MIS/REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE MEDIA:

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Introduction

International recognition and understanding of the role of Women Migrant Workers (WMWs) have been transformed given the feminization of migration and shifting labour migration governance regimes. Gender norms, perceptions, and power relationships influence women's labour migration across borders, as women migrant workers interact with multiple actors including States, employers and citizens in countries of origin, transit and destination. Such norms and perceptions are both reflected in and influenced by media representations. Indeed, media are particularly influential in shaping public perceptions, and therefore represent valuable sites of study of social change.

As part of a UN Women project, funded by the European Union, that aims to strengthen international human rights mechanisms for WMW by including a gender focus[1], a media content analysis was conducted with the purpose of examining media representations of WMWs, which can both reflect and influence public perceptions. Adopting a comparative case study approach, a qualitative content analysis of the representation of WMWs in newspapers was carried out across a range of migrant sending and receiving countries.

Understanding Representations of Women Migrant Workers

Dominant representations emerge over time through discursive practices at individual and societal levels, through policies, media production and everyday social communication (Hall, 2007). Representations of women migrant workers are often subject to prevailing systems of knowledge production, which are tied to gender norms (Mohanty, 2008). Depictions of women migrant workers are shaped by discourses pertaining to gender, race, nationality and immigration status. WMWs are represented by an array of terms and categorizations: care worker; mother; sister; supporter; criminal; sex worker; victim; hero, etc.

Whether in origin, transit or destination countries, WMWs face negative and positive stereotypes, reinforced by dominant representations, which feed assumptions about their behaviours or aptitudes based on their ethnicity or origin, and gender. Gendered norms and values can influence migration processes and experiences (and vice versa). For example, *machismo* culture in some Latin American countries feeds a depiction of women as "less than" men and even some *coyotes*[2] in Mexico have stated they prefer *hombres de ranchos* (rural, "rustic" men), because of their perceived toughness, compared to women[3] (Angulo-Pasel 2015).

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[1] The title of the project is entitled 'Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers' Labour and Human Rights: Engaging with international, national human rights mechanisms to enhance accountability'
[2] The term *coyote* refers to people smugglers who charge a fee to bring migrants across the border
[3] This perception is partly associated with the smuggling business on the northern border of Mexico where different service packages are sold to migrants who want to cross the border. If it is agreed between the parties (the coyote and the migrant), a guarantee can be included for the migrants who, in case of detention and deportation, the coyote will guide them back up to three times at no additional cost. For the coyote, it is perceived

In the case of Moldovan women in Italy, families tend to prefer Eastern European women as care workers rather than, for example, Filipina workers due to racialized assumptions about Eastern European women caregivers' "innate" abilities (Miles, 1982; Silverstein, 2005). Yet simultaneously, some media outlets adopt a narrative criticizing WMW caregivers for taking jobs from Italian workers. This process of idealizing or stereotyping workers through gendered and racialized depictions is not unique to care workers; indeed, agricultural workers in Canada face similar representations leading to accompanying gendered and racialized assumptions about their roles, worth and abilities. For example, women farmworkers are more likely to be hired on strawberry farms where employers perceive migrant women to be more docile and gentle workers (McLaughlin, 2010; Preibisch and Binford, 2007; Hennebry, 2006).

In the United States, Latin American women are often closely linked in media to domestic care work, where terms like "cleaning gals" or "baby sitter" are used (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007). Associations with such roles can solidify over time.

Migrant workers of both genders are most often subjects of 'othering' discourses, which identify migrant workers as outsiders, 'us' versus 'them', which is closely related to ideas of inferiority (Sharma, 2001; Hennebry and McLaughlin, 2013; Daley, 2017). Such discourses play a pivotal role in the ideological justification, legitimization and sustainability of the coercive and exploitative practices to which migrant workers are subjected (Bauder and Di Biase, 2005). Further, the process of othering, can be institutionalized through language and discourse, and can substantially affect WMW's exercise of legal and political rights. Notions of who "belongs" and who does not become reinforced through governance frameworks (Sharma, 2001; Jiwani, 2006; Hennebry and McLaughlin, 2013).

In addition to gendered norms and perceptions, colonialism and the inherited assumptions that accompany colonial pasts, greatly influence present-day ideas surrounding WMWs, as articulated by Mohanty's (2008) definition of colonialism as "…a relation of structural domination and a suppression, often violent, of the heterogeneity of the subject or subjects in question". Indeed, colonial pasts and associated racialization of groups can significantly influence representations of WMWs, maintaining unequal social and power relations. The power to represent someone or something within a "regime of representation" is an exercise of symbolic violence (Hall, 1997). In the context of this report, social relations are made visible in the representations of groups to the eyes of a society.

Dominant representations of WMWs have the power to modify understandings and knowledge about migrant women, which in turn can determine how WMWs understand themselves, and even influence their behaviour

as easier to take a group of men than women because it is believed that women are more likely to get caught by border authorities.

and the behaviour of others towards them. Media framing of subjects can shape discourses, which when repeated, can become the dominant discourse and representation of a given group of people (Hall, 1997), creating fields of truth and knowledge around the subject (Foucault, 1989) – contributing to how groups of people are understood and valued. This has the potential to establish commonly accepted 'truths' about a group of people (like women migrant workers) or social processes (like migration).

Media representations of WMWs are especially powerful in shaping the discourses around migrants which can have far reaching consequences for migrant women who are often marginalized, lack political representation and whose voices are rarely heard. For example, the characterization of WMWs as 'victims' of trafficking has been actively constructed through both media and State discourses. It is manifested in policies which rationalize enhanced security arrangements at borders and on the fringes of society, such as in the sex industry and in the informal economy (Hennebry et al, 2016b). The discourse surrounding human trafficking highlights the harmful effects that can stem from uninformed or narrowly framed representations (Anderson, 2012). Such framing is problematic because women are rendered invisible through this categorization; the agency of women is ignored and the focus is pulled away from approaches which empower women to assert their rights (Hennebry et al, 2016a). In this narrative, women are seen as 'victims' in need of protection from harm, rather than individuals whose rights need to be protected (Anderson, 2012). This representation often relies on the State, NGOs and other actors defining and identifying 'victims', ignoring the voices and experiences of WMWs. The logic follows that WMWs necessitate intervention by law enforcement trained in identifying 'victims' of trafficking in need of rescue; harm is then reproduced by State control methods (i.e., seizure, interrogation, detention, return); consequently, the logic moves away from a rights-based approach into a risk-based approach (Anderson, 2012). Indeed, such representations (including media and policy discourses around trafficking in persons) are typically characterized by sensationalism, gender stereotypes, and distortions that negatively affect strategies to mitigate the realities of trafficking (Brennan, 2005: 38).

Another popular representation of WMWs is that of 'hero'. Largely associated with women involved in care work, global discourses represent the heroic endeavours of WMWs, focusing on the benefits of remittances and the positive contributions of care work in countries of destination. Although in this representation WMWs' contributions to national development are lauded, it reinforces conceptions of remittance-driven development and contributes to additional pressure for WMWs to secure remittances. This representation of women as "heroes/heroines of development" idealizes them and neglects their human rights, and the social costs incurred by women migrant workers in securing remittances (Hennebry et al., 2017). Further, such narratives can exacerbate the precarity of migrant workers, and does not recognize the vulnerabilities they may encounter in migration (such as the threat of deportation as a means of employer control).

Further, the 'hero' representation is closely associated with a discourse of 'self-sacrificial labour'. This representation has a coercive effect, disciplining WMWs labour, such that migrant workers will be less likely to challenge labour conditions and demand their rights. This increases WMWs' vulnerability to exploitation since care work and domestic work are already devalued; this work is often performed in private residences, sometimes through informal arrangements, and without access to social protection (Hennebry, 2014; Yeates, 2009). The invisibility, under-regulation, and general informality of the domestic work and care economy, combined with the 'hero' representation of WMWs, amplifies power imbalances between women migrant workers and their employers, leading to increased precarity and vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

A third popular representation, which has been applied to many groups of migrants, is that of the migrant as a 'threat'. Such media representations cast migrants in negative terms and cover migrants and migration as social and political problems that must be addressed or solved. Migrants are often represented as engaged in criminal activities with other actors trying to "stop them" (Rasinger, 2010). Crime is also over-attributed to migrants; for example, Geschke *et al* (2010) found that migrant crime is overrepresented in German media when compared to the actual number of crimes committed by migrants. The media often communicates the 'threat' of migration and migrants to citizens using metaphors related to the sea, rivers, and water in general (Rasinger, 2010). For example, during news coverage of the crisis in Central America leading to the migration of women and minors to the United States, the *New York Times* reported that "Obama pressured Central American leaders to stop *a wave* of migrant children" (July 26, 2014, emphasis of the authors). The *Houston Chronicle* discussed the same event indicating that "while US officials are trying to stop the flow of illegal immigration from Central America that works against them, a rising but less visible tide of money is going the other way" (August 11, 2014). Migrant workers have long been framed as an economic threat as well. In the United Kingdom, Polish migrants have been characterized as "torrents" of workers who come to take away the jobs from local residents and workers of a country (Spigelman, 2013). In addition, WMWs have been associated with social problems in popular and media discourse and as moral or social 'threats' – as women who have left their families, or who perform devalued or socially stigmatized work (e.g. domestic work and sex work) (Lawrence, 2015; Kaspar, 2006). Further, as noted above, trafficking is perceived as a "hidden phenomenon" that disproportionately renders migrant women as 'victims'; since it is conflated with crime, illegality and undocumented women (Hennebry et al., 2017).

Methodology

This study focused on the representation of WMWs in newspapers selected from a range of migrant sending and receiving countries, with a specific focus on WMWs from or working within the three pilot countries of the UN Women project. The Philippines represents a leading sending country for WMWs worldwide; Italy was selected as a primary receiving country for WMWs within Europe (predominantly from Moldova), and Mexico

represents an important sending *and* receiving country for WMWs. Canada was also selected as an example of a primary receiving country of WMWs in North America, with notably large numbers of WMWs from the Philippines. The design of this project was developed in consultation with teams based in UN Women country offices in Moldova, Mexico and the Philippines who assisted with the identification of popular newspapers, and provided language translation and the selection of country specific key terms.

In the last decade, the relevance of the newspaper industry has been challenged by the growing dominance of an online news presence and social media. Nevertheless, the newspaper industry continues to be a source of reliable and relevant information that is subject to professional journalistic practices (accountability, transparency, minimize harm, etc.) (Society of Professional Journalists, 2014). Newspapers therefore offer a valuable contribution of journalistic rigor standardized across the industry, and are additionally available in an electronic format.

A sampling frame was developed using techniques originally employed by Newbold et al. (2002), in which newspaper issues are selected as the units of analysis. In order to capture variations in article content over time, the analysis was conducted over a two-year time period. A purposive sampling strategy was used by selecting the five most prominent newspapers from each country (Riffe, Aust, and Lacy 1995; Lacy et al. 2001). The prominence of a newspaper was based on having the largest distribution size and widest coverage. A complete sampling frame constructed from these newspapers captured approximately 3120 newspaper issues for each country between May 2013 and May 2015.

After selecting five newspapers from Canada, Italy, Mexico and the Philippines, sampling was completed using the media aggregator, Factiva[4] (Factiva 2015). Specific reference to women migrant workers were then identified in articles for analysis. All relevant articles (which specifically mentioned women migrant workers) were selected through a qualitative scan using four coders who employed consistent keyword searches (see annex). A list of articles was generated using keywords related to women migrant workers. Owing to specific country-based variations – including the use of languages other than English – the keywords were adapted for each country, and articles with women migrant workers as their primary subject were selected. Queries were semi-structured; starting with an initial list of terms related to women migrant workers as well as common terms or professions they occupied. A total of 138 articles were collected, featuring women migrant workers as the primary subject, from each of the four countries.

The articles were then coded using both inductive and deductive approaches. First, an inductive qualitative analysis was carried out with coders identifying descriptors and terms used to describe WMWs in each article,

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[4] Factiva is a business information and research tool, which aggregates content from both licensed and free sources.

with attention to gender and dominant framings identified in existing literature. Based on this initial qualitative analysis, three common representations of women migrant workers were identified, which had also been identified in existing literature: hero, victim and threat.

Results

This study identified 522 unique depictions of WMWs in the 138 articles. Typically, articles with reference to WMWs occurred towards the front of the newspaper and were approximately 550 words long. Articles mostly focused on domestic workers, but some pertained to sex workers, strippers and exotic dancers.

Italy featured the most articles with WMWs as the primary subject (47), while the Philippines had the fewest (25). The five most prominent newspapers were *Corriere della Sera* (20 articles), the *Toronto Star* and *Reforma* (16 each), *Il Messaggero* (12) and *Phillipine Daily* (11).

Based on previous literature, most WMWs were employed within the following sectors: agricultural work, domestic work/live-in-caregivers/maids, strippers and exotic dancers, the sex industry, food service work, hotel/hospitality work and high-skilled work. 'Other' was also included as a variable in those situations in which a type of worker was identified but not included in the previous list. Only four of these nines types, however, occurred in more than five per cent of all articles: domestic workers, women in the sex industry, strippers and exotic dancers, and other. Domestic workers were the most commonly referenced women migrant workers, featuring in three-quarters of all the articles reviewed.

Overall results recorded 522 unique depictions of women migrant workers in the 138 articles. Women migrant workers were more likely to be depicted as 'victims' (38 per cent) or 'threats' (35 per cent), rather than 'heroes' (27 per cent).

The 'Victim'

There were 198 depictions in the 138 articles of women migrant workers as 'victims' (Figure 1). There were six indicators of 'victim' recorded: abuse, labour exploitation, recruitment, trafficking, domestic State policy and State policy in countries of origin. An 'Other' category was also included. All seven of these indicators occurred in more than five per cent of the sample. The most common indicators of the 'victim' category were abuse or exploitation (31 per cent of all depictions), domestic State policy, and trafficking. There were significant variations in the indicators reported in each country context. Canadian media was most likely to report women as 'victims' for reason of domestic State policies; Italy for other reasons; Mexico for abuse and exploitation; and the Philippines for domestic State policy and abuse. Representation of women migrant workers as 'victims' were more common than those of 'heroes' or 'threats'.

Figure 1. Depictions of Women Migrants Workers as 'victims' by Indicator

n = 198

Legend:
- Abuse
- Exploitation
- Trafficking
- Recruiters
- Domestic State Policy
- Origin State Policy
- Other
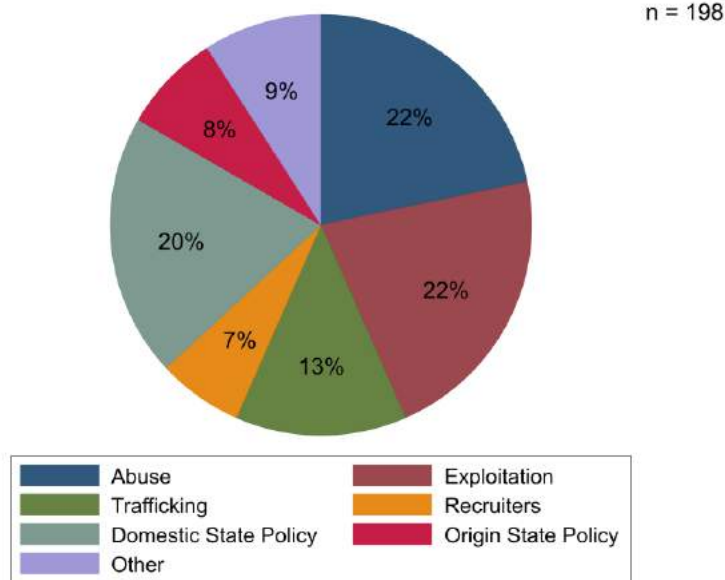
The 'Hero'

There were significant variations in the indicators of heroism reported in each country context. There were 140 depictions in the 138 articles of women migrant workers as 'heroes' (Figure 2). There were nine types of heroism recorded: agents of development, mother, spouse, daughter, other family, caregiver, primary income-earner, secondary income-earner and activist. An 'Other' variable was also included. Eight of these ten types occurred in more than five per cent of the sample. The most common depictions were agents of development (26 per cent of all depictions), mother and spouse. There were significant variations in the types of heroism reported in each country context. Canadian media was most likely to report women as mothers; Italy as spouses; Mexico as activists, mothers, caregivers and primary income-earners; and the Philippines as agents of development. Representation of women migrant workers as 'heroes' were less common than as 'victims' or 'threats'.

Figure 2. Depictions of Women Migrants Workers as 'Heroes' by Type

n = 140

14% Agent of Development
26% Mother
12% Spouse
6% Other Family
4% Daughter
8% Activist
10% Caregiver
9% Primary Income Earner
9% Other

Legend:
- Agent of Development
- Mother
- Spouse
- Daughter
- Other Family
- Activist
- Caregiver
- Primary Income Earner
- Secondary Income Earner
- Other
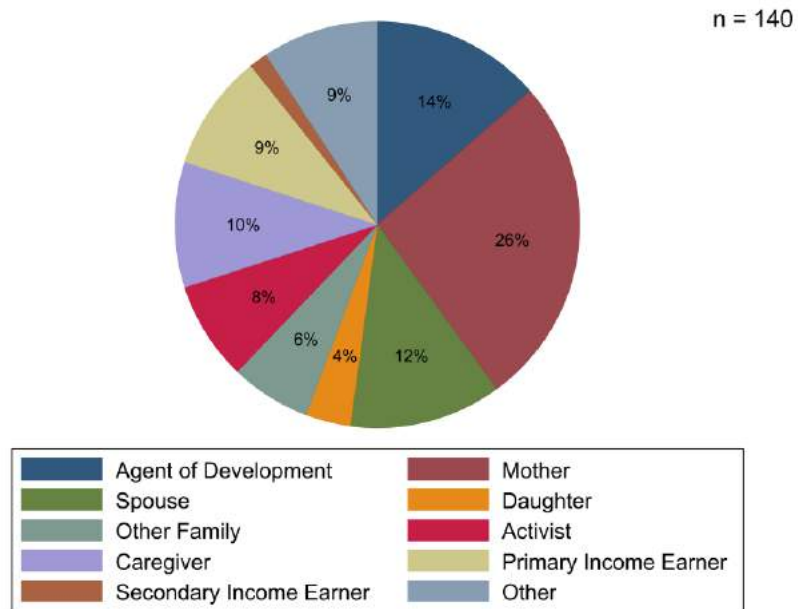
The 'Threat'

There were 184 depictions in the 138 articles of women migrant workers as a threat to society in some manner (Figure 3). There were eight types of social issues or problems recorded as 'threats': WMWs were represented as stealing jobs, as a drain on the economy, a threat to the immigration system, a threat to public security, a threat to public health, a threat due to overt sexuality, a threat due to foreign origin and a threat due to race. An 'Other' variable was also included. Eight of these nine types occurred in more than five per cent of the sample. The most common depiction of threat was that of security threat and 'other' (26 per cent of all depictions each), followed by a threat to the immigration system and the economy. 'Other' depictions notably included women migrant workers as bad mothers and spouses or involved in local crime. Canadian media was most likely to report women as a threat to the immigration system, whereas both Italian and Philippine media representations were more likely to consider WMWs as a threat to security. However, when Mexican media represented WMWs as a threat, it was typically in relation to sexualisation. Representations of women migrant workers as 'threats' were less common than as 'victims' but more common than as 'heroes'.

Figure 3. Depictions of Women Migrants Workers as a Threat by Type

n = 184

Legend:
- Economic Necessity
- Drain on Economy
- Immigration Threat
- Security Threat
- Public Health Threat
- Sexualized
- Othering (Alien)
- Racism
- Other
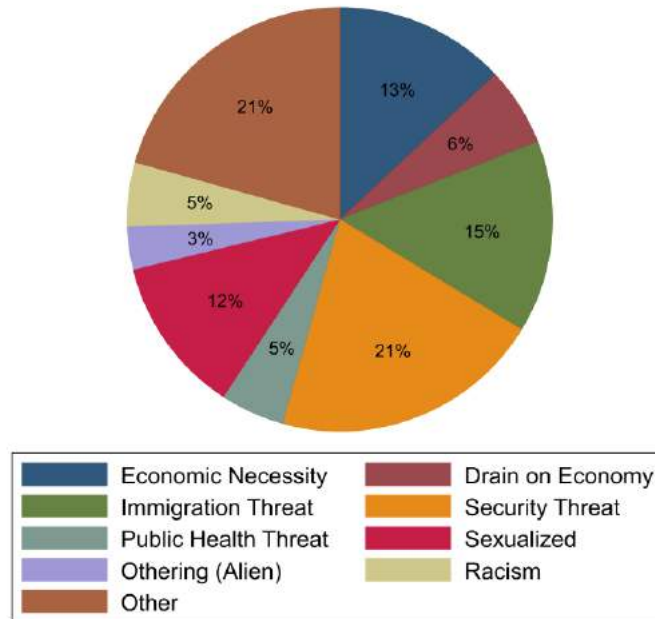
Country-specific results

Canada

Newspapers in Canada were sampled based on distribution, and included the *Toronto Star, Global and Mail, National Post, Vancouver Sun* and *Montreal Gazette*. A total of 37 articles were collected from these sources between May 2013 and May 2015. Most of these articles came from the *Toronto Star* (43 perc cent), with the *Vancouver Sun* and *Globe and Mail* contributing 19 per cent each, and the *Montreal Gazette* contributing 8 per cent.

The Canadian media most commonly depicted women migrant workers as 'victims' (55 depictions) rather than 'heroes' (42) or 'threats' (41). As 'victims', women migrant workers were most commonly described as vulnerable because of exploitation carried out by employers or owing to restrictive immigration policies of the Canadian federal government. As 'heroes', women were overwhelmingly portrayed as mothers in media reports, with some attention being given to their role as agents of development and caregivers.

Canadian reporting overtly centred on the Live-in Caregiver Program, which featured domestic workers. Women in this program were often referred to as "nannies", "caregivers" or even "maids". News articles often framed WMWs as hardworking, and self-sacrificing but ultimately 'victims' of an abusive immigration system: "Karen is hardworking and trustworthy. She works four jobs to cover all her legal fees. She raised my child at the expense of not raising her own" (Toronto Star May 16, 2015). Women migrant workers were considered to be heroic, because they were thought to make great sacrifices for their family's well-being. However, several

articles frequently reported that fraud was an "ongoing problem" in the program and the absence of mothers in countries of origin was proving disruptive to families left-behind in the Philippines.

Italy

According to research conducted in the Italian Spread Press[5] the five largest national newspapers by dissemination are *Il Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, La Stampa, Il Messaggero,* and *Il Giornale*. Out of a total of 47 articles in the country subsample, *Il Corriere della Sera* accounted for 43 per cent, *La Stampa* 19 per cent, *Il Messaggero* 25 per cent, *Il Giornale* 11 per cent, and *La Repubblica* only one article (2 per cent). As in the other country analyses, coders searched for articles using general, as well as country-specific, terminology relating to WMWs (in this case the term '*badante*'). With this keyword, 723 references and 49 articles[6] were identified.

A majority of the observations represented WMWs as a 'threat' (53 depictions, versus 23 as 'heroes' and 20 as 'victims'). The most common 'threats' identified were those concerning the perceived costs to social security (47 per cent). The second highest percentage of observations in this 'threats' sub-category fell under the 'other' indicators. This is due to the surprisingly high presence of articles in which women migrant domestic workers were depicted as thieves; carrying out violence against their elderly clients; accusations of economic exploitation; and some references that depicted them as alcoholics. The dominant representation that emerges is that WMWs employed as "*badante*" (live-in caregivers) are morally flawed, dangerous people who are unqualified, and have the sole intent to steal money and exploit the vulnerable elderly.

Among the 23 depictions of WMWs as *'heroes'*, almost 70 per cent of the observations portrayed WMWs as self-sacrificing good spouses (nine) or mothers (seven). Among the 'victim' depictions, 55 per cent were migrant domestic workers who were victims of abuse carried out by partners, or mistreatment by employers. Generally, depictions of WMWs in the Italian media almost exclusively focused on those in the care sector (i.e. as '*badante*'), even though the presence of migrant women in other sectors of the Italian labour market is also substantial[7]

Mexico

The records available online allowed for a search of five of the main national newspapers in Mexico including: *La Jornada, Excelsior*, *El Universal, Reforma* and *El Economista*. A total of 30 articles were collected between May 2013 and May 2015. Most of the reporting in relation to women migrant workers came from the *Reforma*

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[5] See: http://www.adsnotizie.it/
[6] The final number of the articles analysed is 47 instead of 49 (the total of articles found) because of the repeated presence of two articles.
[7] See: www.inps.it

newspaper (53 per cent of articles). The focus of the reporting generally gave women more agency and provided more nuance to situations than other articles that were analysed. This included examples of women resisting objectification in the sex industry (Lopez & Olvera, 2014), mothers rallying for the disappeared children (*Reforma*/Staff, 2014), and of those women living undocumented (Garduño, 2014). *El Universal* accounted for 30 per cent of articles, where the focus of the reporting in general framed women as 'victims' of a crime committed against them.

Many of the articles examined represented WMWs as 'victims' of trafficking where they were reportedly offered jobs as waitresses in restaurants or other businesses as a cover for employing them in the sex industry (*Agencia El Universal*, 2013). The majority of the WMWs in these articles originated from Honduras and Guatemala, with several accounts of WMWs who had been rescued by the police from sexual exploitation (*Agencia El Universal*, 2013) or situations where women faced sexual abuse at strip clubs (*Reforma*/Staff, 2013). As 'victims', many of the observations related to abuse, exploitation and trafficking; these three indicators accounted for 79 per cent of the themes.

However, there were also a number of articles that framed women as 'heroes', such as in relation to being caregivers, mothers, and as the main breadwinner.

Among those categorized as a 'threat' the Mexican media's depiction of WMWs emphasized their overt sexuality (63 per cent of articles) or in relation to ways in which WMWs are vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and forced disappearance.

Philippines

The five newspaper sources that were reviewed in the Philippines were: *Manila Bulletin*, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, *The Philippine Star*, *The Manila Times* and *Business World Philippines*. Between May 2013 and May 2015, a total of 25 articles were collected from these sources. The *Philippine Daily Inquirer* newspaper had the most articles related to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and women migrant workers (44 per cent).

The most common depiction was the representation of Philippine migrant women as 'heroes' and agents of development. Most articles depicted the OFWs and WMWs in a positive light, often referring to the workers as the nation's '*bagong bayani'* (new heroes) (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2013). Philippine women were reported as being heroic for seeking work abroad, often as caregivers, earning money to ensure the well-being of their own families left-behind. Across the articles from the Philippines, the women's role as agents of development was prominent: "*By their hard work, creativity, positive work attitude and personal attributes, they endear themselves to their employers and customers, creating a generally good impression of the Philippines and of Filipinos"* (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2013)*.

In part, this framing could be explained due to the importance of exemplifying Philippine migrant women workers, especially in the domestic worker sector. With a high percentage of OFWs being women, the 'new hero' representation within the Philippine media served to motivate other women to work abroad and support their families and the Philippine economy. Though less common, the depiction of WMWs as 'victims' was also present. Several news articles referred to the lack of laws that protect women workers abroad, displaying several examples of how they are often left in a vulnerable system of employment: *"Many Filipino women working as domestic workers in the United Arab Emirates say their employers beat them with sticks or cables, punched and slapped them, and there's little they can do because they're excluded from the country's labor law protections"* (Manila Bulletin, 2014)*.*

As 'victims', women migrant workers were repeatedly described as vulnerable to employer abuse. In contrast to the 'new hero' depiction, several articles examined the problems of working as a domestic worker, including the vulnerability to abuse and exploitation; for example, migrant workers stating they work long hours with little or no rest or days off (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2014). However, the overall depiction of WMWs in the Philippine media tended to focus less on the victimization of the workers but rather on their role as agents of development.

Discussion

The migration experience is complex and rarely fits into neat categorizations. The spectrum of articles identified in our study revealed that around 75 per cent of all articles featured domestic workers as the most common type of representation. Other groups with more than 5 per cent of all articles included sex workers and strippers. There were 522 recorded representations in the articles. WMWs were sometimes represented as more than one dominant representation in the same article. Women migrant workers were much more likely to be depicted as 'victims' (38 per cent of all articles) or as 'threats' (35 per cent of all articles) than as 'heroes' (27 per cent of all articles). Yet, in many cases, depictions were mixed or did not fit neatly into any one conceptualization, demonstrating the complex ways in which WMW are viewed.

When WMWs were represented as 'victims' it was typically as victims of abuse and exploitation (31 per cent of all articles), or as victims of domestic State policy (29 per cent), though this varied across countries. The different depictions of WMWs as 'victims' in our four case studies can be attributed to different country specific material conditions and policy structures (immigration control policies, integration policies, their legal status vis-à-vis the host State, as well as the characteristics of WMWs). In the case of Canada, the representation of 'victims' is constructed as the result of interactions with the legal apparatus and employers. In Italy, WMWs as 'victims' is constructed as the result of abusive partners and cases of employer mistreatment and violence. The Italian case study tended to ignore structural issues and focused instead on abuse and exploitation. Similarly,

in Mexico, representation of WMWs as 'victims' was mostly associated with employer abuse, exploitation and trafficking. While in the Philippines, where the State and government occupy a crucial role in labour migration, the 'victim' category was most often attributed to WMWs' interaction with receiving States.

When WMWs were represented as 'heroes', they were most commonly framed as agents of development (26 per cent of all articles), courageous mothers (14 per cent) and spouses (12 per cent). In Canada WMWs were most typically celebrated as mothers, and in Italy as spouses, whereas in Mexico WMWs were referred to fulfilling a range of roles (activists, mothers, caregivers and primary income earners), and in the Philippines primarily as agents of development

When WMWs were represented as 'threats', they were commonly constructed as 'security threats' (26 per cent of all articles each) and 'threats to the immigration system' (18 per cent). By country, the most common representations in this theme were: Canada (threats to the immigration system), Italy (security threats), Mexico (overt sexualisation as a moral threat), and the Philippines (security threats and economic threats).

Conclusion/Recommendations

The media contributes to understandings and so-called 'truths' surrounding of women migrant workers within societies, which not only inform public opinion but also shape knowledge and attitudes. These 'truths' might also influence countries policies and the provision of rights, protections and services to these largely stereotyped groups. This report examined the representations of WMWs in a sample of newspaper articles taken from the most widely circulated printed media in four case studies: Canada, Italy, Mexico, and the Philippines. A content analysis of the sampled newspaper articles found that three dominant representations of WMWs perpetuated across the case study contexts: victim, hero and threat.

To enhance balanced representation of WMWs in the media, stakeholders must endeavour to actively provide media outlets with stories centred around the voices and experiences of WMWs to allow them some degree of authority in representing themselves. Further, in the context of increased competition and decreasing budgets in newsrooms, newsmakers pressed for time often rely on perpetuating dominant representations, often determined by official government sources, employers and other more powerful actors (business leaders, media personalities, trade unionists etc.). Supplying newsmakers with alternative views and WMW-centred stories would provide a new source of information that newsmakers could draw on to inform their representations of the issues.

Additionally, dominant representations could be countered by promoting education and public awareness initiatives about WMWs and their lives. The popular narrative of migrant women as victims ignores the lived realities of WMWs, and fails to recognise their agency. Allies and advocates of WMWs must advance a new

narrative in sources outside of traditional media, to more accurately represent the humanity and the reality of WMWs. This has the potential to make visible the presence and reality of WMWs as persons with the capacity to act; and it brings public awareness of the challenges and barriers faced by WMWs. This in turn would allow for greater empathy from local and national communities. Involving the media in multi-stakeholder meetings related to WMWs, their challenges etc. may help to reframe the media's understanding and knowledge about WMWs, and foster greater accountability in reporting.

Governments play a key role in regulating media, as well as in providing messaging that media rely on for information. Governments can therefore participate in reshaping dominant representations of WMWs by working to enhance the regulation of the media to include gender and racial discrimination, as well as xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiment. In addition, governments could support training and capacity building on gender-sensitive approaches to media, migration and development with government employees (all levels) and service providers.

News media representations are a key site where dominant discourses are articulated and communicated, and can directly feed stereotypes and discrimination. News media therefore has the power to shape dominant representations and reframe narratives and discourses surrounding migration. Indeed, fostering more gender-responsive reporting on migration is an important element to realizing the rights of women migrant workers, and opportunities must be sought to bring their voices from the margins, and into the centre of the story.

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Appendix

Table 1: Newspaper characteristics Italy

Newspaper	Monthly average real distribution Year 2014	Reference Political Area	# of articles provided (out of a total of 47)	% of articles provided (out of a total of 47)
Corriere della Sera	334,887	Center	20	43%
La Repubblica	306,098	Left-wing	1	2%
La Stampa	202,301	Industrial/financial approach	9	19%
Il Messaggero	134,706	Center	12	25%
Il Giornale	97,805	Right-wing	5	11%
			47	100%

Table 2: Italy Keywords used

Italian term	English translation
Migrante	Migrant
Immigrata	Immigrant
Moldava	Moldavian woman
Lavoratrice migrante	Woman migrant worker
Migrante lavoratrice	Woman worker migrant
Lavoratrice immigrata	Woman immigrant worker
Immigrata lavoratrice	Woman worker immigrant

Table 3: Newspaper Characteristics Mexico

Newspaper	Monthly average real distribution Year 2014	Reference Political Area	# of articles provided (out of a total of 30)	% of articles provided (out of a total of 30)
El Universal	137000	Center	9	30
Reforma	134961	Left	16	53.33
Excelsior	90,000	Right	1	3.33
La Jornada	107,666	Center	1	3.33
El Economista	34,439	Industrial/financial	0	0

Table 4: Mexico Keywords used

Keyword	English Translation
Mujer migrante.	Migrant Woman
Migrante trabajadora	Women Migrant Worker
Empleada	Domestic worker
Empleada Guatemala	Domestic worker (Guatemala)
Empleada inmigrante	Immigrant Domestic worker
Mujer migracion	Woman migration
Feminizacion migracion	Feminization migration
Trabajadoras domesticas	Women Domestic workers (rephrased)
Trabjadoras domesticas migrantes	Women Migrant Domestic workers
Trabajadoras Guatemala	Female workers (Guatemala)
Sexoservidoras hondureñas	Sex workers (Honduras)