

## The Representation of Offending Women in the Irish Press: A Content Analysis

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**Summary:** Reductive definitions characterise many of the representations of women in the media. These depictions are frequently built around commonly understood and uncritically accepted gender norms which restrict the range of roles women can inhabit. 'Offending' women are particularly vulnerable to such limitations of representation due to their relative invisibility; such women are substantially constructed and understood through media reporting. The operation of this process in Ireland has not been the subject of extensive study; this article presents research on the representation of offending women in Irish newspapers within the context of the existing literature. Through a content analysis of the output of four newspapers over a one-month period, the representation of offending women in Irish newspapers was found to rely on familiar narratives of maternity, sexuality and pathology. In addition to these tropes, issues of ethnicity and nationality were also present, demonstrating the need for an understanding based on intersectionality.

**Keywords:** crime, punishment, criminal justice, women, Ireland, courts, media, newspapers, reporting.