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Globalization, Migration and Social Transformation
Ireland in Europe and the World

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Chapter 15

Media Perspectives on Chinese Migrants in
Ireland

Rebecca Chiyoko King-O’Riain

Theories of Transnationalism focus on the macro economic reasons that people migrate to live in one country from another (Wallerstein 1974, Massey et al. 1993). Within studies on transnational migration, the focus has been squarely on how migrants “maintain a variety of ties to their home countries while they become incorporated into the countries where they have settled” (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007: 130). In this paper, I argue that although many immigrants do have ties to ‘home’ and ‘away’ (or ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’) countries they also have ties and orientations, manifested in everyday transnational practices of digital media use, beyond and between those two poles – to other ethnic diasporic communities in the world. To unpack this, I examine here how the globalization of the economy in Ireland and corresponding time-space compression in terms of transportation and communication makes transnational and cosmopolitan orientations possible for Chinese immigrants in Ireland (Vertovec 2004, 2009). I examine how the Chinese are seen in Irish society, the portrayal of Chinese in the Irish mainstream and ‘ethnic’ Chinese print media and then look at everyday practices and media orientations of Chinese migrants in Ireland. I look particularly at how Chinese migrants use digital technology in their everyday lives to maintain diasporic connections and identities while residing in Ireland.

The Chinese population (0.4 per cent of the total population) in Ireland is bigger proportionally than most other countries in Europe. However, Chinese migrants in Ireland tend not to be seen as unregulated ‘Chinese hordes’ as they are in other European countries like Hungary (Nyiri 2005) but instead are seen by the mainstream Irish media and even the Chinese ‘ethnic’ print media (The Chinese News Express and The Shining Emerald) as migrants who are working hard in low-wage service jobs, with little English, in order to succeed in Ireland. The Irish media primarily portray Chinese migrants in Ireland in positive terms highlighting ‘hard work’ and ‘industriousness’ or economic potential (as consumers, business opportunities and as streams of revenue through international student fees). I argue that portrayals of both Chinese people in Ireland and of China itself cast the Chinese in Ireland as a ‘model minority’ (Chou and Feagin 2008). This image of a quite, polite, hardworking, but exploitable population dehumanizes Chinese migrants and pits them against other migrants in Ireland. This image in Ireland may be shifting as Chinese migration to Europe has shifted...
in the last ten years with increasing migration flows that are unregulated and associated commercially with poor working conditions and trafficking in Europe such as the case in Morecambe Bay in the UK (Pieke 2007). This myth, however, casts Chinese migrants as the ‘model’ for other migrants to follow, allows for an implicit and racializing comparison between ‘deserving’ (Chinese) and ‘undeserving’ (Nigerian) migrants in Ireland.

While the model minority is a myth, it still frames Chinese in Ireland in terms of migration and integration. But, the model minority myth for Chinese in Ireland is different from that in other places, predominantly the US, because this status in Ireland is defined in terms of being a ‘good short term’ worker with a structural context which does not encourage Chinese migrants to stay in Ireland and experience long term integration (even if some do manage to do so). The Chinese state also has a version of this ‘good migrant’ who works hard and sends money home to China. But what do the Chinese migrants in Ireland think of themselves? For the most part, the Chinese migrants in the studies reviewed below see themselves as ‘target learning’ (King-O’Riain 2008a) as a way of investing in their own education and human capital and as a part of the broader view of global cosmopolitans and pioneering modernizers encouraged by the Chinese state. However, there is an added dimension to this as they see their relation to other Chinese migrants and the Chinese diaspora as very important. They see the Chinese in Ireland (few refer to it as a ‘community’) and Chinese outside of Ireland as a part of this diaspora, relate to them as this, and not just as ‘Chinese’ or as a part of the host country. The Internet is an important part of the infrastructure, which allows this more fluid transnational and diasporic identity construction. However, clearly their diasporic ties are not totally free wheeling and they cannot escape the everyday lived ‘host country effects’ which are apparent in the structural context including laws, labour market characteristics, and the media as well as relations with earlier Chinese migrants, racialization and politics.

Chinese Migration in Ireland

Since the 1970s, there has been a small but growing Chinese community in Ireland. Many more settled Chinese in Ireland were originally from Hong Kong and came to Ireland from England in the 1970s and 1980s (Yau 2007). The size and diversity of the Chinese community in Ireland has increased dramatically and rapidly over the past 15 years. The 2006 Census found that 16,500 Chinese were living in Ireland in April 2006. However, many sources and community-based groups (Irish Chinese Information Centre) consider this number to be an undercount. They feel that the census 2006 missed many Chinese community members because some Chinese migrants in Ireland did not know about the census due to language barriers. Although the census was available in the Chinese language, oftentimes, it had to be specifically ordered in some areas to receive it as such. Some also felt that the density of housing in the city center of Dublin (where many Chinese
reside) missed counting many who live in densely populated apartments where
many have multiple, and perhaps in some cases too many occupants, to comply
with health and safety codes in their living space. They also felt that some Chinese
in Ireland have had negative experiences with the state in China and do not trust
the Irish state, do not want to be counted or have overstayed their student visas are
now here without legal status and fear being deported if they are counted.
For these reasons, they estimate the community is closer to 40,000 members
(Wang 2006, O’Leary and Li 2008, Clifford 2004). These authors base their
estimation of the Chinese community in Ireland upon estimates by the Chinese
Embassy, the number of visas issued to Chinese students – according to the GNIB
15,933 student visas went to Chinese students in 2004 (Wang 2006), and anecdotal
estimates by Chinese community based organizations in Ireland such as the
number of queries from Chinese living in Ireland at the Irish Chinese Information
Centre. While the pace of migration from China has slowed recently and some
Chinese have returned to China or moved on to other countries, they are still a
proportionally large and racially noticeable minority group in Ireland (Donohoe
2002: 9).
Chinese people living in Ireland currently tend to migrate from many different
areas of mainland China (with large groups coming from Shenyang, Shanghai, and
Beijing), have often come to Ireland as students (43 per cent) and are relatively
young (70 per cent being in their 20s) and unmarried (71 per cent). They are
primarily urban dwellers with 95 per cent living in urban areas with two thirds in
Dublin City and surrounds. Both Chinese men and women have come to Ireland
to learn English and to better their employment opportunities. Unlike Chinese
in other parts of the world, religion played a very small, if negligible, role for
them. In survey research conducted by O’Leary and Li (2008) they found that
the Chinese living in Dublin were more concerned with their immigration status
and English language competency than they were about religion (O’Leary and
Li 2008). Because Chinese students have been allowed to work part time, many
young Chinese can be seen in low wage service jobs (particularly in catering and
service/hotel industries where 51 per cent of them work) in addition to their study
(all stats from CSO 2008: 48–51).
Similarly, Feldman, Gilmartain, Loyal and Migge (2008) using 100 surveys
and one focus group (conducted in English) of Chinese living in Ireland found
that 40 of the Chinese in their survey had first arrived in Ireland 5+ years ago, 53
had third level degrees and that most of them came to Ireland for education and
36 training. They had the lowest income of the migrant groups studied compared
38 to Indian, Lithuanian, and Nigerian migrants, with 59 of the Chinese surveyed
having an income of less than 14,400 euro per year (p. 113). 70 per cent of the
Chinese in this research did not remit money home, perhaps because of the high
cost of education tuition for them (as international students) and due to their low-
income rates, but also perhaps because the Chinese migrants who come to Ireland
are the ‘better off’ in Chinese society unlike some migrant groups in Ireland which
are made up predominantly of refugees such as Romanians. However, the authors
found that half of the Chinese surveyed contacted family and friends using the
phone 7 or more times a month and watched both Irish/British (39 per cent) and
Chinese TV (20 per cent) daily illustrating an interest in and contact with the
Chinese diaspora and the wider world through media sources (p. 161). The primary
focus of this study was ‘integration’ and the Chinese were found to have ‘low or
very low’ integration levels versus their Nigerian (70 per cent medium or high
levels of integration) or Indian (90 per cent medium or high levels of integration)
counterparts (p. 186).

To add to the findings of the above study, Titley et al. 2010, focused on Chinese
migrants’ views of themselves, not only in relation to what Ireland thought of
them and how they fit in (integration), but also in their views of Irish society, their
relationships to the global Chinese community (diaspora), and to the homeland
(China).

Like much of the world, Chinese migration to Ireland is not driven by poverty. In
fact, many of the migrants in Ireland, as in other parts of Europe, are from
the most economically advanced provinces in China and from families who can
afford to send and support studying abroad. As such, they come (as we saw in the
statistics above) from higher educational backgrounds even though they may work
in low wage service industries. Chinese in Ireland, also cited the fact that it was
easier to get a visa in Ireland (post 9/11) than in the US and that the cost of living
(relatively) was lower than other parts of Europe (Wang 2006) although they felt
that this was rapidly changing.

Figure 15.1 Numbers of PRC nationals in European countries 2000–2001

Source: Drawn from data at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/overseas_chinese
In other parts of Europe, Chinese migration is important, but statistically has been relatively small as a proportion of the total population compared to Ireland. Figure 15.1 shows the numbers of nationals from the People’s Republic of China in 2000–2001 in Europe.

Proportionally, compared to other European countries, Ireland (with 16,500 Chinese in 2006) has a much larger Chinese community with Chinese in Ireland making up 0.4 per cent of the population as opposed to 0.08 per cent in Italy, 0.05 per cent in Germany, 0.06 per cent in Spain and 0.03 per cent in the UK. The speed and diversity of migrants from China in Ireland is also unique as they have mostly come to Ireland in the last 10 years and have come from diverse locations in China, not just from Zhejiang and Fujian provinces (Laczko 2003).

The Global Chinese Diaspora

Recent (1990s) migration from China is different from earlier waves of migration to Europe and Ireland with large numbers of Chinese seeing emigration away from China as an option through commercialization (including the use of ‘agents’ and with local Chinese government support for emigration as a form of development policy), the globalization of Chinese migration and rise and diversification of educational and professional migration from China (Pieke 2007: 85). While some Chinese migrants see migration as an educational and professional strategy to develop human capital, not all are able to find white collar jobs (because of limited English and lack of recognition of their Chinese credentials) and a considerable number end up in low-skilled, low wage work (Salaff and Chan 2006). Likewise, this is true for many Chinese migrants in Ireland, who when interviewed, had not improved their English that much, not attained high paying jobs (Feldman et. al. 2008) and were not integrated in Irish society. In addition, many ‘newly arrived Chinese’ ‘Fresh off the Boat’ (FOBs) did not have much in common with earlier migrants and in some instance may even be in competition with co-ethnics and face racialization from Irish dominant society (Yau 2007). Interestingly, even settled Chinese in Ireland and second generation Chinese (many of whom were mixed race), were still heavily racialized in Ireland and assumed to be recent migrants.

Globally, Chinese students often do not return home after their studies, but instead continue in their studies, take up employment in their destination country or move on to another country. In the US, the recipient of the largest number of Chinese students, the return rate is 14.1 per cent, but in Europe, nearly half of the migrants and in some instance may even be in competition with co-ethnics and face racialization from Irish dominant society (Yau 2007). Interestingly, even settled Chinese in Ireland and second generation Chinese (many of whom were mixed race), were still heavily racialized in Ireland and assumed to be recent migrants. The transnational orientation the Chinese migrants was not unique to Ireland and in fact is an example of the new wave of Chinese migration around the world, which has ‘spawned a broad range of new institutions that are a product of the transnational experience itself, and therefore only partially rely on local resources.'
and opportunities from which new migrants groups are quite often excluded’ (Pieke 2007: 90). Clearly, local Irish and Chinese ethnic media can shape how Chinese people come to cope and see themselves in Ireland, but transnational media also play a significant role in creating transnational practices, which not only encourage and enable transnational ties, but come to constitute transnational living in meaningful ways.

Irish Media Portrayals of the Chinese in Ireland

How the mainstream media ‘sees’ migrant groups is important in terms of how Irish people form opinions about migrants and the countries they come from (Haynes, Devereux and Breen: 2009), how those opinions affect the daily lives of Chinese migrants in Ireland and how this may be in contrast to how the group sees itself. Hungary is a good comparison for Ireland in terms of Chinese migration because there was a rapid inflow of Chinese to Hungary in the 1990s (as well as Ireland). Visa requirements became easier in Hungary because of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In Ireland, student visas became attractive for Chinese students because after 9/11, English-speaking countries like the US and UK began to make student visa requirements more stringent and Ireland increased its recruitment of Chinese students to pay international fees in Irish universities. In addition, the size of the Chinese communities in Hungary and Ireland are proportionally similar with 10,000 Chinese in Hungary by 2001 and roughly 16,500 (although believed to be much larger) in Ireland by 2006.

In Hungary, Pal Nyiri (2005) argues that two parallel but opposing narratives of the position of Chinese in Hungary were clear within media coverage. One discourse, produced by the Hungarian officials and media, viewed Chinese migrants as ‘semi-criminal marginals.’ The other discourse, engaged in by Chinese officials and Chinese ethnic media in Hungary, saw migrants as ‘pioneering global modernizers’ (p. 659). They were loyal to the state policy of emigration as a form of development bringing ‘modernity’ to China via their migration experiences and networks.

In Ireland, the Irish print media tend to see Chinese migrants (relative to other migrants) as deserving and known for their ‘hard work’. In the height of the Celtic Tiger Economic Boom in 2004, the Sunday Tribune ran an article that exclaimed: Guo Wei Li conforms to the stereotypes of the Chinese in this country. Work appears to be something of a passion to which the only impediment is the limited number of hours in the day. You thought manual labour was a Spanish musician? No sir, he’s a Chinese immigrant. Look all around in Dublin these days, and to a lesser extent the state’s other cities. They’re a-comin, in the thousands. Buy a newspaper, order a cup of coffee, peruse the aisles of the supermarket, hand up your empty glass in your local. These days, those working at the rough end of the service industries all appear to be of Asian origin … . The estimated 35,000–
40,000 (Chinese) nationals in this country have taken over the jobs the natives won’t touch anymore … Where once the Gaels went to the UK or USA to do that which the native wouldn’t do, now we invite the Chinese in to do that which we deem beneath us. We’ve come a long way, baby (Clifford 2004: 10).

Not only were they seen as hard workers and perhaps exploitable because they would work diligently for lower wages, they were also seen as a form of revenue for Universities. With declining finances for universities in Ireland in 2005, international students, but particularly Chinese students, were seen as a potential ‘revenue stream’ to keep Irish universities afloat and it was recognized widely that ‘Chinese students are big business, as the presence of the great and good of the Irish education system on the high-profile trade mission shows’ (Downes 2005: 12). The age-old stereotype of the Chinese migrant as a hard working businessperson was also a way for the media to portray Chinese migrants as one-dimensional, but contributing members of society. ‘Because the Chinese tend to be successful wherever they settle, it is likely they will become an ever-increasing business presence in Ireland’ (O’Connor 2003: 32).

The Chinese tend to be portrayed then in Irish print media as hard working (like the Irish of yesteryear) migrants who are contributing and deserving to be here. They are also big business (both as consumers and as streams of revenue for universities) and worth recruiting to come to Ireland.

Chinese migrants are not framed in these media accounts in terms of what they add to society by way of multiculturalism, global social networks or diversification, but just as economic units, as potential economic links to China (not that many are willing to learn to speak Chinese from them) or doing jobs Irish don’t want to do. This perpetuates an on-going framing of issue of migration in media as part of the ‘Host/newcomer’ (Hickman 2007) dichotomy where the idea of ‘Ireland becoming multicultural due to immigration installs an imbalanced power relation between a (re)imagined monocultural host and immigrants and over-determines the moment of becoming multicultural. When this underpins responses to immigration … “talk of diversity” is predicated not on the acceptance of plurality but on the notion of a “host” that is being subject to diversification’ (Hickman 2007: 12).

State integration policies (or lack thereof) have created what some call ‘tolerant inclusive nationals’ on the one hand and ‘migrants in need of integration’ on the other (Gray 2006). Chinese migrants interviewed here don’t see themselves primarily in terms of ‘diversifying’ Ireland or as migrants in need of integration. Instead they see themselves as globally oriented citizens who are here to build human capital (in terms of learning English and getting job and educational experiences) and not as newcomers, but as locally based global dwellers. Migrants, even returning Irish migrants, and especially Chinese migrants, challenge the home-abroad dichotomy (see Chapter 2) and problematize the dichotomies of Host/Newcomer, Home/Abroad and also assumptions about what we see as global/local.

To better understand this, I next analyze the Chinese migrants assessments of portrayals of China in the Irish print media, their perceptions of Chinese ‘ethnic’
media in Ireland and their own use of digital media to overcome what they see as the shortcomings of both. As Titley (2008) argues, we need to consider that: … while, functional aspects of minority media are crucially important, imagined (ethnic minority) audiences are malleable and shaped by a variety of pressures and reflexes, and the orientation and production of any one channel must ultimately be understood within a transnational field of information flow, diasporic engagement and self-presentation (Titley 2008: 42).

Chinese in Ireland present themselves, not as always in relation to other migrants per se, or as strictly members of the local Chinese community, but globally oriented to other overseas Chinese communities and the world at large. In Ireland, Titley (forthcoming) argues that: media produced by and for Chinese in Ireland were mainly evaluated in terms of detached utility… and did not feature as central, never mind common, points of reference…Media engagement was frequently shaped by priorities derived form the wider, gendered experience of work and opportunity-based migration…it is not society in Ireland or self in society in Ireland that stands as the contrapuntal other for re-imagining the self. Instead it is a site from where their relations to China are re-assessed (Titley forthcoming: 11).

I would add that it is also Chinese migrants’ relations to other ‘overseas Chinese diasporic’ members and well as other local Chinese migrants that produced a distinct way of ‘being Chinese’ in Ireland in relation to the rest. The integration discourse has examined how Chinese migrants relate to Irish society and Ireland and Titley clearly argues that this must be placed in context where we consider how Chinese migrants also relate to their homeland, but I add that Chinese migrants in Ireland are also ‘in the world’ and orient themselves internationally as well. Titley, Kerr and King-O’Riaiin (2010) found that Chinese migrants used the Internet and computers far more than they watched TV or listened to the radio and far more than either Nigerian or Polish migrants interviewed. This was in part because they felt that there was nothing for them on the Irish radio and TV. They could obtain more up to date information (news) and a wider range of programmes in both Mandarin and English because they prioritized ready access to computers and the Internet. Not all owned a TV or a landline phone, but almost all owned a computer or had easy access to one via study and we found that they often used the computer to watch TV. Most used the print media to learn about Ireland (particularly upon first arrival) for logistical and practical purposes (jobs, housing, etc.) but dismissed the Irish papers as parochial and poorly produced. They felt that representations of China in Irish media were largely negative, but also recognized the limits of Chinese media to do so because of state restrictions. The context of Chinese migrants media use was very collective as most participants read the newspapers, watched TV or other Chinese programming with friends.
or housemates. Like their Nigerian and Polish counterparts, the report finds that Chinese migrants are fairly sophisticated consumers and users of media in Ireland. Media use is integrated across different platforms and scales of production; local, Irish national, home country national, diasporic, and transnational channels are combined in daily practice (Titley, Kerr and King-O’Riaín 2010: 107) shaped by language competency, cultural capital, and action orientation. Interviewees were equally critical of ‘ethnic’ or ‘national migrant media’ in Ireland and diasporic and transnational media played a more central role in all of the media users lives. This disconnect between migrants, ‘ethnic media’ and national media fora may be shaped by the structural context of the host country and limit their ability to connect with Ireland. The structural context of the working vs. student visa system in Ireland, means that the majority of Chinese migrants have come to Ireland on student visas and hence they are only allowed to work 20 hours per week during term time and 40 hours a week outside of the term. Their student visas must be renewed every 6–12 months (depending on the date of entry and type) involving much time and expense. When they finish with their studies, there is only a small chance for many to obtain a work visa and in order to do so there is an income requirement, which many find prohibitive. For these reasons, many of the Chinese migrants in Ireland see themselves as only here temporarily and their identity, orientation and social actions are not focused primarily upon integrating in Ireland for the long term. This is different from other migrants in Ireland, such as the Polish who, as EU members, can stay for as long as they like or for refugees and asylum seekers (say from Romania or Nigeria) who are in state provision until they are allowed to stay or deported. This is not to say that Chinese migrants don’t end up staying in form or another, but there initial and persisting orientation to Ireland is that of ‘outsider’ and ‘temporary resident.’

Gillespie (1995) argues that studies of media by and for migrants is important in terms of understanding the expectations placed on migrants in terms of how to be ‘ethnic’ and on the way migrants respond to these expectations. One way to see this is to examine Chinese views of local ‘ethnic’ (Chinese) media in order to center the Chinese views of where and how they should belong in Ireland, but also who they are in Ireland.

Most Chinese migrants in Titley et al. (2010) reported that they didn’t read local Chinese ‘ethnic’ newspapers like the Shining Emerald or the Chinese Newsxpress (now Irish Chinese News) that often. Their reading of it, when it happened, was casual – if they happened to be in a Chinese restaurant, they might pick it up, but
they don’t buy them or read them regularly. They found they were helpful for practical local information (finding a job, house etc.) or if you were ‘fresh off the boat’ (FOB) – a newly arrived migrant. They found the content of the news in Chinese newspapers to be literally ‘cut and pasted’ from other sources off the Internet, poorly written/edited and that they could read these articles sooner and in a timelier manner on line. Their more meaningful links were to the Chinese diaspora.

Transnational Media and Links to China

Wanning (2005) argues that in particular, new ‘digital’ media add to rather than replace Chinese language media (print) in Chinese diaspora communities around the world to create a chinese mediascape (p. 66), which in part determines “not whether I can continue to be Chinese in another country, but how Chinese or what kind of Chinese I want to be” (p. 68). She analyzes the relationships between community, commerce and cultural consumption of Chinese media where the meanings of ‘Chineseness’ are constructed to demonstrate how ‘the processes of media production, representation and consumption are integral to the formation of a Chinese diasporic imagination…which is inherently transnational, and central to the formation of such transnational imaginary is what I refer to as the “transnational mediasphere”’ which, is a global phenomenon nevertheless inflected with local concerns’ (Wanning 2005: 69). It is a social process that is an ‘interface between the material – the flow of people – and the symbolic – the flow of images; a convergence between the private individual diasporic subject position – and the public – the performative and expressive aspect of such a position; and an overlap between the national and the nation-state with the post national and the diasporic’ (Wanning 2005: 81).

Many of the Chinese participants in Ireland identified the Internet as the social technology of the Diaspora and said that they often turned to the internet for information, communication and entertainment. They described how they used the internet and the web based chat programs often, sometimes daily. They used skype (a digital telephony and webcam service) and QQ (a Chinese language based chat program on line) mainly because of the cost (free) and due to easier access as many said they had a computer or went to a café to use a computer to do so. Titley et al. (2010) reported that Chinese migrants in their study used a computer almost every day (far more often than TV viewing) and most had access through their place of study, at home (or a friend’s home) or at an internet café. Participants reported keeping up blogs, using webcams everyday to communicate with others (some in China and some in Ireland). They talked about using the web to disseminate information about themselves. Almost all of the Chinese migrants interviewed saw the Irish digital media as less developed than Chinese digital media. They were particularly disappointed in how slow the download speed was and that broadband availability was an issue in some areas, which made it
difficult to stream for web chat/webcams, TV programmes etc. They felt that the whole process of getting access to the Internet was slow and expensive in Ireland. They specifically mentioned that applying to Eircom to get service and installment was slow and complicated. This was not surprising since many Chinese migrants remember hail from bigger cities in China where Internet access is better than much of rural or even suburban Ireland.

Conclusions

Chinese migrants in Ireland use the Internet and computers far more than they read newspapers (in either English or Chinese), because they can get more up to date information faster via the internet, can access a wider range of programmes (even from the US/UK) in both English and Mandarin almost instantly (often before movies or TV programmes are shown in Ireland), and because they have ready access to computers and broadband service. The digital media for them is the social technology and the medium of the diaspora.

While participants claimed that TV and phone services were expensive, not all owned a TV (or paid the TV license), almost all owned a computer or had easy access to one (by paying fees to college or school or by paying by use in an internet café). Chinese migrants prioritized spending money on the computer/internet as a gateway to communicating with China, within Ireland, but also with members of the Chinese diaspora and diasporic culture (movies in Chinese etc) throughout the world.

There are a proportionally large number of Chinese migrants living in Ireland, and yet, it has not been seen as in the narrative of the ‘Chinese hordes’ that some other European countries have. Likewise, the Irish representation of Chinese in the print media has been predominantly positive but tend to see Chinese migrants in Ireland in economic terms only and not as people. Chinese migrants are critical of these perceptions and of the portrayal of China in Irish media, but again, are clear that perhaps some Irish coverage was more truthful than the state controlled media in China. Perceptions of Chinese local ‘ethnic’ newspapers didn’t fare much better and instead, Chinese migrants felt that these papers tended to be poorly produced, using state (embassy press releases) ‘news’ or recycling (remediating) news from Chinese papers on the Internet. They preferred to use the Internet themselves to seek out various news sources (including non Irish and Non Chinese sources).

We can see that these Chinese migrants, through their media practices, are oriented not to ‘diversifying’ Ireland as a ‘model minority’, don’t relate to local ethnic media or see themselves as a local Irish Chinese community, but prefer ‘globally oriented’ digital media for information, news, and social networking both within Ireland, China, and the world.

Chinese migrants in Ireland see the local Chinese community in Ireland and the Chinese outside of Ireland as part of a constellation of the Chinese diaspora.
in which they circulate. Digital media (blogging, email, texting, web cam use, telephone, streaming TV and radio programmes, keeping up with news etc.) use is the social technology, which enables a fluid, diasporic connection and identity to be maintained. The increasing availability and speed of communication technologies in Ireland, enables Chinese in Ireland to be ‘here’ and ‘there’ and ‘everywhere’ simultaneously and creates identifications, which can be moved with the ease of a laptop. However, there are local limits to this fluid diasporic identity when broadband speed prevents communication, work visas are not forthcoming and living standards prohibit the use of the digital media to stay in touch. There are also significant negotiations to be made in terms of identity in terms of racialization, relations with earlier Chinese migrants and identity politics and what it means to be Chinese in Ireland today.
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