

Deconstructing Immigrants' Invisibility and Irishness in the Broadcasts Used in the 2011 Election Campaigns in Ireland¹

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Abstract: Although immigrants have been arriving in Ireland in the last years and contributed to the economic development of the country, their underrepresentation in politics seems to be a hot issue. In order to prove this hypothesis, the political broadcasts used in the 2011 general and presidential elections will be analysed. I will observe the presence or absence of immigrants in the broadcasts and the way politicians refer to them. In addition, the construction of Irishness in the videos will be observed as well. Accordingly, this research paper will consider the discursive representation of immigrants in the 2011 campaigns and to the way they are (or are not) taken into consideration in the construction of Irishness; I will do so by scrutinising the spoken texts in the broadcasts. The sample will consist of the most representative TV broadcasts of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Sinn Féin, Labour Party, Green Party and the Socialist Party. As regards methodology, critical discourse analysis, and particularly social actors theory (van Leeuwen, 2008), will be used. The analysis will show that immigrants are not mentioned directly and do not appear as explicit actors, probably because they are not among the groups of the population with right to vote. This makes clear that, although they have helped Ireland grow in the last fifteen years or so, their social situation is not a priority for contemporary Irish politics and, therefore, they cannot contribute to Irishness.

Keywords: immigrants, critical discourse analysis, broadcasts, Irishness, Celtic Tiger period