in Banbury, Oxfordshire conducted in 2000, Walter et al. argue that as part of the assimilation narrative, Irish identity construction for a whole generation had been discouraged in public and therefore occurred inside families and on trips to Ireland (2002). The authors, including Hickman, use theorisations of hybrid identity formation to problematize the assimilation of the Irish in Britain and show how the participants "… draw on two contrasting and at times conflicting cultural traditions," leading to hybrid identities based on "family memories [that] persisted within the domestic sphere and in many cases strengthened over time as people reflected on their senses of identity in adulthood" (2002:215). Their second-generation interviewees articulated an acute awareness of their lack of cultural knowledge about Ireland, the importance of which become more apparent to them as they grew older. Beginning with an interest in their family stories, they sought to place these in a wider national history through visits to public libraries and through watching

television dramas and documentaries about Ireland whenever possible. These " … secondary academic and media historical accounts were being actively sought in their adult lives" (Walter *et al.* 2002:214).

Sarah O'Brien has investigated Irish identity in Birmingham, and her work includes interviews with elderly Irish migrants who have returned to Ireland. These interviewees described feelings of sadness while in exile in England and sadness once again on returning to a second exile in Ireland as they did not feel fully accepted there. The importance of media to those Irish who had spent their lives in Britain is evident in the following statement from one of the interviewees:

> I missed home terribly, even when I was in England for years I missed Ireland, even right up to, what am I now? Seventy-Six? I missed Ireland. You'd always be listening for things about Ireland; you never get Ireland out of your system (2009:169).

More recently, Daithí McMahon has analysed the strategies of *Radio Kerry*, a local commercial radio station in the south of Ireland to find it was creating a transnational public sphere through its online content and in particular the development of its Facebook page. The analysis included an online survey completed by *Radio Kerry* listeners some of whom identified as living outside Ireland and one long-form interview with a Kerry native, living in the United States since the 1950s, who keeps the station on "24 hours a day". As the interviewee put's it; "[I]t's like living there actually […] It makes you feel like you're a part of Kerry" (2018:250).

Even prior to the technological changes of the late-twentieth century Irish media is likely to have embedded itself in the local and the transnational social interactions of the Irish diaspora and to have been a constituent part of how Irish identities were formulated, maintained or re-created. The attention to media that the above accounts demand points to the need for a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between Irish and Irish-

themed media and the diaspora and it is this, in relation to the Irish in Britain, that this thesis has set out to do.

SUMMARY

In this chapter the theoretical underpinnings of the project were outlined and include theorisations of cultural and diasporic identity, understandings of the role media plays in identity formation and maintenance and the insights from the extant scholarship on diasporic media audiences. The chapter also reviewed the historical and sociological literature that seeks to delineate and illuminate the Irish in Britain.

Late-twentieth-century theorisations of diaspora conceptualize the term as a historically constituted form of solidarity based on a common origin that can unsettle traditional assumptions and allow group identities to embrace diversity. The chapter outlines how, over the course of the twentieth century, cultural identity came to be understood as fluid and malleable, worked on by individuals under the influence of those around them and that of structural forces such as media and their symbolic content. Scholars also came to understand how easily media embeds itself in social relations and becomes a resource used by individuals to construct and maintain identities. These conceptions allow Irish migrants and the subsequent generations of their families to be understood as a socially constructed, historically constituted and geographically differentiated group that work on their identities using whatever resources are available to them. The research on diasporic media audiences reviewed in this chapter paves the way for this project by revealing how migrants and their families use home and host media to form hybrid identities that keep places of origin alive in the migrant setting. The recent historical and sociological research carried out on the Irish in Britain has engaged with the intergenerational and intra-generational diversity that arises from the many waves of migration from Ireland to Britain that have occurred over the last two centuries. These studies show that the Irish in Britain have maintained their identities, often in hybrid forms, despite not feeling empowered to do so in any public manner until the last decade of the twentieth century. Instances in this literature which point to the

significance of media to Irish diasporic identities justify the conceptualisation of the Irish in Britain as a media audience in this project and strengthen the argument for a fuller understanding of their relationship to Irish and Irish-themed media content. The next chapter will outline the methodological journey and explain the epistemological framework that led to the use of qualitative interviews with members of the Irish media audience living in Britain as the means to gather data and the use of a constructivist grounded theory approach for its analysis.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted to understand the role played by Irish and Irish-themed media in identity formation and maintenance among the Irish in Britain. Initial inspiration for the project came from the pioneering work on transnational media audiences carried out at the turn of the century and discussed in the previous chapter. As the findings of many of these studies resonate with the role of media evident in the literature on the Irish diaspora, it was a logical step to look at them as possible methodological templates. The chapter begins with a discussion of their approaches and the arguments made therein for an ethnographic approach to media audiences with its emphasis on qualitative interviewing. It then traces the origins of ethnography in the hermeneutic tradition of the social sciences in the United States and shows how it developed via symbolic interactionism and its associated grounded theory method in the mid-twentieth century. Transnational and diasporic audience research at the end of the twentieth century was also influenced by the work conducted in British cultural studies on media audiences, initially in the area of reception research. This began by combining textual analysis with audience interviews but soon focused on the latter as a valid tool with which to understand media audiences, and it is in this context that the open-ended semi-structured qualitative interview was chosen as the data-gathering tool for this project. Many of the core principles of the Cultural Studies tradition, such as the full acknowledgement of the research context and the need for reflexivity, are also central tenets of the constructivist grounded theory approach developed by Kathy Charmaz (2014) which is historically aligned with symbolic interactionism and the approach chosen for data analysis in this project. The chapter ends with a discussion of the rationale behind the research design and how the above methodological approach was applied in this project.

THE METHODS OF DIASPORIC AUDIENCE RESEARCH

A review of the methodological approaches of the transnational and diasporic audience research reveals the need for methods suited to the complexities of diasporic identities and the interactions of such identities with global media flows. Marie Gillespie argued that: "... the new social and cultural conditions of transnationalism require a rethinking of conceptual and methodological tools" and pointed to an ethnographic approach as "... essential to tracking complex transnational connections" (2000:169). Acknowledging the negative historical legacy associated with its earliest uses in anthropology, she suggests that ethnography's 'history of complicity with racism' can be acknowledged while its potential to provide a "rich understanding of what people actually do with the media, rather than predictable 'findings' about what the media do to people" can still be harnessed (2000:170). During her study of the South Asian diasporic community in a then predominantly Sikh area of South London, Gillespie spent considerable time in the homes of Hindu family members watching television and "conducting extended interviews" (2000:172). Her study revealed how watching television drama from India "helped young Hindus articulate a Hindu consciousness and world-view with remarkable sophistication and philosophical depth … sophistication achieved in part by the contrastive, cross-cultural analysis but also by the dialogic nature of the long conversation" between participants and researcher as they watched (2000:174). Gillespie calls for an "actor-centred" (2000:170) ethnographic approach which can take account of "the patterns of difference and similarity" across a diasporic group (2000:168).

Around the same time, Annabelle Sreberny was researching the media practices of 'Iranians living in London' a phrase she coined to describe a dispersed and diverse diasporic population about which there was a dearth of hard information and which reflected the fact that "... there are many real and potential Iranian communities in London, not just a single one" (2000:186). Sreberny's work on the importance of media to this group combined a number of methods including a mapping of the physical spaces where they could potentially

meet, the description of Iranian media available in London and a substantive element of interviewing to access their views on media and their conceptions of its role and uses. It was important for Sreberny to examine media use and habits within the broader context of cultural activities endorsed by the diasporic community because:

> Too easy theoretical moves claim many peoples and their media as 'diasporic' while what is needed is rich empirically grounded material about how diaspora is experienced, lived in the everyday, and what kinds of roles the media play within the complex set of psychological, sociological and cultural dynamics that comprise diasporic reality (2000:182).

Media ethnographies such as those outlined above are, as Kim Schrøder et al. point out, explicitly interpretative in approach and focuses on a holistic analysis of the variation found within small samples (2003). The move toward media ethnography in audience research at the end of the twentieth century is understood by Schrøder et al. not merely as a response to huge technological changes that forced a re-conceptualisation of the audience as positioned across diverse media platforms accessing content that varies in both genre and origin but also as a methodological reaction to the increased influence of the "… interpretative paradigm and a concomitant cross-fertilization between the humanistic and social science traditions of research…" (2003:63). In the next section I will look at the development of the interpretative approach to the social sciences and the methodologies it inspired.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Schrøder et al. understand ethnography as having initially developed within two separate traditions, anthropology and micro-sociology, both of which emerged from a contestation over what counted as truth in the scientific climate of the nineteenth century (2003). The rationalism of the Enlightenment led to the search for universal laws using methods whose results had predictive value and this approach, in tune with the contemporaneous natural

sciences, became known as positivism. In contrast, the hermeneutic approach sought to understand expressions of human behaviour, culture and history using methods that lead to findings that are interpretivist in nature rather than having predictive value. The early ethnography that grew out of social and cultural anthropology in the first half of the twentieth century integrated empirical description, analysis and theoretical conceptualization and as Schrøder et al. point out, this mixing of description and interpretation would also become the mainstay of another tradition of ethnography that evolved in the particular form of micro-sociology developed at the University of Chicago in the years after the First World War (2003).

What is now known as the Chicago School of sociology was a network of scholars who undertook interpretative research to better understand the effects of the rapid change then being experienced in the urban setting of their university and which would lead to new areas of research such as urban, subcultural and deviance studies (Schrøder *et al.* 2003). The work of the Chicago scholars was underpinned by philosophical pragmatism and conceptualised people as meaning-making creatures where meaning was conceived as a social practice, constituted through interaction. These ideas would be developed by William Isaac Thomas and George Herbert Mead and the latter developed them into a theory of social psychology which Herbert Blumer, a central figure at the Chicago School, later named symbolic interactionism (2003). Symbolic interactionism envisages the self as defined in continuous communicative action during which the individual anticipates the responses of others and adjusts communications based on expectations of the other's intentions. This would be further radicalized by Thomas who argued that "if men [sic] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Rochberg-Halton 1986 in Schrøder *et al.* 2003:66). To access the meanings generated in human interaction the Chicago School advocated hands-on empirical research using a diverse range of methods including life histories, diaries, interviews and participant observation, with Robert E. Park, a journalist before his time at Chicago, famously urging his students to "... go get your pants dirty in real research" (Schrøder *et al.* 2003:66). This realist approach to qualitative research, which envisaged the

truth as out there to be uncovered, inspired many generations of scholars in ethnography and communications studies, including Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss who would go on to theorise the 'description-cum-interpretation' method of the Chicago school in their grounded theory of 1967 (Schrøder *et al.* 2003:67).

The emergence of feminism and post-colonialism in the following decades led many researchers to question the validity of the epistemological and ontological realism that underpinned classic anthropology and micro-sociology in favour of emphasising the subjectivity of both the participants and the researcher's perspective. In the early 1970s, Clifford Geertz, the American anthropologist, stressed the constructivist nature of anthropological research stating that "anthropological writings are themselves interpretations, and second and third order ones to boot ... They are, thus, fictions" (Geertz 1973 in Schrøder *et al.* 2003:68). This radical questioning reached its zenith in the 'relativism' of postmodern ethnography where research findings were deemed selective and partial, and analysis of them were understood as constructions (Clifford and Marcus 1986 / Marcus and Fiscer 1986 in Schrøder *et al.* 2003:68). The 1990s saw a shift back towards what Martyn Hammersley coined a 'subtle realism' (1992 in Schrøder *et al.* 2003:68) or the dialogic approach to ethnography (Rosaldo 1980 in Schrøder *et al.* 2003:68), which accepted that an external reality exists to be investigated but as the researcher is always implicated in it, reflexivity is always necessary. As Schrøder et al. put it: "[T]he move from realism through relativism to reflexivity has also coloured the applications of ethnography within media studies," and it is to a discussion of the methodological developments pertaining to audiences in that discipline that the chapter moves next (2003:68).

MEDIA STUDIES

In her survey of Media Studies from a feminist perspective, Liesbet van Zoonen points to the significance of symbolic interactionism and ethnography as two traditions of

interpretative research of relevance to how media audience research developed (1994).[3] Van Zoonen claims that symbolic interactionism can be understood as the paradigm within which media scholars studied the construction of reality by media audiences and points to how certain elements of their approach had been set out by Blumer as early as 1969. Among these were the need to carry out research in the 'direct empirical context of media use', the centrality of the audience's own interpretation in the context of their '... individual and collective life histories' and the positioning of their media use within a wider set of influences (van Zoonen 1994:132). These principles came to underpin the flowering of qualitative reception research in the decade prior to van Zoonen's review even though that was more directly a result of separate developments in cultural studies and feminist media studies rather than any conscious application of symbolic interactionism itself (1994). Much of it emanated from the ground-breaking work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies led by Stuart Hall at Birmingham University in the UK in the early 1970s which soon became the 'globalised field of Cultural Studies' (Scannell 2020:236).

Fomented in a conceptualization of culture as an unequal struggle between dominant and repressed classes or groups, the Birmingham School drew inspiration from a range of European political and cultural thinkers to develop two main methods of inquiry; the textual analysis of cultural phenomena and the ethnographic exploration of subcultures (Schrøder *et al.* 2003). Johnson et al. describe how the impetus for this formulation came during the 1960s as the relationship between representation and power came to be recognised. Cultural studies deliberately involved itself in the critique of dominant misrepresentations and misrecognitions of identities along with the securing of representation for marginalized or subordinated groups, all the while accounting for the complexities that impinge upon discrete cultural groups both societally and historically (2004). For Schrøder et al, the

[3] Van Zoonen's book is a synthesis of the field of mass communication research and not just audience research and therefore she lists four major interpretative traditions including ethnomethodology and phenomenology. I have not discussed these here as they are described by van Zoonen as mainly relevant to production research and textual analysis rather than audience studies.

ethnographic exploration of youth and ethnic subcultures pioneered by British cultural studies during the 1970s had a lasting influence on audience research leading to:

> … the emergence of qualitative reception research of the media … to explore what people do with the media … in a manner that emphasized the signifying processes surrounding the nexus of media and everyday life, and that related these meanings closely to the historical, political and social context in which media consumption takes place (2003:42).

Given the ideological focus of the cultural studies project, it was through such reception research, which initially combined textual analysis with audience interviews, that a shift towards more fully ethnographic approaches came about (Schrøder *et al.* 2003, Scannell 2020). Van Zoonen's use of cultural studies as a suitable framework with which to integrate global feminist media research shows the importance of feminist interventions such as those made by Dorothy Hobson, Angela McRobbie and Charlotte Brunsdon at Birmingham as well as the resonance of their work with feminist media studies in the United States which also, under the separate influence of 1980s poststructuralism, "produced new questions that can only be addressed by turning to the audience" (1994:107). A pioneering study of the reception of romance fiction in the United States by a feminist scholar had deployed similar methods to those of cultural studies, although Janice Radway was unaware at the time of developments at Birmingham and contextualised her own approach as part of an anthropological turn in American Universities "aimed at securing a methodological footing upon which popular (rather than elite) culture could enter academic cultural analysis" (Sonnet 2003:255). Van Zoonen draws a parallel between Radway's group of romance fiction readers and the cultural studies focus on subcultures as the former shows how "media use and interpretation itself can … construct a subculture or interpretative community" with which researchers can then engage (1994:133). Schrøder et al. point out that although reception research is conventionally understood as bringing textual analysis and audience interviews together to give a fuller comparative picture, the reality is that

reception researchers came to intentionally avoid the former as "meeting the informant with a ready-made depth-analysis … would impede a truly phenomenological exploration of the informants lifeworld-based experience" (2003:126). Radway, who had begun her study of romance fiction readers with a feminist critique of the genre, wrote "I soon realized I would have to give up my obsession with textual features and narrative details if I wanted to understand their view of romance reading" (2003:219). Joke Hermes, in her study of the readers of women's magazines, warned of the "fallacy of meaningfulness [which] leads popular culture researchers to privilege knowledgeable viewers and to use only their most expressive utterances" arguing that, as her own research showed, "it should not be assumed that the media text is always important" (Hermes 1995:16). These and other reception studies which, in the spirit of the British cultural studies project, increased respect and understanding for the audiences being studied, were inspirational to this project. They clearly reveal a shift away from textual analysis in favour of the qualitative interview and other ethnographic methods that can reveal the role that everyday media plays in the construction and negotiation of identities.

As this section has outlined, the ethnographic turn in media research in Britain was rooted in cultural studies and 'more traditionally anthropological' than its counterpart in the United States which was devised in opposition to the dominant positivist paradigm in media studies there and underpinned by interpretivist foundations developed in sociology as well as anthropology (van Zoonen 1994:133, Schrøder *et al.* 2003). Whatever the foundation, the increased diversification and proliferation of media around the globe at the end of the century led audience researchers to ethnographic methods as a means of dealing with its complexities (Schrøder *et al.* 2003). Increasing awareness of the porousness of borders for media audiences as well as content also generated the conceptualization of audiences as diasporic and the potential of ethnography as a way of understanding them was realised in studies such as those of Gillespie (2000), Sreberny (2000) and Georgiou (2006). Both reception research and media ethnography utilised qualitative interviewing as a valid and ethnographic research tool for understanding how media relates to everyday lives (van

Zoonen 1994, Schrøder *et al.* 2003). This project, aimed at understanding the Irish in Britain as a media audience, found inspiration both in cultural studies and sociological approaches to the media and their ethnographic approaches to media audiences. The next section will look at the case for the qualitative interview as the primary methodological tool to understand the Irish in Britain as a media audience.

THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

Although Schrøder et al. clearly delineate between interviews as the primary tool of media reception research and as having a 'back-up' role in media ethnographies (in which participant observation is perceived as the primary method), they accept that a significant muddying of the waters in ethnographic research means that "in practice … there are many borderline cases between these two" (2003:126). This is particularly evident in some of the canonical qualitative studies of everyday audience practices as they were based primarily on the interpretation of interview data. David Morley, one of the first of the Birmingham scholars to deploy the cultural studies framework in reception research, acknowledged the absence of participant observation in his study on family television by pointing out that he was 'working with people's accounts of their television viewing, rather than with direct records of their behaviour' (1986:37):

> In the case of my own research, I would accept that in the absence of any significant element of participant observation of actual behaviour beyond the interview situation, I am left only with the stories that respondents chose to tell me. These stories are, however, themselves both limited and indexical of the cultural and linguistic frames of references which respondents have available to them, through which to articulate their responses (Morley 1989 cited in Hermes 2005:84).

In her study of the use of home video cassette recorders, Ann Gray pointed out that most qualitative audience studies of television, the main focus of audience research at the time,

could not be described as ‘ethnographies,’ but she characterised audience-focused research such as Morley’s family television study as “having ethnographic intentions”. These intentions were to understand how audience members “live their culture” as subjects located “in their social and historical contexts” and were fulfilled in her own research by using “a loosely structured but open-ended conversational interview” with her participants (Gray 1992:21). Such research was ethnographic in orientation, but its claims to truth were based on the researcher’s interpretation of the interviewee’s verbal accounts (Hermes 2005). Van Zoonen describes the concerns of those who consider such interview-based studies as not fulfilling the requirements of ethnography proper as a form of ‘methodological purism’ that is impractical given the ethnographic outlook common to much qualitative research and the ways that interpretative research generally has become synonymous with ethnography (1994:132). The use of the open-ended interview was actually pioneered by one of the earliest media audience researchers whose contribution to qualitative research methods was overshadowed by the work of her quantitatively focused and mostly male colleagues. Herta Herzog used the method as a way of understanding, albeit in the somewhat judgemental way symptomatic of the times, what popular radio meant for “non-elite female audiences” in the U.S. in the 1930’s and 1940’s (Scannell 2020:28-9). As Susan Douglas points out:

> Herzog was decades ahead of her time in anticipating how poststructuralism, feminism, and postmodernism would inform media criticism and analysis by emphasizing people's ambivalent relationships to media content that was itself filled with contradictions (2004:144).

Jennifer Mason describes the interview as “probably the most commonly used method in qualitative research” pointing out that qualitative interviewing is usually intended to refer to in-depth and loosely structured forms of the method (2002:62). Despite its wide use having led to variations in style and tradition across qualitative research, she outlines some core features that all qualitative interviews have in common. These include ‘an interactional

exchange of dialogue' whether in a one-to-one or group setting or whether face-to-face or conducted through communications technologies such as the telephone or internet. They also feature an informal style understood as "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess 1984 in Mason 2002:62). All qualitative interviews consist of a number of themes or topics the interviewer wants the conversation to cover and fluidity around them is built into the interview design. Mason also emphasises the situated contextual and constructed nature of the knowledge generated during interviews (2002).

Van Zoonen considers 'in-depth' interviewing the most popular method used in feminist media studies and cultural studies and particularly so for research on audiences. She differentiates between open-ended interviews which allow participants to talk on their own terms but have some disadvantages, not least the creation of an abundance of information with unclear relevance to the research topic, and semi-structured forms which balance the advantages and disadvantages of open conversation. In the latter, a loose questionnaire, can contain 'grand tour' questions which allow participants to tell their story in their own terms and the inclusion of 'floating' and 'planned' prompts help to focus participants on particular topics as the conversation develops. As "[T]he final aim remains to reconstruct people's experiences and interpretations on their own terms … the planned sequence can be completely overturned if participants 'decide' differently" (van Zoonen 1994:137). This emphasis on the constructed and reconstructed nature of knowledge gained from interviews means that they lend themselves particularly well to the *constructivist* grounded theory approach advocated by Charmaz which I adopted for this project and will explain in more detail in the next section. Charmaz uses the term 'intensive interviewing' to denote the conversational and open-ended nature of the qualitative interview, for her the most common data collection method used in grounded theory. Such interviews hold several advantages over alternative methods of data collection including their potential to follow new leads during the conversation and the sense that concepts and categories can be tested and developed over a series of interviews in a process that reflects the iterative nature of grounded theory analysis itself. Importantly for this study and according well with the

methodological literature discussed above, Charmaz points to the uniqueness of interviewing for generating knowledge based on the participant's articulation of his/her own experiences:

> Researchers adopt intensive interviewing precisely because it facilitates conducting an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an area in which the interviewee has substantial experience. ... An intensive interview may elicit a range of responses and discourses, including a person's concerns at the moment, justifications of past actions, and measured reflections ... responses and discourses flow from the research participant's multiple identities and social connections. During an interview, the participant's responses may echo a shared discourse tied to one or more identities ... [or] ... elicit the participants reappraisal of a taken-for-granted discourse and its social functions ... And research participants can use interviews to find, piece together, or reconstruct a discourse to make sense of their situation (2014:85)

Charmaz sees the interview as facilitating the construction of a participant's story and of a social bond between interviewer and participant. This view of the interview within a systematic grounded theory approach to the collection and analysis of qualitative data is indicative of what she terms the 'constructivist turn' that came about in grounded theory during the 1990s when "postmodern and narrative critics undermined the epistemology of the method" (Charmaz 2014:13). Earlier in this chapter the origins of grounded theory in the symbolic interactionism that developed from interpretative approaches to sociology was noted. In the next section, I will look at how grounded theory has since developed and argue that its constructivist phase is compatible both with media and cultural studies approaches to audiences and the aims of this project.

CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY

Schrøder et al. argue that grounded theory is a methodological approach compatible with the aims of ethnographic audience research "to understand and analyse the object of research from the informants' or users' points of view" (2003:81). While an ethnographic account must use categories that are meaningful to participants, the researcher must build on such *emic* perspectives to form *etic* categories that acknowledge the researcher's prior knowledge and understanding and avoid what Geertz had called 'ethnographic ventriloquism' (2003:81). The process of a grounded theory approach leads from initial perception to selection, comparison and interpretation and on to the building of concepts which then form the basis of a substantive or more formal theory. Therefore it involves what Schrøder et al. call "the dual demands of realism and constructivism," the latter understood as the epistemological basis of contemporary ethnography because ultimately: "Media ethnographies … are articulations of and claims to particular realities, not reality itself. Neither are they fictional narratives inventing (possible) realities" (2003:82). Van Zoonen argues that the analysis of interview data is somewhat neglected in media studies and one of the key issues that needs to be made clear in any study is the ontological status of the interview material. Similarly to the dual demands mentioned above: "Language should not be conceived as reflective, but as constructive and functional", a position that advocates a social constructionist view of reality in media research (1994:140):

> For the researcher, the task is to find a balance between faithfully reconstructing the meanings, definitions and interpretations of individual participants and producing a grounded theory, an analytic and encompassing picture of the whole collective process of making meaning (1994:146).

In 1967, Glaser and Strauss challenged the quantitative scientific methods that had dominated American sociological research with their qualitative grounded theory approach which "... proposed that systematic qualitative analysis had its own logic and could generate

theory" (Charmaz 2014:7). The strategies of grounded theory were the collection and simultaneous iterative inductive analysis of qualitative data using comparative methods to create conceptual categories that can be used to build a substantive or formal theory (Charmaz 2014). While some ethnographers, as Lyn Lofland has argued, had always been doing this, other scholars have pointed out that Glaser and Strauss had effectively "democratized qualitative research" by providing researchers with tools that allowed them "to advance their work theoretically" whereas it had hitherto remained merely descriptive (Charmaz 2014:278). Although the method was initially associated with the objectivist notion that any prior theoretical knowledge could pollute the research data and should be therefore disavowed, this was in fact a position espoused in later years more by Glaser than by Strauss (Charmaz 2014). Juliet Corbin worked with Strauss in the 1980s to develop a variation of the approach which conceived of prior knowledge as useful in identifying an area of research, but both approaches necessitated the researcher remaining objective and implied that prior knowledge should never impose itself on a theory emerging from the data (Charmaz 2014, Ramalho *et al.* 2015). It was the undermining of the epistemological basis of both approaches by postmodernist critics in the 1990s that led to further development of the grounded theory method by others, including Charmaz. Labelling her approach as *constructivist* grounded theory, she embraced the idea that the researcher can never be wholly objective and an explicit recognition of subjectivities in the construction of a theory is necessary. It is important to note, however, that her approach is a continuation of "the inductive, comparative, emergent, and open-ended approach of Glaser and Strauss's original statement," and one that deploys "the iterative logic that Strauss emphasized in his early teaching, as well as the dual emphases on action and meaning inherent in the pragmatist tradition" (Charmaz 2014:12-3). The theoretical perspective from that tradition that is most associated with the grounded theory method is that of symbolic interactionism, and Charmaz points to the symbiotic relationship between the two as well as to their ongoing potential to 'inform and advance each other' (2014:284). For Charmaz it is the very focus on language inherent in symbolic interactionism that draws attention to the

researcher as well as the researched and “fosters developing the kind of reflexivity to which constructivist grounded theorists aspire” (2014:284). Her constructivist approach to grounded theory does not endorse “mid-century assumptions of an objective external reality, a passive, neutral observer, or a detached, narrow empiricism” but instead takes the full context of the research encounter into account in a social reality understood as “multiple, processual, and constructed” (2014:12-3).

Constructivist grounded theory is a useful method of analysis for the interview data in this project not only because it emerged from the symbolic interactionist understandings of communication that underscores much media studies research but because it aligns with the ‘anti-objectivist’ view of knowledge espoused by the British cultural studies tradition where the object of knowledge was not conceived as separate from the researcher and the context and historical circumstances of engagement were important:

> ... partiality is not only inevitable – [but] a necessary human condition of knowledge production – it is also, potentially, a resource or asset, provided it is made explicit and debated and reflected on (Johnson *et al.* 2004:17).

The following section will outline the application of this epistemological framework to the research design of this project.

APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGY

In this section I describe the application of the methodology in this project outlining the journey from the call for participants to the construction and evolution of the interview questionnaire and subsequent coding and analysis of the gathered data. The section will also discuss some of the decisions taken in the run up and during the fieldwork stage of the research such as the parameters of what constitutes media for the project, the benefit of conducting telephone interviews and the division of the findings chapters between the first-generation and second- (and later-) generation participants.

Drawing on the implications of symbolic interactionism and the ethnographic turn that underpins qualitative audience studies and choosing a method of data analysis consistent with both, a set of semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with Irish people in Britain for whom Irish-themed media and media from Ireland is part of everyday life. The same guiding principles outlined by Rionach Casey in her study of Irish collective identity in Sheffield were adopted. In that study, “the working definition of ‘Irish’ referred to individuals who self-identified as Irish, whether they were born in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland or other parts of the UK or elsewhere” and the diversity of the Irish in Britain in terms of age, gender, social class and religio-cultural background was also recognised (2010:214). Delaney argues, in relation to Irish historiography but the point is also relevant here, that the subsequent generations should be included in diaspora:

> [T]he scope of what actually constitutes the Irish diaspora should include people of Irish descent. For defensible reasons, historians often delimit their focus to those who were actually born in Ireland, first-generation migrants, or second-generation migrants with at least one Irish parent, avoiding complicated issues of ethnic self-identification that arise when it comes to second and third generations of Irish descent. Histories of the Irish diaspora that do adopt such an approach demonstrate the malleable nature of Irish identity, and the complex set of mechanisms by which it was transmitted from generation to generation (2014:141).

Drawing on my own family experience, which resonates with the insights of Nash on “births in England and lives in Ireland, and births in Ireland and lives in England,” the inclusion of participants regardless of country of birth was extended to country of current residence which can change without negating a lived experience as Irish in Britain or indeed Irish in Ireland (Moran 2010:18).

Considering the iterative nature of data collection and analysis in the grounded theory tradition it was decided early on in the project to conduct one or two interviews in order to

get a sense of what the data might contain and as a way of focusing the literature review and use of the methodology against it. In the years prior to undertaking the research, a small but significant number of second- (or later-) generation Irish people had moved from Britain (more specifically England) to the Conamara Gaeltacht region in the west of Ireland where the researcher was based and from where their parents had emigrated a generation previously. Given the case made above for inclusion of the second- (and later-) generation Irish in research on the diaspora this was seen as an opportunity to understand that experience and ensure it was included as the project was developed. Thus the first 'call for participants' (Appendix 1A) was in the form of a notice displayed in the local shops and community centres in Conamara with a view to attracting second- (or later-) generation Irish people who had moved to Ireland.[4] Two second-generation participants came forward and the interviews that were conducted with them ensured that, from the very earliest stages, the project was as open to the second- (or later-) generation experience as it was to that of first-generation migrants.

The notice used to recruit participants in Britain (Appendix 1B) was disseminated to local and UK wide Irish support and interest groups over a period from the end of 2016 to the spring of 2017. Some of these groups received the information from the Irish in Britain charity which is the national membership body for over 100 organisations, groups and societies supporting the Irish community across Britain and others were contacted directly including The London Irish Centre, St Michaels Irish Centre in Liverpool, and the UK wide Traveller Movement and Mind Yourself charities. These organisations were willing to print and display the notice on their physical noticeboards as well as to share the call on their social media accounts, a step which helped to widen the geographical range of the call and extend its period of circulation. In the spring of 2017 short description of the research project, that included contact details, was also published in the two Irish diasporic print

[4] This notice was bilingual (Irish and English) as Irish remains the everyday language of the region and local custom is that the majority of signs and public notices are in Irish. The English text allowed those without Irish (likely to include second-generation Irish who had moved from Britain) to understand the project and get in touch if they wished to participate.

newspapers *The Irish Post* and *The Irish World* and they also distributed the poster on their social media pages.

The images used for the posters were chosen to catch the eye of potential participants and engage them with the explanatory text. For the initial notice posted in Ireland it was felt that the iconic symbol of the Kilburn High Road London Underground sign would resonate with Irish people who had spent a substantial amount of their lives in Britain whereas the use of images of a radio and television that had the Irish flag displayed prominently on them was aimed at engaging those with an Irish identity in Britain as well as communicating that media was the focus of the project. These images were not intended to foreground traditional broadcasting technologies or media organisations over internet based ones although the researcher's own preconceptions about definitions of media and of the media technologies presumed to be important to the Irish in Britain as well as the insights of the initial two interviewees all played their part in this choice. However, the explanatory text and the subsequent interviewing approach to participants deliberately eschewed foregrounding any particular media platform, channel, genre or text in order to allow participants articulate their own personal relationships to Irish media in their own terms. At the time that the research project was being developed there had been regular media coverage of the huge ratings success of the Irish-themed television sit-com *Mrs Brown's Boys* on British television but alongside the headline figures there was little engagement with the cultural or ethnic identities that might make up that audience (Logan 2013, Jackson 2016). For this reason, the text used to recruit participants was deliberately phrased to avoid any mention of specific media texts and defined media technologies in the broadest possible terms including traditional television, radio, magazines, and newspapers as well as social media platforms and internet content.

The data collection began with an open mind as to how and where the interviews would be conducted. The two interviews recorded in Ireland in late 2015 were conducted in a traditional 'face-to-face' manner given the participants were in close proximity to the

researcher. Although it was initially envisaged that face-to-face interviews would be the primary interviewing method for the project this was readdressed over time given the practicalities of covering the wide geographical area that is Britain and the effectiveness of social media for keeping the call for participants in circulation. Seven more 'face-to-face' interviews were conducted in different locations around London on a visit there in the summer of 2017 but the other twenty one were conducted between 2016 and 2018 using the Skype telecommunications computer program to make calls to the personal landline or mobile telephone numbers of participants alongside the Amolto Call Recorder software package to record those calls. This use of phone interviews was initially undertaken on a trial basis but it became the primary approach because of the convenience to participants (who could fit an interview more easily into their busy lives) and because it greatly extended the geographical scope of the study. Phone interviews were carried out with participants living in Liverpool, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow and the Isle of Man as well as across the Greater London area. Following Mason, the phone interviews were conducted in much the same way as their 'face-to-face' counterparts with one or two preliminary calls used to share knowledge about the project, build up trust with the participant and arrange a mutually convenient time for the extended recorded interview phone call (2002). Just as with the 'face-to-face' interviews these preliminary calls were not recorded and the participant was fully aware of the project details, of when the recorded interview would take place and of their ability to withdraw their consent at any time. In some ways the phone interviews were more advantageous as both the participant and the researcher could be in their own familiar surroundings at a time when they were unlikely to be disturbed and this allowed for a natural free-flowing conversation. In contrast, some of the 'face-to-face' interviews conducted during the research trip to London were a little pressurised due to time constraints posed by the practicalities of travel across the city and the fact that the interview space was usually only available for a pre-arranged time by the organisation

providing it.[5] At no time, other than the occasional minor technological glitch, was it felt that the interviews were any less valuable or practical when conducted over the phone. It is also interesting, in the light of the shift to virtual online meetings brought about by the global Covid pandemic that occurred as this research was being written up, to note that only one of the participants asked if a Skype to Skype video call would be possible. This call was recorded in 2017 and while it made an interesting contrast to the recorded phone call it was felt that the addition of video, because of its poor quality with glitches and delays, made communication a little more difficult. For this reason it was decided to continue with the Skype to phone model unless the video mode was again requested.

The use of phone interviews also meant that they were carried out over an extended period during which each could be transcribed and analysed and the resulting information fed back into the subsequent interviews, an approach in keeping with the constructivist grounded theory approach advocated by Charmaz (2014). Initial 'coding' of each interview for salient themes was followed by further rounds of 'focused coding' and of 'memo writing' which produced drafts of what would become the findings chapters of the thesis. As the number of interviews increased higher level 'theoretical sampling, saturation and sorting' was possible allowing the 'theoretical categories' to emerge and give structure to the findings chapters. This was an iterative process in keeping with grounded theory but in the constructivist version it is also an 'interactive' one that allows for the understanding and experience of the researcher to contribute to the conceptualisation of categories and themes (2014). The themes that emerge are built on the similarities across the interviews and the contextual knowledge of the researcher and in cases where a category has been saturated with multiple participant accounts a summary or direct quotation from one or two participant can be sufficient to illustrate it. It is for this reason that, although six of the First-generation and two of the Second- (or later-) generation participants listed in Appendix

[5] I am very grateful to the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith for the use of their building, to London GAA for the use of their hall at McGovern Park, Ruislip and to the *Irish Post* for the use of their offices in Fenchurch St. in Central London to conduct these interviews.

4 are not explicitly referenced in the relevant findings chapter, their accounts have contributed to the construction, description and interpretation of those themes relevant to them.

The research and its aims were fully explained to each participant and they were asked to read and agree to the consent form (Appendix 2) which ensured anonymity in the use of interview information. Thus, all participant names have been changed and I have withheld any details that could make any of the participants identifiable. There was a near-even gender breakdown across the thirty participants with just over half of them self-identifying as first-generation and the rest as second- (or later-) generation. This generational definition was articulated by the participants themselves in the ways they described their Irishness and also evident in their understanding of Ireland and Irish media. This led to small divergences in the interview guides used (Appendix 3) and the subsequent division of the findings chapters. It is important to note, however, that the difficulties of classification articulated by Nash were evident in some of the participant accounts, and this is usefully illustrated with some examples (Moran 2010). The two participants interviewed in Ireland were born in London to Irish parents and had lived the greater part of their lives there. They had both 'returned' to live in Ireland not long before seeing the call for participation in this project there and both have been included in the second-generation chapter. Another participant, who had come across the call on social media while living in London, was born in Ireland to Irish parents but had spent significant and equal parts of her childhood and adult life living both there and in Britain as her parents work commitments involved prolonged and repeated periods in both places. That participant had followed her third level education in Ireland with postgraduate studies and subsequent professional employment in England and her lived experience of Ireland and understanding of Irish media meant that she fitted more easily with the other first-generation participants. The insights of these participants into the role of media in the formation and maintenance of an Irish identity in Britain are all the more valuable as they embody the complex and often unacknowledged lived realities of migration.

SUMMARY

This chapter outlined my journey towards the constructivist grounded theory method for understanding the Irish media audience in Britain and the role of their media practices in the formation and maintenance of an Irish identity. It describes how ethnographic approaches to media audiences grew out of audience reception research conducted in the United States and in the Cultural Studies tradition in Britain and how these developments can be linked to symbolic interactionism as a theory of meaning-making that arose much earlier in qualitative sociology. The development of grounded theory, a systematic method of analysis directly inspired by symbolic interactionism, is also traced from its earliest objectivist conception to the contemporary constructivist one that makes it compatible with the wider move toward poststructuralism. Inspired by these interpretative traditions in the study of media and the constructivist turn in grounded theory, I have taken my own subjectivities into account in the research design, the methodological choices and subsequent analysis of collected data. My personal family history of migration to and from England with extended family members growing up there or my professional interest in media studies and related areas would be impossible to set aside in an attempt to conduct or analyse interviews with the Irish in Britain about their media use in a wholly objective manner. The epistemological and methodological basis of ethnographic approaches to media studies and cultural studies as well as that of constructivist grounded theory as a method of data analysis and theory construction call for this personal context to be acknowledged and used throughout the research process.

Diasporic audience researchers highlight the importance of collecting 'rich empirically grounded material' with which to understand media audiences (Sreberny 2000:182). The use of an ethnographic perspective in this project is indebted to such work as well as to symbolic interactionism as the theoretical basis of media audience research which emphasises the contextual sense-making processes of participants as crucial to any understanding of everyday practices. The theoretical and methodological approaches

outlined in this chapter point to open-ended semi-structured qualitative interviews as a valid tool for collecting data in this project. Grounded theory provides the tools for analysing that interview data and advancing it toward a theory of the Irish media audience in Britain.

The constructivist version of grounded theory pioneered by Charmaz makes it wholly compatible with both feminist interpretative research on media audiences and with the Cultural Studies approaches to subaltern groups (2014). Given the history of misrepresentation and invisibility of the Irish in Britain, the philosophical underpinnings of cultural studies methods are of particular relevance to this project (Curtis 1971, Hillyard 1993, Hickman 1997, Curtis 1998). The importance of taking researcher subjectivities into account, of being interpretative in nature, and of aiming to *construct* a situated understanding of the Irish in Britain as an internally differentiated group identity that, in spite of invisibility and often presumed assimilation, has remained strong in British society over successive generations also points to the methodological suitability of constructivist grounded theory. I am also indebted to van Zoonen's articulation of the implications of media studies research which means "our understanding of gender has moved away from it being a consistent feature of human life that preceded society and culture, [but as] unstable and constructed" and this project takes a similar approach to Irish identities (1994:130-1). A 'politics of becoming' can be articulated in research grounded in respect for and attention to the interpretative frameworks of participants who consider themselves to have an Irish identity and in research that remains aware of the constructivist nature of both those articulations and their subsequent reconstruction by the researcher (Gray 2003).

The next chapter will show the analysis of the interviews conducted with the first-generation participants and develop the key themes which are denoted in the chapters sub-headings. Chapter six will do the same for the second- (and later-) generation participants and the final chapter will compare and contrast the two groups in a set of main findings. It will also describe the projects contribution to media studies, discuss its limitations and outline possible areas for future research.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FIRST-GENERATION IRISH MEDIA AUDIENCE IN BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

As discussed in chapter two identity is now understood not simply as the choice of an individual but an aspect of humanity that is produced by the social worlds around us (Wetherell 2010). As one Rolland Munro put it: “identity itself lies in the gift of others” (2010:214). It can thus be in the very early period of the migration experience as access to media content ubiquitous at home becomes more precariously available that its significance to an Irish identity becomes apparent. Having moved away from where Irish local and national media have a privileged position in everyday life, the first-generation Irish migrant is forced to adjust to having their sense of collective cultural identity defined and sometimes challenged by the media institutions of a host nation. This, coupled with a sense of being out of touch with events in Ireland, can throw identities into crisis and lead to feelings of alienation that inspire re-engagement with the media sources and content once taken-for-granted in previous lives. This chapter analyses the interviews conducted with first-generation Irish migrants living in Britain to understand the interplay between their Irish identities and the Irish media content they engage with in their everyday lives.

While being ‘Irish’ was understood by the participants in this group to be a taken-for-granted aspect of their identities that needed neither articulation or justification during the interviews it also clearly began to require emphasis and maintenance in their everyday lives within a short period after they had left Ireland. The uncertainties and tensions associated with this change as they are articulated by participants are outlined at the beginning of the chapter, and this is followed by an analysis of their explanations for engaging with media content from and about Ireland in the course of their everyday lives in Britain. Many of the features of diaspora as outlined by William Safran resonate in these accounts of the importance of Irish media in Britain to first-generation Irish migrants including the maintenance of an ongoing identification with the home country, a sense of alienation in

the new location, a need to support the homeland and a desire to return there if and when the opportunity might arise (Clifford 1994). Walter et al. point to hybridity as a way of understanding the complexity of Irish cultural identities in Britain. Although phenomena such as the increase over time of rates of intermarriage between first-generation Irish migrants and the English, Scottish and Welsh could be simplistically understood as assimilation, they suggest an alternative understanding "… in which both placed and displaced identities are held in tension, their expression varying contextually in time and space" (2002:202). The interviews analysed in this chapter show the emphasis placed on media from home as a means of keeping a displaced identity alive in the context of life in Britain and how this can be part of a process out of which a hybrid identity may emerge.

Given the physical proximity of Britain to Ireland, maintaining an interest and investment in media from Ireland has always been a possibility for the Irish migrant to Britain. Throughout the twentieth century, this could be achieved because of the wide availability of local and national Irish newspapers as well as the presence, in the post-war period, of the analogue radio signal from Ireland's national broadcaster.[6] In the period that the interviews were conducted, the transition to digital distribution meant that the potential for media habits to transfer with initial migration were in many ways greater than ever and often only frustrated by legal or financial barriers to access. The biggest difficulty articulated by first-generation participants during the interviews was the lack of access to Irish broadcast television which was not readily available to all but one of the first-generation participants.[7] That participant was paying a subscription to the RTÉ Player International service launched by the broadcaster in 2015. In contrast, a mix of still-available print newspapers including *The Irish Independent* and the long wave analogue radio signal broadcasting RTÉ Radio One combined

[6] Transmission of RTÉ Radio One on the 252 kHz long wave frequency commenced in 2004 but, prior to that, the station would have been accessible in Britain via the medium wave frequency widely used in Ireland prior to the proliferation of the high frequency FM band.
[7] One second-generation participant did have access to all the television channels from Ireland in his home and had achieved this by use of a satellite decoder card he found on the black market.

with websites and smartphone apps made Irish radio and newspaper content very much available to the Irish in Britain in the period prior to the interviews.

Accessing media content from Ireland within a similar timeframe to audiences at home in Ireland has the potential to allow Irish migrants to Britain remain a part of Ireland's imagined community, something once taken-for-granted but which, in the context of migration, can serve to both ameliorate and extenuate the fact of migration itself. This chapter explores the ways knowledge of Irish media content might facilitate everyday conversations with family and friends in Ireland thereby helping a migrant feel they are not that far from home while simultaneously inducing feelings of distance. Continued access to Irish media is an important way to maintain links to and knowledge of Ireland and engagement with it can be connected with the desire to remain engaged as an Irish citizen and keep open the possibility of future return. The chapter also discusses how Irish media is used as a resource that affirms Irish identities in personal and in professional lives in Britain and how the signposting and promotion of Irish media content to non-Irish family members, friends or work colleagues in Britain acts as a corrective to the perceived inadequacies in representations of Ireland on British media. The use of media to bring Irish identity to the fore in the different contexts of everyday life in Britain can be understood as a bulwark to complete assimilation and as a resource to aid the performance of that identity by first-generation migrants there.

MAINTAINING AN IRISH IDENTITY

As discussed earlier, the understanding of identity that developed over the course of the twentieth century was underpinned by the social constructionism of the early identity scholars while simultaneously emphasising the agency of the individual (Wetherell 2010). Cultural identity is handed down from previous generations, formed and maintained through cultural resources that include media and their discourses but also must be actively invested in to have meaning. A change in circumstances, such as adapting to life in a new country, can throw these processes of identity formation and maintenance into sharp relief, as Mary Corcoran pointed out in her analysis of Irish identities abroad:

> The insider/outsider status of Irish migrants in the host society and the society of origin traps them in a liminal space wherein their [sic] experience the contradictions and ambivalences associated with identity formation in late modernity (2003:14).

The first-generation accounts point to similar experiences soon after leaving Ireland. John is in his late twenties and has, with the exception of one year spent working in Dublin, been living in different parts of England since the age of sixteen. He spoke of the 'horrible homesickness' he often currently experiences in his life in Birmingham:

> Dublin is home and I don't think that will change ... [I'm] very proud of where I'm from and that kicked in from moving over here.

Highlighting the transformational effect of migration on past identities, he describes having no definitive plan to go back to Ireland but that the possibility often comes up in conversations with his third-generation Irish fiancé making him very uncertain about where he will eventually settle. He described himself as:

> [A]n outsider in Dublin, an outsider in England. I don't have a middle ground so I've just got to bite the bullet one way or another.

Hickman has highlighted the importance of accent as the primary marker of Irish ethnic identity in Britain, emphasised by Irish immigrants as a way of differentiating themselves from both the older generation and the second-generation Irish they find there (2002). John is proud of the strong Dublin accent he still has and sees it as an important marker of his Irish identity in Britain. He points out that he would never want to lose it or want it to "turn into a Birmingham accent, which is awful". Other first-generation participants in the study pointed to the desire to hear accents from home as a motivating factor in their habit of tuning into radio stations they were familiar with in Ireland. Frank, who is in his early fifties, had to leave Donegal for economic reasons for the second time in his adult life in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis. He describes his reasons for streaming Donegal's

local commercial radio station *Highland Radio* on his smartphone while working as a house painter in London, as wanting to hear the Donegal accents he misses from home. He tries to avoid listening to the station for extended periods, however, as this has brought on depressing feelings of homesickness. Emma, a postgraduate student in her mid-twenties who moved from her native Cork to Edinburgh a year before the interview, found that streaming a local commercial radio station she loved as a teenager has helped her adjust to her new life:

> I did have one or two occasions where I did tune into *Red FM* … I was quite homesick … I found it comforting on a few occasions and it would mean just putting it on my laptop and doing bits and pieces around the room while I'm just hearing the familiar accents, that was what I was looking for the most.

Listening to this radio station also evoked comforting memories of her early teenage years at home in Cork, a period when she listened clandestinely to late night talk shows with mature themes or when she would insist the family's car radio be switched to the station whenever she was travelling in it with her parents. Emma's emphasis on the need to hear the Cork accent is paralleled in her description of her social media activity. She describes this as a conscious tailoring of content that has resonance with her followers who are predominantly friends in Ireland. On her Instagram account, she will share images of Cork landscapes captured on visits home or similar images captured while out and about in Scotland and post them with an anchoring phrase that deliberately evokes Irishness such as "Grand day for it!" She points out a contrast with the practice of friends she follows, who are predominantly living in Ireland, and who seem to use Instagram while travelling outside of Ireland to post "amazing photos of other places". This is the opposite of what she uses it for, and she articulates her motivation as keeping a "sense of Irish identity, I like to show that I am very much still in touch with Ireland ...". Emma's use of Irish radio to continue hearing accents from home and relive memories of life in Ireland, along with her use of

phrases connoting Irishness to anchor the pictures she posts on social media are examples of ways of actively maintaining an Irish identity while living abroad.

Mary has lived on the Isle of Man, a British Crown dependency that lies in the Irish Sea between Ireland and Britain, for over thirty years along with her Irish husband and their now almost adult children. Throughout this time she has felt isolated from the large family in which she grew up as most of her siblings also emigrated but to destinations some distance from Europe. Both the lack of an Irish community on the island and not having family left in Ireland accentuates this isolation and makes her daily use of the Irish national public-service radio station RTÉ Radio One all the more important: "[I]t helps me feel not so isolated … from the family and from the familiar". When she first moved, it was her husband who always tuned in to this radio station to keep in touch with what was happening back home and Mary actually found it difficult to listen to the morning talk show, then hosted by Gay Byrne, as she found the strong feelings of homesickness evoked would upset her. As the years passed such feelings subsided, and the station and its daytime talk shows became an essential part of her daily routine and fundamental to how she maintains her Irishness.

These accounts show the importance of Irish media to maintaining Irish identities. They reflect what Jenkins called the most persuasive elements of the symbolic interactionist tradition where identity is understood as an accommodation between internal and external definitions of the self (Wetherell 2010). The emphasis that these participants put on markers of Irish identity and their efforts to maintain those markers in their everyday lives in Britain by surrounding themselves with media from Ireland points to their consciousness of living away from home and the related fear of potential identity loss. In the accounts, familiar media from Ireland are accessed to reconnect with and compensate for a lack of familiar cultural markers in the host society. This points to the way media from Ireland are sought out by the first-generation Irish in Britain and how it engages them in 'activities of identity' that endeavour to keep Irish identities alive in the migrant setting (Wood 2010:273).

The trajectory of another participant, Margaret, in her early thirties and living in London for nearly a decade, serves as an insight into other ways Irish identity in Britain can be worked upon over time to alleviate some of the underlying tensions of living away from home. Margaret initially found it very difficult to adjust to her new life in London, but this became easier when she got a job in the advertising department of an Irish diasporic newspaper there, which helped her discover and take an active part in the Irish community in London. This included access to many of the Irish sporting and cultural events organised in London, which transformed her immigrant experience. She now feels she is much more connected with an Irish community than she was even when she was growing up in Ireland. For her:

> There's a stronger Irish community away from Ireland … I grew up in Dublin and it's quite ... big and diverse ... my family are from [rural Ireland] originally and when we go back down there, it's very much 'the parish' and it's lovely, a real sense of community, but we didn't actually grow up with that. We grew up in Dublin in a suburb which was lovely, but there wasn't a real community spirit whereas the community I'm involved in over here is mainly through my job. I'd be heavily involved with Irish business networks, with the GAA, with Comhaltas[8], with all the different organisations, and you really feel part of something. Much more so away from home. You can see how people easily become part of a community and don't feel the need to necessarily go home.

Margaret's framing of this insight suggests that, for her, an Irish identity grounded in the rural is more authentic and more easily available to an Irish immigrant in London willing to embrace it than to an urban dweller in Ireland. This reveals some of the tensions around how Irishness is typically represented in the media and how it is actually lived across a range of heterogeneous real-life settings in Ireland itself. Margaret's interaction with and

[8] Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is a non-profit organisation involved in the preservation and promotion of Irish traditional music in Ireland and around the world.

understanding of the Irish community in London is led by her connection with the Irish diasporic newspaper in which she works. It is also interesting that despite Margaret's clear enthusiasm for the life she has in London, she had, in the days prior to the interview, returned from a holiday in Spain with some of her friends from Ireland, and the experience had brought on strong feelings of homesickness for life in Ireland. After a day or two back at work she was feeling positive and excited about her life in London once again, but this experience alongside her view that becoming part of the Irish diasporic community in London can compensate for a life no longer lived in Ireland points to the contradictory tensions and emotions around identity and belonging that are part of being an Irish migrant abroad.

The above discussion reveals something of the often conflicted feelings that an Irish migrant to Britain can have. While all the first-generation participants expressed their use of media from Ireland as positive and essential to their lives, it is seen here to both compensate for and exacerbate feelings of alienation or loneliness. This is further explored in the following sections which deal with the main themes that emerged from the first-generation participants' discussion of their Irish media use.

The most common reason for regular engagement with Irish media in the everyday lives of this group was that it was a way of keeping up to date with what was happening in Ireland. Given the proximity and the relatively low cost of travel between Ireland and Britain, Irish migrants have always been able to make relatively frequent visits home, and the participants discussed here also maintain regular contact with family or friends in Ireland by phone or other social media which has, due to technological advances, become cheaper and more instantaneous in recent years. Having regular access to media from Ireland is described as a way of experiencing the media content that their personal connections and wider peer groups in Ireland are using, and this knowledge becomes a resource through which personal conversations with home can be initiated, developed and extended. It also allows them, despite their physical location, to retain their place in the Irish community they have had to

leave for now. An important element of this is real-time knowledge of how individual news stories are unfolding, political campaigns are proceeding or cultural texts are being received and, by extension, how Ireland itself might be changing. This up-to-date knowledge of Ireland was also explicitly understood in the cases of some participants as an important resource to aid return as it could alert them to opportunities and facilitate a smoother re-engagement with life in Ireland. The sections which follow take a closer look at these themes.

THE SOCIAL USES OF IRISH MEDIA

The social role of media was manifest in the earliest audience research although it was, at the time and in historical accounts since, obscured by a focus on positivist approaches to audiences and the social class differences between early researchers and those they researched (Scannell 2020). Paddy Scannell argues that the ‘uses and gratifications’ tradition of audience research pioneered by American mass communications scholars in the 1950s and interpreted rather narrowly by many scholars since, revealed the “sociability” of media and the ways they were “… interacting with viewers’ own sociable existence” (2020:302). Researchers such as Horton and Wohl (1956) had obscured the conversational use media was put to in the social lives of the audience by emphasising ‘the para-social relationship’ constructed with broadcast media by socially isolated audience members (Scannell 2020:301). The social uses of Irish media was evident across the interviews conducted for this thesis and some examples of how this was articulated are discussed here.

John feels knowledge of what is happening in Ireland, which he picks up by checking the RTÉ website on a daily basis is useful when chatting to friends in Ireland. It ensures he is “not coming into the conversation blind” and allows him to contribute despite a sense that he can never be as well informed as those living in Ireland. However, not being fully informed about a topic discussed with friends is an enjoyable aspect too as it means he can initiate the conversation and then “… sit back and hear what the others are saying,” increasing his

understanding of the information he has gathered from his own engagement with Irish media.

Although Mary had not been able to listen to RTÉ Radio One without getting homesick in the first years after she and her husband emigrated she became more reliant on it as the years went by. Listening to the daily chat shows helped her stay informed about issues being discussed in Ireland and allows her take an active part in conversations with friends and family from Ireland:

> When I went home, I would be out of the loop if I didn't know what was going on so I would start to listen to the radio … and then I just became very involved over the last ten or fifteen years really with Irish radio and with what's going on in Ireland … It is who we are … I listen to Joe Duffy, I feel a sense of identity with everybody (on it) … I listen to the News, I listen to *Playback* … RTÉ [Radio One] would be our radio of choice.

For Mark, a participant in his late forties who emigrated to England twenty years previously and has lived in Scotland for ten years now, having a knowledge of current affairs in Ireland also helps to enrich and extend phone conversations with his connections back in Ireland:

> 'How's everyone in the family?' and the phone call is over after five minutes whereas when there's a news event happening that you're reading about you're able to have a right good conversation about what's their view of it and what's happening and all the rest of it, which just keeps you connected.

The work of Helen Wood, as outlined in chapter two, focuses on the social aspect of media to reveal the ways interpersonal and mediated communication are interconnected. One of the 'activities of identity' that result are the conversations about media and their content audience members have through their social connections (2010:273). People make choices from the large and diverse media available to them based on what is meaningful in their

lives, and it is from these resources that they build social connections and wider imagined communities (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998).

Mark recounted an example of how Irish-themed media content may be heard about in conversation, get mentioned on Irish news media and be sought out not least because of their potential to have a role in further conversations. The Irish-themed historical film *The Siege of Jadotville* was made available on the streaming service *Netflix* in 2016 and recommended to him by a friend he had met socially while on a visit home to Ireland. He recalled that conversation a week later when at home in Scotland he came across an article on the RTÉ News website detailing the presentation of medals to the Irish soldiers portrayed in the film. This led him to seek out and watch the film, and he felt he enjoyed it all the more because of both the background knowledge on the events from Irish news media that he could draw on while watching it and the connection to a friend with whom he could chat to about it again in the future.

Mark also made a strong distinction between the Irish national media which he feels is very Dublin-centric and the local media based near where he grew up on the border of Mayo and Galway.

> In the national newspapers, it's very focused on where the politics is really … so you know there's something very different outside of that but you have to find it somewhere else and often you might listen to Midwest Radio to find out a little bit more.

However, Mark spends more of his time listening to the Irish national public-service radio station RTÉ Radio One and reading Ireland's main national newspaper websites *The Irish Times* and *The Independent* than he does accessing local media from Ireland. For this reason he is sometimes unaware of the local angles on national stories, and he enjoys hearing about these during conversations with home:

> So you might miss some angles that they'd have picked up from reading something else you know like *The Western People* or *The Mayo News* or even some new station that they're listening to, and they've just got a different angle I wouldn't have.

Conversations with home in conjunction with his use of Irish media allows Mark to make critical distinctions between Irish media providers and the ways they represent Ireland. He described how one particular crime story in the part of rural Waterford his brother is currently living in was covered by RTÉ and *The Irish Times* in a way that he felt to be credible and true to the nature of the place he knows from personal visits to and chats with his brother but covered by the *Independent* in a more sensationalist manner similar to how inner-city Dublin crime stories are often framed in that newspaper. A chat with his brother who had local knowledge of those involved in the story revealed to Mark that some of the more colourful "facts" in the *Independent*'s version were unlikely to be true.

These examples show how Irish media content plays a significant role in the everyday conversations taking place between Irish migrants and their friends and family in Ireland. Knowledge about and familiarity with Irish media content can empower and facilitate an Irish migrant's desire to take an active part in conversations about Ireland while the interactions themselves allow Irish migrants to develop critical understandings of Irish media practices. Particular stories and programmes are meaningful in the specific and subjective social circles of each participant pointing to the social uses of Irish media to Irish migrants in Britain. There are many similar examples in the interview data, and some of these will be used later in the chapter to draw out the additional related uses Irish media content is put to by the Irish in Britain. Firstly, the imagined community constructed by media from Ireland for first-generation participants is discussed (Anderson 2006).

IRELAND'S IMAGINED COMMUNITY

Many of the accounts show that the first-generation migrants seek out media content from Ireland as a way of compensating for not living in Ireland any longer. Reading newspapers or their websites, listening to radio or watching television programmes from Ireland allowed participants the sense that they were still a part of the Irish media audience. As one participant described the daily habit of listening to RTÉ Radio One: "It's the easy way of feeling like you're not that far away from home" (Siobhán). Benedict Anderson connected early print media with the development of the modern nation which he defined as 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (2006:6). Although citizens could not hope to know, meet or hear about most of the fellow members of that community, the daily rituals spent consuming the same narratives helped bind them together in a common political identity. Anderson's conception is useful to understanding the accounts of all generations of the Irish in Britain and will be revisited in the analysis of the second- (and later-) generation interviews. It is important that the community on which common identity was based was also imagined as limited due to its 'finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations' (2006:7). This has special resonance for this research due to the intertwined histories and common language of the two countries in question, as well as the proximity and ease of travel between them, which means the elasticity of the border is more pronounced. In this context, the idea of "feeling not too far away from home" is facilitated by the continuation of habits once familiar in Ireland.

Siobhán is in her thirties and had been living in England for twelve years at the time of interview. She emphasised the continuity of her media habits with those she was familiar with growing up in Dublin. There the radio was always on and over the course of a typical day regularly switched between RTÉ Radio One and BBC Radio 4 by her parents and she continues this practice in her everyday life in Britain now. She is also aware of such continuities among her Irish friends in Britain:

> One friend … here … wouldn’t have listened to it at all … but another friend who lives here always listened to Irish radio anyway, so she kind of brought that over … if you’ve done it at home, it’s just a habit that you bring with you.

The accounts also reveal that Irish and Irish-themed media content could become more important for those migrants without an Irish support network in Britain. Susan, living in London for three years at the time of interview and having spent six years in Brussels before that, feels that Irish media compensates for the lack of contact with other Irish people in her daily life. She contrasts the sizable network of Irish friends she had as a younger Irish immigrant in Brussels, where she worked as an Irish language translator, with the mostly non-Irish connections she has now developed through her English husband and her professional life in an IT company in central London. In Brussels, her social life was conducted mainly through the Irish language with fellow Irish immigrants, and she contrasts her active participation in the traditional Irish music and GAA scenes there with her current lifestyle doing mainly ‘English stuff’ with her husband. This lack of an Irish social circle has meant that “… other links to home become more important ...,” and one main link is her daily use of Irish media which complements her direct contact with Ireland via phone, social media and trips home.

Particular media content such as mediated sport in public settings can also alleviate feelings of isolation from the wider Irish community. Arthur Raney has explored why audiences watch and enjoy mediated sports and points to the notion of the ‘sports encounter,’ where sports events broadcast in a public setting can legitimise interpersonal interaction between strangers, and “many fans … report being motivated by a larger sense of group affiliation … a … sense of belonging and community can be felt on various levels” (2006:323). Áine, in her mid-twenties and living in London for a few years having spent some of her early childhood in England and all her teenage years in Ireland, explains how having to go to out to pubs to watch Irish sports in London was seen as a positive thing:

> Because both my parents are from Cork, I support the Cork hurling and football teams, and you're quite lucky in supporting Cork, that you have the two sports. The thing about watching camogie or hurling or Gaelic Football or Ladies Football is that it's not really available on British television or it wasn't a couple of years ago. You would have had to go to an Irish pub to watch the matches which was nice, not only because it got me out of the house when I was quite isolated but also because you have an enforced interaction with the other sports fans, and I'd find the same thing for soccer or rugby. I would go out for the World Cup or the Euros or the Rugby World Cup, and it's a nice way to have a connection with other Irish people.

The lack of an Irish social circle was emphasised by Mary also, and regularly listening to Irish radio while she reared a daughter with Down's Syndrome made her more keenly aware of the cultural differences between Ireland and Britain in the area of pregnancy and disability. Mary gradually realised that, as her daughter grew up, she would not have a support network of peers which would have been available to her in Ireland. Over the years, this has grown in significance and sometimes causes Mary to regret that she is no longer living in Ireland. Listening to RTÉ Radio One on a daily basis has helped her develop an awareness of and a feeling that she and her daughter are also a part of the Down's Syndrome support community there. It was also clear from the interview conducted with Mary that Irish media representations of Ireland gleaned from RTÉ Radio One form a significant part of her understanding of the country. When speaking about potential trips to Ireland, she focused on the traffic problems so often covered in Irish news and talk radio: "I would never drive around Dublin now, if I could choose, I would go by bus or train or Luas 'cos it's insane, the M50 is a nightmare!" Her descriptions of contemporary Ireland are similarly framed in the narrative of boom, bust and subsequent economic recovery that would be very familiar to regular listeners of RTÉ Radio One at the time of her interview. At the same time Mary makes a critical comparison between the various programmes she hears by contrasting her

frustration at news and current affairs coverage that provides a platform for politicians to speak what she describes as "bullshit … and crap… you can't argue with" with the "Irish human touch" she finds on the daily lunchtime audience phone-in programme *Liveline* and on the daily morning chat show hosted by Ryan Tubridy. Mary evinces a sense of pride in the ordinary listeners who call in to such shows to offer help and advice "in a spirt of tolerance and acceptance" to the more distressed callers. She feels that in Ireland: "Your general man on the street is not really critical of other people" and that the importance of the family in Ireland is palpable in these shows. Listening to and feeling a part of this mediated version of Ireland gives her support and solace in her role as a mother to a large family that includes an adult child with significant additional needs.

Susan emphasises that her daily use of Irish talk radio, which she discusses with family in Ireland, gives her knowledge of what "… everyone's talking about" back home in Ireland. It is clearly important for Susan to feel that she can access the same everyday media content as media audiences living in Ireland irrespective of the fact that she is not currently living there, and she emphasises this in various ways over the course of the interview. The importance of accessing Irish news synchronously with or even in advance of those she knows in Ireland is highlighted by her, and she is excited by the developments in digital technologies that have recently facilitated this. She enjoys reading a breaking news story from Ireland on her smartphone before her friends or family who live there, and social media facilitates the immediate communication of such material to those in Ireland in a way analogous to being there with them. Such immediate access to Irish news sources and its subsequent communication would not so long ago have only been possible if she was physically in Ireland and allows her to feel:

> More in touch in some ways … because I'm up early to commute ... I'm reading the news before [them]... I'll text someone from home ... Hey, did you hear about this? And they're hearing it from me because they just

> haven't even gotten up yet ... everything is so instant now, so whether I'm in Ireland or am here I still get the same websites.

Her emphasis on the sameness of the media experiences now available whether one is located in Ireland or in Britain points to ways that the regular use of Irish media in Britain can help ameliorate the fact of migration itself. Thanks to her smartphone, Susan's keen interest in Irish daytime talk radio shows is less constrained by location than it was to previous generations of Irish migrants relying on the analogue radio signal. The one constraint that she and many people in her peer group in Ireland and elsewhere are conscious of is that she is too busy at work at the times of the live broadcasts themselves. Digital technologies are increasingly providing her with workarounds, however, allowing her to catch up after work during her commute home, and she stresses the practical usefulness of the segmented podcasts of programmes which RTÉ makes available in the hours after initial broadcast. She downloads these to her smartphone while at work and listens to them during her commute home.[9] The segmentation of a two-hour chat show into its constitutive features and interviews listed with textual descriptions on the RTÉ website allow her to go directly to the topics of most interest to her rather than having to scroll through an entire broadcast. In describing her phone or text message conversations with her mother in Ireland during which such content is discussed, Susan reveals the emphasis she puts on normalising this access to Irish media content:

> My mum … would have the radio on driving around and she'll message me and say 'Oh I heard … Seán O'Rourke or Ray D'Arcy talking about something this morning and I'll say 'Oh yeah, I heard that..' and she's like 'How did you hear it though?' And I say 'I heard it on the radio'!

[9] When the interview was carried out in 2017 it was possible to stream such content instantaneously without a need for prior downloading but this usually required a more expensive data agreement with a network provider. The alternative was to download while connected to a freely provided internet service such as that of a workplace and then play back the audio on the phone later.

Susan's use of Irish media also provides her with up-to-date knowledge of what her peer group in Ireland might be doing in their everyday lives. She is attracted to Irish media content that is specifically focused on lifestyle and cultural activities in Ireland and that allows her to feel part of an 'imagined community' of people in Ireland who are engaging with it at the same time as her. It also gives her the practical information needed to participate in such activities on future visits home. Her regular engagements with Irish media include a ritualised perusal of lifestyle content such as the weekend food, fashion and travel supplements of *The Irish Times*. The printed supplements that come with the weekend print edition of this newspaper had been an integral part of Susan's weekend routine (enjoyed alongside her Saturday morning coffee) for the first two years she lived in London, but by the time she was interviewed for this project in 2017, it was no longer available in her local shops. When Susan realised she could no longer buy the printed newspaper, she took out the online subscription to the publication's website, which she now reads every day via the smartphone app and describes as her 'main link to home'. She endeavours to recreate the Saturday morning ritual she had with the print newspaper by using the 'flip-view' setting on a laptop computer that converts it to a tablet as this facilitates a more comfortable sitting position similar to how she would have read the printed version. Most importantly for Susan the lifestyle and culture content she is reading on any given weekend is what *Irish Times* readers across Ireland are reading to get up-to-date knowledge of "… where new hotels open, restaurant reviews, what's going on and what people are talking about and thinking about". Keeping in touch with lifestyle trends in Ireland, as they are reported on or promoted by an Irish media outlet such as *The Irish Times*, gives Susan the sense that she is having the same experience as *Irish Times* readers at home in Ireland and allows her to vicariously experience what they may be thinking of, planning and even doing. It is also a growing store of practical knowledge she can use in conversations with home and for planning activities for future visits to Ireland.[10] Although Susan does not have access to television channels

[10] Susan's strong association of *The Irish Times* with its extensive lifestyle content is all the more interesting because she did not mention the publication's specific efforts to include the Irish diaspora as part of the Irish

from Ireland in London, she is aware of and eager to watch the occasional television dramas set in Ireland and whose episodes are typically screened on the main broadcasters of both countries in the same week.[11] As the broadcasts are nearly synchronous Susan can be sure that she is engaging in a viewing experience shared with television viewers in Ireland. Given the often contemporaneous nature of their Irish settings, these dramas can evoke memories of Susan's life before she left Ireland:

> Recently there's been a few little dramas like *Paula*, *Redwater,* TV dramas that are on Irish TV (and) a few days later on the BBC … so *Redwater* was on Sunday maybe in Ireland, it's on here tonight and there's been three that I've noticed: *Can't Cope Won't Cope* as well, on BBC, is (about) very young girls going to Coppers[12] which just reminded me of when I was living in Dublin, it was the same kind of craic, and it does remind me of definitely being at home.

Being a part of the audience for these dramas means Susan can bring her own opinion to bear on reviews of them she comes across in other Irish media and that she can potentially add that opinion to future conversations about them. She made a comparison in this regard between *Can't Cope Won't Cope* and another Irish television show that she was not able to watch in London:

> I know there was a lot of talk about it so when I'm reading *The Irish Times* or I'm reading an Irish website, and they're reviewing it or discussing it ...

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public sphere. That initiative began in 2007 with the Generation Emigration Blog and has since expanded into a broader section of articles and reader contributions on Irish diasporic experience under the title 'Abroad'. For a useful discussion on the conflict between the 'hegemonic language of the marketplace' and the more radical goal of extending the Irish public sphere via online news content see: Markey, A. (2014) 'Throwing Media Shapes Online and the Public Sphere: "The Irish Times"', *Nordic Irish Studies*, 13(1), 57-75.

[11] These dramas are typically co-productions jointly funded by British and Irish broadcasters or Irish productions sold on to British broadcasters.

[12] 'Coppers' refers to 'Copper Face Jacks', a popular Dublin nightclub.

> it's nice to know that I can say 'well I've seen it' whereas *First Dates Ireland* I can't get .. I've no access to that so no idea what's going on.

Here Susan shows how being able to actually watch a television programme in London that is being enjoyed in Ireland allows a first-generation migrant to feel part of that 'imagined community' once taken-for-granted in Ireland and how the inability to watch such a programme means a migrant can feel left out. This sense of finding oneself left out of the national conversation also came up in other first-generation accounts as even the deliberate everyday accessing of Irish media in Britain can sometimes be felt to be inadequate to the task of keeping fully informed and up to date with events in Ireland. Although a daily listener to RTÉ Radio One's morning news programme and reader of Irish news websites Ivan, who moved to London six years before the interview to undertake postgraduate study and is now working there, feels that he sometimes misses out on the finer nuances of Irish current affairs precisely because he is not in Ireland and thus is unable to access a broader range Irish media sources on a more continuous basis throughout the day. He gives the example of a high-profile news story involving the then Garda Commissioner Nóirín O'Sullivan which he felt to have been slowly brewing across mainstream Irish media outlets for many months before it suddenly becoming a huge controversy:

> Sometimes a scandal will come up, and I'll be like I don't understand how this thing ... I had been following in bits and pieces ... became a big thing ... and I think part of that is because I wasn't there for the day-to-day media ratcheting up ... [it] being talked about on each show, this is what's been on the news and it [all] reinforces each other ... I think that's what you kind of miss out on. [13]

[13] Garda Commissioner Nóirín O'Sullivan was forced to resign in November 2017 following a sustained smear campaign against Garda whistleblower Maurice McCabe in which she was falsely implicated. The fourth interim report of the Disclosures Tribunal published in July 2022 dismissed all of the allegations against the former commissioner. See article by Colm Keena: https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/garda-whistleblower-controversy-had-devastating-effect-says-noirin-o-sullivan-1.4733535

The sudden elevation of a story into a vortextual scandal could also have caught many members of the news audience in Ireland by surprise if they also had not kept up to date with the continuous coverage across different media platforms and formats over an extended period but, in Ivan's case, his surprise seemed to confirm the fact that as he was not living in Ireland, he could not hope to be fully informed, despite regular daily use of Irish radio and newspaper website content. In a related point, he spoke of his frustration that a lot of the small local news stories from around Ireland that he used to enjoy back in Ireland in the print edition of *The Irish Times* did not seem to feature in his experience of the newspaper's website. He is unsure as to whether these articles are simply not put up on the website at all or just difficult to navigate to and he hasn't yet gone as far as taking out the online subscription which would allow him unrestricted access and potentially reveal the answer. While this insight into the experience of using a media text is clearly bound up with the differences between print and online versions of the newspaper, it also points to the sense of alienation from the everyday media audience practices experienced living in Ireland that can remain aloof despite concerted efforts to re-experience them.

These examples show a desire on the part of these first-generation participants to experience Irish media in ways similar to how they had done before migration. This includes being as informed about their favourite media content as the Irish media audience still living there and can be understood as the need to continue to feel a part of the imagined community once taken-for-granted in their lives. In some cases the uncertainty of future plans fed into this desire not to be left out of the national conversation in Ireland. The interviews with Ivan and other young participants who had migrated in response to the 2008 economic downturn is further explored in the following section to show how keeping open the possibility of return also motivates the desire to remain part of Ireland's media audience.

POSSIBILITIES OF RETURN

A recent study of Irish graduates who had moved to London following the 2008 economic crisis shows how migration was perceived as a temporary solution with future return

desirable if and when economic opportunities arose (Lulle *et al.* 2020). The authors note that Irish people who emigrated during the economic crises of the past have also returned when the economy improved as it did during the 1970s, the Celtic Tiger years and in the years following the 2008 financial crash. The accounts of media use by participants who were graduates or pursuing postgraduate study in the U.K. at the time of this study also reflected this desire. For instance, Ivan explained his motivation for reading and listening to Irish news and current affairs media content on a daily basis as being directly related to his desire to move back to Ireland in the future. His account of how his relationship with news and current affairs media coverage changed over time shows how such content can be felt on a deeply personal level precisely because it impacts on a person's future career and life prospects. When he left Ireland in 2012, the effects of the economic recession were continuing to play out and he had been getting increasingly frustrated and worried by the negative economic outlook portrayed across the Irish news media as he was thinking about the transition from university to work and career. When he decided to undertake postgraduate study in London he felt excitement at the relief he might get from such media induced anxieties by interesting himself in the current affairs of a different country, one with which his own future would not be tied up with. This feeling soon turned out to be short-lived however because, as the Brexit referendum debate took hold in Britain, he found himself feeling the news and current affairs very intensely again. As an Irish immigrant seeking professional experience that might later help him find professional opportunities in Ireland he found the referendum debate affected him on a personal level. His frustration with the amount of air-time and column inches that he felt was given to pro-Brexit arguments in the British news media began to grow and led him to abandon BBC Radio 4's main morning news programme entirely and replace it with RTÉ's *Morning Ireland* programme, which he had always listened to in Ireland. The British media coverage of the Brexit debate seemed to him to have a definite lack of awareness, understanding or care about the potential impact the move would have both on migrants and on Ireland. This

brought Ivan to the realisation that his relationship to news and current affairs would always be personal:

> I was maybe looking forward a little bit to being able to maybe consume news with less passion but then very quickly realised that's not really the way of it.

After beginning a full-time professional position in London, he came to realise that the personal interest he had always had in Irish news and current affairs is now intimately tied up with his prospects of returning to Ireland, and staying in touch with public debate there via media from Ireland would be important in achieving his goal:

> It's not like I can ignore it for a few years and then just try to take it back up and I wouldn't want to anyway … both from a personal interest and ultimately [in the] long run professionally … I had no desire to let it go.

The idea of not letting Ireland go and being invested in its future via media audience membership can also be understood in the wider terms of active citizenship. Schrøder has outlined how recent retheorizations of the Habermassian theory of the public sphere have led to attempts by audience researchers at mapping the mediated citizenship now understood to be taking place wherever and whenever an individual interacts with media. Regardless of source, genre or technological platform, the mere fact of "being a member of the media audience, [means that] the individual is a politically inscribed citizen everywhere"(Schrøder 2012:190). This is a helpful way of thinking about the kinds of engagement evident in Ivan's account and the account of two other young graduates. Both spoke of their interest in particular news stories from Ireland sourced through social media that highlight the positive and progressive changes that seemed to be occurring in Ireland at the time of interview. Emma uses social media to share progressive social and political news stories about Ireland such as the Repeal the 8th campaign or the election (in the weeks before the interview) of Leo Varadkar as Ireland's first openly gay Taoiseach who was also

the son of an immigrant family to Ireland.[14] During the interview she mentioned posting a picture of herself on her Instagram account dressed in black in support of the Repeal the 8th campaign and of how her interest in how Ireland is changing socially and economically since the 2008 crash has increased since she left:

> Since moving away I feel a stronger pride in my home country and I want to … be proud of what's developing in my home country, the positive things that are happening whether it be in political or social circles or just you know … people … able to buy homes … that the economy is improving … I just want to feel that things are improving all the time.

Áine was also motivated by an interest in socially progressive narratives of contemporary Ireland and the ways such change can be brought about through media not typically associated with the political public sphere. While not making specific efforts to directly access Irish news and current affairs media sources in her daily life, she feels she gets to see the news and current affairs stories that are of interest to her through her use of social media as the timelines of her social media accounts often contain links to the Irish news content shared by those in her network, which mainly consists of people living in Ireland. Such links often take her to the news website *Journal.ie* or to the news websites of traditional mainstream Irish media such as RTÉ, *The Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times*. Many in her friend network identify as LGBT, and the examples of news stories that are shared and of interest to her tend to fit a narrative of Ireland as a progressive liberal democracy. In the weeks before the interview, these stories included the appointment of Leo Varadkar as Taoiseach, the Repeal the 8th campaign and related stories of Irish women's experiences around pregnancy and abortion. The sense that Ireland should continue to face up to and move beyond its history of social and moral conservatism is one that Áine is invested in with the themes of consent and bodily autonomy coming to the fore in her

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[14] Repeal the 8th was the title of the campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment to the Irish Constitution (which severely restricted access to abortion in Ireland). The campaign achieved success in a referendum held in May 2018, a year after the interview with Emma.

descriptions of her favourite medium of all, that of the fiction novel. She is an avid fan of young adult fantasy and women's fiction and reads over 150 books annually, reviewing many of them on her own online blog. Most of the Irish authored fiction she reads is in the 'women's fiction' genre, and while she loves the work of established writers such as Maeve Binchy, Sheila O'Flanagan and Claudia Carroll who she describes as writing "… about characters who are struggling with their jobs, with their children, with their husbands," she is even more enthusiastic about a new generation of Irish writers including Claire Hennessy and Louise O'Neill, who write specifically on the issues of abortion and rape:

> I like reading women's fiction books that are set in Ireland because it's nice to have that extra connection to home … I like UK women's fiction as well and I read a lot of U.S. [women's fiction] but I think a book which is set in Ireland and by an Irish author, for me has an extra dimension, it's like an extra point in its favour … the majority of books I read would be written by women, they tend to be kind of feminist positions, they're about bodily autonomy and about rape culture and the situation as it is in Ireland … I think it's unacceptable and the same in Northern Ireland.

Áine points to the role of Irish fiction writing can have for the public sphere by contributing to what would otherwise be quite difficult conversations among readers.

> The portrayal of those issues is something that I feel quite strongly about and putting them across delicately and making the viewpoints of the characters sympathetic and explaining why they made these decisions or what happened to them or how they feel about it or why this is unacceptable … that's something that I very much respect because putting it across in a fictional context then makes it easier to have the conversations about the real life contexts.

The accounts above show the relationship between Irish media use and personal investment

in the future of Ireland. Young migrants with high levels of education who moved during an economic downturn can view their time in Britain as a temporary solution to lack of opportunities at home and use Irish media as a resource to facilitate future return. Future return often depends on the direction which the Irish economy and the wider society is taking and engaging with Irish media in Britain allows the first-generation to assess that trajectory, take up opportunities for return when they arise and, by sharing on social media, show their support for the kind of Ireland they would like to see develop. Those who are critically engaged with social justice and human rights issues use Irish media to engage with debates about how the country can move in progressive directions. Irish and Irish-themed media content is not just a means through which first-generation participants retain their membership of the Irish national imagined community or keep the possibility of future return alive in their lives however. Such content also compensates for what these participants perceive as a lack of serious engagement and understanding of Ireland on British media and their frustration with how Ireland and Irishness is portrayed to the wider British public is discussed in the next section.

FRUSTRATION WITH BRITISH MEDIA

Many of the first-generation Irish participants pointed out that everyday access to media content from Ireland was important to them as they felt British news and current affairs media were insular in their concerns and rarely engaged with Ireland in meaningful ways. British media was perceived as having a paucity of regular Irish news or sports coverage and when Irish items did appear they were considered to lack sufficient understanding and context. Sports coverage was a particular bone of contention for some participants with the misappropriation of British identity to Irish sports personalities or errors in presentation revealing a lack of commitment to and understanding of Ireland in traditional British media. Coverage of international affairs in Britain was similarly frustrating for participants who described it as insular in comparison to Irish equivalents as it seemed to always concern itself with what issues and events meant for Britain rather than giving a broader and more

objective understanding of other countries or their concerns to the British public. This along with the perceived lack of interest in Ireland on the part of the British media generally was felt to have potentially negative consequences on the ground in the shape of the British public's lack of understanding of Ireland and its complicated history with Britain.

John emphasises how being informed about contemporary Ireland through Irish media content and conversations with friends and family there helps him project a positive image of Ireland in his interactions with British people who he feels still hold some of the negative stereotypical views of the Irish prevalent in Britain historically.

> [Birmingham is] only 250 miles away [from Ireland, but] the people have very little understanding … I feel I'm almost educating people a little bit … I'm wanting to represent where I'm from, Ireland, in a good light. That's always been with me and I don't see that going.

Despite living many years in England, Siobhán is still fascinated about the ways Ireland is portrayed on British television and will keep an eye out for any programme with an Irish connection or theme even if it belongs to a genre that would normally not appeal to her personal taste.

> I would spot things that are Irish but I wouldn't stick with it if it was awful or too 'twee' ... if it's 'diddly-idly' Irish, it would annoy me and I'd not bother watching it, but I will give anything connected to Ireland a go and could end up passing away a half hour watching something that I wouldn't watch otherwise.

She is often frustrated at what she sees as stereotypes about Ireland being re-used on television drama and lifestyle genres. As a recent example, she pointed out the portrayal of rural Ireland as a place of dark hidden secrets in *Redwater*, a drama series spin-off of the British soap opera *Eastenders*. She also pointed out that British factual entertainment television genres such as travel and nature documentaries that occasionally feature Ireland

always seem to focus, with a huge amount of complicity from Irish tourism interests, she adds, on the idyllic clichés of rural Ireland and its western coastline. For Siobhán, these representations leave a lasting impression on the British public by promoting stereotypes of Ireland as an unchanging place of wild natural beauty and failing to engage with life in contemporary Ireland or the Irish urban experience she herself knew:

> There's still a lot of … these conversations: 'Yeah, we do have electricity!' It's not a great image for me, but then again that might be because I'm from Dublin and it doesn't really represent me at all and where I came from.

Siobhán finds that when British news and current affairs media does contain items on Ireland, they are less focused on the stereotypes and give a more balanced picture of contemporary Ireland, but this can also be a source of frustration. She feels that Channel 4 news makes little effort to find new voices or attempt to understand Ireland on anything other than a surface level. At the same time, she feels the tabloid media in Britain continue to rely on the very negative portrayals of Irishness used in the past:

> I kind of roll my eyes a bit … they're [Channel 4] a bit lazy in who they go to and the opinions that they get but I would [also] be aware of other media: There was an incident recently with the London Bridge attacks when they discovered that the guy had lived in Ireland for a certain amount of time.[15] I noticed the *Daily Mail* headline of 'Irish immigrant beats up British wife' or something like that, and I thought 'Oh, as soon as we can bring it back to being Irish and blame it on this other country' kind of thing! I do think sometimes the red-tops still go back to their default of the no-good Irish, but the kind of media that I would access isn't that kind of approach. … [T]hough in terms of things outside of the news … there's still

[15] A vehicle-ramming and stabbing incident that took place in central London on 3 June 2017.

> a lot of twee-ness, if there's going to be a programme about Ireland it will be all about the green fields.

The sense that a lack of real engagement with Ireland in the mainstream British media has the effect of keeping levels of ignorance high amongst the British public comes across in a number of participant interviews. This was particularly evident in participants' discussion of sport in the media. The misappropriation of high-profile Irish success stories under the banner of Britishness is perceived as a regular occurrence in the British media and indicative of a lack of concern to represent Ireland at all:

> Noting an Irish person who's done well as British I've seen a few times. I'm thinking 'have you really not done your research?' [It's] the Andy Murray theory, when he's good he's British, when he's shite he's Scottish! News and sport have this … BBC Sport might have eleven up and coming players … one will be Irish although presented as British (John).

Margaret makes the same point about the mainstream British media's coverage of sport:

> They'll claim so many Irish people as British. […] Katie Taylor was claimed as British at one point … she's as Dublin as it comes (laughs) and even there was a reference at one point to Conor McGregor as a British fighter. I think a lot of that comes from the old British mentality that Ireland is still part of the United Kingdom even though we're not.

The sense that British media do not attempt to fully inform the British public about Ireland and its history is also felt when British media are seen to cover Irish topics but make basic errors that reveal a lack of knowledge and understanding:

> Even Sky's coverage of the GAA is something that's a complete topic of conversation … whether Sky buying those rights for the GAA is a benefit in terms of putting GAA on the world stage or whether it's detrimental to the national pride in taking it away from RTÉ and making it too commercialised.

> I have to say I think their coverage of it is good, but they haven't quite gotten it right either […] there's been so many gaffes … you know 'the *All-Britain Final'*.[16] That was said last year during the All-Ireland final and it's like literally 'Get the name of the competition right'! There's an argument for both sides, I think [the] GAA can obviously do with more funding to put more on the world stage, but it comes across as a little bit cringey on Sky (Margaret).

The lack of coverage of Irish topics is understood by a number of the first-generation participants as due to an insular attitude on the part of British media. Even when international sports competitions include Irish and British teams the coverage is perceived as uneven and somewhat lacking:

> We have all the British papers here at work and I might have a quick look, at the sports pages, but I'm not big into club soccer and they don't cover much more … even for the Six Nations [rugby] coverage they'll have a small little article on Ireland, so I don't even bother anymore. Even the European Rugby, whatever the Heineken Cup is now called, they won't even have match reports for Leinster or Munster games or even Ulster games to be honest. They'll have a big focus on Leicester or Northampton or Saracens, but you won't even get a match report of the Irish club game … and unless Ireland are playing Wales or Scotland there is really like surprisingly little coverage (Ivan).

This perception of a British-centric attitude across the British media is all the more surprising and troubling to these first-generation participants when it comes to current affairs coverage of Northern Ireland:

[16] This is likely a reference to Claire Tomlinson, a Sky Sports News presenter who introduced a piece on the 2016 final as the 'All-England Final'. See https://www.thejournal.ie/sky-sports-news-all-england-final-2-2989618-Sep2016/

> You often find that they [the British media] don't really get the Irish situation, particularly references to the North and the South of Ireland … they just mix up the whole connection. They don't understand the sensitivities around it (Margaret).

> On the news side, the coverage is so simplistic it's just laughable particularly now with all this stuff on Brexit … I just found myself going mad by how little attention they gave to Northern Ireland and how little they seem to care about […] *not* a small part of their own country. [It] just gets no coverage at all apart from when the DUP struck the deal here with the Tories to support them for the current parliament.[17] That was a real insight into just how much ignorance there was [...] all these English journalists having to come up with, you know, opinion pieces on the DUP they don't seem to have a breeze about. I find it really aggravating. Again, no insights got from reading the coverage … it's almost like a 1.0.1, every article that covers Northern Ireland, about half of it is: What is Northern Ireland? (Ivan).

Participants are aware that the sheer difference in population and geographical size of the two countries and the complexity of the British media landscape in comparison to its Irish equivalent go some way to explaining the lack of coverage of Ireland they come across on British media. The frustration for first-generation Irish migrants to Britain is the consequences of that lack of knowledge and understanding of Ireland they see in their day-to-day interactions with others in Britain:

> I think what hit me when I came over here was that it's such a big place that you wouldn't know what was happening ten miles down the road from where you live so from an Irish perspective you would think that these sort

[17] In June 2017 the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) signed a confidence and supply agreement with the minority Conservative government led by Theresa May.

> of things should be in the British media but really they haven't really got interest in their own news let alone in something random that's happening in Ireland but things [like] the repeal campaign … are dealt with … I wouldn't feel that they're ignored although they might be in certain media, but when the DUP thing kicked up … people were talking about Northern Ireland like it isn't part of the UK, like they're giving some foreign aid or something like that … I think most people that I would be friends with wouldn't have a clue what was going on in Ireland (Siobhán).

The lack of serious engagement with Ireland on the part of the British media was framed by many participants as indicative of a British-centric perspective that had become more evident in the run-up to and aftermath of the Brexit referendum in 2016. This issue and other international news and current affairs was perceived to be covered by British media primarily in terms of the consequences for Britain rather than giving a broader analysis that might encourage greater understanding of neighbouring countries. In contrast, and partly due to Ireland's acknowledged smaller role in international affairs, national Irish news media were felt to be a more reliable source of objective reporting that could give the perspectives of the different countries involved.

> I found since moving over to the UK [that] it's a weird experience living in London. It's such an international place, and yet it's bizarrely insular in its coverage of events, everything revolves around the UK … particularly now with the Brexit stuff … Everyone must be always thinking about the UK and [are] just really ignorant of other countries […] having their own political difficulties. One of the reasons I've exclusively switched over to Irish sources is even on the international coverage, particularly European stuff, I just find the Irish stuff a lot better … you get better coverage of the German elections in Irish papers than the British ones (Ivan).

The pre-referendum debates and the eventual result were felt by some participants to have increased the space given to anti-European opinion on British news and current affairs and some of the participants found this challenging and disconcerting as it felt so different to the more internationalist outlook of the mainstream media in Ireland:

> I've found the British media at the moment ... so insular, so inward looking, [I] find it more interesting reading *The Irish Times* coverage on Brexit, on the elections, on other stuff that's going on in the world. It's a bit more of a different view on things. The British media is gone very 'one direction,' and even my [English] husband now is using *The Irish Times* to get a different view on things. Even looking at Brexit … [They are] only looking at it from a British perspective, the impact on them. On RTÉ or *The Irish Times* you get a more European or global perspective. Being a small island we look outward more rather than inward , I think so, you get a different view by looking at Irish media here. (Susan)

This comparison between British and Irish media is not just made by participants living in England. Mark, in Scotland, also finds the international coverage of the main newspapers poor as they seem to focus mainly on issues in Scotland:

> There's only a tiny focus on anything international, so if you want to find international news you're wasting your time reading Scottish newspapers. Now … the *Irish Independent*, *The Irish Times*. They won't have huge sections on international news either, but they'll cover it in a fair bit more depth, so when I want to find out about Donald Trump, I'm far happier reading Irish newspapers than I am reading the Scottish ones (Mark).

Some participants expressed frustration and concern that the country to which they had committed time and energy, and which had been moving its complex historical relationship with Ireland in a positive direction for at least a generation was, with Brexit, suddenly pulling

in a direction that seemed could only have negative consequences. Issues such as the threat of a hard border on the island of Ireland had deep personal implications for some participants and the interests of other European countries, including Ireland and ironically even that part of Ireland officially in the UK, seemed to be secondary to those of Britain:

> Coming back to Brexit … quite a devastating part of my life. When it happened I would say to people 'my cousin lives in Donegal and works in Derry … What's she going to do with her life?' and they're like 'Oh, we didn't think of that'. I think the British media didn't engage with the whole Ireland situation during the Brexit campaign, but I think maybe they've got a bit more on board now (Siobhán).

The widespread fears of immigration in England that the Brexit vote seemed to confirm makes the lack of understanding the British public have of Ireland all the more worrying for Irish migrants to Britain. One participant pointed to the lack of any meaningful coverage of the contribution of the Irish to British society in the mainstream media:

> There's an anti-immigrant sentiment rising in Britain. I don't think the Irish are the first ones on the end of that, but I think we're somewhere there in the spectrum in some parts of Britain. I think it's important, like all kinds of communities, that we're still represented in Britain 'cos we're a community that is here and we're kind of giving a huge amount back to Britain … we're paying taxes, we're bringing business … I mean the amount of Irish business in Britain is keeping half the economy running … look at all the main construction contractors, for example, so many of them are Irish. The Irish are contributing so much to business in Britain, and it's a pity you don't see a bit more of that in the media (Margaret).

At least part of the frustration around the perceived lack of engagement with Ireland on British media can be reasonably attributed to the complexity of the British media

infrastructure in comparison to its Irish counterpart. The media landscape in Ireland is a comparatively simple combination of local and national media, which means that local stories can get national traction relatively easily. The regional subdivisions of national broadcasters and the geographical footprint of newspapers in different parts of the UK means the news focus is often localised leading to the ironic situation that even that part of the island of Ireland that is part of the UK can seem, to audiences in Britain, as invisible and misunderstood as the rest of the island. The complexity involved in finding British media coverage of Northern Ireland is explained by Ivan, and his experience as detailed below validates his and the view of other participants that the media in Britain do not prioritise coverage of Ireland in meaningful ways.

While Ivan feels that coverage of Ireland rarely features in any depth on the British media that he encounters in his daily life in London, he also points out that there is high quality coverage of Irish issues, particularly relating to Northern Ireland, to be found if one is prepared to take the time and look for it. He points out that there are Northern Ireland based newspapers such as *The Irish News* or *The Belfast Telegraph* whose websites he could access if he wanted to, but as he had no past experience of reading them in Ireland, this is not something he has had the inclination to do. Watching British television is a normalised media activity for most of the population of Ireland, but in Ivan's case he grew up only with Irish channels in a rural part of County Wicklow. Since moving to London, he has become aware of the regional nature of British broadcasting, with differential programming inserted into the BBC news website and television schedules. He deliberately searches the website for articles and television content from BBC Northern Ireland from time to time, as he has found their coverage of current affairs and the historical conflict there to be hugely rewarding in terms of increasing his own knowledge and understanding of that history. However, he expresses frustration at the lack of interest this, often controversial and politically contested content, seems to garner in London however. It also evident to him that fewer resources seem to be allocated to producing it with the same frequency as other British current affairs content or to its promotion among BBC audiences outside Northern Ireland:

> The BBC is a bit better [For content on Northern Ireland] than [other media] but you have to go down into the BBC Northern Ireland section. You'll never get the story on the front page of the [BBC] website or even on their politics page. You have to first go UK, [then click] Northern Ireland, all the way down into the subsections before you get any stuff and even then like that seems to be less regularly updated. I'd probably check the BBC Northern Ireland page every few days, and when there's something like [a] *Panorama* special documentary on, I'll try and watch that on my laptop as I do feel the staff that they have working there have a better understanding … [but] no-one listens. I remember there was one incident that stood out. It was after Finucane.[18] There'd been a BBC Special alleging collusion, and I remember getting really wound up because it wasn't anywhere in top read stories, and you could see from the work that the *Panaroma* team were doing [that] they were trying to push it out. They were just getting no interest whatsoever. No one cared. So yeah, it's unfair to tar all the English media with the same brush … because the BBC guys seem to do some good stuff but it doesn't get ... given a huge amount of prominence and you have to try and go out of your way to find any of the stories.

Similarly, Ivan is aware that his sense of the insularity he perceives in British newspaper coverage of international stories is related to the editorial choices that put British-centric and London-centric stories to the fore of a printed edition or a website designed to attract a London-based audience. He can get around this in a similar manner to the BBC Northern Ireland content by clicking through to the less obvious pages in a newspaper website to reveal articles that would have been historically printed in regional or international print

[18] Pat Finucane was an Irish lawyer who specialised in criminal defence work and came to prominence due to his successful challenge of the British government in several important human rights cases during the 1980s. He was killed by loyalist paramilitaries acting in collusion with British security services. *Panorama: Britain's Secret Terror Deals* was broadcast on 28 May 2015. https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05x8gzs.

editions of a newspaper. Ironically, in the context of using Irish media, the internationally focused and less British-centric articles of *The Guardian* newspaper are found more directly and with less searching by Ivan in their syndicated version published as part of *The Irish Times*:

> I'm not [just] talking about *The Telegraph* here, even in *The Guardian* I find [this insularity] … and more in the UK edition than the International *Guardian* … we have the print *Guardian* at work and I just couldn't be bothered flicking through that 'cos I know I'll have read a better take on it by *The Irish Times* or I'll probably see 'The Guardian Service' (laughs) take on it in *The Irish Times.*[19] I just don't rate *The Telegraph* [or] *The Times* at all. I would have read a fair amount of stuff in the FT (Financial Times) but even now I find that's getting increasingly just for British consumption with a kind of British-centric view of things … That has much to do with editorial … which stories are getting highlighted … [There] might be good stories but they're not getting prominence on the webpage or put into the British edition of the paper so you have to go out of your way and look through the European section online to find these stories. Some are good, but [it is] easier to get the main stories in a way I'd trust or without the British-centric focus from the Irish papers.

Ivan's dogged pursuit of Irish and international news stories on mainstream British media sheds light on why he and the other first-generation participants feel such media is insular in its dominant focus on British concerns. Like the other participants Ivan concludes that it is simply easier to use Irish media to find coverage of international current affairs.

The frustrations of the first-generation participants with the British media they encounter in their everyday lives reveal some of ambivalences and uncertainties of Irish identities in the migrant setting (Corcoran 2003). While continued engagement with media from home help

[19] The Guardian Service by-line indicates syndicated content.

to bolster their Irish identities the need to do so is also related to a lack of engagement with Ireland and Irish themes that they perceive in British media. When Ireland is portrayed, the accounts show the sensitivities of Irish migrants to how this is done and the perceived misunderstandings of Ireland that are potentially disseminated. Their knowledge of contemporary Ireland, gleaned from Irish media and connections with home, alongside the appearance of Ireland and Irishness on British media, provides a useful combination of resources to initiate conversation about and promote understanding and acknowledgement of Ireland among British families, friends and colleagues. The next section examines how the first-generation migrants use Irish media and the Irish-themed media content that is available to British audiences to articulate Irish identities in such contexts.

ARTICULATING IRISHNESS IN BRITAIN

As discussed earlier, the Irish have, with the exception of a brief global flowering of Irish culture in the 1990s, historically suffered from prolonged negative stereotyping in media alongside a concurrent invisibility in Britain (Hickman 1997, Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2014). It is in this context that the importance to first-generation migrants of the appearance of Ireland and Irishness in British media can be understood. Given their perception that coverage of Ireland and Irish themes are not deemed important to British media, the occasional exceptions to this become all the more significant. From the identification of Irish actors and media celebrities to the promotion of creative Irish media content and talent to non-Irish family members, work colleagues and others in Britain, the following accounts show how Irish and Irish-themed media content is used by the first-generation to articulate Irish identities and promote understanding and engagement with Ireland in Britain.

Siobhán, who is rearing a young family with her English husband in London, feels a "heightened awareness of things on [British television] that are Irish" and enjoys looking out for locations, actors and even the names of production personnel that she might recognise on the end credits of the occasional Irish-themed television dramas that appear on British television. Having heard on an RTÉ Radio One programme that *Paula,* a television drama set

in Dublin would be broadcast on BBC, she sought it out on the BBC iPlayer and watched it with her husband. As she grew up in a suburb of Dublin, she often recognises specific locations across the city used for exterior scenes in television drama such as this.[20] When she was a child, quite a few of her school classmates had parents involved in the Irish arts scene and went on themselves to work in Irish media production, and she sometimes sees them or others connected to them in acting roles or mentioned in the end credits of these TV dramas. She is also keenly aware, through the television viewing preferences of her young children, of Irish-produced children's television programmes on BBC such as *Little Roy.* This is also set in Dublin and features Irish actor Simon Delaney whom Siobhán remembers from *Bachelors Walk,* an Irish television drama hugely popular among her age group in Ireland just before she emigrated. She jokingly describes her pleasure in spotting the people and places that she recognises from home as a 'very Irish trait', based on coming from a very small place (relative to Britain) where everybody knows everybody else. Her regular demonstration of this Irish 'stereotype' during television viewing with her family often raises a laugh from her English husband, but pointing out the people and places she knows from Ireland to her family helps to reaffirm the Irish part of her family's identity in England. It is also clear from Siobhán's interview that she carries this desire to affirm Irishness beyond the immediate context of her family. Her frustrations at representations of Ireland on British television will be explored later but she also points out her delight when versions of Irishness that chime with her own understanding are made available to British audiences. For instance, she enjoys the light-hearted and self-mocking portrayals of Irishness that are a feature of some of the contemporary comedic Irish television personalities that have achieved huge success on British media in recent years:

[20] This series was broadcast during 2017 in the weeks before the interview and may have come easily to mind for this reason. Ironically, although set in Dublin *Paula* was mainly filmed in Belfast. Many other TV series broadcast on British television in recent years were filmed in Dublin including *Quirke* (2014), *The Walshes* (2014), *Love/Hate* (2010) and *Smother* (2020).

> I don't think the Irish or the Ireland that I came from is overly represented in the media, although the comedians … like Dara O'Briain … show the sense of humour that Irish people have and the ability to laugh at yourself. [That] would be more what I would want Ireland to be seen as in the media.[21]

It is clear that her main concern with representations of Ireland is about how Ireland is perceived by the British public, and this is mirrored in the ways another first-generation participant engages with Irish media content in order to articulate and promote Irishness in Britain. Susan engages with the social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and follows the accounts of many Irish musicians and designers she has heard about through Irish media but who do not seem to get exposure on British media at all. It is important for Susan to be aware of the Irish cultural content that is being covered by the media in Ireland for the reasons mentioned earlier, but such information is also useful to her if and when Irish performers or examples of Irish creativity are being showcased by the Irish community in Britain. Information about such events is not readily available in mainstream media outlets there due to the competition for media attention and the focus of these outlets rarely being on Ireland or Irishness. Following the social media accounts of Irish musicians and fashion designers she has become aware of through her engagement with Irish media alleviates a persistent concern that she may be missing out on potential links with home due to the lack of coverage of Irish cultural events in Britain. In one example, she connects her interest in the 'latest' Irish fashion designers she has come across due to their promotion on Irish media and whom she then follows on Instagram with an upcoming trip she has planned with her husband to the Royal Ascot race meeting, which like all the big horse race meetings in England would always have a strong Irish contingent from the media, fashion and celebrity domains. For Susan: "... it's quite nice going to a very British event and saying well I'm wearing something that was made by an Irish person or this [particular celebrity] *is* an Irish

[21] Graham Norton is another example. The success of Norton and O'Briain as TV presenters can be traced back to early Irish pioneers of British broadcasting such as Terry Wogan and Eamon Andrews.

person.” This can be said in conversation or via social media as a way of emphasising Irish identity in Britain.

Irish-themed television dramas broadcast in the UK also allow Susan to encourage engagement with and gauge reaction to Irish creative content amongst her non-Irish colleagues and friends in Britain. After she mentioned television drama’s *Paula* and *Redwater* as examples of television drama broadcast on Irish and British television in the same week, she pointed out: “I’m interested to know the reception of them *here* as well”. She remembered recommending one such drama series to her colleagues at work:

> Actually, one that was a big hit ... with some colleagues (was) *Love/Hate*. I work with a lot of guys, they’re all in tech and some of the guys ... the Indian guys, loved it, they thought it was so real, they really thought it was interesting and they started watching it ‘cos I told them it was one to watch and [that] it was on one of the British channels.

Knowledge of the contemporary Irish cultural content available to British audiences gives Susan the opportunity to discuss and promote Ireland among non-Irish colleagues and is a way of articulating and reinforcing her Irish identity in Britain during a period in her life in which she has little face-to-face contact with other Irish people there.

The above accounts point to how Irish and Irish-themed media are used by the first-generation as a means to draw attention to Irish identities in Britain and promote engagement with and understanding of Ireland there. They show that these first-generation Irish migrants seek out ways to bring Ireland and Irishness to the fore of their everyday lives at the same time that they are confronted with the possibilities of life in a new country.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the interviews with first-generation migrants to Britain were analysed to reveal the role Irish and Irish-themed media content plays in relation to their Irish identities

in Britain. The regular use of such content by these participants in Britain is a continuation of audience habits developed in lives lived in Ireland and which have acquired a new importance at the same time that they require more effort. Media content produced primarily for audiences in Ireland accessed as part of everyday life in Britain can both ameliorate and accentuate a sense of dislocation associated with migration. Such dislocation is exacerbated by the migrant experience of being in a new country surrounded by national media institutions that, although widely available to audiences across the island of Ireland play a minor role there and, with the exception of Northern Ireland, are not understood as representing Ireland. Ultimately regular engagement with Irish media content keeps first-generation Irish migrants to Britain up to date with news and events from home and facilitates their continued and active involvement in conversations with friends and family there. The difficulties of being away from home are eased through access to the same media content Irish people are consuming there and this gives the first-generation migrant a sense that they still a part of a community they have had to leave for now. The knowledge of contemporary Ireland that comes from such engagement is also understood as an important resource in possible future return as the economic and social mood of the country is gauged from afar. Ongoing knowledge of events and trends in Ireland helps migrants articulate their Irish identities and promote understanding of Ireland in their personal and professional lives in Britain. This compensates for what first-generation Irish migrants perceive as a lack of serious engagement with Ireland across mainstream British media but also keeps Irishness to the fore of their everyday lives ensuring that it is not forgotten and can remain an important part of their identities in Britain.

This chapter has looked closely at the accounts of Irish media use given by the first-generation Irish participants in this project. It outlines the main themes that emerged from the interviews conducted with a set of people with diverse personal histories and experiences of moving to Britain. What they have in common is that they grew up in Ireland before migrating and have continued to seek out media from Ireland while there. The next chapter will focus on those Irish in Britain who have limited experience of living in Ireland

but who grew up in Britain with an Irish identity and choose to seek out Irish and Irish-themed media content in their everyday lives today.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE SECOND- (AND LATER-) GENERATION IRISH MEDIA AUDIENCE IN BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

In contrast to the first-generation, second- (and later-) generation cultural identities are sites of tension and negotiation from early childhood as intergenerational understandings of family identity contrast with the day-to-day experiences of growing up in a host country. Contemporary understandings of the relationship of media and identity alongside research on audiences point to the significance of both 'home' and 'host' media in the formation and negotiation of diasporic identity (Gillespie 2000, Wood 2010). In this chapter, the interviews conducted with the second- (and later-) generation participants in this project are analysed to reveal the role Irish and Irish-themed media content plays in the formation and maintenance of hybrid identities in which Irishness is an essential component. The chapter begins with a discussion of how the early tensions around identity made themselves known in the lives of participants and then shows how the Irish aspect of participant identities are formed, (re)formed and maintained in the context of Irish and Irish-themed media use. The participants articulate the ways Irishness was initially made known to them in childhood and subsequently strengthened by contact with extended family and their social circles as well as by regular periods spent in Ireland. The extent to which media content produced in Ireland or Irish-themed media content produced elsewhere was present in these accounts of growing up Irish in Britain is then examined. Irish radio broadcasts and newspapers are remembered as constituent parts of the daily and weekly routines of many participants' parents in Britain, and Irish television content is remembered as a shared resource through which participants bonded with extended families during time spent in Ireland. Familiarity with contemporary Irish media and the knowledge of Ireland and Irish history it brings facilitates conversation about Ireland and Irishness and keeps diasporic memories of and connections to 'home' alive from one Irish generation to the next.

When sought out by the first or subsequent generations within a family the normative presence of media from the 'home' country has the potential to symbolically construct a cultural identity that differs from that constructed by the media of a 'host' nation. The importance of the Irish personalities and Irish-themed content that appeared on British television and in British cinema over the course of their lives was emphasised by many participants and is discussed in relation to the negotiation of their Irish identities in Britain. Early and tentative understandings of Ireland and Irishness, often handed down within families, can be revisited, developed and brought up to date through the use of Irish and Irish-themed media available to participants today. The Irish identities of the second (and later) participants are held in tension with other identities, both local and national, surrounding them in Britain and bolstered by the media there. Irish and Irish-themed media content becomes a crucial resource to support and validate Irishness in this context.

HYBRID IDENTITIES

Growing up as second- (or later-) generation Irish in Britain naturally brings participation in ever-widening social circles in Britain, some more predominantly Irish than others. The personal agency that comes with adulthood allows engagement with different available identities as well as a coming to terms with familial Irishness. As will be shown over the course of this chapter media are important resources in the negotiation of an Irish cultural identity inflected by a family history of migration. Irish identity was strongly emphasised by the second- (and later-) generation participants in this project, but the tensions and complexities around this Irish identity in Britain were also present. In this section the ways in which the negotiation of second- (or later-) generation Irish cultural identities is articulated in the participant accounts is outlined to reveal their hybrid nature. Liam made the following observation about how his second-generation Irish schoolmates developed different cultural allegiances as they grew into adulthood:

> I knew a guy at school who would have been doing Irish dancing and that, so it was around but … it wasn't forced down our throat … but then as I

> grew older … a lot of my friends became more English, if you know what I mean, more following the soccer … so half the group followed Ireland and especially when Ireland actually started, under Jack, started getting a bit better and then half would follow England … even though, they came from the same demographic … most of them would have been of Irish descent.[22]

While emphasising the ways their Irish identities were shaped through everyday rites of passage and the social connections they brought, these second-generation participants also point to the significance of local and, in the case of London, cosmopolitan identities that were available to them as they entered adulthood.[23] Val looks back on her own progression into adulthood in London as a time she actively searched for her own identity rather than passively accepted an 'Irishness' defined by her family history. As a young adult, she actively engaged with the multicultural London available to her and considers that exposure to diverse cultures from around the globe as a huge benefit that ultimately allowed her to forge to her own sense of Irishness. She enjoyed going to Irish pubs and social club events as "constituent parts" of a much broader multicultural social life that really began to develop in the mix of ethnic identities she encountered when she entered the world of work. At the same time, she actively avoided identification with the Catholicism that had been a significant part of her Irish childhood in London. It was through her active social life that she met with her life partner who was from Scotland but was also of Irish descent. As part of planning for her retirement, Val has recently purchased a residential property in Ireland to which she travels to regularly and she describes herself as Irish, but with the positive influences of multicultural London:

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[22] The Republic of Ireland soccer team had their first major international successes in the late 1980s and in the World Cup competitions of 1990 and 1994 under the management of Jack Charlton.

[23] Perhaps unsurprisingly, the national identities of England, Scotland or Wales that might directly challenge Irishness were disavowed by many, although not all, of the second- (and later-) generation participants. Similarly, there was clear reluctance to identify with Britishness among most participants. That said, none of the second-generation participants who came forward for the project articulated familial connections with a Loyalist tradition, and it is acknowledged that second-generation Irish with such connections would articulate a very different attitude to Britishness.

> I stand between the two. I have grown up with a strong connection to Ireland and have always identified as Irish. I love London, and I have a strong sense of connection to London as well, not necessarily the UK but more London as a global metropolitan city.

Holding on to different identities can involve tensions and some of the participants pointed to various times that this was an issue for them. Margie spoke about having two simultaneous but separate social lives when she first began to explore connections outside her immediate family:

> In Kilburn, you could get anything, not a problem. When I was a teenager and used to go out with friends, we used to go to the Irish dances as well as going to other clubs in London. I'd do both. In fact, I didn't know what I was a little bit, it was a bit confusing. I had one group of friends that I'd go to the Irish dances with and then when I started work, I had another group of friends that I'd go with to different clubs and English places so it was like a double personality thing.

Laura's interest in the 'Indie' music scene that flourished across the UK and to a lesser extent in Ireland during her early adulthood intermingled with the Irish identity she was brought up with in London in spite of her own sense that this alternative youth culture was quite distinct from her Irish cultural experience there:

> There'd be certain *Irish* Indie groups that you'd be into. Sultans of Ping or The Frank and Walters from Cork.[24] And alongside the Indie thing you'd still be going to the Irish pubs which you grew up [with] when you were younger. There was always a few bands playing rebel songs. We'd know all the words. I'd always been brought up with Irish music, but my passion and love for indie music was different from my passion and love for Irish music.

[24] Both these Irish bands came to prominence in the Irish and UK indie music scene in the early 1990s.

For Jack, the specificities of Liverpool with its historical connections to Ireland made it easier to identify strongly as Irish because of the many other Irish families living there. Despite this, he still feels he had to grapple with what being Irish meant in the context of growing up Irish in a part of England with a strong local identity while not feeling fully accepted as Irish in Ireland itself:

> I had little battles with yourself every now and again thinking about what am I? Am I a scouse or am I Irish? And those kind of questions get aggravated every now and again because you get people from over here saying, well, you're not part of us, you're Irish. And you have people in Ireland saying, well, you're … a plastic paddy, a derogatory term, but I'm quite proud of it. I don't have a claim to be as Irish as people born and brought up in Ireland, but your identity is what you're feeling. I had no doubt that I wanted to seek that out and make that a part of my life and [have] always done that.

These accounts point to the hybridity of second-generation identity, which can involve the ongoing negotiation of different cultural identities, but the emphasis on other local and/or global rather than national identities in the above accounts is significant. The idea of considering oneself English was problematic for all participants for whom both parents were Irish. While this is related to the ways that foundational ideas of Irishness are historically grounded in the othering of Englishness, it is of interest in the context of this project for the impetus it gives to these second- (and later-) generation Irish participants to reaffirm their Irish identities. Those participants who expressed Irish identity using a local inflection such as London or Liverpool Irish that allows for two identities to co-exist were keen to point out that they would never identify as being 'English'. As Laura put it:

> I never ever considered myself English and never do. Never will. I always felt Irish, but I would say I was a Londoner. For example, if England were playing football, you supported Ireland.

Annie, a participant in her early twenties whose mother is first-generation Irish and whose father is English spent her teenage years torn between those two identities until recently when she discovered more complex ways of conceptualising identity at university where she studies geography. Despite having always had a large extended family in Ireland, including cousins of a similar age with whom she had developed close friendships, and not having many living relatives at all in England, she had always felt, due to her particular circumstances, that she could only authentically identify as English. This led to an initial rejection of the messiness that embracing an Irish identity might impose:

> When I was a teenager I tried to not think about being Irish and [at] my confirmation I picked the most English name I could, I was gonna just get rid of it [Irishness] completely because I felt I had to choose one or the other.

By actively suppressing her feelings of Irishness, she had sought to protect herself from a sadness she felt when she thought about how the extended family members she was close to were all in a different country. At university, she began to understand identity in a more nuanced way, and this allows her to facilitate the different strands and histories of her family's past. This has led her to actively develop her Irish identity without rejecting her Englishness:

> I felt it didn't have to be one or the other; it could be more of a spectrum, and I could kind of accept both and do both, and when I realised that, I realised how much being Irish had actually influenced the person I am, the person I am becoming.

Paul, a fourth-generation participant grew up with a keen sense of Irishness that was encouraged by both his parents and subsequently bolstered by the Irish social circles in which he mixed. As he put it:

> Irishness is an elusive thing really in as much as it means a lot of different things to different people, and you know, perhaps I'm more conscious of that because I'm not native born and indeed I'm not fully Irish ethnically.

Kevin, who is also fourth-generation Irish, does not have any living relatives in Ireland. However, he has always felt a strong attachment to Ireland as his parents and grandparents always kept their Irishness alive through the sharing of family stories and travel to Ireland along with active engagement with Irish media. This Irish identity was also naturalized outside the family in Liverpool by the preponderance of other families of Irish descent:

> I felt a connection in the households where I was growing up. I was always looking over to Ireland rather than down to London. It's a connection that might sound strange four generations down the line, but as you know, it's only a hundred miles away, and Dublin's the nearest capital city to where I'm sat and I just feel the pull. My grandfather was a great one with the union and Jim Larkin was the dockers' union leader here before he was over in Dublin with the lock-out so, all that history that I've picked up over my lifetime with my relatives and me ancestors and listening to their radio stations. I'm carrying it through. It just feels natural.

Mirroring Hickman's (1997) analysis of the Irish in England, Larry felt that being raised catholic in Scotland was also significant to his sense of being Irish despite what he describes as a tension between the Scottish identity promoted by the church and the visible realities of Irish migration within it:

> The Scottish Catholic Church's historic mission has been to convert Irish immigrants into the Scottish middle class. The Church was very keen to emphasise Scottishness but there was so many Irish priests … [that] … there was always a kind of a complicated acknowledgement of Irishness as well.

Larry points to the continuation of a strong Irish identity in his own family many generations after migration from Ireland and how that identity was bolstered by its association with Catholicism in Scotland and lead to regular visits to Ireland:

> I remember my Dad and his cousin having [a chat] about 2002, and they were both in their 70s and arguing about whether or not Scotland had been good to us! For people of that generation, born here [in Scotland] before the Second World War, they were still regarded as Irish. Even my Dad's cousin was saying Scotland had been good to us! There was still a sense that there's these people who had … been born in Scotland to Scottish parents but at a time when being Catholic was equated with Irishness in a way that people wouldn't understand in England. My Dad used to go on holiday every year to Ireland.

These accounts reveal the importance of Irish identity to these second- (and later-) generation participants while also bringing the tensions between that Irish identity and other cultural identities available to them in Britain into view. The interviews also reveal that Irish and Irish-themed media content played a role in the formation of Irish identity as these participants grew up 'Irish' in Britain and this is explored in the next section.

GROWING UP WITH IRISH MEDIA

Growing up in Britain with Irish immigrant parents or grandparents creates an awareness of Irish cultural identity from early childhood. This identity is reinforced outside the immediate family through interactions with Irish peers in Britain and on visits to extended family in Ireland but it also emerges from representations of Ireland that become known through exposure to the media of the previous generations. Britain's media construct particular imagined communities that do not easily accommodate the more complicated narrative of origin articulated by first-generation Irish migrants who hold on to familiar media from home and make themselves part of an Irish transnational media audience. Second- (or later-)

generation migrants also become part of that audience. Contact with, and regular travel to Ireland during childhood and adolescence, which brings with its own exposure to Irish media, strengthens Irish cultural identity in the second- (and later-) generation Irish in Britain, while simultaneously complicating that identity by revealing difference and the limitations of acceptance. This section looks at how Irish identity was made known to the second- (and later-) participants in this study and reveals how Irish and Irish-themed media was embedded in that process from early childhood.

Hickman's work on the second-generation Irish in the British education system demonstrated how they had long been rendered invisible in British society by a narrative of assimilation into that 'homogenous' British nation that had given way to the multicultural society of the post-war period. Her analysis problematized the commonly held view that the public invisibility of the Irish in Britain was a result of the political troubles in the north of Ireland and related violent episodes in Britain during the 1970s. Hickman pointed to how the British state had sought to incorporate the Irish into English society via the Catholic Church over the previous century, ensuring that expressions of Irish identity maintained a low public profile. However, this did not prevent engagement with Irishness in the privacy of the family home or on the regular trips to and extended periods spent in Ireland common to many Irish immigrant families (Hickman 1997). Such engagement with Irishness in family homes in Britain or during periods in Ireland could involve Irish media and Irish-themed media content and the interviews with second- (and later-) generation Irish participants in this project attest to this. They show that in the second- (or later-) generation Irish childhood exposure to Irish media can lead to active engagement with it in adulthood reflecting the formative role of childhood media memories to the construction of generational identities (Bolin 2014). They also reflect the importance of childhood memories to constructions of Irish identity in Britain which previous research on the second-generation Irish has explored (Walter 2013).

Personal interactions within and between families and peers are crucial to the identities constructed through media engagement and this is of immense importance to understanding immigrants, their families and their connection to media. Peggy Levitt has pointed out that “Whether individuals ultimately forge or maintain some kind of transnational connection, at some point in their lives, largely depends on the extent to which they were brought up in transnational spaces” (2009 in Walter 2013:33). Second-generation participants in this project whose parents were both first-generation Irish migrants expressed a strong sense of Irish cultural identity that pervaded most aspects of their social lives from early childhood. They were born into family settings that maintained a strong sense of Irish identity and their early lives outside the home were predominantly in Irish social circles. Two of the second-generation participants had actually relocated to Ireland not long before participating in the project and were eager to share their experience of Irish media in Britain. Participants with one Irish parent or who were third- (or later-) generation Irish were less confident about embracing Irish identities in early adult life and relied more heavily on media resources to explore their sense of Irishness.

Laura is in her early forties and defines herself as ‘London Irish’ having lived there up to a few years before the interview when she moved to Ireland along with her elderly Irish parents so that she could care for them in their retirement from working lives spent entirely in London. She feels that her experience made her Irish from a very young age:

> I was born in London, of Connemara parents, and being Irish has always been a very strong part of my identity. I’ve always felt Irish. When we were growing up Mum and Dad spoke Gaelic in the house in London […] There are recordings of me about two or three singing ‘Peigín Leitir Móir’ with a London accent![25]

[25] Peigín Leitir Móir is a traditional Gaelic song enjoyed by many generations of Irish-speaking children in the Connemara Gaeltacht of Co. Galway.

Liam who is in his early fifties was also born in London to Irish parents and lived there until he was thirty five. He remembers how reminders of his Irish heritage were all around him as he grew up:

> I'd go upstairs and there'd be a road sign on the wall: 'Castlebar 32'! You'd always be reminded ... And of course you'd go to Ireland on summer holidays every year as well so you'd be six weeks in Ireland so that's where you got your sense of Irishness.

Bronwen Walter's interviews and group discussions with the second-generation Irish in Britain found that childhood holidays spent in Ireland "may assume a particularly significant role in defining identities in later life [and] can be used … to explain important choices in their lives" (2013:32). Many of the second-generation participants spoke about the regular and lengthy periods of time they spent in Ireland throughout their childhoods, particularly during the summer holidays from school. Jack, in his late thirties and from Liverpool, gives an insight into how such trips were a significant part of the lives of the second-generation Irish in Britain:

> Growing up, we would have gone over for the two week holiday in August normally and maybe one other visit at some stage depending on what was going on like confirmations, communions, funerals or other occasions. Two or three visits a year growing up. Then when I was between GCSE's and A-Levels I spent the summer over there working with my uncle. That was probably six weeks … then my Dad died four years ago and since he died I haven't got over to the west as much [but] I've been over to Dublin quite a lot. Still got an uncle in Dublin [so] we visited him recently.

As well as trips to Ireland it is clear from the second- (and later-) generation interviews that Irish identity in Britain was often reinforced by attendance at Catholic schools where other second-generation Irish children would be met and by participation in social activities

organised by the Irish community. When asked to explain his strong sense of being Irish in London Liam pointed to the activities of his family and friends:

> When I was growing up … when I was about 10, 11, 12 with your initial group of friends, one was English. He was the minority, the rest were Irish descent. Family and friends and the people that they go around with. So all around me there was Irish dances, it was holidays in Ireland … My uncle was very much into the Irish associations in London and I used to represent Wicklow on the quiz team and stuff like that. There was an Irish centre in Camden and we'd always go to the Irish association get-togethers.

The Irish activities that these second-generation Irish participants enjoyed growing up often involved the kinds of entertainment that were part of media content they were already familiar with. Liam developed a love of sport that was focused mainly on English soccer but remembers being taken to Gaelic games played at Wembley stadium as a child.[26] As he grew into adulthood the rituals and symbols that connected him to a sense of Irishness remained:

> I would go to a place called The Mean Fiddler, and that would have Irish music. … Paul Brady and stuff like that. You'd go there, and they'd be on rather than you went there to see them specifically. Most of the places that you went to, even the discos, would be so Irish that the Irish national anthem would be played at the end of the night. It would be pop music most of the night, [but] it would still end with the Irish national anthem, so it was always in the background.

Niamh, also from London, has fond memories of how she, as a teenager, would be taken by her first-generation Irish mother to music gigs in London by Irish acts such as The Fureys, The Dubliners and Johnny McEvoy. She was already familiar with these performers who

[26] The GAA rented Wembley Stadium for an annual tournament from the late 1950s to the mid 1970s. See for example, 'Mayo, Offaly, Kilkenny and Cork Teams Depart for Wembley 1970', RTÉ Archives, https://www.rte.ie/archives/2015/0722/716384-gaa-teams-head-to-wembley/ Accessed March 5, 2019.

regularly appeared on Irish television during the summer holidays she spent in Ireland, and these social occasions in venues such as The Mean Fiddler and The Galtymore helped develop her interest in the Irish cultural scene in London. As an adult she worked in the advertising section of *The Irish Post* an Irish diasporic newspaper based there and later set up an advertising freesheet magazine promoting Irish events and businesses across the city.

Liam's class background saw him gravitate to the building sites of London in early adulthood, and he would spent the first two decades of his adult working life side by side with first-generation Irish migrants there and in casual labour in various Irish pubs in London:

> It was a different time because there was still the influx of Irish people coming in. In the eighties … there was still young Irishmen coming, and they weren't … educated; they were still just part of the labour force. It was a … pub/bookies/work kind of existence, and I lived that life as well. We would go to the pub, we'd go and watch a game, have a couple of pints. We'd do that.

Liam's experience points to the banal ways that a second-generation Irish identity could be reinforced in London, whereas another participant account shows how a second-generation Irish person could be reminded of their cultural identity in more negative ways. For Laura, physical appearance was a marker of her Irishness and sometimes used against her even by other Irish people in London, and this hurt, particularly during times that racism had bubbled to the surface of English society:

> Someone like me stood out like a sore thumb. Me and my brother looked very 'Irish' ... pale, freckles, curly red hair, ... so... people used [to] take the piss out of me in the pubs at night: 'You're an advert for Bus Éireann'! I had that from other [Irish] kids, but I was also once called a 'Mick kid' which

> was a horrible insult. I remember it was around the time of the national front marches.[27]

Larry, a third-generation participant, was born and grew up in Scotland and always felt a strong Irish identity around him:

> Where I grew up in Scotland was a majority catholic former mining village, and there was a sense of Irishness there. Most of that's around Celtic [Football club] in Glasgow. It's quite a masculine thing, but Celtic introduces you to Irish politics and Irish music as well as Irish-themed football, so I always had a sense of Irishness from that.

The personal accounts of the ways Irish identity was made known to these second- (or later-) generation participants show how it was passed from Irish parents and developed and strengthened in social experiences outside the family as well as on regular visits to Ireland during which significant amounts of time could be spent with extended families. But the accounts also bring to light the important role of Irish media, native and diasporic, in the formation of these Irish identities. As Helen Wood has described, media becomes embedded in everyday social communication, taking on its own significance in the formulation and rehearsal of identities (2010). It is clear in these accounts of growing up in Britain that Irish media and its content were always present. Laura remembered how her parents would always make sure they had Irish newspapers:

> We'd lived in Lewisham, in South London, and my dad would go all the way to Kennington to buy *The Connaught Tribune* in a particular little Asian shop. He'd go there on a Thursday and get his local paper, and my mum would buy *The Irish Independent* … I always remember as a kid *The*

[27] In the mid-1970s the Lewisham area of South London, where Laura's family lived, was the site of violent clashes between far-right organisations that had made gains in local elections and a coalition of anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations who came together to protest their opposition.

> *Connaught Tribune* being around and *The Irish Post.*[28] Every Saturday after mass, that would come in the house.

Similarly, Ann, who was also born in London to Irish parents, had a particularly vivid memory of her father "...running up and down the Holloway road trying to find *The Munster Express*", the regional newspaper from Ireland that he liked to read. Alongside Irish newspapers, Liam remembered the music from Ireland his parents enjoyed:

> We would have had *The Irish Post*. *The Western Peopl*e would have been in the house, and music, the showband music, Larry Cunningham and that kind of thing would have been around the house.[29]

Liam also remembers a particular shop that stocked Irish newspapers and his description connects Irish media and the settings in which they were encountered with actual visits to Ireland itself:

> There was a shop in Willesden called Mandy's and that would sell all the local Irish newspapers. It was just like going into a shop in Ireland on [the] holidays.[30] It even had that kind of smell, that kind of paper/soda bread smell, that kind of old time smell. Everybody had their own local newspaper […] and we had *The Western People*. The only one I saw was the *Irish Post,* [and] *The Western People*. We had three [British TV] channels, that was it. It's not like today when you can go on the internet and see everything. But there was access to the media and others got the *Irish Independent* every day and *The Irish Press*. It was there. There was no

[28] There are two diasporic newspapers based in London; *The Irish Post* and *The Irish World.* They have been distributed in Britain and Ireland since 1970 and 1987 respectively and both have also developed a significant online presence in recent years in addition to their print offerings.
[29] Larry Cunningham (1938 – 2012) was one of the leading figures of the Irish showband scene in the 1960s and 1970s and regularly played Irish cultural venues around Britain then and right up until he died in 2012.
[30] This shop catering to Irish emigrants in London opened on the Willesden High Road in the 1960s and moved south of the Thames to Tooting in the early 2000s. https://www.dailyedge.ie/mandys-irish-shop-london-3188963-Jan2017/

> lack of Irish information and later on when I was in my twenties, I would read *The [Irish] Independent* ‘cos my Dad would leave it around.

Many of the second-generation participants also recalled *The Irish Post* in the house when they were children, and Liam pointed to the practical social function this London-based diasporic newspaper served in facilitating Irish immigrants to connect with each other:

> My picture was in it a few times, but it was more about Irish communities *in England* […] It had Irish news on it, but it was about what was happening in Manchester or in Leeds or in London more so than it being an ‘Irish’ newspaper. The Irish would just flick through [it] to see what was going on. There would be dances and that. My parents would have been going out quite a lot to the *Galty*, and places like that and dances in *The Spotted Dog* on a Saturday night. That’s how the Irish community got together.[31]

Radio broadcasts from Ireland were also an important part of the everyday media landscape of the families of some of these second- (or later-) generation participants. Participants had memories of their parents and other Irish families regularly listening or attempting to tune into the main radio station of the Irish public-service broadcaster RTÉ. Jack still listens regularly to RTÉ Radio One today, a practice normalised by his parents as he grew up in Liverpool. He and his siblings still identify the station by a name not officially used for it in Ireland since the mid-1960s:

> I listen to what we call *Radio Éireann* but what I think is your RTÉ … One? That’s what I was, we were, brought up with.

[31] Galty refers to The Galtymore, a well-known London dancehall synonymous with the Irish since it first opened in 1952. It closed in 2008.

The analogue radio signal from Ireland was weaker further south and Val, who grew up in London, also using the old name for the station, recalled the efforts of her mother to tune in her radio set:

> My mother would try and get Radio Éireann late at night ... she would struggle with the radio that she'd have. It worked out sometimes but not very often. She was delighted when it worked out for her.

Liam recalled how Irish migrants in London developed a certain technical knowledge to access the Irish radio coverage of Gaelic games when he was a teenager:

> There was a park […] that was quite high and before the days of satellite TV, that's where the lads used to go to listen to the Irish games, the Sunday game, cos they could pick up the long wave. I remember late summers […] people with transistor radios on top of the hill desperately trying to get a signal […] Gladstone park in North West London … 'cos London's a basin and to get the signal you have get up to the top of the basin, so that's what they were aiming for.

Although receiving television channels from Ireland in most of Britain was never a practical possibility for most in Britain even after the advent of satellite television in the late 1980's, some of the participants had knowledge of Irish television from time spent in Ireland. These experiences bolstered Irish identities in childhood and continue to sustain relationships with Irish media in adulthood today. Val accompanied her father on visits to Ireland throughout her childhood and can recall her initial wonder that Irish television consisted of only two channels with one of these broadcasting only in the evening time. She also remembers how *The Late Late Show* (a weekend television chat show) was such an important weekly event for her Irish relations in Ireland.[32] Niamh has vivid memories of the summer holidays she

[32] *The Late Late Show* is RTÉ Television's flagship chat show which first aired in 1962 and was synonymous with the iconic Irish television presenter Gay Byrne from then until he retired from the show in 1999.

spent in Ireland that include ritualised occasions of communal television viewing. Her descriptions shows how media becomes embedded in processes of identity formation (Wood 2010). As a teenager she and her younger sister would travel unaccompanied from London to Dún Laoghaire for their school holidays each summer to be looked after by two aunts who lived there:

> We'd stay with these two old ladies, and they'd make a great fuss of us. They'd take us into Dublin and we'd have Knickerbocker Glories and one aunt used to work in Johnson Mooney's bakery in Dún Laoghaire, and we'd go in and they used to give us free buns, and then in the evenings, they'd say 'now we've got *The Late Late Show* coming on and Gay Byrne' or 'we've got *The Rose of Tralee'* and so my sister and I, we'd be all watching all these programmes and listening and setting the table and then there might be visitors coming.[33] All that really instilled in me this love of Ireland.

Irish-themed media content on British media was relatively rare, and this made it all the more memorable when it did appear. The lack of newly commissioned Irish material on Channel 4, which launched in 1982 and was bound by legislation to be diverse and cater for underrepresented social groups, has been critiqued by Lance Pettitt. Although the channel commissioned new programmes for the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities as well as from the gay and youth perspectives throughout the 1980s, they only rebroadcast Irish television programmes previously shown in Ireland and purchased directly from RTÉ and UTV (2015). Jack recalled how being able to watch Gaelic football, a sport his family regularly listened to on Irish radio and usually only viewable in public settings at the time, on British television was important to him as a teenager:

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[33] Gay Byrne also presented the live broadcasts of the Rose of Tralee competition every summer from 1974 to 1994.

> I have vivid memories of Channel 4 having Gaelic sport … they only had it for a couple of years, but I remember being made up with that … [It] felt good to see TV like [that] at home, I didn't have to go to pubs or clubs to watch it.[34]

Liam, who spent his childhood summers with his extended family in his Dad's home village of Crossmolina in County Mayo also has specific memories of particular times the village got a mention in media he came across in London. He remembers his excitement as a teenager at finding a newspaper article in *The Irish Independent* declaring the village was the wettest place in Ireland and at seeing a music video on British television by popular British rock group Dexys Midnight Runners, whose lead singer Kevin Rowland is also of Irish descent, which contained images from Mayo with a direct connection to his family:

> We were watching a programme on BBC Two about six o'clock. Dexys had just changed their style from their kind of scruffy Irish look into a kind of a more Ivy league college look, and we're watching this video and he'd [Rowland] filmed it where […] his parents were from in Ireland which […] wasn't too far from where my Dad was from and as the video went around it stopped in a graveyard, and I'm watching this video and 'oh that's nice, that's nice' and it stops on my Grandad's grave!

This section has emphasised the second-generation participant's understandings of how their Irish identities were shaped during childhood and early adulthood in Britain and the accounts reveal the role of Irish and Irish-themed media content in forming and maintaining those identities. The importance of the imagination in constructing identities and allegiances in human societies was pointed out by Appadurai. The work involved, once carried out by charismatic individuals or elites who then "implanted their visions into social life" is, in the era of transnational ethnoscapes and mediascapes, increasingly carried out by "ordinary

[34] The channel also re-broadcast RTÉ Television's weekly chat show *The Late Late Show* on Monday afternoons in the early 1990s.

people [who] have begun to deploy their imaginations in the practice of their everyday lives" (1996:5). The interest of first-generation Irish parents in Irish media content in Britain coalesces with their children's excitement about and familiarity with Ireland and the Irish media they would encounter there. In this process, a lifelong interest in Irish media can be nurtured and, as later sections will show, maintained into adulthood. Jo Whitehouse-Hart has argued, in relation to film and television viewing in particular, that:

> [I]mportant figures from the viewers' pasts, such as parents and siblings, are present unconsciously and imaginatively when they view, without the need to be physically present … regardless of the technology. … [F]amilies, and the traces of their earliest experiences … are present with viewers … even if they are not conscious of this. This is further enhanced and intensified in the context of personalised viewing which creates new emotional possibilities and tensions for viewers (2014:168-9)

It is also evident in these accounts that exposure to Irish media while growing up in Britain not only inspired the imagination but made that media a part of intergenerational relationships in Irish families in Britain. Conversations between the generations that involve Irish-themed media content habits around Irish media are now explored revealing the ways such media reinforce Irish identities between different generations of the Irish in Britain.

SHARING IRISH MEDIA ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

Many of the second- (and later-) generation accounts indicate that Irish and Irish-themed media continue to play an important role in the relationship between participants, the previous and the next generations of their families. A shared interest in family origins and history between the generations becomes the subject of conversations often triggered and supported by the resources of Irish and Irish-themed media. The continuation of media habits and rituals around Irish media made familiar in childhood points to the role Irish media plays in passing on Irish identities in migrant families. Examples of how Irish media

can inspire conversations and embed themselves in the identities of different generations of the Irish in Britain are now explored.

In one anecdote, Niamh points to the way an Irish radio broadcast being accessed in London can help maintain social connections between the first- (and second-) generations of the Irish in Britain:

> My mum had a great friend from Limerick who had been a nurse [in London] all her life, and she had RTÉ on her radio. If there was anything interesting on, she would tell me. […] One time, Mary rang to say there's this interview on the radio that I should come around and listen to […] When I worked at *The Irish Post,* we had a fabulous inspirational editor, Norah Casey. Mary […] said Norah Casey's going to be interviewed on RTÉ. You should come and listen to it. So we were all round at Mary's, and we were all listening to the radio together![35]

Liam's account of his excitement at the Dexys Midnight Runners music video recounted earlier reveals a deep-seated desire to share such content with his father. That was actually unfulfilled at the time of the initial broadcast, but the memory of it remained as an often recounted story within the family. The video would eventually become readily accessible as the internet facilitated the personalised viewing of historical media content:

> [I was] trying to call the old man in 'cos there was no Sky Plus and pause and 'look at this' back then. It was only years later we were able to get it on *YouTube* and show him the actual video!

As this memory shows, developments in digital technologies over the past three decades have facilitated increased opportunities for accessing Irish media in Britain. As the internet made both mainstream media and user-generated content from Ireland more accessible

[35] Norah Casey was editor of *The Irish Post* in the late 1990's before moving home to Ireland where she developed a career as a magazine publisher and television media personality.

outside Ireland, these second-generation children of Irish immigrants were instrumental in bringing such content into family environments to share with parents. In London Laura would access internet content from Ireland that interested her but was also often motivated by the desire to find content of interest of her parents:

> I'd always have a look every day at *The Irish Times* and local things, *The Galway Advertiser* or whatever. My dad would be well into the pucán and the currach races.[36] I'd see clips of old lads rowing on YouTube or something. It was a kind of new world for them really cos they could see what was going on in a way that before was just pictures in *The Connaught* [*Tribune*]. They'd want to listen to Raidió na Gaeltach[ta] so they'd ask me to get it on for them … and TG4. Always good documentaries on TG4.[37] They'd want to see something or I'd want to see something.

Niamh buys the Irish diasporic weekly newspapers *The Irish Post* and *The Irish World* so that she can be up to date on the Irish in London when compiling the advertising freesheet that she distributes in the Irish pubs and cultural venues there. However her weekly perusal of diasporic Irish media is also driven by her mother's interest in Irish-themed publications and the newspaper contents are a regular topic of conversation between them:

> I don't read an English Sunday newspaper because I don't have time, but I would read those two publications. I buy them … on a Wednesday. […] I skim through them […] and then I might mark, 'Oh yes, that's interesting,' and […] Sunday is when I would actually make time to sit down and read … it might be a two or three page article and I make sure that I read it. My mum also reads them, so we might discuss stories which is actually quite good, and also if I haven't got time to read something, I might say to my

[36] Traditional boat races from the Irish speaking communities on the west coast of Ireland.
[37] Raidió na Gaeltachta and TG4 are Irish language national public-service broadcasters (radio and television respectively).

> Mum, look, I've just picked up this, go through it and tell me if there's anything I should know about (laughing).

Niamh's mum has also always been an avid reader of two long-established and widely circulated magazines from Ireland aimed at an older Irish audience both in and outside of Ireland and that are also useful for her work:

> She also gets the *Ireland's Own* at Church. She gets *Ireland's Eye* if she can get it anywhere, but it's a bit difficult to get. She reads those, and then she tells me about things, if there's anything that she thinks [would] be good for [my] magazine. So it's another little source of information.

Conversations stimulated by interest in Irish media content with the next generation of Irish within and across extended families are also evident in these second- (and later-) generation accounts. Such conversations are reminiscent of conversations the participants once had with previous generations and are a means of passing an Irish identity on to the next. The following examples show how the younger generation become involved in discussion and enjoyment of Irish media and point to the role it can play in the formation and maintenance of an Irish cultural identity for them.

Niamh recalls how, over the years, the *Ireland's Own* magazine became a significant symbolic connection with Ireland for all the generations in her family:

> Mum was always getting it when my daughter was a child. It always has this 'kid's corner,' so if we were anywhere and Maura was getting a bit fidgety, my mum could say 'Oh, I'll just get out the *Ireland's Own*' … Maura could do the kids corner, and she quite liked that.. My mum used to babysit a lot. She'd come in, and Maura would say 'Oh Nanny, have you got the

> *Ireland's Own*? We'll do the kid's corner'. That was quite a good thing. Maura was learning about Ireland![38]

Niamh got an opportunity through her work to move to Ireland for a period of time, and this meant that her daughter briefly attended primary school there. During this time, her daughter learned some of the Irish language which was taught at the school, and this became something she had in common with her grandmother in London who had also attended school in Ireland many years previously. Subsequently Niamh, who understood no Irish herself, would take great pride in listening to her mother and daughter reading the Irish language sections of *Ireland's Own* magazine together and having little interactions with each other in Gaelic.

Kevin, who is fourth-generation Irish and in his mid-fifties, connects his lifelong passion for Irish radio with the stories from Irish history and folklore that he first heard directly from his grandparents as a child in Liverpool. Regularly listening to RTÉ Radio One there today helps Kevin keep those memories alive and pass them on to the next generation in Liverpool:

> One of me nephews, he's […] taking a great interest in the history and the stories. It's someone picking up the baton for the next generation and interested in the family and where they're from. I used to go to me grandmother's house, both sets of grandparents were Irish descent and you'd sit in front of the coal fire, and they'd be telling me about O'Sullivan Beara. I'd fall asleep listening to those stories, and that's better than a film for me, listening to a storyteller in the dark staring into a fire. I can see the same interest in this young nephew, same sort of face as I must have shown to me grandparents. So I'm like the family archive 'cos I took an interest to know where the family were from and who was married to who

[38] While names have been changed to respect the anonymity of participants it is significant in terms of Irish identities continuing down the generations that Niamh and Maura's actual first names are similarly traditionally Irish and very common in Ireland.

> and stories that was passed to me or from what I can remember, but of course, if I need to know about O'Sullivan Beara I can pick it up off RTÉ and go 'oh that's right. I remember this'.[39]

Ann who finds Irish content via Facebook, internet searches, her TIVO cable television service and by reading the diasporic *Irish Post* newspaper, specifically referred to the importance of Irish identity to the generations of her family before and after her and how media content related to Ireland can be a resource to help maintain that identity:

> If you're an immigrant into a country, how do you maintain your roots and your sense of identity in a foreign country the generations going down? [...] What makes me Irish and what makes me English and how do I retain that link with Ireland and know what my family is about? […] My daughters have grown up. They do the same thing; they look for Irish stuff, pull up things from their Facebook feed and there's a continuity there. I just think it enhances your sense of self, and if only I could get RTÉ [Television] onto Virgin Media or on to Freeview, my mother's life would be complete!

Two other points made in the interviews with second- (and later-) generation Irish participants also highlight the importance they place on passing Irish identity on to the next generation. Laura expressed regret that her parents, despite being fluent Irish speakers from an Irish speaking region of Ireland, had not passed on the language to her or her siblings as they grew up in London. However, it is now a source of pride to her that her son will soon begin attending an Irish language primary school in Ireland as she has recently moved along with her first-generation parents from London to the Gaeltacht region in Ireland that they originally came from. Jack, a daily listener to Irish radio and regular viewer of Irish television

[39] An RTÉ radio documentary entitled 'Retreat of O Suilleabhain Beara' about the epic march of the Gaelic chieftain and members of his clan from west Cork to Leitrim in 1603 was first broadcast on 30th August 1980 and then re-broadcast on RTÉ not long before this interview. https://www.rte.ie/radio/doconone/646576-radio-documentary-o-suilleabhain-beara-march-1603

in Liverpool, expressed his eagerness to get back to visiting his extended family in Ireland more regularly like he had been doing before he started his own family:

> Now I've got my first child, I'm keen to sort that out so we can kind of reconnect again. [I have] still got family over there and still want him to be brought up with that experience; I think that's useful for him and valuable to him.

In the meantime Jack's Irish media practices in Liverpool are another significant way of passing on an Irish identity to the next generation of his family there.

Irish media and Irish-themed media content has been historically difficult to access in Britain. The first-generation migrant parents of these participants sought out Irish newspapers on the streets and Irish radio signals from the ether and ultimately passed their Irish media habits onto the next generation whose accounts were discussed here. The digital plenitude of recent years makes more Irish-themed media and media from Ireland available and is a significant way for the second- (and later-) generation Irish in Britain to pass Irish identities to the next generation. As these accounts suggest, such media content becomes intertwined in intergenerational relationships within Irish families in Britain and is a cultural resource that helps maintain family connections to and interest in Ireland. Irish identity in the second- (and later-) generations is reaffirmed and re-formed in the kinds of media infused family interactions recounted above.

The second- (and later-) generation Irish are also members of the British media audience throughout their lives. The ways that British and other widely disseminated media content such as Hollywood film represented Ireland and the Irish throughout those lives were very important to the second- (and later-) generation Irish participants in this project. Their understandings of those representations and their implications for being Irish in Britain is discussed in the following section.

SCREEN REPRESENTATIONS OF IRISHNESS

The ways that British media representations of the Irish explicitly reinforced anti-Irish prejudices and stereotypes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been well documented (Curtis 1971, Hillyard 1993, Curtis 1998). Sarah O'Brien puts it succinctly: '[W]hen the Irish were featured in British mainstream media it was most frequently framed within a deficit narrative' (2017:374). This was tempered in the 1990s as the Northern Ireland peace process signalled the beginning of the end of the Troubles, and a concurrent global flowering of Irish culture was reflected in British media representations of Irishness that included Irish-themed British television drama produced by Irish creative teams such as *Father Ted* (1995-98) and *Ballykissangel* (1996-2001). The portrayal of the Irish over this period has been characterised as changing from one based on 'race' in which Irish assimilation was presumed to one of 'ethnicity' where Irishness was celebrated as a distinct and 'high-status cultural icon' (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2014:147). Having grown up in Britain as part of the mainstream media audience that directly experienced this trajectory, many of the second- (and later-) generation participants in this study were keen to share their views on representations of the Irish on British media and on television and film in particular. This section reveals that these second- (and later-) generation participants have thought deeply about this aspect of the media they grew up with in Britain and reveals their ability to think critically about the media in their everyday lives.

For Liam the historical success of Irish personalities on mainstream British media even during the Troubles stood as a testament to their popularity with English audiences and worked for him as a counterweight to the negative representations of the Irish at that time which clearly made him uncomfortable:

> Growing up, I think I was surprised how popular Irish people like Val Doonican and Dave Allen were on television, especially with the times that

> were in it.[40] I became more aware, say when I was 15 and 16, of the nuance and it did surprise me that the English accepted these people as their own. It's only when the bombs came mainland that it [the negativity] became more prevalent … but TV programmes, I remember *Robin's Nest.* There was an Irish chef or dishwasher. Of course, he was dropping the plate, Kelly, the actor's name was. There was a few kind of silly Irishmen and he played the same character on *Fawlty Towers*, the bad builder.[41] You can't really take it too much to heart. It depends on who's telling it, of course, and what they want, what's behind it, but a silly joke is just a silly joke. I didn't take any hurt from it. I just kind of laughed along. There was that, but then you also had Wogan on the radio.[42] There were Irish people that had standing in the media too.

This quote reveals the tensions involved when a second-generation Irish person in Britain is confronted with representations of the Irish on mainstream British media. While Liam takes solace from the popularity of these media personalities, he understands their success was based on being perceived by the English 'as their own' rather than representative of the 'Irish', an ethnic group exploited for its comedic value in British sitcoms. Memories of negative representations of the Irish in the British media historically were strong for many participants and goes to the very heart of the question of identity, as described by Ann:

> Irish people would be portrayed in British media as being rather stupid and comedic ... when I was a child ... that would be repeated throughout the media ... and then you had all the Troubles so we were stupid and *then* we

[40] Val Doonican, originally from Waterford, was a highly successful recording artist, musician who presented his own television series on BBC from 1965 to 1986. The comedian Dave Allen, who moved to England from Dublin at the age of 14, also had his own television show on BBC from 1971 to 1986.
[41] Robins Nest (1977-1981) was an ITV Sitcom starring Irish actor David Kelly who also played the role of an incompetent and unreliable 'Irish builder' in an episode of the first series of *Fawlty Towers* (1975).
[42] Terry Wogan, originally from Limerick, was a hugely popular BBC radio and television presenter in Britain from the late 1960s right up until he stepped back from professional work a year before his death in 2016.

were all terrorists! Actually, most of us were just people of average intelligence going about our daily business and then for people like me that are born in England... Are we English? Are we Irish? How do people see us? Certainly within the British media you, you had all those themes going through it; the Irish are stupid, they're feckless, they're drunks, they're terrorists. A bit like now if you were Syrian or a refugee, what would you be seeing about yourself in the British media?

The stereotypical representations described here created a critical distance between the second-generation Irish and the British media. Media representations of the Irish were discussed and dismissed within Irish families in Britain, as Ann also indicated:

My Dad always said to us 'Don't believe what you read in the newspapers' (laughing). I knew that we weren't stupid, and other Irish people I knew weren't stupid and weren't drunks and weren't all these things, so you just think, well ... it's media, it's not the truth.

For those participants who were young adults – such as Laura - when the Troubles ended the contrast before and after this time was very strong:

I remember the faces of the 10 hunger strikers. Bobby Sands.[43] I remember my mum crying. I remember that distinctly and I remember the backlash and Irish people kind of kept their heads down. Now it's fantastic to be Irish in London, but it wasn't then. I mean my mum always said the 'No Blacks, no Irish, no dogs' was commonplace in the fifties when she went over. In terms of media, there was a lot of anti-Irish sentiment around at that time. It's not like that now. You can see how it evolved, how it changed. I

[43] Ten IRA prisoners died on hunger strike while demanding political status in 1981. During the strike one of the hunger strikers, Bobby Sands, was elected MP for the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency.

> remember that rugby game. England at Croke Park and … being like 'Oh my God, you'd never have thought that that would happen'.[44]

It was events during the 1990s related to the North of Ireland that were remembered by participants as precipitating a move away from anti-Irish sentiments in the British media. Paul, who was involved in the Irish Republican movement in London during this time, pointed to the release of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six as events that forced the British media to engage with the complexities of the Troubles, which he felt they had hitherto avoided through simplified condemnation of IRA violence and, in the case of the tabloid newspapers in particular, by whipping up anti-Irish feeling. He feels that the more nuanced narrative the British media were forced to tell in response to those events brought about significant changes in British middle-class attitudes to both the institutions of law and order and to Irish nationalism. Another pivotal event for Paul was the announcement of the IRA ceasefire that signalled the start of the peace process. He was so moved by what he saw as the first real acknowledgment by the British press of the "armed struggle" that he subsequently spent a significant sum on an archive edition of a British newspaper covering this story:

> The front page of the *Independent* the day after the provisional IRA put down their weapons was pretty remarkable. … it was a fair presentation of what, in my view, had been historically grossly misrepresented. [It] was neutral. It basically said: the Irish have now withdrawn from this armed struggle and that was an exceptional piece of journalism in my view because it acknowledged that it *was* an armed struggle with its own rationale and that was a very important moment in real genuine historical factual terms and in terms of cultural influence and perhaps also in terms

[44] In 2005 the GAA modified their rules to allow rugby matches to be played at the Croke Park stadium during the period that the Irish rugby teams own grounds were being redeveloped. Laura is referring to a match between England and Ireland played at Croke Parke in February 2007. This GAA decision contrasted starkly with their 2002 decision not to allow soccer to be played at Croke Park which stymied Ireland's bid to co-host the European Football Championship of 2008 with Scotland (Arrowsmith 2004).

> [of British] media attitudes to Ireland. I do think that was sort of a line in the sand.

Ann contrasts her personal memories of the 'nasty' anti-Irish sentiment across British media with contemporary 'sympathetic' coverage no longer 'poking fun at the Irish,' evident in a newspaper such as *The Guardian*. For her, this is down to a change in attitudes towards the Irish following a period of economic assimilation into Britain when both the second-generation Irish and newer waves of first-generation migrants from Ireland are better educated than previous generations:

> I don't think culturally society has this view of Irish people anymore. Society in England changed as well. Irish people are more ... socially evenly embedded in English society. It isn't just your barman that's Irish ... it's just as likely that your doctor's going to be Irish or your dentist … so it's sort of social cohesiveness ... and embedding of people that are either Irish or of Irish heritage within British society. We're no longer a group apart, and that's reflected in how the media portrays us.

While participants confirmed a historical narrative of significant change in representations of the Irish by the British media during the 1990s, some were keen to qualify this by pointing out the lack of trust they had in British tabloid journalism, which they avoided but which they felt could easily resort to old ways and might still be doing so:

> I imagine if you picked up *The Daily Mail* … disgusting stuff would come out of that. It's a dirty rag. (Laura)

This shows that participants retain a lingering unease about how the Irish can be portrayed in Britain in spite of the ostensible changes of recent decades. Indeed, writing on the ways Irish stereotypes continue to go almost unnoticed in English films, Walter has suggested that:

> [D]espite major changes at the end of the twentieth century in British/Irish economic and political relationships as a result of the 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom and Good Friday Agreement, long-standing attitudes persist and are easily brought into play by filmmakers and actors to convey background and context in ways which need no explanation (2011:12).

The invisible use of Irishness that Walter identifies and defines as a means of reinforcing a certain 'Englishness' reflects the 'embeddedness' that Ann describes. In keeping with Walter's thesis, this aspect of English films was not remarked upon by any of the second- (and later-) generation participants in this study when they spoke about screen representations of Irishness in Britain. Their accounts focused on explicitly Irish and Irish-themed screen drama and how that reflected the transformation of the 1990s. The iconic television sitcom *Father Ted* was introduced by participants as important in this regard. This show written by Irish scriptwriters and featuring Irish actors was produced by a London production company and funded and broadcast by Channel 4 in the UK. As Marcus Free relates, the sitcom achieved a cult following in Britain (and in Ireland when it was subsequently broadcast by RTÉ) as a celebrated symbol of Irish popular culture's irreverence towards Catholic Ireland. While it parodied long established Irish stereotypes of drunkenness and stupidity, it was produced in the context of changing political relations between Britain and Ireland and increased opportunities for transnational cultural work due to media deregulation and the growth of the independent production sector in the UK. In Free's analysis, this created the historical context in which *Father Ted*'s scriptwriters could self-consciously free themselves from expectations that the tropes of anti-Irishness could not be revisited, and it was this creative freedom that facilitated their irreverent satire of the Catholic church (2015:8). The interviews conducted for this project show that *Father Ted* is similarly understood by participants as the Irish themselves engaging with historical issues through comedy in a text that could be enjoyed by the Irish in Britain:

> *Father Ted*'s a send up of Irishness but from an Irish perspective. It's laughing at us, laughing at ourselves to some extent. [It is also us] laughing away the oppression of the Church which we grew up with as well as Catholics here (Larry).

It is also an Irish-themed media text that continues to be shared with the next generation of Irish in Britain, opening up conversational spaces for engagement with Irish identities and histories:

> My oldest girl loves *Father Ted* […] It's a funny thing [but] when I was growing up it was still common, I tried to explain this to my daughter […] Irishness meant 'thick' and 'stupid,' and obviously there was the war in the North as well […] so I think people taking a bit of ownership over comedy, if you like, rather than being laughed at … maybe that's got a bit of a meaning to it as well (Larry).

Participants remembered how this irreverence was not welcomed by everyone in the London Irish community however:

> My Dad … was strongly in favour of an Ireland that was Catholic and old-fashioned if you like. [He] didn't like *Father Ted*. (Larry)

> We always loved *Father Ted*. From a young age we were […] watching *Father Ted* and laughing, whereas I had quite a few friends whose parents wouldn't let them watch. They found it offensive and still [do] to this day whereas my parents would be watching it and laughing (Laura).

Another more recent British produced sitcom with an Irish creative team that participants understood as fitting into the same tradition of Irish people 'laughing at ourselves' was also the subject of a mixed reception among those participants who mentioned it. *Mrs Brown's Boys* received a poor critical reception, despite enjoying immense popularity since first airing

on the BBC in 2011 (Jackson 2016). It has been described as a show “that unashamedly taps into an end-of-the-pier comedy tradition and the un-pc aesthetics of 1970s/80s sitcom” (Fagan 2015:204). This deliberate resonance with an era of anti-Irish stereotype in British television comedy may be one reason that many of the second- (and later-) generation Irish participants in this project never mentioned it, despite its huge ratings success and profile in the U.K. throughout the half decade prior to the interviews for this project. One participant dismissed it as ‘insulting caricature’ and only two participants introduced it as a programme they had actually enjoyed. One of these, Margie, retired and from London, enjoyed it because “it just reminds me of people that I knew years ago” and was looking forward to attending the live stage version in the weeks following her interview. Another, Annie, the youngest of the second-generation participants, considered the show ‘a guilty pleasure,’ and her nuanced engagement with it points to its potential as a resource in dealing with the dialectic complexity of progressive and conservative ideas of Ireland, either one of which can become implicated in an Irish identity:

> [I]t’s so bad, and the stereotypes are so played on, but at the same time, it can be funny, so it’s difficult to decide whether you like it or don’t like it. I tell myself I won’t watch it, but then it was on at Christmas, and I was like, ‘I’ve got to see this, I’ve just got to leave it on! My [first-generation] mum left the room. She was like, ‘I cannot watch this man speak about all these things,’ but I’d say it *is* a good show overall. There’s a couple of things in it that I quite like. For example, you do have these really old stereotypes of the Irish mammy and the cloying lifestyle and overbearingness, but then you also have a representation of quite a modern family in a more progressive and accepting type of family set-up. There is a gay son [and] unmarried older daughter. There’s things I like about it and things I don’t.

Annie’s parsing of the use of an established stereotype alongside the programmes inherent challenge to traditional conceptions of conservative Ireland mirrors a discourse analysis of

the show's protagonist 'Irish Mammy' figure carried out by Bróna Murphy and María Palma-Fahey who concluded:

> [T]he inclusion of counter-stereotypic examples … does not attempt to disconfirm and render the cultural stereotype obsolete … but instead, serves to mark, emphasise, acknowledge and challenge the traditional stereotype … The deconstruction of the Irish maternal figure, which includes her acceptance of homosexuality, her sexually liberated nature, her desire to be a leader, her feistiness and outspoken personality as well as her blatant lack of respect for Catholicism … challenge the cultural meanings which exist around the stereotype (2018:36).

The re-fashioning by the Irish themselves of stereotypes initially established by the British reflects the creative confidence described above by Free in relation to *Father Ted* (2015). It is understood by participants in this project as an Irish intervention in previously British representations of Irishness. The Irish, as one participant put it, "taking a bit of ownership over comedy". Given the historical prevalence of anti-Irish media representations in Britain in everyday news media, this re-fashioning was of particular importance to participants because it occurred in relation to everyday television content. It was also noted in film representations of Irishness, however. Paul remembered the knowing use of established Irish stereotype by the Irish lead-actor in the film *The Guard* (2011), which he described as:

> [Q]uite interesting in terms of the self-presentation of an Irish person. There's a Jamaican phrase which is 'play fool to catch wise,' and I think there is an element of that in the Irish self-presentation to the British which I think Brendan Gleeson played on in that role. […] I think that has something to do with the colonial experience; the worst of English popular culture and the racist stereotyping [of the] Irish as being stupid. You can see that dialogue being played back to the British in certain aspects of Irish culture (laughs), which is: 'If you take us for this, we'll play that game but

> actually who's winning in the end?' I think Brendan Gleeson personified that for me in *The Guard.*

This is a pertinent example given that the film's London-born and second-generation Irish director John Michael McDonagh found himself embroiled in some public controversy with sections of the media in Ireland after he expressed a wish, during a promotional interview in the United States for his second film *Calvary* (2014), that his films not be labelled 'Irish' as Irish audiences were averse to the historically lower standards of cinema that he felt the description implied. Given that his films had been funded by the Irish Film Board (now Screen Ireland) and produced in Ireland with predominantly Irish casts and crews, this was considered an insult to the Irish film industry by some in the Irish media who responded with tongue-in-cheek references to McDonagh as an 'English' director (Clarke 2014a). In a statement in which he sought to clarify that he had been trying to orientate his film as a universal story suitable for an international audience, McDonagh emphasised his personal hurt at being excluded as a valid commentator on Irish film: "I am an Irish citizen, a child of Irish parents, nearly all my friends and work associates are Irish, and yet because I was born in London, I supposedly have no right to comment on Irish film" (Clarke 2014b). The prevalence of Irish stereotypes in his films has prompted the reservations of Irish film scholars (Díaz-Cuesta 2018). In the case of *The Guard*, such stereotypes are understood by Paul as a turning of the tables on British representations of the Irish by an Irish actor (and by extension an Irish creative team) and mirrors the similar readings of *Mrs Brown's Boys* and *Father Ted* discussed above.

The representation of Ireland and the Irish in cinema has a historical specificity grounded in tropes initially established outside of Ireland. Films with Irish themes, predominantly set in rural Ireland, were established as commercially viable in the nascent film industries of the United States of America and Britain from the 1910s, due in no small part, to the large Irish diaspora in both markets and at a time when there was little structural investment in indigenous filmmaking in Ireland. Filmmakers from Ireland would be heavily influenced by

the themes and tropes developed by those iconic films when an indigenous Irish film culture eventually gained political support and some critical mass over the last two decades of the twentieth century (McLoone 2000, Barton 2004). The second- (and later-) generation participants interviewed here engaged with Irish-themed films in terms of how authentically they were felt to portray Ireland and its history, and this included a suspicion of Hollywood representations and a concomitant appreciation of British realist filmmaking. One participant listed examples of the kind of 'Irish' film she had made a point of seeing by comparing them with *Far and away* (1992), a much derided Hollywood production on the theme of Irish famine migration:[45]

> You'd go and see Irish films. [I] went to see *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, *Hunger*, films that were of quality. I wouldn't be going to see *Far and Away* or whatever that nonsense is! (Laura)

The films of 'quality' listed by this participant fit into a realist tradition of British filmmaking that engages critically with the interconnections of British and Irish history. The first deals with the Irish war of independence against the British (1919-1921) and the ensuing civil war (1922-1923), and the second with the Republican hunger strikes of the early 1980s. Another participant who was particularly critical of British media coverage of the Troubles up to the 1990s, emphasised some widely known Irish-American films, produced in that decade, that he felt were true to the Irish history they depicted, while simultaneously displaying conventional Hollywood narrative strategies, which he considered a weakness:

> I would mention *The Boxer*, [the] Daniel Day-Lewis film about a republican who comes out of prison and *Some Mother's Son* and *In the Name of the Father* which I think was absolutely plagued by *Hollywoodization* but actually was in some respects remarkably sympathetic, I think, to the experience of the Guildford Four. (Paul)

[45] A film described by Martin McLoone as an 'epic folly' (2000:189).

The common element to the films listed by Paul here is Irish-born filmmaker Jim Sheridan who deliberately “sought from the outset of his career to craft emotionally strong stories that would appeal to mass audiences in and beyond Ireland” (Flynn and Tracy 2019:531).[46] These participant accounts show the significance of cinematic representations of Irish history to the second- (and later-) generation Irish in Britain, while also revealing their understanding of Hollywood entertainment tropes and the ways such tropes mitigate against the authenticity of such representations. Participants also drew on their own family histories of migration in response to cinematic representations of Irish migration, another important historical theme they emphasised. Annie described *Brooklyn* (2015) as being a realistic portrayal of her mother’s memories of Ireland and of certain aspects of her own experience of Ireland today:

> I watched the film *Brooklyn* a good few times because it reminds me a lot of the stories my own mum told me about when she moved to England … I was seeing it through her eyes, and I found that to be quite an accurate description of where my mum’s from in Ireland. When I eventually showed the movie to my mum, we were both laughing because it’s so spot on! It was realistic *in a sense*, as much as a huge Hollywood movie can be, like when she [the protagonist] travels back to Ireland.[47] The descriptions of the relationship between her and her mum I found to be quite accurate, like the kind of stiff upper lip. You don’t let the emotions come out, that sort of relationship. A high sense of propriety and quite a lot of decorum and strict social norms ‘cos when I go back to Ireland it’s very … there’s a lot of rules and things that you don’t really think about much day-to-day in England. [They] become more significant there with the smaller

[46] Jim Sheridan directed *In the Name of the Father* (1993) and *The Boxer* (1997) and co-wrote *Some Mother’s Son* (1996) with director Terry George.

[47] Although *Brooklyn*, by Irish director John Crowley, was not a Hollywood produced film, it certainly draws on Hollywood conventions in its storytelling and achieved, like Hollywood films, a wide theatrical release.

> community and … that can make things seem a bit more … I want to look for a better word than gossipy, a bit more tight-knit.

It is in this same film's portrayal of the emigrant experience of arrival in a new country, however, that another second-generation participant finds a lack of authenticity. Pat Brereton has compared *Brooklyn* to the films of Jim Sheridan, pointing in particular to how:

> … the sequence illustrating her [Eilis, the protagonist's] first entry into America, magically appearing on the other side of Ellis island … echoes Sheridan's penchant for mythical and magical excess. Having endured a difficult boat passage, Eilis is witnessed almost literally 'going into the light', emerging through a portal into the utopian space of America (Brereton 2016:286).

For Ann, the 'arrival' of the protagonist was indicative of an American sentimentality around Irish emigration that was far removed from her own parent's experience of arriving in Britain. This meant that she could not take the film seriously, even forgetting its title when she discussed it in the interview:

> Oh, what was that one recently about the woman? She'd gone to New York and met a bloke and there's a bloke back home. I can't remember the name of it. It might be called something weird like *Bridget* or something ... very romanticised ... she turns up in New York, and she has a lovely apartment just like that. When my parents came to England … that's not the experience of immigrants going to a foreign shore that. All lovely when you get there![48]

[48] While the participant could not bring the title to mind the plot described fits *Brooklyn*. The misnomer Bridget suggests this and is also interesting in the light of the recurrence of the stereotypical 'Bridget' character in films depicting Irish immigrants as discussed by Flynn (2011), Barton (2011) and Walter (2011).

For Ann, this film on the theme of Irish migration to America that used well established tropes in Irish-American cinema did not resonate with the experience of her first-generation parents arriving in England. For Annie, it was the portrayal of rural life in Ireland that resonated with her personal experience.

The portrayal of a rural or an urban Ireland in film was also highlighted by other participants as an aspect of Irish film that was important to them. Iconic Irish films of the past, often filmed in rural settings, can seem a world away from the urban experience of the second- (or later-) generation Irish in Britain. Films that do depict an Irish urban experience can help them to draw parallels between their personal experiences in Britain with the contemporary experiences of the Irish in Ireland. Larry, in his fifties and third-generation Irish, had come across the rural Irish television serial *Bracken* (1980-82) on 'daytime TV' in Scotland as a teenager, and this memory has remained with him:

> I think Gabriel Byrne was in it, which I found really strange (laughs). There only seemed to be like three actors in the whole thing. […] Well I couldn't relate to that 'cos my world was an urban world.[49]

In the early 1990s, Larry noticed that representations of Ireland in film and television drama began to deal with aspects of Irish urban experience. These chimed with his own personal experience of growing up in Glasgow, living in London for some years and subsequently settling in Liverpool and contrasted with the kind of film he associates with his father and a rural imagining of Ireland:

> There was a couple of films that meant something to me. There was the John Wayne film *The Quiet Man*. My Dad was very fond of that … quite sentimentalised Ireland. My Dad used to go to Ireland in the '50s quite a

[49] When Channel 4 was launched in 1982 part of its remit was to be distinctive and cover a wide range of subject matter that would appeal to tastes and interests not generally catered for at the time by ITV. In its first decade this often included RTÉ television content that was re-broadcast and it is likely that *Bracken* which starred Gabriel Byrne in one of his earliest screen roles was part of that content. Byrne would go on to become an instantly recognisable star in globally successful film and television drama.

> lot. He went to Wicklow and Cork and places like that, so that was our sentimentalised Ireland, if you like, and the other one was *The Commitments* which, was more an Ireland I could relate to, being in an urban place. And there was another film that I really, really liked called *Into the West*, which was something similar; children from the city going into the countryside. That had a lot of resonance for me.

Irish films that make Irish urban spaces visible open up an access point for Larry to reconcile his own urban experience of life in Britain with the rural Ireland the first-generation of his family knew and his (second-generation) father engaged with. In recent years, he has discovered, through his daughters, a new generation of Irish films in which he sees rural and urban representations of Ireland playing out against each other. He sees the persistence of Ireland as a symbolically rural place in such films as being connected with the many generations of Irish, prior to the 1980s, that had emigrated from rural Ireland to find themselves in an urban setting elsewhere. Their experiences of an urban way of life would become associated with the migrant destination and the image of Ireland that remained with them would be a rural one:

> Films are quite important. My oldest girl got me watching romantic comedies for years, and there's one called *PS I Love You* which is quite a big one, and there's another one, I can't remember what it's called, but it involved someone travelling to Ireland for a wedding and getting stranded.[50] They've all got a kind of urban versus rural clash, and I think that maybe that sense of Irishness that people held onto was a sense of a more peaceful, calmer place. I think it's interesting because most of the Irish people that came to Britain from Ireland, I'm assuming, would have come from rural environments to urban environments so the rural Ireland

[50] This is the plot of *Leap Year* (2010) another well-known Irish romantic comedy with similarities to *PS I Love You*.

> that people have imagined is a way of going back somewhere. I think that's why a lot of people from England are surprised with Dublin. The main place people from Liverpool go to in Ireland is Dublin, and they are surprised that it's such a city.

In the months prior to participating in this project, Larry had been attending an Irish-language evening class and was enjoying contemporary Irish television content that had originally been broadcast on the Irish-language public-broadcaster TG4 and then uploaded onto *YouTube*. He particularly likes programmes set in urban environments across Ireland such as *No Béarla* (2007-2008) which he sees as a welcome change from the ways Ireland had been described by the previous generations of the Irish in Britain:

> The Irishness that I grew up with was quite sentimental. It was quite rural and old fashioned and being introduced to an Ireland that is modern and recognisable to somebody living in a city appeals [to me]. I like the countryside. I like aspects of that way of life, but I think it's a bit more authentic, a bit more real when there's something you can relate to as part of your own experience.

There is a sense here of discovering new representations of Ireland that are rooted in an Irish urban experience and thus not clearly linked to established stereotypes of Irishness or familiar in migrant family histories that were rural in origin. It was articulated by another participant who highlighted an Irish film that made a big impression on her:

> My favourite film ever is *The Crying Game*, which is kind of a weird film but I think it's a really lovely film. I felt that the characters were very believable. My family's from the middle of the countryside in Ireland so … oddly, although I live in London, Irish cities are not part of my experience very much, and certainly the Irish people I would have met going back to Ireland over the years wouldn't particularly be the kind of people that I saw in that

> film, but I thought the film was quite real, and I also felt it was about people who happened to be Irish rather than [about] Irish people. (Ann)

These second- (and later-) generation Irish accounts of media representations of Ireland and Irishness show an informed understanding of the ways that the Irish have been represented historically in Britain. It is the period of the Northern Ireland peace process in the 1990s and the concomitant British news media engagement with some of the complexities of Irish history that the participants understand as the turning point to a more positive representation of Irishness in British print and television media. They feel that this change had real world effects in disseminating a better understanding of Ireland and Irish history across British society at this time, which allowed the Irish in Britain to be more open about their identity there. Negative Irish stereotypes were remembered as prevalent in the period prior to this in newspapers and were remembered in British television comedies in particular. This made the arrival of *Father Ted*, a television sitcom created by Irish writers and actors, a seminal moment in the representation of the Irish on British media. Although making fun of the Catholic church was remembered as unpalatable to some first- (and second-) generation Irish personally known to the participants in this study, they themselves embrace the series and understand it and other Irish screen dramas in its wake as the Irish taking ownership of the stereotypes once used against them.

Participants in this project also engaged with Ireland through major Irish and Irish-themed film productions originally screened in cinemas and later available in homes via DVD, digital streaming or television broadcasts. The influence of Hollywood storytelling traditions on such films was alluded to by participants as a reason they may lack authenticity but for these participants it was important to engage with them as they are a high profile vehicle for the dissemination and discussion of Irish history (including the history of Irish migration) and contemporary Ireland. Films that deal with the history of the Irish-British relationship are judged by participants in terms of how well they deal with complexity and are seen as important ripostes to a British journalism that had historically oversimplified that history or

refused to engage with it in a meaningful way. Films dealing with the theme of Irish migration were understood by participants as resources for revisiting family histories of migration and were judged as authentic or otherwise in comparison to those histories. For second- (or later-) generation Irish whose family migrated from rural Ireland, Irish-themed film or television content in an urban setting can resonate with their own experience of urban Britain and reveal experiences of Ireland not available in family narratives.

While these second- (and later-) generation Irish participants remember seeing or seeking out screen depictions of the Irish that were widely available in Britain, many of them also pointed out that the Irish are under-represented in everyday media in Britain. Their desire for continued representation of their histories and experiences in media readily available to the British public is related to how the Irish in Britain are perceived and understood by their fellow Britons. This makes any media coverage of Ireland of the Irish all the more important while simultaneously prompting their own search for media content not so easily available in Britain and that often emanates from Ireland itself. The following two sections will look at how these second- (and later-) generation participants have compensated for what they perceive as a lack of engagement with the Irish and Ireland on the part of everyday media in Britain.

SEARCHING FOR IRISH HISTORY

Through their media audience practices, the second- (and later-) generation Irish interviewed for this project show an eagerness to inform themselves about Irish history which can contextualise their own family histories and provide resources for expressing their Irish identities today. Many participants felt that the mainstream national media in Britain tells a historical narrative of the British nation-state that, despite the interconnected histories of both islands and the history of Irish migration to Britain, often omits Ireland altogether. This has the additional consequence of excluding them, the Irish in Britain, from national narratives. Accounts of Irish history were present in the Irish media content that some of them grew up with, and this made its absence in British media all the more explicit.

Participants seek out media content pertaining to Irish history in their everyday audience practices, whether it is sourced directly from media in Ireland, from diasporic Irish media in Britain or from lesser known parts of British media. In this section the participants articulate the perceived absence of Irish history in mainstream British media and describe the ways they compensate for it using other media sources.

As outlined in the previous chapter, the concept of 'imagined communities' is central to understanding the relationship of audiences to the everyday media they engage with (Anderson 2006). Charles Husband points out that the strength of imagined communities lies "in the construction and institutional practices of the nation-state" which can too easily exclude. The "privileged domain of members" is

> … sustained by a supportive 'invention of tradition' in which a selective amnesia toward the past allows for a consistent and positive account of the 'national history' to be disseminated (2000:202).

The troubled historical relationship between Ireland and Britain has the potential to complicate and problematize any straightforward narrative of British 'national history'. As a consequence, Irish aspects of British history are often seen as tangential to a central narrative that emphasises Britain's internal stability and simultaneously active role in the wider world. Mo Moulton argues that the internal stability of Britain during the interwar years, unusual in the wider European context of the time, came about as a reaction to the potentially destabilizing effect of its relationship to Ireland. With the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 'The Irish Question' could be considered solved and thus no longer of significance to British politics or subsequent historiography. Moulton uncovers some of the complex social and cultural strands in the relationship between the two countries during those years and contends:

> [I]t is necessary to reintegrate Ireland into English history in a way that reflects the varied links between the two countries and the central place often occupied by Irish politics and Irish people (2014:4).

The absence of Ireland (and the Irish) from much mainstream historical media content aimed at audiences in Britain can be understood as an effect of the approach to British history Moulton critiques and has been keenly felt by the Irish in Britain. One study of Irish women in Britain conducted in the 1980s made this very point:

> A sense of our own history is very strong amongst Irish people in a way which people in Britain often find mystifying. Most women we talked to felt this. The need to locate ourselves historically also appears to be reinforced by living over here and confronting that lack of information which so many British people have about Ireland and also, about their own history. Against this background many Irish people living in England feel that they can't afford not to know something about their own history. (Lennon et al. 1988 in Walter *et al.* 2002:214)

This was also emphasised by the second- (or later-) generation participants in this project. Although the BBC has dealt with Ireland and its history in a handful of landmark radio and television series over the years, it is the absence of Ireland and the Irish from the narratives of British history that frequently appear on mainstream British media that creates this perception among participants.[51] Kevin, who is a passionate listener to historical content on Ireland's national broadcaster RTÉ, compared the paucity of Irish history available on British media to his childhood experience of education in Liverpool and the role that played in constructing historical narratives of England:

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[51] BBC Northern Ireland, which provides regional media content to Northern Ireland as it is in the United Kingdom, is available to anyone in Britain through a minor adjustment of their satellite/cable television but the service was not mentioned by any of the second- (or later-) generation participants in this project. Perhaps this is due to the invisibility of the service to the rest of Britain as was discussed in Chapter Four.

> The teaching in English schools, history for instance, it was about … how many wives did Henry the Eighth have. There were French kings and Danish kings and German kings […] and on RTÉ I'd be listening about [sic] O'Sullivan Beara and the rebellion in Tyrone and that was my perception of my sort of history. That was where I was from and I wanted to know more about it rather than the Elizabethans and that sort of stuff so I could pick that up from RTÉ, but I couldn't pick it up from the media where I was living.

For Ann, whose family moved to Britain in the second half of the twentieth century, there is a disconnect between her family history and the history regularly narrated on British television:

> There are certain things in British culture that don't resonate with me ... because my family weren't involved. The Second World War for example, there is [sic] lots of references in British media to the Second World War and experiences with English people during the Second World War that were not my family experiences … the Irish experience was completely different.

Studies of second-generation Irish identity in Britain have shown how a dearth of acknowledgment of Irish narratives in the public discourse in Britain could result in "an individual search process" among the Irish in Britain that sought out knowledge and understanding of Irish history in diverse media including books, websites and films (Walter *et al.* 2002:214). In ways similar to Kevin's use of Irish radio other participants have found sources outside the British mainstream media to learn more about Irish history:

> You would notice these gaps, and you look for things. I'm looking for something that might renew my sense of identity and connect me with my wider family that aren't here. If I looked on Facebook now, there'd

> probably be half a dozen things ... there was something came up on the *Irish in Britain* [Facebook page] about ... a talk by an Irish historian on Constance Markievicz. That just pops up and it says you can just go and book it on *Eventbrite* just turn up (Ann).

Niamh likes to look through the nostalgic Irish magazines *Ireland's Own* and *Ireland's Eye* bought by her mother and she finds the historical content therein facilitates her participation in Irish cultural networks in London:

> [T]here might be something quite informative that you didn't know about or there might be a historical figure that I heard the Irish ambassador talking about but I never knew the background of and suddenly 'Wow, there's a full page on this historical figure' and you'd say 'Oh yeah, that's interesting'.

These examples show participants welcoming media engagement with Irish history as and when it appears in media they routinely use rather than engaging in personal projects aimed at understanding specific historical periods and events. The case of another participant shows that media focus on a historical period can also lead to a more sustained search and deeper engagement however. Jack pointed out how he added to his understanding of Irish history and its connections to Liverpool by engaging with contemporary reappraisals of the 1916 Easter Rising exhibited and published during the centenary year. He attended exhibitions held locally in Liverpool and others on a trip to Dublin and read a long-form assessment of the Rising by an Irish author he found in the *London Review of Books* which left a lasting impression on him:

> I had this romantic glamorous impression of 1916, and then due to the anniversary, I looked into [it in] a lot more detail and spent a bit of time in Dublin. I went to view exhibitions and seen [sic] stuff that actually happened over here [in England]. There was a lot of work done in Liverpool

> in particular about the Liverpool based people who went over [to Ireland] in 1916 and what their objectives were, what they were hoping for. There was a good piece actually in the *London Review of Books*, a big piece and I can't remember the guy's name, [a] famous Irish historian, and he was talking about how it could be argued that the people in charge of the rebellion knew it was going to fail and almost wanted it to fail and fail gloriously so that the sacrifice could be used [for] the following generations.[52] That was quite interesting. I had an idea that they felt they were going to win 'cos they knew the streets of Dublin and the people were going to rise alongside them and it would be done and dusted, but you looked into it, and you thought the leaders, maybe not the people who were volunteering, had no real expectation that they were going to be successful in the short term anyway. That was from an English-based publication written by an Irishman but that changed me.

The centenary of 1916 in Ireland saw a series of major commemorative events at local and national levels to which significant state funding was made widely available. In Ireland there was also a plethora of media productions and publications that engaged with the events of 1916, and these included many television and radio series and landmark documentaries mainly but not exclusively on national public-service broadcasters RTÉ and TG4. Jack, as a daily listener to RTÉ Radio One's news and current affairs programmes and a regular viewer of RTÉ television which he accesses via a satellite dish, would have been aware of this public engagement by Irish historians, and his account shows how he actively engaged with the centenary commemorations and sought out other more specialist media in Britain to learn more about Irish history.

[52] This appears to be an essay by the Irish novelist Colm Tóibín published on 31 March 2016 on the theme outlined by Jack: https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v38/n07/colm-toibin/after-i-am-hanged-my-portrait-will-be-interesting

The accounts in this section show that the second- (and later-) generation participants are keen to be informed about Irish history, a history immediately relevant to their own family history and its connections with Britain but which is rarely a focus of everyday British media. By representing ethnic minorities in Britain British media can help multicultural audiences feel part of an imagined British community, but Irelands physical closeness to Britain and its self-definition in terms of colonisation and migration, as well as the invisibility of the Irish in Britain means that the exclusion that Husband outlines can be easily felt (2000). The desire of the second-generation Irish participants discussed above to understand where their families came from as well as Ireland's historical relationship with Britain encourages them to seek out alternative sources that can include media content from Ireland, with which they are familiar since childhood, or Irish contributions to less ubiquitous British media sources. However, finding media content on Ireland's history and the ways it is interpreted today also forms part of a desire understand contemporary Ireland. In the next section, the ways in which the media audience practices of these second- (and later-) generation Irish participants satisfy this desire is discussed.

UNDERSTANDING CONTEMPORARY IRELAND

Contemporary current affairs media content about Ireland today is useful to the second- (and later-) generation participants in this project as a way of understanding how Ireland has changed since their parents first migrated. Irish current affairs content, like the Irish history content discussed in the previous section, needs to be sourced outside of everyday British media as it only occasionally appears there. When British media do cover Irish political, cultural or social affairs, however, the extra contextual information that is often included for a British audience is valued by these second- (or later-) generation Irish participants, and their familiarity with British media is also used as an ideological benchmark with which to position Irish media also regularly engaged with. Knowledge of contemporary Ireland built up from all available media sources works as a counterpoint to the era-specific

descriptions of Ireland passed on by the first-generation, helping participants to reconcile different ideas of Ireland and better understand their Irish origins.

As John Gabriel points out, the negative portrayal of the Irish across British media in the twentieth century was paralleled by an absence of engagement with the day-to-day issues they faced as a racially invisible ethnic community in Britain (2000). The participants' desire for Irish media content is connected to what they perceive as a lack of acknowledgement of the Irish (and therefore of Ireland) in British media. For Ann, this lack is graphically brought home to her every day when she sees the BBC television weather forecast which shows a map of the island of Ireland but includes weather graphics only for the Northern Ireland part. She wonders how difficult it could be "... to put in a few anti-cyclones and a couple of temperatures" which would at least acknowledge the existence of the rest. This frustration can also be understood in terms of the value of news from Ireland to the Irish in Britain. As Scully found, one of the main ways Irishness in Britain becomes categorised as authentic as opposed to inauthentic is an interest in and knowledge of contemporary Ireland (2012). Maria, who is retired and living in London, stressed how the physical proximity and historical interconnectedness of both islands made the dearth of Irish news in mainstream British media all the more difficult to understand: "Considering we're so close, I think it's quite surprising that we don't get more Irish news here". She pointed to Irish diasporic newspapers published in London as her source of news about Ireland (alongside internet and social media browsing) and emphasised elements of the social transformation of the country apparent in recent years and which had received little coverage in British media:

> I do read *The Irish Post* and another Irish paper sometimes; *The Irish World* […]. The news you get in them you very seldom get here, things about what's happening in Ireland like when they've got a vote on something like abortion or same-sex marriage or the election last year. You might get a small bit about it in the British press but very little. If you really want to know what's going on you have to look at something like that.

Participants like Maria emphasised how news from Ireland helped them to see how the country was always changing and was a dramatically different place from the one they had first been introduced to in their youth. Jack grew up in Liverpool with what he describes as a 'time-capsule impression of Ireland' which led him to make assumptions about Ireland based on his parents' memories. It is by engaging with radio and television from Ireland and by seeking out articles about Ireland and its history that he improves his understanding:

> I'm still learning lessons … not everyone in Ireland thinks like that or even thought like that back then when they came over … so that's been quite kind of refreshing … from media, from reading articles and seeing people explain their own experiences and how they're completely different from what I thought Ireland was like … we only saw a sliver of it … that balances me out a little bit.

What is evident in these and in the accounts that follow is the 'reconciliation' of different versions of Ireland that Stephanie Rains has pointed out in relation to the Irish-American diaspora:

> [E]ngagement with Ireland is not indicative of an anti-modern romanticism that is to be compared with a realistic and modern Irishness. Rather … the nostalgia evident within the diasporic gaze should be seen as the self-interrogating framework through which the diaspora negotiates reconciliation between its narrativised collective history and its engagement with contemporary Ireland (2007 in Brereton 2016:286)

This self-interrogation can be seen in the interview with Margie, who finds Irish news and current affairs through her Facebook account and online browsing as well as on visits to a friend who has Irish television in her home in London. She feels that her own knowledge of Ireland, which goes back to the 1950s, is the reason she was taken by surprise by the change in Irish social attitudes signified in 2017 by the figure of a newly elected Taoiseach:

> Being older, I thought it was absolutely amazing and a great thing that the new guy who's elected … was from an Indian background and was gay. I thought 'I don't believe this' because [of] the Ireland I remember from years ago. But it has changed so much, and I thought it was a really wonderful thing.

At the same time that Margie expressed similarly positive feelings about Ireland's recent economic successes, she showed a nostalgia for the poorer Ireland she remembers predating it:

> I remember the old ways which were lovely, and I'm so glad I went through all those but it is nice to see that it has changed and is progressing. I mean we used to send clothes parcels home to my cousins. They were very poor whereas now their children have all done really well and got really good jobs and are working abroad and stuff. It's changed so much, and you can see that in the media, on television and stuff with the way things are in Ireland.

It is clear from these accounts that Irish news and current affairs media content provides a contrast with previously held understandings of Ireland often shaped by family histories and other forms of Irish-themed media content. What is interesting is that this challenge is welcomed by these participants. They are keen to engage with contemporary Ireland and compare what they find to the earlier versions of the country they have known. The accounts also show that these second- (and later-) generation Irish participants look for similarities between Ireland and Britain and finding them makes it easier for them to see their personal life experience in multicultural urban Britain as being an authentically Irish experience.

The perception of a lack of engagement with Ireland and the Irish on the part of British media makes its occasional occurrence all the more valuable and memorable to participants.[53] When British news media do focus on Ireland the added contextual information deemed important for a British audience and not necessary in Irish media is greatly valued by the second- (or later-) generation Irish who continually seek to increase their understanding of Ireland. Jack's discussion of the All-Ireland Football Final match which involved his parents' home county of Mayo is indicative of the role British media can play on those occasions that they do focus on Ireland. The story of 'the Mayo curse', frequently used by Irish media in recent years to add colour to media coverage of Gaelic football finals featuring Mayo, was something Jack already had an awareness of from his use of Irish radio and television. However, the origin story of the curse is often left unarticulated in Irish sports media, and the first full account of it he came across was on a BBC website article:

> There was a really good article a couple of weeks ago on the BBC website [about] the Mayo curse … and that was written from quite an interesting [perspective] … somebody who had obviously total knowledge and experience of Ireland but they were writing it for a British audience, they explained a lot of the terms and they looked at the history, the propensity for Irish people to look at mysticism, like the Celtic tradition and sort of the whole … curses and things … something that was quite prominent in Ireland, going back years … I've noticed that quite a lot … Ireland presented … to a British audience and that's quite interesting to me cos obviously that's the way I've predominantly experienced Ireland anyway.[54]

[53] Occasional media content focusing on Ireland such as that produced by Fergal Keane at the BBC and newspaper correspondents such as Rory Carroll in *The Guardian* are among the exceptions but a lack of regular engagement with Ireland was articulated by most participants in this project.

[54] The website article Jack refers to is: D. Fleming, 'A fresh chance to banish the curse of Mayo', 16 September 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-37378935. As Jack pointed out it is aimed at readers with little or no knowledge of Irish sport and includes a subsection entitled 'What is Gaelic Football?' Accessed February 13, 2019.

The somewhat romanticised view of Ireland articulated here connects with the ‘time capsule’ sense of Ireland Jack feels he had growing up, but he is also aware that this view is from a British media source and that it resonates with others he has come across on British media. The differences Jack perceives between representations of Ireland framed for a British audience, which includes the Irish in Britain of course, and the more immediate sense of Ireland that he gets from accessing Irish media directly relates to what Rains describes as a ‘reconciliation’ negotiated by diasporic identities engaging with Ireland (2007 in Brereton 2016).

British media coverage of political and social issues in Ireland can also function to add perspective to Irish media coverage of those issues and serve to position media organisations on an ideological spectrum. Despite Ann’s previously discussed frustration with a lack of acknowledgement of Ireland in contemporary British media and her memories of negative Irish representations across British media historically, she does occasionally find ‘sympathetic’ coverage of contemporary Ireland in The *Guardian* newspaper, a left-leaning and liberal newspaper. This point was echoed by Val, another participant who is a regular *Guardian* reader but who spends considerable time engaging with media from Ireland including *The Irish Times* website on a daily basis and tunes into Irish talk radio stations via the internet throughout the week. She likes the ‘liberal view’ on contentious Irish social issues she finds in The *Guardian’s* occasional coverage of Ireland, pointing out that this is more difficult to discern in the Irish media she is familiar with:

> I find *The Guardian*’s portrayal [of Ireland] is interesting ‘cos they’ll report on issues like abortion or repeal of the 8th, that kind of thing, and they will provide an alternative liberal view that you don’t get as well or as clearly in the Irish media [which] is quite conservative.

The accounts in this section show that second-generation participants seek to understand contemporary Ireland and how it has changed since their earliest conceptions of it, conceptions initially passed down from the first-generation and engaged with throughout

lives spent in Britain. In their articulation of the ways they engage with Irish media participants express frustration at the lack of regular coverage of topics of Irish interest in British news media and appreciate it all the more when they do appear. They also compensate for this lack by seeking out media content related to Ireland either from diasporic publications in Britain or directly from Ireland.

AN ALTERNATIVE IMAGINED COMMUNITY

Building on Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities,' Appadurai pointed out how the advent of electronic media in the second half of the twentieth century in conjunction with previously established non-electronic forms facilitated diasporas by providing "… new resources … for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds … as an everyday social project" (1996:3-4). The second-generation participants in this project live their everyday lives in a mediascape that consists of national (British) and transnational (Irish and international) print, analogue and digital sources which they can use to access Irish-themed media content as resources that help them confirm and re-affirm Irish identities in Britain. Ann pointed to the TIVO technology of her domestic television set-up in London as being one of the ways she engages with her Irish identity. The TIVO system facilitates the curating and recording of multichannel television content, and Ann can use its 'wish list' function to find programmes with Irish themes or contributors from the plethora of channels available. This allows her to access Irish-themed programmes whenever they become available, and despite there never being an abundance of them the fact that she has filtered them out from the endless array of choices in the world of multichannel television gives her a sense of actively engaging with media content that relates to her identity:

> It will come up with one every month or couple of months, and then I might go in and have a look and set it up, properly record a series … so it's just so much easier to be Irish'.

New technologies do not merely increase control over the curation and time-shifting of media content but also allow audience members to seek out transnational content that is relevant to diasporic identities. Describing his daily use of Irish radio and television in Liverpool as helping him to "retain a sense of Irishness and feel part of a wider community," Jack emphasised how this had been made easier due to recent developments in digital technology. He was very excited by new ways of listening to Irish media on his smartphone which he uses in addition to the long wave radio in his car and Irish television channels via satellite at his home. He had, in week prior to his interview, used a smartphone app to listen to the build-up to the All-Ireland senior hurling championship final on a local commercial FM radio station based in Mayo, the county his parents had emigrated from and that he has spent much time in over the course of his life. Listening to this local station's coverage of such a high-profile Irish sporting competition while simultaneously living his everyday life in Liverpool gave him the sense that the two are compatible. Rather than missing out due to being in Britain during this important sporting event, he felt he was a part of the community of Mayo supporters either physically present in the county or, like him, tuning in from some other part of the world:

> I can listen on an app on my phone to *Midwest Radio* and feel the build-up to the All-Ireland, like as if I was there, and as soon as you turn that on you feel connected whereas before you had that kind of technology you would feel a little bit removed, and there's more of an effort … to maintain that sense of Irishness.

Having listened to the Irish national radio on the long wave analogue frequency all his life in Liverpool the more recent access he has to a local radio station, which in the past would only have been possible on visits to Ireland, is a significant addition to his sense of being a member of the Irish media audience. Although such stations existed on an ad-hoc pirate basis in Ireland since the early 1980s, it was during an era of neoliberal media deregulation of the 1990s that they flourished. This happened at a time when what Scannell has described

as a conversational mode of presentation became increasingly valued as audience interaction and a sense of immediacy was facilitated by new technologies (Smith and Higgins 2020). Digital access to local Irish radio allows the diaspora to listen and engage with the localities of family origin with that sense of immediacy. Kevin, another lifelong listener to RTÉ Radio One in Liverpool, also recently began listening to the digital stream of local FM radio station Dundalk FM on the east coast of Ireland using a digital internet radio set. Drawing on his keen interest in Irish history, in which the factual output of RTÉ Radio One plays an important informing role, and his knowledge of his own and other Liverpudlian families connections to Ireland, he likes to keep the close physical proximity and long historical ties between Liverpool and Ireland to the fore in his mind. The ability to pick up a local radio station from the place his ancestors came from on the other side of the Irish sea helps to confirm this proximity and to maintain the sense of connectedness and continuity in his mind. He likes to imagine these connections as traceable to pre-modern times when the sea to the west of Liverpool was easier to travel across than the undeveloped land routes to the east:

> Sometimes you think of the Irish sea as being a barrier, but I think of it, it's more like a bloody motorway, over the years. Some of my great-grandparents came over from Dundalk, and you could get from Dundalk to Liverpool with the tide […] Dundalk's about a hundred mile away, and Birmingham's about a hundred mile away. It would've taken about two days to get to Birmingham in those days, and it would only take you twelve hours to come over on a boat with the wind behind you.

Listening to historical documentaries on RTÉ Radio One helps Kevin keep this narrative alive while the current affairs coverage of that station alongside similar coverage on British media help him to bolster the sense of ongoing interconnections between the countries:

> I thought sometimes Ireland's taking the lead, and then other times I think is it any different to anywhere else in the big picture where there's things

> going on that maybe shouldn't be going on. A few years ago there was the McCarthy-Dundon gang down in Limerick, and now this Kinahan gang going on Dublin and all over, and of course we know from our own media here that some of the Kinahan people come to Liverpool frequently and there's all sorts of connections, so sometimes we think we are in different countries but you wonder sometimes.[55] A long time ago there was no England, Ireland, Scotland. Before they were even thought about, there was people just crossing the sea like they're doing now, and I think we've all got a lot more in common than maybe the people in power would have us believe with the borders and the passports and everything else.

Kevin uses his love of radio to keep Ireland and his family's origins there to the fore of his imagination on a daily basis. Irish radio content facilitates his sense of being part of an Irish community that moves back and forth between Ireland and Britain in continuation of traditions that, like his own earliest memories of radio, reach far back in time.

These accounts indicate the role Irish media plays in facilitating a transnational imagined community for the second- (and later-) generation Irish in Britain. This can be understood as an alternative imagined community which they actively construct and which can exist alongside and in contrast to a British one that they are also a part of. The accounts point to the multifarious ways that Irish identity as an everyday project is facilitated by media that crosses borders and keeps family connections with the past alive in the minds of the second- (and later-) generation Irish. Irish media is a resource for active engagement with Irish identity in this sense but also in the sense of having tangible use value in the interactions of everyday life. The next section explores the social uses that Irish media is put to by the second-(and later-) Irish participants.

[55] These are references to high-profile gangland feuds that were a major and long-lasting news story in the Irish media throughout the last twenty years.

THE SOCIAL USES OF IRISH MEDIA

As outlined previously, the social uses of media were evident since the earliest days of audience research (Scannell 2020). The second- (and later-) generation participants in this project pointed to the role of Irish and Irish-themed media in maintaining existing social connections or initiating new ones with other Irish people. Jack explained his interest in the daily current affairs radio programmes on Ireland's national public-service broadcaster during his commute to and from his place of work in Liverpool by pointing to its social uses:

> It's to keep up to date 'cos whenever I go back over to Ireland and I speak to uncles either over there in person or via the phone, I think it's nice to be able to have some kind of knowledge as to what the current affairs are.

Similarly, news items from Ireland are a topic of conversation that can be discussed with other Irish people in Britain. Such news can be useful in building relationships between those in conversation by emphasising a common connection to Ireland and facilitating the concrete verbalisation of the places of familial origin in Ireland and, in the same breath, the affirmation of identity:

> You're hearing about these things in Ireland … they're coming through ... two weeks ago I was meeting [a friend] and the news had come through about a desperate tragedy [in Ireland] … and [my friend] said 'You know that's our home town? We only live down behind that church'. … There's always a connection! (Niamh).

As this quotation shows, the social uses of Irish and Irish-themed media can have a specific contextual importance for these second- (and later-) generation Irish in Britain. In her discussion of using group discussions to better understand the second-generation Irish in Britain Walter explains that her participants, despite being strangers who had not met beforehand, participated enthusiastically and "welcomed the unusual experience of finding people in England outside their families with whom to have such conversations" (Walter

2013:23-4). It is in this sense that Irish-themed media content has helped Annie, who has only recently embraced the Irish aspect of her identity, articulate Irishness with confidence in conversations with people she encounters with similar family origins:

> When you know a song or a show or a film and there's another second-generation Irish person you meet and you say 'Oh I'm Irish kind of' and they say 'Oh, I'm Irish kind of too' then you have a little bit of shared identity and you might have some of the same … in-jokes … a bit more to talk about in common with people that you might not necessarily know that well ... I actually feel excited when I meet an Irish person in my daily life ... so knowing a bit more about Ireland or being Irish … from the media that I consume makes you feel a little more confident about saying 'I am Irish'.

As Irish television broadcasts have always been difficult to access domestically in Britain the live relaying of Irish television broadcasts in communal settings such as the Irish pub or club has been an important means through which Irish people of all generations has accessed them since the advent of satellite and cable television. The accounts of media reception in public settings that emerge from this project range from the use of quiet pubs as an alternative to watching television at home to the large celebratory public gathering associated with large sporting events. Niamh pointed out how having an Irish friend who runs a pub in London is always useful when she wanted to catch an Irish television programme:

> I have a friend with a pub. He can get everything so if I wanted to watch anything on RTÉ I could ring him and say. For instance, I'm a big fan of Finbarr Furey all my life so there was a special programme on RTÉ about Finbarr and I rang and said 'I've got to be over, it's starting at eight o'clock. Can you make sure you can have it on for me in the bar' and he said yes. We arrived, two seats set up for us and we had a great time!

The use of the Irish pub as a place to see Irish-themed content being shown on British television was also discussed. Liam, who managed an Irish pub in London in the late 1990s, remembers how the Irish-themed sitcom *Father Ted*, broadcast on Channel 4 Television became a special weekly occasion for young Irish men in London:

> The fact that it was Irish and was so good. We used to have theme nights and comedy nights and that was one of the better nights, the *Father Ted* night. There was a smaller bar with a television, and it was just young men drinking and laughing. That was good.

Laura emphasised the social side of the live sports broadcasts she had experienced in Irish pubs in London and pointed to how it connected the Irish community in their common enjoyment of hurling and Gaelic football championship games:

> I was quite into GAA, I didn't play it, but … from a young age … we'd go and see the games, 'cos it was a social thing … you'd look forward to the summer and the championship. You had to make an effort to go to the local pubs to watch … [but] everyone would go … If Mayo and Galway were playing, you'd have some kind of ding-dong with the Mayo bloke down the pub … friendly banter and all that.

For Munro, identity is rarely simply a choice and often dependent on validation from others "who affirm or deny identities and so 'pass' them into circulation" (2010:202). Laura's experience is reminiscent of the 'sports encounter' where live sports broadcasts with their ongoing suspense and tension are enjoyed in public settings and enable social interactions with strangers (Raney 2006). In the case of live broadcasts of Irish sporting events in public settings attended by first-, second- (and later-) generations of Irish migrants, opportunities are provided for connection and identification with and validation within the wider diaspora. This was particularly true when the Republic of Ireland soccer team had their first major international successes in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As Liam recalls:

> I remember being in The Spotted Dog and having the 'Give it a lash, Jack' T-shirt …, the big screen and the sense of amazement of how far they got. ... I was working on the [building] sites at the time, and it was just all Irish working together. It was a great sense of community, everybody together, everyone went out to watch the match, and it was great.

This sense of the Irish as 'everybody together' includes the first-generation migrants working with Liam and is also emphasised by Jack, who recalled watching the 1994 World Cup campaign in a pub setting as a teenager, in the company of first- and second-generation fans. The presence of so many players of Irish descent on the team they were all celebrating was of huge significance as it gave him confidence that his second-generation Irishness could be accepted and acknowledged:

> That was massive … there was a pub in Manchester called The Grove … that was kind of my first exposure really to … sports drinking culture … I loved it … getting that kind of interesting experience … really helped a lot … watching Ireland on the BBC [and] on ITV in the pubs when they were playing, being covered and being talked of so highly, like being so well respected 'cos of course, Liverpool, it's pure soccer here and seeing all of these first- and second-generation Irish lads … and seeing the kind of adoration that they had over in Ireland but also seeing that the respect they had in England that gave me a bit of an access point to my identity … cos I know a lot of those lads had nowhere near the same level of connection that I had so … if those lads can be kind of accepted, then I can.[56]

[56] England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all failed to qualify for the 1994 World Cup which also meant there was more interest from the British media in the Republic of Ireland team during the competition than might otherwise have been the case.

This section has shown that the second- (and later-) generation Irish participants in this project use Irish media as a conversational resource with which to express and build confidence around Irish identities on an everyday basis. Irish and Irish-themed media content has a social role within families and with friends and acquaintances who have a common connection to Ireland and such content is also a useful way of breaking the ice when participants make new contacts also identifying as Irish. Participants' memories of Irish television in public settings such as Irish pubs point to this social role, and this is especially the case during the broadcast of high profile Irish sporting occasions. The importance of sport in the formation and maintenance of an Irish cultural identity within Irish emigrant populations both from a historical perspective and in studies of the contemporary Irish diaspora has been well established (Darby 2003, Darby and Hassan 2007, Harkin 2018). The interconnection of sport and media is also understood as a powerful cultural force in the creation of collective identities, including that of Irishness (Rowe *et al.* 1998, O'Boyle and Free 2020).

Such events build confidence in the public expression of Irishness among the second- (and later-) generations in Britain and are particularly important to those participants in this project who grew into adulthood in the years that satellite and cable television facilitated the live broadcasting of Irish sport in public settings across Britain. This section has emphasised the social uses of Irish and Irish-themed media content to the second (and later) participants. Across varying contexts, they all point to how Irish and Irish-themed media content facilitates social interactions during which Irish identities can be expressed and validated. The importance of this to second- (and later-) generation participants is best understood when the hybrid nature of their identities are taken into account in the context of the historical tensions experienced by the Irish in Britain discussed earlier.

SUMMARY

The accounts of second- (and later-) generation Irish participants in this chapter reveal how Irish identity was made known to them and show its ongoing importance in the context of

their lives in Britain. This is understood as the motivational context of their ongoing interest in Irish and Irish-themed media content. This content facilitates the renewal and strengthening of the Irish aspect of their identities there, an activity which is all the more important as representations of Ireland or Irishness are rarely found on mainstream British media. The engagement of these participants with Irish and Irish-themed media content is understood as a continuity with media audience practices normalised in their childhoods in Irish families in Britain. Exposure to the audience practices of Irish migrant parents and those of the wider Irish community in Britain during childhood made Irish media a regular feature of participants' everyday lives. Their continued engagement with Irish and Irish-themed media content in adulthood enables them to remain in touch with and contextualize the accounts of Ireland and its history first made known to them by previous generations and which they in turn can update and pass on to future generations.

Second- (and later-) generations of Irish in Britain are interpellated as and understand themselves to be members of the British media audience to a much greater degree than the first-generation Irish in their families. This makes them especially alert and sensitive to the ways in which Irishness is and has been historically represented in the media in Britain. Second- (and later-) generation participants in this project emphasise their family's awareness and rejection of the negative stereotyping of the Irish which is remembered as a prevalent feature of media content in Britain up until the last decade of the twentieth century. While they describe a change to more positive representations of the Irish on British media at that point, they also perceive a lack of regular engagement with Ireland and Irishness in contemporary British media, and this is a source of disappointment. They also remain wary of the potential of British media, and in particular the British tabloid press, to rekindle anti-Irish prejudices at any time.

Representations of Ireland and of Irishness in television dramas and feature films are of particular interest to many of the second- (and later-) generation participants in this project and they are interested in comparing and contrasting how those representations have

evolved over time. Their engagement with this content reveals a keen awareness of established Irish stereotypes as well as the structural constraints on the international commercial film industry. Screen dramas and other media forms can be used to provide perspectives on Ireland and its history that broaden and contextualise the personal narratives shared by the migrant generation of their families. Irish history is of particular significance to the second- (and later-) generation Irish in Britain who have grown up where local and national media are perceived as not readily engaging with it and where the fraught historical relationship between Britain and Ireland make informed accounts of it all the more important (Walter *et al.* 2002). Participants seek to increase their understanding of Irish history as well as of contemporary Ireland by seeking out Irish or Irish-themed media content wherever it is to be found. On the rare occasions that Ireland or Irish culture does appear on media widely available to British audiences, whether in the form of sports coverage, current affairs stories involving Ireland, or Irish-themed screen dramas, the Irish identities of these participants are validated by being made knowable to the rest of British society.

By actively making Irish and Irish-themed media a part of their daily lives the second- (and later-) generation participants in this project make themselves part of an alternative imagined community that includes Ireland but also spans Britain and the wider Irish diaspora. This community is brought to life whenever knowledge of Irish media content can be deployed as a conversational resource to build connections among the Irish whenever and wherever they meet. Keeping Irish identity alive is revealed as a motivational factor in continuing engagement with Irish and Irish-themed media content in the everyday lives of the participants particularly in the context of a relative absence of Irish-themed content available in mainstream British media.

This chapter has examined the accounts of Irish media use given by the second- (and later-) generation Irish participants in this project. It outlines the main themes that emerged from the interviews conducted with a set of Irish people with diverse personal histories and experiences of lives spent in Britain. They all have an Irish migration story considered

important in their family history and the Irish identity that brings has been kept alive by previous generations through various means including the maintenance of an interest in Irish media. In their everyday lives today, these participants seek to maintain their Irishness by engaging with Irish and Irish-themed media content. Knowledge and understanding of Ireland, its history, culture and connections to Britain ultimately validates and strengthens confidence in the articulation of Irish identities in Britain. The implications of these insights in the context of the wider study will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the role of Irish and Irish-themed media in the formation and maintenance of Irish cultural identities in Britain. Cultural identity is understood as a discursive construct formed and maintained by social interaction inflected by media in all its forms. The Irish in Britain are conceptualised as a media audience that engages with Irish-themed media content to negotiate, strengthen and maintain Irish identities. Through the analysis of qualitative interviews, conducted with participants who have made themselves part of that audience and describe their engagement with media in their own terms, the thesis has examined how everyday media habits are constitutive of Irish cultural identity in Britain.

The interviews were conducted between 2015 and 2018, a period of time that can now be understood as a transitional moment for the Irish in Britain and for media audiences more generally. It was during this period that the divisive Brexit debate on the future of Britain culminated in the referendum of 2016 that would see the U.K. leave the European Union. While the full effects of this momentous change in the relationship between Britain and a European Union that includes the Republic of Ireland are still working themselves out, anxieties about the potential harm to the Irish in Britain was evident across the interviews conducted with both the first- and second- (or later-) generation participants in this project. First-generation participants' attachment to Irish media was made all the more important by what they perceived as a lack of concern across British media for the consequences the referendum result would have on Ireland and on Irish immigrants in Britain. Second- (and later-) generation participants remained wary that, in a political climate that increasingly anti-immigration, the prejudices against the Irish they remembered in the past could easily resurface.

It was also during this period that new digital technologies providing increased access to media content continued to replace and redefine their print and analogue precursors and the study reveals the lived experience of this transition in relation to Irish media in Britain in the lives of the participants in this project. Long established habits around Irish media, often picked up from the previous generations and including analogue radio and print newspapers, were being transposed onto or enhanced by new digital modes that facilitated instantaneous access to newspaper content, live access to and time-shifting of radio and television broadcasts and long distance access to local Irish radio content that was previously only available in the geographical region in which a station was based.

The interviews and their analysis reflect this transitional moment and represent a snapshot in time in the lives of those who participated, each of whom, in their own unique way, is a member of the media audience investigated by this project, the Irish in Britain. In this chapter the project's underpinnings are reviewed and the main findings from chapters four and five are elucidated. The contribution the project makes to existing scholarship and its limitations are also discussed along with suggestions for future research.

REVIEW

This section briefly reviews each chapter and underlines how they have contributed to understanding the Irish in Britain as a media audience. In the first chapter, a distinction was drawn between the theorisation of diaspora by diverse international academics as a potentially progressive concept that could capture the diversity of humanity and the narrower appropriation of the term by neoliberal interests in Ireland at the turn of the twenty-first century. This thesis is an engagement with the Irish in Britain in the terms of the former. Irish migrants and the subsequent generations of their families are understood to be members of a global Irish diaspora which is a socially constructed, historically constituted and geographically differentiated set of peoples that can be located within as well as outside of Ireland at different periods in their lives. This articulation is underpinned by contemporary understandings of cultural identity that conceive of it as fluid and negotiable while

continuously under the influence of structural forces such as those specifically explored in this project, namely the media and the ways it becomes embedded in the social connections of an individual's life. The theoretical basis and empirical study of the relationship between media and identity was explored in chapter two with particular emphasis placed on that body of ethnographic research into media audiences that conceptualised them as diasporic. It was that research that inspired the conceptualising of the Irish in Britain as a media audience in this project and provided valuable insights into diasporic audience practices and their relation to cultural identities that could be brought to bear on the analysis of interviews conducted with the Irish in Britain.

The study is informed by the historical and sociological study of Irish migrants and their descendants to Britain which reveals the complexity of this diasporic group and contextualises the analysis of the interviews. The literature pointed to historical misrepresentations of the Irish in Britain, often constructed to fit official narratives on both sides of the Irish sea, as well as to the continuation of anti-Irish attitudes in Britain particularly during periods of political violence. Irish identity was not afforded full public expression in Britain until the peace process of the 1990s, which coincided with a flowering of Irish culture across the globe. This study reveals the role Irish media played in the maintenance of Irish identity in family and more public settings in Britain right through the second half of the twentieth century and continues to play there today. It also reveals the deep-seated desire of the Irish in Britain to see positive representations of Ireland and the Irish in the British public sphere.

As discussed in chapter three, this thesis is a qualitative interpretative study that utilised interviews with 'ethnographic intentions' aimed at understanding the role of Irish and Irish-themed media in the formation and maintenance of Irish cultural identities in Britain. This approach was underpinned by an understanding of how audience studies in general, and diasporic audience studies in particular, developed from their earliest foundations in the symbolic interactionist and cultural studies traditions. At the end of chapter three the

application of this epistemological framework to the research design of this project is outlined. The interviews are analysed in chapters four and five using a constructivist grounded theory method to bring out the common themes and draw them together in a theorization of the media practices revealed by the first-generation and second- (and later-) generation participants respectively. The main themes from those findings chapters are brought together in the following set of overall conclusions that, despite the experiential differences between the two groups, reveal their shared characteristics.

MAIN FINDINGS

This thesis set out to gain a deeper empirical understanding of the role of Irish and Irish-themed media in the formation and maintenance of Irish cultural identity in Britain. Using real world examples from interviews conducted with people who define themselves as Irish or part-Irish in Britain, the research revealed how Irish and Irish-themed media content is a constitutive element of Irish identities in Britain. Despite the first- and the second- (and later-) generation groups having different lived experiences of Ireland and understandings of Irish media structures the role of such media in identity formation and maintenance is remarkably similar in both.

The first-generation accounts show that the sudden change in the presence and availability of media from Ireland that results from migration brings with it a realisation of its importance to identity. Although considering oneself to be Irish was a given for these participants, having experienced childhoods in Ireland, their audience practices reveal the role of media in the maintenance that identity in the migrant setting. This draws attention to the fluid and contingent nature of identity itself and the ways it needs external supports to stay strong. It also points to the influence of new identities, constructed in the new social circles and new sources of media content available to first-generation migrants in the host nation, which can seem to compete with Irish identities. The first-generation participants articulated a clear stance against assimilation to host identities articulating a desire to maintain their Irish identities and share them publicly in Britain. This can be understood as

the nascent emergence of a hybrid identity in which Irish identity is protected. In their desire to seek out familiar media content from home while not there, the first-generation participants reveal the tensions around Irish identity loss alongside its potential alignment with newer identities that may emerge with time spent living away from Ireland. In contrast, the second- (and later-) generation accounts point to already developed hybrid cultural identities within which Irish identities, formed in childhood under the influence of previous generations and their media habits, are held in tension with local and other identities available to them in Britain. Their accounts included strong memories of Irish media sought out by first-generation parents in Britain, and these memories reveal the role such media played in the formation of the participants' Irish identities. The presence of Irish media in Britain was normalised from early childhood for many of these participants but always existed in tension with British media which made other identifications available. Following the scholarship on identity discussed in chapter two, Irish identities are understood in this project as discursive constructs that need to be sustained by identity activities that include engagement with Irish and Irish-themed media content whose stories and references become the substance of those identities. Despite their different circumstances, it is concluded that both the first and second- (and later-) generation participants engage with Irish and Irish-themed media content in order to maintain and validate Irish identities in Britain.

Both the first and second- (and later-) generation groups pointed to the role Irish media plays in conversations within social networks. This was most commonly recounted as conversations within family, particularly between parents and children, in which Irish media moments are shared as a means of re-affirming Irishness in everyday interactions. For first-generation participants, such conversations were an opportunity to point to as well as add to the knowledge of Ireland they had picked up from Irish media. In the second- (and later-) generation accounts, such media moments provide opportunities for discussion of family origins, histories and ties with Ireland. Both groups utilised their knowledge of Irish media as a means of creating new social connections in work-based and other public settings

whenever the opportunity arose. This allows the articulation of Irish identities in Britain in the context of a perceived lack of engagement with Ireland and Irishness by British media reaffirming the validity of Irish identities there.

Knowledge of contemporary Ireland is also important to both participant groups for other reasons. The research shows that for some of the first-generation participants, this is an important way of remaining engaged as an Irish citizen or as a means to keep the option of future return alive. For the second- (and later-) generation such knowledge represents new layers of understanding as they fill out the sense of Ireland given to them by parents and extended family as well as by media representations from the past. The lack of engagement with Ireland across British media and in British educational settings noted by previous scholars and articulated in this project by the second- (and later-) generation participants makes media content on Ireland and on Irish historical themes all the more valuable to them (Walter *et al.* 2002).

A major theme of this thesis was the intergenerational identity practices between migrants and their children. There is a striking continuity between the audience practices of the first-generation participants interviewed for this project and the practices of the first-generation migrants as recalled by their second- (and later-) generation descendants. Although the print newspaper and the analogue radio signal had been almost fully superseded by newer technologies at the time of the interviews, it is important that surface technological change does not obscure the underlying continuities. It is clear that first-generation migrants seek to surround themselves with the media content that surrounded them before they left Ireland and use whatever formats or technologies are available to achieve this goal. During the period the interviews were conducted, this included the recreation of the Saturday morning newspaper experience via a laptop computer and the use of smartphones to listen to downloaded podcasts of the radio programmes once heard on analogue radio sets in Ireland. The accounts of the second- (and later-) generation participants revealed how the first-generation migrants in their families had sought out familiar Irish local and national

newspapers and tuned into the radio service of Ireland's national broadcaster throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The use of internet technologies among the first-generation participants, who ranged in age from twenty somethings to those of retirement age could be said to be the twenty-first-century equivalent of 'running up and down the Holloway Road' in search of an Irish newspaper. As for the second- (and later-) generation participants they have continued to read the news websites of Irish newspapers and to listen to what their parents called *Radio Éireann* albeit via a range of rapidly changing technologies. The former, despite an ongoing shift to subscription models of access, were, at the time of the interviews, relatively easily available on personal computers, tablets or smartphones either directly or via links shared on social media. The latter was still being listened to by participants via the long wave analogue signal on home or car radios while also available via smartphone apps or digital internet radio sets. One significant change brought on by the advances in digital technologies in recent years are the digital streams from local or regional Irish radio stations such as Red FM, Midwest Radio and Dundalk FM which allows diasporic Irish audiences become part of the imagined communities of the localities they or their forebears had emigrated from. This points to the potential for the commercial local radio stations in Ireland to reach new audiences for whom their content may have deep personal significance (McMahon 2018, McMahon 2021). Despite what Susan Douglas calls the "atrophying of communal imaginings … [leading to] increased alienation from the concept of community" due to the technology-led fragmentation of traditional radio audiences at the end of the twentieth century she asserts that radio still retains devoted audiences who "feel the connection between cognitive engagement and a sense of political and cultural community" (2004:356). This project shows that the devoted audiences of national Irish radio could be located beyond Irish borders throughout the twentieth century and they are now being joined by local radio listeners there too.

As discussed in chapter five it was often a first-generation desire to continue using Irish media in Britain that led to its normalisation in the lives of the next generation and which in turn has led to its continued use by subsequent generations. This research also shows that

this same process of using Irish and Irish-themed media content to share Irish identities with the next generation within families continues to occur in the lives of some of the first-, second- (and later-) generation participants interviewed. Those with children of their own (or who had children in their extended family in Britain) emphasised the importance of sharing knowledge and experience of Ireland with the next generation. The presence of Irish and Irish-themed media in those activities points to its effect on the hybrid identities of future generations of the Irish in Britain. It was also in the interviews with the second-generation participants that the importance of the Irish language to Irish identity was mentioned. In two accounts, a sense of regret that the language, although used or understood by first-generation parents had not been passed on to them was coupled with pride in the possibility that their own children could have the opportunity to learn it. Mike Cormack has pointed to the ways that endangered minority languages (such as Irish) can be usefully understood as intimately tied to cultural identity in a globalised world. In his analysis of Irish language shift which sees the language abandoned over the course of a generation he argues that those left without it:

> … feel that they have lost something of value. The earlier generations were simply doing what seemed to them to be in the best interests of their children. The problem is that what those 'best interests' might be appears differently to different generations (2005:114-5).

In both of the accounts where the Irish language was raised in this way, and in a further account by a third-generation participant attending Irish language classes in England, there was an awareness of its presence in media content from Ireland. This affirms media as integral to identity and reveals the importance of Irish media of all kinds to sustaining the hybrid identities of the Irish in Britain (Wood 2010).

The analysis of the interviews also found that both sets of participants engage in media rituals which give them a sense of being part of an imagined Irish community. The first-generation endeavour to engage in the same audience practices familiar to them before

they left Ireland, and the second- (and later-) generation engage in audience practices that reflect those with which they grew up in Britain or encountered during periods spent in Ireland. For first-generation migrants being part of the Irish media audience can ameliorate feelings of distance from Ireland by helping them feel a part of Ireland's imagined community, although at other times such media can bring the reality of their new situation and its implications for expressing Irish identity into sharp relief. For those first-generation participants who do not have a strong Irish social network in their lives in Britain, access to media from home is even more desired as it is the only dependable everyday connection with Ireland outside that of contact with friends and family still living there. Such contact with home is enhanced by familiarity with Irish media as it provides common conversational topics related to aspects of contemporary Ireland and Irish experience which evidence membership of the Irish media audience and bolster Irish identity. The second- (and later-) generation participants also grew up understanding themselves as members of the Irish media audience and they endeavour to maintain this throughout their lives. The alternative imagined community they create by remaining part of the Irish media audience in Britain exists alongside other identities available to them via the local and national media there. The interview analysis showed that their imagined Irish community is more elastic (to use Anderson's term) than that of the first-generation participants in that it extends more easily beyond the borders of the Irish nation-state (2006).

Frustration at the perceived shortcomings of the British media was evident across both participant groups. First-generation participants were frustrated by how they felt Irish sport or sporting personalities were regularly misrepresented as British and by how tabloid newspaper coverage of stories with an Irish connection reverted to anti-Irish stereotype. Many of the second- (and later-) generation accounts recalled the anti-Irishness that they had experienced during the latter half of the twentieth century, and although they pointed to significant change from the mid-1990s, they continue to feel it could be reactivated by the British tabloid press at any point. For both groups, Irish media compensates for what is perceived as a lack of informed engagement with Ireland and Irishness by British media.

Many of the second- (and later-) generation participants grew up with this phenomenon, and felt that although it had briefly improved during the period of the Northern Ireland peace process it had once again become more prevalent in the years preceding the interviews. The dearth of British media content relating to Ireland increases its value, for both groups, whenever it does appear as it facilitates acknowledgement and understanding of Ireland and the Irish among the wider population there.

This thesis has shown that the contemporary availability of media content about Ireland, regardless of its technological platform, enables first-generation migrants and the second- (and later-) generation Irish in Britain to engage in discourses of Irish identity by learning from and sharing such content within and outside their families. The accounts reveal the desire of the Irish in Britain to maintain, strengthen and pass on Irish identity to the next generation and reveal the enabling role of Irish and Irish-themed media in that endeavour.

CONTRIBUTION TO MEDIA STUDIES

This research set out to investigate the media practices of the Irish in Britain as a media audience at a transitional moment for media studies. Over the last two decades audience researchers have been grappling with a fast-changing and uncertain media environment (Livingstone 2004, 2013). Writing about the challenge brought by 'new' media to the established concerns and practices of traditional media studies, Hermes argues that

> [T]he new media ecology demands new roles of researchers, and an open approach to 'audiencehood' […] as a layered palette of activities, attachments and investments, widely differing in intensity and importance, [that] is caught up in everyday social relations (2009:115-6).

This research has engaged with the Irish in Britain as a media audience without preconceived assumptions about what media technologies, formats or content would be of significance to them or about the uses Irish media was being put to in their everyday lives. The project was designed to give participants the space to articulate their own accounts of audience

practices around Irish and Irish-themed media in their own terms. Hermes' use of audiencehood is based on Larry Grossberg's concept of 'sensibility' through which audiences actively construct the cultural worlds that resonate for them while remaining aware of power imbalances in their relationship to media. Sensibility in this sense is related to mood or 'affect' which:

> [O]perates within and, at the same time, produces maps which direct our investments in and into the world; these maps tell us where and how we can become absorbed – not into the self but into the world – as potential locations for our self-identifications, and with what intensities (Grossberg 1992 in Hermes 2009:116).

Hermes argues that audience studies should reconstruct 'mattering maps' using the 'practices, energies and investments' of audiences as the starting points that will lead to more diverse and less place-bound understandings of media-inflected identities (Hermes 2009). By engaging with, and listening to, participants eager to share their Irish media experiences in Britain this project has drawn such a 'mattering map' for the Irish media audience in Britain, a map that shows their critical engagement with a wide range of media content and forms. It reveals their active self-orientation to transnational and diasporic media in Britain driven by their desire to keep Irish identities alive.

This thesis, with its qualitative focus on the Irish in Britain as a media audience, represents a significant addition to the corpus of Irish media audience studies. Pettitt situated Irish media studies as having emerged from a such a diversity of disciplinary origins over such a protracted period of time that it was best described as a "sub-field" or a "second-generation [of] scholarship within what has come to be called Irish Studies" (2007:154). Within it, he notes the dearth of qualitative academic audience research (2007). Alexander Dhoest, writing about television, points out that qualitative approaches to audience research are "an interesting complement to the overly abstract, theoretical macro-accounts of national and ethnic viewing communities and identities" because they provide "… a better understanding

of the actual diversity in everyday interactions with television" (2012:99). Edward Brennan used life story interviews to write a history of Irish television that both problematizes and complements orthodox Irish media histories. They have tended to tell the story of Irish television from the point of view of media institutions and the state while ignoring the voice of the ordinary viewer. Brennan's interviews with the Irish television audience reveals the importance of transnational broadcasters and imported programming in Ireland and brings out tensions between the global and the personal often missed in a focus on national institutions and the boundaries of the nation-state (2019). This research brings the diverse day-to-day audience practices of the Irish in Britain into view using a qualitative approach to investigating lived experience. Dhoest's point about television can be usefully extended to audience interactions with the plethora of media platforms, content and organisations now available to audience members on any given day:

> Imagined or interpretive communities have never been as homogeneous as we are sometimes led to believe, but television viewers do belong to national and ethnic groups, and they do share significant characteristics with fellow group members (2012:99).

The qualitative study of such interactions in this project brings a sense of the diversity (age, gender and generation) of the Irish in Britain as media audience whilst retaining a purchase on their shared characteristics. While the conclusions are, like all qualitative interpretative research, "case-specific and situationally bound," they are offered here as an indicators of what might be to some extent typical of the group from which the participants were drawn (Schrøder *et al.* 2003:45).

An additional methodological criterion proposed by van Zoonen is reflection on what intervention the research makes in existing social formations (1994). Previous research on the Irish in Britain has pointed to the desire of the second-generation to have the hybrid nature of their identity recognised and celebrated rather than framed as being 'caught between two cultures,' with assimilation the only successful outcome (Hickman *et al.*

2005:177). Theorisations of diaspora were drawn upon in this project and facilitated the inclusion of migrants and the subsequent generations of their families in understandings of the role played by Irish and Irish-themed media in the world. This thesis brings the second- (and later-) generation Irish into view as part of the Irish media audience a formulation often reserved for those resident in Ireland. It stands as a corrective to the ways the second- (and later-) generations have been elided from representations of Irishness that devalue hybrid forms of identity and gives voice to a part of British society that has remained invisible in the ethnic homogeneity of British whiteness. The research also reveals the role Irish media plays in the tensions around identity loss felt by first-generation migrants in their new situation. Media from Ireland is used to renew and strengthen first-generation Irish identities in Britain and the analysis of the interviews points to possible hybrid identities emerging over time.

The project findings show remarkable similarities across both generational groups in relation to the uses Irish and Irish-themed media are put to by diasporic Irish audiences. The Irish identities of both the first and subsequent generations need proactive negotiation in the British context, a context which includes a perceived lack of engagement with Ireland and Irishness across British media. Participants from both groups seek out media from Ireland or Irish-themed media produced elsewhere to maintain Irishness as an element of their symbolic environment and validate Irish identities in social networks in both Ireland and in Britain. The drawing out of these similarities represents an intervention in considerations about who may be considered a member of the Irish media audience, and this can be seen as a microcosm of a wider debate on who is considered authentically Irish in the world (Scully 2012).

A final point on the methodological aspects of this thesis is that despite the move from textual analysis to the interviewing of audiences in the British cultural studies tradition and in qualitative audience studies more generally (as outlined in chapter three above), the second- (and later-) generation participant's critical engagement with the representations of Irishness available in Britain opened up a space for comparison between their

understandings and the scholarship on those representations. As indicated in chapter three the ethnographic interview method adopted for this project can be traced to developments within reception research for which textual analysis was the initial methodological starting point. In their discussion of cultural studies methods, Johnson et al. suggest they are most productive when used in combination or when methodological conventions are transgressed such as when close textual analysis is used to analyse the face-to-face exchanges of the interview (2004). Similarly, for research interested in the relationship between television fiction and national identity, Schrøder et al. argued that while it would be best to abstain from "a detailed preliminary textual analysis" that might colour analysis of audience accounts, it could be fruitful to take interview findings "back to the text" to account for "textual properties that seem to have triggered and shaped particular readings" (2003:126). As shown in chapter five, many of the second- (and later-) generation participants had thought deeply about and were keen to discuss how representations of Irishness in Britain had changed over time. Their engagement with iconic Irish-themed screen drama allowed for the fruitful use of existing textual analysis literature in the analysis of their interviews and which brought the extent of their critical thinking on these media texts to the fore.

This thesis compliments the study of diasporic media production carried out by Niamh Kirk which has highlighted the role played by the Irish diasporic press in North America, Australia and Britain in shaping Irish ethnic identities for the Irish abroad. In the British context, the research focused on the political economy constraints of *The Irish Post* and *The Irish World* and tracked their framing of Irishness over a six-month period in 2016 (Kirk 2019). This thesis has engaged with members of the target audience of such media content through interviews that were conducted around the same time. One of the findings from Kirk's study, relevant to the findings of this one, was the prevalence of news stories from Ireland found to populate the printed pages and online offerings of diasporic Irish newspapers:

> [T] he flow of culture in the form of news flows among the digital diaspora press is mainly centre–periphery, with a large concentration of news about Ireland and news from Irish national resources compared to lower levels of cross-diaspora news stories. … [T]he role of the [Irish] nation state as producer of culture and supplier of media content is still prevalent in the case of the Irish digital diaspora press (2019:323).

This resonates with the findings from both participant groups in this study who predominantly spoke of seeking news from Ireland rather than news from the Irish diaspora in Britain or elsewhere. Although *The Irish Post* and *The Irish World* were useful as a way of finding out about Irish-themed events in Britain, they were mainly valued by those participants who engaged with them as a means of sourcing contemporary news about Ireland.

In the ways discussed above, this thesis makes a significant contribution to Irish media studies and specifically to increasing understanding of Irish media audiences. It is not intended to be a final word on any aspect upon which it sheds light but a useful starting point for further investigation. In that context, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the research and point to some of the possibilities for future research.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Limitations are inevitable with any small scale qualitative study aiming to better understand a population as large and diverse as that of the Irish in Britain. At the same time each limitation can open up possibilities for future research. In this section I will discuss limitations such as the lack of a 'like-for-like' comparison between the first- and second- (and later-) generation Irish media audience groups discussed in the two findings chapters, the difficulties of extrapolating audience motivations or practices from a small number of individuals to the wider Irish population in Britain and the uneven depth of analysis across the different media genres discussed by participants during the interviews.

Direct comparison between the two participant groups in this study is hampered by the fact that many of the first-generation participants were relatively young whereas the majority of the second- (and later-) generation participants were middle-aged or older. This was an unintended consequence of the research design which emphasised an openness to all who presented themselves as willing participants without regard to criteria that would have forced a more even distribution of age ranges. The publication of the call for participants in Irish support networks and the diasporic newspapers in Britain attracted older second- (or later-) generation participants, while its dissemination on social media attracted mainly younger first-generation participants. The use of the snowballing effects which inevitably occurred also strengthened this inherent bias in the make-up of the participant group. In a broader sense, it is also evident from the interviews that younger participants focused more on their contemporary practices and relatively recent media experiences whereas older participants, in a manner similar to Brennan's study, utilised their full repertoire of media memories and drew on past experiences to contextualise the present (2019). In hindsight, it would have been valuable to conduct further interviews for both categories with a view to achieving more balance in age terms, but given the constraints of the project, this was not possible. This very limitation, however, does point to future research aimed at achieving a more precise comparison and tracking how first-generation migrant identities evolve over time.

Given its qualitative approach, this study does not attempt to be representative of the large and diverse population that is described by the term 'Irish in Britain' but, as pointed out earlier, it does hope to reveal some of the characteristics that may be shared across that group. It would be of great interest to many, and not least Irish diaspora stakeholders, to see how representative of the wider population the participants in this project might be. This study or further qualitative work on some of the insights revealed could form part of mixed-methods approach that attempts to quantify the media audience practices (and the justifications for them)of the Irish media audience in Britain.

Another area of future research pertinent to the transition to digital media would be a focus on the ways by which Irish media can be accessed in Britain today and in the past. Although they were not the focus of this project, the technological means by which Irish media was being accessed in Britain was mentioned by most of the participants and revealed a startling diversity of approaches. Alongside long-established methods for accessing broadcast media such as the RTÉ Radio One long wave radio signal and the Sky Sports subscription (for GAA matches) and newer digital methods such as streaming or podcasting stood many other fascinating ways the participants can access or have in the past accessed Irish media content in Britain. These included the redirecting of satellite dishes to receive Republic of Ireland soccer games broadcast on the television channels of the countries against which the Irish team were playing, the purchase of satellite cards on the black market that decode the main Irish television channels for viewing in Britain, the conversion of Irish television signals into internet compatible digital streams for viewing on computers or smart televisions and the purchase of car brands that came equipped with long wave radio receivers. Added to the historical methods also mentioned by participants, such as taking analogue radio sets to high points around London to get a signal from Ireland or getting newspapers posted by family members to Britain, they would make for a fascinating study of the ingenuity of the Irish abroad determined to remain part of the Irish media audience.

Given that this project allowed the Irish media audience in Britain articulate their engagement with media in their own terms it is not surprising that the interviews contained references to a broad range of Irish media forms and content both past and present. As mentioned earlier, textual analysis of Irish screen drama was fruitfully applied to the analysis of interviews in which that genre was discussed, but a similar approach was not feasible with other genres or texts brought up by participants due to the uneven development of Irish media studies and its relatively muted engagement with other media forms (Pettitt 2007). Like the other limitations, this one also provides room for future research aimed at achieving a deeper understanding of certain media forms or texts considered important in the everyday lives of the Irish in Britain. In this context, the importance of a particular medium

such as radio as a format for diasporic engagement could be usefully explored in more depth. Within such a medium a particular genre or media text such as the daytime talk shows beloved by some of the participants in this project could be the basis for a more focused study.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I began this thesis with a personal story that shows the importance of media from the places we call home. That story also highlights the longevity of media audience habits which can literally last a lifetime as well as the ways Irish media was always a transnational phenomenon in the British context. The first-generation interviews in this study confirm that the audience practices of the mid-twentieth century continue with each new generation of migrants albeit on new technological platforms and with new media content. They also show the reticence of the Irish migrant in Britain to allow an Irish identity recede in the light of life in a new country and their ingenuity in staying in touch with discourses that reinforce Irishness. The second- (and later-) generation interviews attest to the fact that these practices can be passed on, engaged in and developed by Irish people whose primary location has always been outside of Ireland and that such practices are a way to strengthen hybrid identities.

As I put the finishing touches to this thesis, there are nearly fifty thousand Ukrainian refugees adapting to life in Ireland and despite their hopes of quick return they face an increasingly uncertain future. This research has a lot of resonance with their situation and with that of the many other migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and their families that have made their way to Irish shores over the past twenty-five years. As the accounts of the first-generation Irish participants in this project have shown, migrants do not easily give up the cultural identity associated with the home they have left behind. This thesis has also shown how subsequent generations follow in the footsteps of their parents and learn the significance of their cultural origins from a young age. For those who have come to Ireland to start new lives this research is a reminder that we live in a world in which media content

from the places we call home is one of the essential building blocks on which cultural identity is built. Despite the distance from their countries of origin, and the difficulties many of those countries face in a geopolitical context of war and climate change, digital media allows content to travel farther and faster than ever before, making itself available to us wherever we reside. As this research attests, this has implications for migrant populations' sense of who they are and how they envisage themselves in a host society. As in the case of the participants discussed in this project the new Irish and their descendants are likely to develop hybrid identities that allow them participate fully in Irish society without disavowing the places they have come from. In this regard, there are questions raised by this research in relation to the lack of diversity in the Irish public sphere that serves to exclude or attempts to assimilate migrant voices. Katie Moylan has pointed out the "homogeneity within a homogeneity" that characterises Irish mainstream media and keeps Ireland's immigrant population contained within a narrow conception of Irish cultural and political identity whose boundaries are set by media institutions that are overwhelmingly white, settled and middle-class (2013:5). The lack of acknowledgement of their Irish heritage in mainstream British media felt by the participants in this project is prescient in this regard. Understanding the role of media in the formation and maintenance of local, national, and hybrid identities is all the more important given the uncertain future so many are now facing around the world.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1A: CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS (IRELAND):

Ar fhás tú aníos i Sasana?

Is mac léinn PhD in Ollscoil na hÉireann Gaillimh mé atá ag tabhairt faoi tionscadal taighde ar dhiaspóra na hÉireann agus an chaoi a n-úsáideann siad na meáin le fanacht i dteagmháil le Éire agus le tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar a bhféiniúlacht Éireannach. Tá spéis agam labhairt le daoine atá lonnaithe anois in Éirinn ach a chaith tréimhse suntasach dá saol ina gcónaí i Sasana.

Más duine mar sin tusa agus má tá spéis agat cabhrú leis an taighde seo déan teagmháil liom le gur féidir liom tuilleadh eolais faoin tionscadal a roinnt leat.

Did you grow up in England?

I am a PhD student at NUIG currently undertaking a project on the Irish diaspora in England and how they use the media to keep in touch with and to better understand Ireland and Irishness. I am interested in speaking to people who have moved to Ireland having spent a considerable amount of their lives in England.

If you fit this description and are interested in assisting me with my research please get in touch so that I can give you more information about the project.

Dan Dwyer - 087-8168629 - dan.dwyer@nuigalway.ie

(Poster distributed in local shops in the Conamara Gaeltacht in the west of Ireland)

APPENDIX 1B: CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS (BRITAIN):

Do you tune in to Ireland?

I am a PhD student in Ireland conducting research on how

The Irish in Britain use media content to keep in touch with Ireland and an Irish identity.

I am interested in talking to you about the kinds of TV and radio programmes, magazines, newspapers, social media or internet content you like and how these may be important to your sense of Irishness.

If you would like to assist me with this research (by doing a short phone interview) please get in touch so that I can give you some more information about the project.

Dan Dwyer

Email: dan.dwyer@nuigalway.ie

Tel. 00353-87-8168629

Do you tune in to Ireland?

I am a PhD student based in Ireland conducting research on how

The Irish in Britain use media to keep in touch with Ireland and a sense of Irishness.

I am interested in talking to you about the TV and radio programmes, magazines, newspapers, social media or internet content you like and how these may be important to your identity as Irish.

I will be in **London** from 12-16 June and would love to meet with you.

If you would like to share your experience of Irish media please get in touch by email or text so that we can arrange to meet at one of the many **Irish cultural venues around London** that have kindly agreed to support this research.

Dan Dwyer

Email: dan.dwyer@nuigalway.ie

Tel. 00353-87-8168629

(Posters distributed in Britain)

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form [Face to face interviews]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Please read the following statement in full and sign where indicated.

- I ___________________________________ agree to participate in Dan Dwyer's research study.
- The purpose of the study has been explained to me and I understand it.
- I am participating voluntarily.
- I give permission for my interview with Dan Dwyer to be recorded and for such personal details as I have provided to be kept on record.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time whether before it starts or while I am participating.
- I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.
- I understand that extracts from what I say may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications.

Signed_____________________________ Date: _________________

Consent Form [Email consent for phone interviews]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Please read the following statements in full and follow the instruction at the end.

- I agree to participate in Dan Dwyer's research study.
- The purpose of the study has been explained to me and I understand it.
- I am participating voluntarily.
- I give permission for my interview with Dan Dwyer to be recorded and for such personal details as I have provided to be kept on record.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time whether before it starts or while I am participating.
- I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.
- I understand that extracts from what I say may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications.

Please confirm by return email that you have read this document and are happy to proceed with the recorded interview

APPENDIX 3A: FIRST-GENERATION INTERVIEW GUIDE:

Interview questions (1G): Name: Contact: Date:

[Make sure Amolto recording audio settings at Headphone/Microphone set at: Raptor HS40!!!!!]

Irish *and* Irish-themed media.... explain that all is included here... any media (newspapers / radio / TV /internet) or media content with an Irish angle of any kind...

1. Just to get us going can you briefly say why you felt your own experience would be relevant to this research project....
2. Do you spend much time in Ireland these days?
3. Can you describe your typical media week... what you watch, listen to?
4. Do you think you're relationship to media channels has changed much since you left Ireland?
    - Focus on Irish ones
    - Focus on British ones
    - What about American and others?
5. Do you use and enjoy British media outlets now (you are living in the UK)?
    - Do you ever feel 'left out' of the narrative on British media?
6. Do you think you become aware at a certain stage growing up of each country having its own distinct media and can you describe this?
7. Do you think that you actively seek out Irish media content, in any form from online to TV/Radio newspapers or even films?
    - Can you describe how you go about this?

- Do you make any distinction between Irish-themed media that came from the UK and media that originated in Ireland itself?
- Do you seek out 'local media' as opposed to national...?

8. Are you aware of local Irish media produced by the Irish in England and can you describe how important or not that was to you (or your family)?
9. Can you describe your feelings around Irish/Irish-themed media?
    - Does this content give you (and your family) a sense of belonging or a sense of community?
10. Does media need to be new and fresh or exciting in some way before it was sought out or enjoyed... or is it simply good enough if Irish?
11. **Why do you think you have this interest in Irish media?**
12. Were you aware of coverage of Ireland and Irish themes in the media in England...
    - Examples? Stories?
    - Did you have a particular view of Ireland at this time... positive? Negative?
13. Do you think that such media made you think about Irishness and influenced what you imagined Irishness to be?

14. Do you feel media fills out your understanding of how Ireland might be changing?
15. Does a knowledge of Ireland through media help relationships with others
    - at home (facilitating conversation on phone / when back at home?)
    - other Irish in UK or

- other non-Irish in UK?
- Does knowledge from Ireland or Irish angles on stories help in relationships in UK?

16. Are advances in media technologies over your time in UK making a significant difference to your engagement with Irish-themed media?
17. Do you think you would enjoy same media in same way if you lived in Ireland?
18. Do you think you will return some day?

APPENDIX 3B: SECOND- (OR LATER-) GENERATION INTERVIEW GUIDE:

Interview questions (+2G): Name: Contact: Date:

[Make sure Amolto recording audio settings at Headphone/Microphone set at: Raptor HS40!!!!!]

Irish *and* Irish-themed media.... explain that all is included here... any media (newspapers / radio / TV / internet) or media content with an Irish angle of any kind...

1. Just to get started can you briefly say why you felt you were drawn to respond to the call for this research?..
2. Do you think Irish or Irish-themed media content is significant for you?
   - Explain...
3. Do you think that you actively seek out Irish media content?
   - Can you describe how you go about this?
   - Do you make any distinction between Irish-themed media that came from the UK and media that originated in Ireland itself?
4. Are you aware of local Irish media produced by the Irish in England/Britain and can you describe how important or not that was to you (or your family)?
5. Are you aware of Irish media channels and do you watch / read them?
6. Do you think you become aware at a certain stage growing up of each country having its own distinct media and can you describe this?
7. Can you describe your feelings around Irish/Irish-themed media?
   - Did this content give you (and your family) a sense of belonging or a sense of community?

8. Were you aware of coverage of Ireland and Irish themes in the media in England...
    - Examples? Stories?
    - Did you have a particular view of Ireland at this time... positive? Negative?
9. Do you think that such media made you think about Irishness and influenced what you imagined Irishness to be?
10. Did advances in media technologies over your time in England make a significant difference to your engagement with Irish-themed media?
11. Did your parents have an interest in Irish-themed media and do you think this has influenced your media practices at all?
12. Have you spent much time in Ireland over the years?

APPENDIX 4A: FIRST-GENERATION PARTICIPANTS

Emma

Emma is in her mid-twenties and moved from Cork to undertake postgraduate study in Edinburgh a year before the interview. She is still settling in to her new life there and really likes it, emphasising the amenities and services, which seem far more advanced and equitable than at home but she also misses Cork and gets a little homesick now and then. She uses social media to keep in touch with and share political and economic news from Ireland and to capture and share images of where she is from and has occasionally used the internet to listen to the local radio station which she loved growing up in Cork.

Frank

Frank is in his early fifties and works intermittently as a building labourer and house painter while doing training courses and networking with the Irish community in the hope of securing other work. He was in London two and half years at the time of interview having had to emigrate as a result of the 2008 economic crisis in Ireland. Twenty five years previously he had also emigrated for similar reasons to America. He likes to listen to a local Donegal radio station called *Highland Radio* and to RTÉ Radio One on his smartphone and reads the *The Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times* (without the subscription) online.

Ivan

Although not born in Ireland Ivan grew up there as his Irish parents moved back when he was aged five. He attended university in Dublin and then moved to London to undertake a PhD and was living there for 6 years at the time of the interview. Ivan travels back to Ireland for all the main holidays from work and also makes a number of trips in between to attend soccer or rugby matches in Dublin. He tries to watch all the international and bigger Irish club rugby games and the GAA championships either by going out to pubs in London or via his laptop computer using his online subscriptions to Sky Sports and GAA GO. He likes to follow Irish news and current affairs listening to RTÉ Radio One in the mornings and evenings

and reading the websites of *The Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times* (without the subscription) on a daily basis. Although he is working full time in London he intends to move back to Ireland in the short term and was sending out his CV and preparing for interviews in Ireland at the time of interview.

John

John, in his late twenties and from Dublin, moved to England at the age of sixteen with his family and with the exception of one year spent working in back in Dublin has lived in England ever since. His parents initially moved to the south of England, then to a town in the north where he attended university and he had been living with his third-generation Irish fiancé in Birmingham for four years prior to the interview. He is an avid sports fan passionately following rugby, soccer, Golf, Cricket and American football, being introduced to the latter two by friends from England and the United States. While not a huge GAA fan he always keeps an eye on the fortunes of the Dublin football team in the bigger games and, frustrated in his attempts to access the All-Ireland final on a television or computer screen in his home, has instead relied on streaming RTÉ Radio One coverage via smartphone apps or his laptop.

Maeve

Maeve, in her mid-fifties, moved to London to take up nursing at the age of 18 and has used both Irish media from Ireland and Irish diasporic media in London throughout that time. She continues to buy the two diasporic newspapers *The Irish World* and *The Irish Post* in her local supermarket every week but due to a lack of availability of print newspapers from Ireland in recent years she now searches them out now and again on the internet. She also uses her laptop to access TG4 and RTÉ television and her smartphone to access Irish radio. Maeve expressed her frustration that the main Irish television channels had never been made available in the UK pointing out that the advances in modern technology would surely have made that very easy.

Margaret

Margaret finished her University degree in Ireland at the height of the 2008 economic crisis there, and decided to follow it with an MA course in England. Although she tried to find work in Ireland after graduating she took an opportunity that came up working in the advertising office of a diasporic Irish newspaper only intending to stay for about a year. At the time of interview she was eight years there. It is predominantly through social media that Margaret accesses Irish content and she is active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram which she uses to follow the content of established Irish media organisations such as RTÉ, *The Irish Times and Irish Independent* and newer Irish digital media platforms such as Joe.ie and Punditarena.com.

Mark

Mark, originally from Mayo and in his late forties, has been working in Scotland for 10 years at the time of interview having emigrated to England 10 years before that. He is a regular listener to RTÉ Radio One which he accesses daily online at his home or via the long wave signal in his car. His other main use of Irish media are the news websites of RTÉ, *The Irish Times* (he has the subscription) and *The Irish Independent* and he also dips into the GAA Go pay per view service for GAA matches he wants to see.

Mary

Mary has lived on the Isle of Man, a British Crown dependency that lies in the Irish Sea between Ireland and Britain, for over thirty years along with her Irish husband and their now almost adult children. Throughout this time she has felt isolated from the large family in which she grew up as most of her siblings also emigrated but to destinations far away from Europe. She is an avid listener to RTÉ Radio One and to the daytime phone-in talk shows in particular.

Siobhán

Siobhán is in her early thirties has been living in London since 2005. She married an Englishman with and they are rearing a young family together. She applied for Irish passports for her children and encourages an awareness of Irishness in them. She listens to RTÉ Radio One as well as BBC Radio Four throughout the day which is what her family always did in Ireland too. She also checks online news from Ireland a couple of times a day mainly on *The Irish Independent* news website as it has no paywall. She would prefer *The Irish Times* but has not taken out the online subscription.

Susan

After finishing her primary degree in Ireland Susan worked in Dublin and pursued an Irish language MA on a part-time basis. After that she went to work for the European Commission in Brussels and stayed there for six years before moving to London with her English partner whom she met in Brussels. At the time of the interview she had been living and working in London for almost three years. Susan and her husband listen to the BBC Radio 4 news bulletin in the early morning before going to work but once she is on the train she will go into *The Irish Times* app and the *Journal.ie* app to find out what's happening in Ireland. She will check these news sources again at lunchtime and then download a selection of RTÉ Radio One podcasts of segments of the daytime talk shows hosted by Ryan Tubridy, Seán O'Rourke and Ray D'arcy to her smartphone for listening to on her commute home. A few months before the interview she began paying the online subscription to *The Irish Times* because the printed newspaper she had regularly bought was no longer available to her in London. She likes keeps an eye out for Irish drama series on British television and she knows they will also be broadcast on television channels back in Ireland.

Áine

Áine is in her mid-twenties and working in London having spent her childhood partly in Ireland and partly in England. Although born in Ireland her parents moved the family over and back to London a few times as she grew up. She did live in Ireland continuously from the age of thirteen until she herself moved to England at twenty three to undertake a PhD there. She listens to RTÉ Radio One via a cable television channel in her home and feels her engagement with social media keeps her informed on what is happening in Ireland. She is an avid reader, mainly of young adult fiction but also women's fiction within which she reads a lot of Irish authors.

Jane

Jane is in her mid-thirties and originally from Dublin. She has been living in London since she left school and is not currently in paid employment. She volunteers as a part-time administrative assistant at an Irish centre and is a regular listener to RTÉ Radio One and a big fan of Irish country and western music.

Jackie

Jackie is in her mid-twenties and currently on a media internship in London having studied and worked in media before that in Ireland. She listens to RTÉ Radio One occasionally on her smartphone and reads *The Irish Times* online. At the time of interview she had only been in London for a few months.

Robert

Robert emigrated to England in 1951 and has lived in various locations ever since. He contacted the project because he used to enjoy watching the Irish-themed commercial television channel IrishTV on Sky channel 191 for the short time that it was available. He used the interview to point out his disappointment that this channel had stopped broadcasting and to reminisce about the early 1950s.

James

James is in his early sixties and initially moved to London from his home in Mayo to study art. He then worked in Ireland for a number of years before moving to back to London to work as an artist. He keeps in touch with Ireland through the internet and by attending Irish cultural events in London where he meets other Irish people. The main media content that he discussed were Irish theatre and films he had seen in London.

Gearóid

Gearóid is in his late sixties and has spent all his working life in London. He is heavily involved in the Irish community in London. He is very interested in Irish news and current affairs as well as GAA and uses websites such as *The Irish Times* and RTÉ Player that he pays a monthly subscription to stream online.

Tom

Tom, in his mid-fifties, left Ireland in the early 1980s and has been living in London ever since. Over the years he has been a regular listener to RTÉ Radio One.

APPENDIX 4B: SECOND- (AND LATER-) GENERATION PARTICIPANTS

Laura

Laura, in her early forties, was born in London to Irish parents and defines herself as London Irish having lived there up until five years before the interview when she moved to Ireland with her parents to support them in their retirement. Nowadays Laura gets her news online from the same newspapers she read when living in England. These include *The Guardian* as well *The Irish Times* and *The Irish Independent*.

Liam

Liam is in his early fifties and was born in London to Irish parents. He lived there until he was 35 years of age working on building sites and in Irish pubs. He has spent the last 15 years in Ireland. His media use is mainly the sports coverage of the main newspapers and the national broadcasters both in Ireland and in Britain.

Paul

Paul is in his late fifties and works with an Irish charity in London. He grew up with a strong sense of being Irish in England despite the fact that the original Irish immigrants to Britain in his family were four generations before him and consisted of a single great-grandparent on both his mother and his father's side. His parents maintained a strong attachment to Ireland however always coming to Ireland for holidays and raising Paul as a Roman Catholic. This meant that he grew up in the company of mainly Irish people and as he grew into adulthood he became politically involved with the Republican movement during the troubles. He is keenly interested in the portrayal of the Northern Ireland conflict across current affairs media and in film.

Jack

Jack was born in Liverpool to Irish parents in the mid 1970's and he and his siblings always considered themselves Irish rather than English even though they mixed with English kids at school and grew up enjoying British media as well as listening to RTÉ Radio One. He continues that family tradition of listening to Irelands national station today and has also tuned his Sky Television box into the main television channels from Ireland using a decoder card he sourced on the black market.

Val

Val, in her early sixties, was born in London to Irish immigrants who always maintained their sense of Irishness. She grew up in an Irish area of London although she attended a private catholic school that did not have a lot of other children of Irish parents. She attended a lot of Irish cultural events as a child and feels that as she grew into adulthood it was important for her to become more independent from her family and this was expressed by immersing herself in local London culture. Although she was always aware of her Irishness and attended Irish events in London all her life it was in more recent years, once she had decided to buy a second home in Ireland, that Irish media have become more important for her. She likes to listen to RTÉ Radio One and was listening to Newstalk for a while but grew frustrated with the quality of the content.

Alan

Alan lives alone in central London and works in an Irish centre there despite living a chaotic life with alcohol related problems. His father was originally from Mayo but did not share any other details of his background. He applied for and received an Irish passport based on his family history in the early 2000's and his regular contact with an Irish centre in London helps him feel part of the Irish community there. He enjoys listening to Irish music which he accesses on *YouTube* and *The Irish Post* and *The Irish Independent* newspapers he accesses through the centre.

Larry

Larry, in his fifties, is third-generation Irish and currently living in Liverpool although originally from Scotland. He is very interested in Irish feature films and his engagement with contemporary Irish media is with the Irish language content of TG4 available on *YouTube* which he was introduced to as a resource for an Irish language class he attended.

Ann

Ann, in her early sixties, was born in London to Irish parents and has lived there all her life. She now has adult children and is very proud of her Irish roots. Although she did not grow up in a part of London that was strongly Irish she was regularly taken as a child to Irish events including those run by a local Catholic club, where her mother worked, and where there would often be Irish music and dancing. She and her siblings would travel to Ireland every couple of years for the school holidays and she always felt Irish due to her parents' Irishness and the fact that her extended family were all living in Ireland. She uses Facebook and internet searches to find Irish-themed content, likes to read *The Irish Post* newspaper and has TIVO television system which she set up to curate programmes with an Irish theme from across all the television channels.

Kevin

Kevin is in his mid-fifties and fourth-generation Irish. He has lived all his life in Liverpool and is eager to emphasise the Irish connections so many people in Liverpool have due to family histories of migration. He is an avid listener to RTÉ Radio One throughout the week and two of local Irish music radio stations in the evenings and weekends. In recent years he has acquired an internet radio set which he uses at home but is keen to point out the importance of RTÉ's analogue service which he listened to all his life. He has also recently started listening to the content of the national Irish language station RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta as a support to the weekly Irish language class he attends. He has occasionally bought *The Irish Independent* or *The Sunday Independent* newspapers.

Niamh

Niamh, in her mid-fifties, publishes an Irish-themed freesheet a number of times a year that is funded by advertising and distributed in Irish pubs and other cultural centres in London where she lives. She has travelled to Ireland regularly for holidays since she was a young child and worked there for a short period at one stage. She follows *The Irish Times* and *The Irish Independent* on her Twitter account and buys *The Irish Post* every week.

Maria

Maria, is in her late sixties, was born in Kilburn and has lived in London all her life. Her parents were from the west of Ireland and she visited regularly during her childhood even attending convent school in Mayo for a few months. She buys both *The Irish World* and *The Irish Post* every week and listens to an Irish country and western music radio station through her Sky television box. She is a big fan of Maeve Binchy's novels and loved *Ballykissangel* when it was on British television.

Margie

Margie, in her mid-sixties, was born to Irish immigrant parents in Kilburn in the 1950s and has lived in London all her life. She continues to travel regularly to the west of Ireland having spent long periods there as a child. She likes to read Irish news found through her Facebook account and is a huge fan of *Mrs Brown's Boys*.

Annie

Annie, in her early twenties, was born and has lived in England all her life. Her mother moved there from Ireland in the 1970s and Annie was brought on regular visits to Ireland throughout her life where she developed strong friendships with her Irish cousins. In her teenage years she felt conflicted about the Irish part of her identity and tried to suppress it in favour of being simply English. Studying geography in University has empowered her to explore and express a hybrid sense of identity that celebrates her Irishness. She enjoys watching Irish-themed films and television dramas.