Over the last two decades, a considerable amount of research has been conducted on the representation of migrants and minorities in the mass media, starting with van Dijk’s (1988a, 1988b, 1991) seminal work on racism in the news media and with the ‘Discourses of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK Press, 1996–2006’ project at Lancaster University, one of the most recent large-scale studies focusing on the United Kingdom (Baker et al., 2007, 2008). However, the majority of studies have focused on national or international news media, with little attention being paid to regional, let alone local media – though the work of Richardson and Franklin (2003, 2004) is an exception.

This paper analyses the discursive representation of migrants from Eastern Europe in regional print media in Cambridgeshire, England, and focuses in particular on, first, the most salient themes used in the portrayal of migrants, and, second, how the paper constructs itself as a local publication with strong concerns for its readership.