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Broadcasting and national identity in Ireland

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A new state for an old country

In 1921, the British government was forced to recognize the secession of the southern twenty-six counties of Ireland from Great Britain. From the sixteenth century onwards, the Irish peasants had paid rents to foreign landlords and had provided cheap food for British cities. In addition, they were a source of cheap labour for the British army, factories and colonies. Thus, the industrial prosperity of Great Britain was based on the agricultural poverty of Ireland. During the 1860s, Irish nationalists began organizing campaigns for the ownership of the land by the peasantry. After years of violent and constitutional agitation, the British government slowly conceded ownership of the land to the Irish peasantry (Lyons, 1973: 160-223). But, although they formed the backbone of the struggle, the peasants were incapable of controlling the movement for Irish independence. As in other emerging countries, the urban intellectuals provided the political leadership for the peasant revolution (Anderson, 1983: 66-79). During the independence struggle, the urban intellectuals created two distinct forms of Irish separatism: secular republicanism and Catholic nationalism. Although these two forms of nationalism were based on fundamentally incompatible worldviews, most Irish revolutionaries attempted to combine these two strands of the separatist tradition. In 1937, this compromise between secular republicanism and Catholic nationalism was eventually codified in a new constitution. Because this synthesis was successful, a Supreme Court judge could still speak of 'the Christian and democratic nature of the state' in the 1960s without seeing any contradiction between these two traditions (Kelly, 1988: 169).

Under the 1937 Constitution, the Irish state was organized as a political democracy. In the late eighteenth century, the ideas of secular republicanism

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had been imported from Jacobin France during the struggle against the enforced political union of Britain and Ireland. For secular republicans, the democratic state could only be created through the consent of its individual citizens. Therefore, the inhabitants of Ireland possessed the democratic right to form their own nation-state, independent from Great Britain. When independence was finally won, the new state was established as a representative democracy with universal suffrage. As in Britain or France, the Irish state was ruled by a cabinet system of government, which derived its authority from a directly elected legislature. In turn, the policies of the government were implemented by an impartial civil service, which had been inherited from the old colonial administration (Farrell, 1988: 20; Breen et al., 1990: 23). Thus, the 1937 Constitution institutionalized the democratic demands of the secular republican tradition.

However, the 1937 Constitution also recognized the primacy of the Catholic Church over the Southern Irish people. During the struggle for independence, there had been a strong Catholic revival within rural Ireland (Brown, 1981: 27-8). For most peasants, Catholicism became the mark of national 'distinction' between the Irish people and the inhabitants of the rest of the British Isles (Bourdieu, 1984; Brown, 1981: 28). After independence, the Catholic identity of Irish nationalism was reinforced by partition. Because most Protestants lived in the British province of Northern Ireland, over nine-tenths of the inhabitants of the Southern Irish state were Catholics (Brown, 1981: 30). Therefore, in a contradictory synthesis, the social and moral teachings of the Catholic Church were incorporated as part of the 'fundamental rights' of Irish citizens in the 1937 Constitution (*Bunreacht na hÉireann*, 1980: 136-52). Under the 1937 Constitution, popular sovereignty could only be exercised within the limits of the moral totalitarianism of the Catholic Church.

But, Catholic nationalism was popular among the peasantry for more than separatist reasons. The Catholic Church also provided wider social regulation for the distinctive society of Southern Ireland. In contrast to the rest of the British Isles, the Southern Irish economy was dominated by small property-owners, especially in the countryside. In this form of economy, the repressive sexual morality of the Church helped to prevent the break-up of rural property through premature marriages or divorces. Thus, the observance of sexual puritanism by the Irish peasantry expressed the Malthusian limits of a society based on individual land ownership (Brown, 1981: 19-21). Hence, when independence was won, censorship of all films and publications was soon imposed in Southern Ireland (Lyons, 1973: 686-8). Led by Catholic zealots, these censorship boards banned all types of films and literature on moral and political grounds (Brown, 1981: 149; Carlson, 1990: 1, 3-4).

Above all else, the Catholic hierarchy wanted to prevent the importation of 'pagan' ideas into Ireland. Because of the common language, Irish

people could easily understand films, books, magazines and other forms of cultural expression imported from other English-speaking countries. Because they reflected the attitudes of industrial societies, these foreign films and literature undermined the strict sexual morality of rural Ireland (Brown, 1981: 39-40; Murphy, 1984: 51). For most Irish nationalists, any questioning of the repressive morality of the Church threatened the cultural self-determination of the Irish people. Therefore, in Ireland, the freedom of communications could only be exercised within the limitations of the teachings of the Catholic Church. According to the Bishop of Cork, the freedom of the press was defined as a 'press that is legally free to print whatever is morally justified' (Murphy, 1984: 60).

The Irish version of public service broadcasting

Under British rule, the assertion of cultural autonomy was an integral part of the struggle for national self-determination. Therefore, once independence was achieved, the Irish government created its own radio broadcasting corporation, which became Radio Éireann. The imperative of cultural nationalism shaped Irish public service broadcasting in two contradictory ways. On the one hand, the state-owned broadcasting corporation helped to reverse centuries of British repression against Irish political and cultural life (Catheart, 1984: 40-2). In its broadcasts, Radio Éireann presented news and current affairs programmes about the personalities and parties of the independent southern state. For example, when the Prime Minister spoke on the radio, his listeners were constituted as citizens of a distinct Irish political community. Moreover, Radio Éireann also created programmes aimed specifically at Irish listeners, from information for farmers to broadcasts in the old language. These programmes were designed to preserve the traditional rural culture using the new electronic mass medium (Mulryan, 1988: 8; Ó Tuathaigh, 1984: 102-3).

On the other hand, this commitment to cultural nationalism by Irish public service broadcasting also had negative consequences. Underlying the defence of traditional peasant culture was a Malthusian fear of the modernization of Irish society. This social conservatism not only led to cultural protectionism against media from the outside world, but also censorship of any opinions challenging the nationalist consensus. Thus, Radio Éireann never presented the work or views of artistic modernists or urban socialists. Above all else, as with films and literature, the questioning of the repressive morality of the Catholic Church was strictly forbidden. In the Irish version of public service broadcasting, the national radio station had to reflect the restricted political and sexual outlook of the peasant and petit bourgeois majority of Southern Ireland. For Irish politicians, the freedom of communications championed by secular repub-

licanism was always limited by the moral totalitarianism of Catholic nationalism. Hence, by not presenting a more diverse range of programmes for its listeners, Irish public service broadcasting maintained cultural and intellectual poverty among the population. In Ireland, the state broadcasting monopoly was not only an expression of national self-determination, but also of cultural exclusion.

The modernization of Ireland

In the 1930s, the Fianna Fáil government implemented the radical nationalist programme for the economic and cultural autarchy of the Southern Irish state. However, after the Second World War, the introduction of Fordist methods of production and economic regulation created rapid industrial growth in the rest of Western Europe. By the 1950s, there was a growing disparity between the living standards of the Irish peasantry and British workers. When the inheritors of peasant farms from the countryside started leaving to work in British factories, emigration began to threaten the long-term viability of the Southern Irish state (Brown, 1981: 186; Wickham, 1980: 57). Therefore, in 1958, the Fianna Fáil government accepted the recommendations of the Whitaker Report on Economic Development. This commission proposed that the Irish state should adopt 'peripheral Fordism' policies for the development of the country (Lipietz, 1987). At the centre of this strategy was an economic plan for the rapid urbanization and industrialization of the country. Under the plan, the state made grants to attract investments from foreign multinationals, carried out infrastructure projects and developed the nationalized industries. During the 1960s and 1970s the Irish Republic had the highest growth rate in Western Europe. After the end of protectionism, foreign multinationals invested heavily in the Irish economy as a low-cost base within the European market, especially in engineering, pharmaceuticals and electronics. By the 1980s, over half of the businesses operating within the Irish economy were subsidiaries of foreign multinationals or banks. In turn, the opening up of the Irish economy encouraged some local firms to expand into overseas markets. Soon, there were multinational companies owned by Irish entrepreneurs, notably in food processing and construction (Breen et al., 1990: 35-40, 74).

In 1972, over two-thirds of the electorate voted in favour of membership of the European Community by the Irish Republic (Lyons, 1973: 588). For most Irish people, the goal of an autarchic nation-state was no longer credible or desirable. The acceptance of European integration by the Irish voters also reflected the rapid fall in the number of self-sufficient farmers within the country. From the 1960s onwards, there was a massive shift in employment from farming into industrial or office jobs. Although the

European Community's agricultural policies subsidized agriculture, Ireland rapidly changed from a nation of peasants into a society of wage workers. In parallel, individual property in land ceased to be the dominant form of wealth. Instead, manufacturing and financial joint-stock companies were at the centre of the economy (Breen et al., 1990: 54-9). While agriculture remained an important employer and exporter, the majority of jobs and overseas trade were within the manufacturing, food processing and service sectors (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1990: 8-10). Thus, the modernization of the economy had rapidly diminished the numbers of self-sufficient peasants and shopkeepers, who were the social basis of the autarchic nation-state. By the 1970s, Ireland had turned into a Fordist industrial country, with a growing class division between the owners of joint-stock companies and the wage workers.

The growth in wage labour was accompanied by the urbanization of the population. Whereas only one-third of the population lived in towns in the 1920s, over half of Southern Irish people were living in urban areas by the 1970s (Brown, 1981: 257-8). The spread of wage labour and urban living started changing the social attitudes of the Irish people. Instead of the peasant extended family, the Irish started living in urban nuclear families. In turn, there was a slow increase in the number of women entering paid employment. In place of frugal rural living, these new wage workers could enjoy the commodities of the consumer society. As Irish Catholicism had been built around the puritan views of the peasantry, the Church's teachings on sexual morality and frugality were increasingly ignored by the urban population, especially among younger people (Black, 1990). Moreover, once the Irish economy was opened up to the outside world, it was impossible to prevent foreign cultures from reaching the Irish people. Although the strict controls were not abolished altogether, the censorship of the arts and media was slowly relaxed. From the 1960s onwards, the prevention of mass emigration through rapid economic growth took priority over the protection of Ireland's Catholic traditions (Breen et al., 1990: 108-11).

Modernization as commercial broadcasting

The relaxation of cultural censorship was speeded up by the reception of British television programmes in parts of Southern Ireland. After the war, the BBC restarted television broadcasting and rapidly built up a service covering both Britain and Northern Ireland. The programmes transmitted by the BBC and, later on, the ITV stations could be picked up on television sets owned by people living in the north and east of the Irish Republic. Because they were produced for an urban consumer society, these British television programmes challenged the rural Catholic morality of Southern

Ireland. Thus, the availability of British radio and television programmes in northern and eastern areas of the Republic foreshadowed the opening up of the whole Irish economy to West European and international competition.

But, when Radio Éireann was transformed into RTE (Radio Telefís Éireann), the new company remained committed to the Irish version of public service broadcasting. Under the 1960 Broadcasting Authority Act, RTE had to fulfil 'the national aims of restoring the Irish language and preserving and developing the national culture' (Irish Republic, 1960: 23). Thus, the creation of a specialist radio service for the small minority of Irish-speakers was given priority over demands by much larger groups for pop music, local and community stations (Howell, 1982: 41-4). In addition, RTE refused to broadcast programmes criticizing the Catholic morality of the majority of the population. In its editorial guidelines, the RTE management stated that the corporation's programmes 'must generally reflect the mores and respect the values of the society in which it operates, acknowledging its standards of taste, decency and justice' (RTE, 1989a: 51). Thus, under the law, RTE was committed to the defence of the Catholic culture of Ireland.

However, from the 1960s onwards, RTE steadily increased the proportion of imported programmes in its schedules. The corporation continued to provide a comprehensive news service, but increasingly relied on imports for its entertainment programmes. In 1978, this process was accelerated by the launching of the second RTE television station: Network 2. By 1980, RTE was showing more imported programmes than any other television company in the European Community (Howell, 1982: 46). For the RTE management, the abandonment of the basic tenets of Irish public service broadcasting occurred for pragmatic reasons. The introduction of RTE television had been financed by the licence fee. After the early years of rapidly rising revenues as set ownership spread, the growth in income for RTE was limited to increases in advertising revenue. Thus, RTE started transmitting programmes which would attract viewers for their advertisers. As in other countries, most Irish viewers wanted to watch many hours of entertainment programmes. But, RTE did not have the resources to fill the increased hours of broadcasting with its own programmes. Therefore, the RTE management decided to buy cheaper American or British entertainment programmes to fill the gaps in their schedules. By stages, RTE had abandoned the Irish version of public service broadcasting for the logic of commercial competition. Thus, the existence of a state monopoly over broadcasting was no longer restricting the influence of foreign ideas on Irish society. On the contrary, the RTE was spreading the consumer culture of the USA, Australia and Britain throughout the country.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, Radio Éireann had provided a variety of

programmes for the whole Irish nation. Insulated by state funding, the corporation's success was judged by its contribution to national cultural self-sufficiency. But, when Network 2 and 2FM came on air in the late 1970s, RTE's reliance on advertising for half its revenue had changed these goals. The new television channel mostly transmitted popular entertainment and gave little airtime to educational or Irish language programmes. Similarly, 2FM provided a Top-40 format for younger listeners with only minimal speech content (Mulryan, 1988: 60-1). Both these stations wanted to win the maximum possible audience. Instead of uniting the Irish people within a common national culture, RTE started segmenting its audience into distinct target groups. The adoption of a Top-40 format by 2FM was a recognition of the generational and class divisions appearing within Irish society.

Despite commercialization, RTE encountered a growing financial crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s. When the recession restricted advertising, RTE was unable to cover its increased costs by selling more commercials. This financial crisis speeded up the development of commercial attitudes within RTE. In response to the global recession, the Coalition government restructured all Irish nationalized companies to prevent further losses (Mitchell, 1990b). The Coalition Minister of Communications commissioned independent consultants to examine the 'efficiency' of the corporation. In this report, the defence of the national culture took second place to the 'value for money' of RTE (SKC, 1985: 3). By the late 1980s, RTE was able to recover its profitability through internal restructuring and diversification. The corporation was even able to increase the number of home-produced programmes to half of its schedule in primetime (RTE, 1989b: 2). But this financial recovery was achieved through further commercialization of the state broadcasting corporation. By the late 1980s, RTE was not only a public service broadcaster, but also a commercial multimedia enterprise.

In other Western European countries, the funding of radio and television stations by advertising has encouraged commercialism within public service broadcasting organizations. In Ireland, the pressure to win large audiences has been intensified by competition from British television stations. The signals from these foreign stations have never covered all of Ireland. Because of a mountain range in the middle of the country, only viewers in northern and eastern areas of Ireland have been able to receive British television stations. Intensifying existing social divisions, the country was separated into urban 'multi-channel' and rural 'single-channel' areas (Howell, 1980: 227). Facing competition from British stations in the richer urban areas, RTE oriented its programmes towards the town dwellers. As Radio Éireann, the state broadcaster had tried to preserve the traditional culture of the peasantry. However, RTE could no longer transmit this type of programme against competition from British stations. The need to win

mass audiences marginalized previously revered types of programmes, such as broadcasts in the Irish language (Kelly and Tructzschler, 1986: 155).

During de Valera's rule, leading nationalists had denounced the influence of foreign broadcasting in Ireland as a form of cultural imperialism. Once autarchy was abandoned, most Irish politicians completely changed their attitudes towards cultural separatism. From the 1960s onwards, they started welcoming the availability of British television stations within Southern Ireland. Many believed exposure to programmes from an industrialized country would help the development of Ireland by encouraging an urban outlook. For example, Conor Cruise O'Brien, a Coalition Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in the 1970s, believed that British television programmes were an antidote to the parochial and insular attitudes of many inhabitants of the Irish Republic. For O'Brien, the English language was no longer seen as a barrier to national identity, but a means of participating in the wider world (Moran, 1990). Thus, in a parliamentary debate, the Minister completely repudiated the old arguments in favour of cultural protectionism:

I believe that to open windows rather than to close them is the more natural function of broadcasting and television and also the one of which our national culture, generously interpreted, stands the more in need. (Howell, 1980: 231)

Because of this 'open window' policy, the Irish government tolerated the growth of cable systems relaying British television services in the urban areas (Moran, 1990). During the late 1960s, private cable operators started building primitive networks to relay British television signals to homes with reception difficulties in the 'multi-channel' areas. By the early 1980s, the desire to watch British television stations had created the highest density of cable users within the European Community in Dublin. However, RTE did not suffer because of the loss of its viewers to British stations. As part of its policy of diversification, the corporation took over the major private cable operators, including the largest cable network in Dublin (Moran, 1990; Bell and Meehan, 1989: 99). Thus, through its cable subsidiary, RTE introduced satellite television stations for its subscribers in the late 1980s. Once again, instead of protecting an autonomous Irish worldview, the public service corporation extended the availability of foreign influences for commercial reasons.

Despite the popularity of British programmes, the Irish viewers have constantly shown a strong demand for home-produced programmes. When a referendum was held on the proposal to relay BBC programmes to the 'single-channel' areas in 1975, a two-thirds majority preferred a second RTE station to the BBC service (Howell, 1980: 234). In 1988, a survey discovered that Irish viewers preferred local programmes to foreign imports, with nine out of the ten top shows on RTE1 being home produced

(RTE, 1989b: 15). Therefore, RTE reduced its use of imported material in its schedules during the late 1980s. This policy has increased RTE's share of the audience in 'multi-channel' areas from 40 to 45 percent (RTE, 1989b: 2, 9). When it led to higher ratings, the corporation was willing to fulfil its traditional public service commitments.

But RTE was less successful in dominating the expansion of radio broadcasting in Ireland. For decades, there was only one radio station within the Irish Republic, which aimed to produce programmes for the whole nation. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, the modernization of the country created the social conditions for a home-grown variant of global youth culture. Van Morrison and other Irish rock pioneers were laying the foundations for the later international success of U2 and other local bands. Before the advent of 2FM, the RTE national radio station was unable to satisfy simultaneously the traditional tastes of their older audience and the desire of younger listeners for pop music. Therefore, pirate radio stations soon won the youth audience by playing continuous pop music (Mulryan, 1988: 22-3). With a growing listenership, the music pirates attracted advertising from companies selling to the youth market. Once illegal broadcasting became profitable, hobbyist stations were replaced by commercial operations in Dublin and other big cities. Although outside the law, these 'superpirates' used large transmitters, introduced formats for their programmes and employed professional DJs. By 1987, the most popular station in Dublin among listeners under fifty was a 'superpirate'. With the industry still illegal, commercial radio stations were earning over IR£2.5 million each year in Dublin alone (Mulryan, 1988: 87-144).

The pirate radio stations were able to evade the law through loopholes in the legislation against illegal broadcasting. But the survival of the pirates also depended on their popularity among potential voters. No Irish government was strong enough to close down the pirates before providing an alternative service for their listeners (Mitchell, 1990b). In 1978, RTE had set up a second national station with a pop music format. However, the corporation had difficulties adopting the techniques of commercial music radio in its most traditional sector of activities. For years, many listeners thought 2FM 'was like a priest running a disco' (Mulryan, 1988: 76). Throughout the 1980s, successive Irish governments attempted to pass new legislation on radio broadcasting. Although both major parties supported the licensing of commercial stations under some form of regulatory body, neither Fianna Fáil nor Fine Gael was able to pass an act through the Dáil Éireann (Mulryan, 1988: 65; Pine and Thomas, 1986: 13). While Fianna Fáil never stayed in power long enough to complete its legislation, Fine Gael's attempts to introduce an act were blocked by its Labour coalition partners. Under the influence of RTE, the Labour Party demanded that the nationalized broadcasting corporation should take a substantial share-

holding in the new commercial stations. But, the Fine Gael Minister for Communications was not prepared to allow RTE to dominate the new independent stations. In his view, 'I would prefer to do nothing and sit and wait until the time was opportune to do something rather than do something that I didn't believe in' (Mitchell, 1990b). Therefore, with the Labour Party refusing to compromise, the Minister for Communications tolerated the existence of seventy illegal stations within the Irish Republic (Pine and Thomas, 1986: 13; Mulryan, 1988: 117-8).

The success of the 'superpirates' effectively broke the RTE's monopoly over the Irish-owned electronic media. The emergence of a commercial sector of broadcasting was the culmination of the decline of the specifically Irish version of public service broadcasting. Once protectionism was ended, the policy of cultural separatism was also doomed. Because RTE needed large audiences for its advertisers, the corporation offered a similar mix of urban entertainment programmes to its foreign rivals. Far from insulating the Irish people from alien ideas, RTE became a major supplier of imported programmes and foreign television stations to Irish viewers. During the 1970s and 1980s, RTE evolved from a defender of the national culture into a semi-commercial multimedia corporation, with limited public service commitments. However, the commercialization of the nationalized broadcasting company made the continuation of its monopoly increasingly untenable. For most Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael politicians, there was little difference between 2FM and a 'superpirate' as both were playing pop music and both were funded by advertising. The successful adoption of commercialism by RTE opened the way for the emergence of fully independent commercial stations in the Irish Republic.

The neo-liberal consensus

Like other members of the European Community, the Irish Republic was severely affected by the 'monetarist shock' of the early 1980s. The international recession exacerbated internal economic problems caused by rising foreign debts and continuous budget deficits. Thus, when the world economy faltered, the strategy of peripheral Fordism followed by successive Irish governments was already reaching its fiscal limits. In response, Irish governments adopted the neo-liberal policies introduced in other industrialized countries, such as the USA, Great Britain or France. Under successive governments, public spending was reduced and the nationalized industries were restructured to cut their losses. These deflationary policies were coupled with 'supply-side' measures to encourage new private enterprises, such as financial services. By the late 1980s, there was a complete consensus within the Irish political establishment over the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies for the Southern state (Breen et al., 1990: 209-21; Coogan, 1987: 71-3).

For the right, neo-liberalism was a replacement for the traditional synthesis between Catholic nationalism and secular republicanism. While few nationalist politicians openly opposed the Church, all right-wing parties continued the economic policies which were undermining the social basis of repressive Catholic morality. From the 1950s onwards, both nationalist parties have sought political power through raising the living standards of Irish voters by increased economic growth. Therefore, although the conservative parties abandoned peripheral Fordist economics, the Southern nationalists have maintained their political strategy of winning votes through increasing the incomes of the electorate. As in 1958, the national autonomy of Ireland has taken second place to the need for economic development.

Controlled liberalism in broadcasting

The decline in the traditional patronage networks of the nationalist parties lessened the dependence of voters on personal favours from politicians. Instead of direct contacts, politicians increasingly had to win support through appearances on the electronic media. Many Irish politicians had an ambiguous relationship with radio and television broadcasting. On the one hand, they needed to appear on the electronic media to win elections. On the other hand, they did not trust the broadcasters to treat their party fairly in news and current affairs programmes. These contradictory attitudes were particularly held by Charles Haughey, the leader of Fianna Fáil. During elections, he ran presidential-style campaigns centred on the electronic media. But Haughey also resented the decline in deference among radio and television journalists (Ryle Dwyer, 1987: 175). During the 1960s and 1970s, the journalists of RTE had adopted a more Western European version of public service broadcasting. Under the 1960 Broadcasting Authority Act, the state broadcasting organization had to ensure its news and current affairs programmes were 'presented objectively and impartially and without expression of the Authority's own views' (Irish Republic, 1960: 23). Using this commitment, the RTE journalists were able to win more independence from the politicians and be more critical of the ruling party. Thus, in recent years, 'most [RTE] reporters will go for the story and not for the political niceties of the time' (Gagan, 1990).

However, the pluralism and impartiality of Irish public service broadcasting was limited in comparison to its equivalents in other Western European countries. Back in the 1950s, an Irish prime minister described RTE as 'an instrument of public policy', which had a duty to explain the policies of the government to the Irish people (Pine and Thomas, 1986: 7). Thus, when a national television service was set up, the Irish government retained the power to appoint or dismiss the chair and members of the broadcasting corporation's management board at will (Irish Republic,

1960: 9–10). Using their powers over the national broadcasting corporation, Irish politicians of all parties expected deferential coverage from radio and television reporters for many decades (Ryle Dwyer, 1987: 32, 49–51, 175). In addition, in one crucial area, the Irish government imposed direct censorship on the news coverage of RTE. Under Section 31(1) of the 1960 Law, the Irish government obtained unlimited censorship powers during national emergencies (Irish Republic, 1960: 35). When the struggle for equal rights in Northern Ireland turned into a civil war, the Irish government used Section 31 to ban the supporters of the IRA and other armed groups from the airwaves. Because of this censorship, 'a credible and comprehensive programme about the political situation in the North could not be made today by RTE' (*Irish Reporter*, 1990: 14).

But, despite these powers over RTE, recent Fianna Fáil governments have not been able to gain complete control over the corporation's news and current affairs programmes. According to Fianna Fáil, the RTE news team was run by socialists, 'Dublin 4 intellectuals' and trade unionists. Because of their left-wing sympathies, these journalists were accused of discrediting the Fianna Fáil government in their political coverage (Ryle Dwyer, 1987: 201; McCann, 1990). In response, the 'fundamental objective' of Fianna Fáil's media policies became the creation of alternative sources of news and current affairs programmes outside the control of RTE. Therefore, Ray Burke, the Minister for Communications, created licences for not only local commercial stations, but also national radio and television services as well (Burke, 1990a: 1571; Burke, 1990c). The Fianna Fáil leadership believed the introduction of commercial broadcasting would benefit their party in two ways. Firstly, commercial radio and television stations were more likely to provide sympathetic coverage of the conservative politics of Fianna Fáil than the 'left-wing' news team of RTE. Secondly, competition from these new commercial stations would bring pressure for a more 'balanced' news coverage by the state broadcasting corporation. In the past, Fianna Fáil had tried to control the electronic media through the nationalization of broadcasting. In the 1980s, the Party hoped to achieve the same aim through the privatization of radio and television broadcasting.

Although the introduction of commercial broadcasting did form part of Fianna Fáil's neo-liberal economic policies, the political goal of an independent news service took precedence over any consideration of the economic constraints on commercial broadcasting in Southern Ireland (Hogan, 1990). In the 1988 Act, some elements of the Irish version of public service broadcasting were retained, such as commitments to promote 'Irish culture' and respect 'good taste' and 'decency' (Irish Republic, 1988a: 7, 10). But, unlike previous broadcasting legislation, the regulation of commercial radio stations was not based on the protection of the national culture. For the Minister, the principal aim of the legislation was

the requirement to provide a news and current affairs service alongside any entertainment programmes (Burke, 1990c). In Article 9, the 1988 Act stated that 'not less than 20 per cent of the broadcasting time' of commercial radio stations had to be devoted to news and current affairs (Irish Republic, 1988a: 9). The Minister not only created an external pluralism of news between RTE and commercial stations, but also guaranteed internal pluralism on the new stations. Each commercial radio station had to ensure that the news was presented in an 'objective and impartial manner' (Irish Republic, 1988a: 9). Crucially, the obligations to respect internal pluralism between the political parties ensured stations would report the viewpoints of Fianna Fáil.

After a decade of tolerance, the 1988 Broadcasting Act introduced effective penalties for illegal broadcasting (Irish Republic, 1988b: 5–18). Within months of the passing of the legislation, most unlicensed stations had closed down and were applying for one of the commercial radio franchises. Under a second 1988 law, the Minister established the Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC), which was an autonomous body for the licensing and regulation of the new commercial stations (Irish Republic, 1988a: 4–5). Although the first chairman of the IRTC was a Supreme Court judge, the Minister for Communications was able to appoint nine Fianna Fáil supporters as the other members of the Commission (Irish Republic, 1988a: 16; Connelly, 1990). During 1989, there was fierce competition between the rival applicant groups for the new radio franchises. On the one hand, voluntary organizations and the Church supported bids from the community radio movement. On the other hand, former pirate operators and local business people wanted to set up commercial radio stations. While a series of public hearings limited overt favouritism towards Fianna Fáil supporters, the national franchise and twenty-two of the twenty-five local radio licences were awarded to the commercial radio applicants. Not surprisingly, many of the businessmen involved in the successful commercial applications happened to be Fianna Fáil supporters (Murphy, 1990; Curran, 1990: 8). Although the IRTC was supposed to favour candidates who promised to respect public service principles, the community groups were largely seen as interlopers into commercial radio (Kenny, 1989b: 6). For Fianna Fáil, the predominance of commercial operators ensured that the new stations would be more friendly to the conservative views of the party than the more radical community radio groups.

The dismantling of the national television monopoly

In 1990, over half the Southern Irish population could still only receive the signals of RTE 1 and Network 2. Furthermore, fewer than 10 percent of

the population were able to watch satellite or cable channels on their television sets (Ox Pictures, 1990). As in the 1970s, this division in the provision of television services mirrored the social divide between the cities and the countryside. While most urban viewers were able to watch British and satellite stations, the country dwellers were largely restricted to the RTE stations. Because the party still received strong support from the rural areas, the Fianna Fáil government was determined to end this division in the availability of television channels. However, it was too expensive to provide cable television networks for the sparsely populated country areas. Therefore, the Minister for Communications decided to introduce a multiple microwave distribution system (MMDS) network to provide British, satellite and cable stations to the rural population. Once every MMDS transmitter is operational, British and other foreign television stations will be distributed across the whole of the Irish Republic. Far from defending the national culture, the Fianna Fáil government now ensured that the remotest rural areas of Southern Ireland will be able to watch stations from Great Britain or other countries. The old fear of cultural imperialism has been replaced by the desire to win rural votes by providing more television channels.

The Minister for Communications tried to offset the extended coverage of foreign broadcasters by granting a licence to TV3, a third Irish television channel run by a commercial operator. For Burke, this new television station will 'balance influences coming in from abroad' by providing an alternative source of Irish programmes for the viewers (Ox Pictures, 1990). But these frequencies granted to TV3 were supposed to be allocated to an Irish-speaking television service. Once again, the protection of the national culture took second place to the development of commercial broadcasting (Moran, 1990; Spandler, 1988: 13; Ox Pictures, 1990). Yet under the 1988 Radio and Television Act, the IRTC could only grant the commercial television licence to a contractor who would 'have special regard for the elements which distinguish [Irish] culture and in particular for the Irish language' (Irish Republic, 1988a: 15). However, in practice, these public service commitments will be largely rhetorical. As in commercial radio broadcasting, the principle aim of the Fianna Fáil government was the provision of 'a reasonable proportion of news and current affairs programmes' on the new television station (Irish Republic, 1988a: 15).

Under the 1988 Act, the news and current affairs programmes of TV3 were subject to the same rules on internal pluralism and censorship of subversive or immoral views as the commercial radio stations (Irish Republic, 1988a: 14). Thus, despite the TV3 franchise being granted to an entrepreneur associated with Fine Gael, the regulation of the commercial television service ensured that the views of Fianna Fáil would still be represented on the station's news coverage. Although the creation of a sector of independent television companies is an integral part of the

'postindustrial' economic policies of neo-liberalism, this economic aim is only a secondary goal of the Fianna Fáil government. Instead, the political goal of establishing a source of television news outside the control of RTE remains the primary aim of the 1988 Radio and Television Act.

The limitations of commercial broadcasting

Before awarding the commercial radio licences, the IRTC researched the potential audience for these new services across Ireland. In the IRTC's view, Ireland was divided between the rural and urban areas. While the country dwellers preferred listening to either traditional or 'Country and Irish' music, the city listeners wanted to hear pop and rock music on the airwaves (Connelly, 1990). What is more, this difference in musical tastes extended across the whole radio schedule. In the countryside, there was a strong demand for speech radio among the listenership of the new stations. As one owner put it, 'country people like to talk. On MWR, we have successfully recreated the western "rambling house". Guests drop into the studio unannounced to discuss life, sex or whatever springs to mind' (Curran, 1990: 11). Therefore, the rural commercial radio stations had little difficulty in meeting their 20 percent quota for news and current affairs (Connelly, 1990; Murphy, 1990). In contrast, the news quota presented far more problems for the urban commercial stations, especially in Dublin. The 'superpirates' had broadcast a continuous music format based on the constant rotation of the most popular records, which was very successful with the urban audience. Thus, according to Capital Radio in Dublin, the 20 percent news quota discouraged listeners from tuning into the new legal services. In the city, listeners wanted continuous music services, rather than the speech-orientated radio of the rural areas (Hogan, 1990; Ox Pictures, 1990).

Despite the news quota, the urban commercial stations continued the music formats pioneered by the 'superpirates'. In Dublin, Capital played contemporary hits aimed at listeners in their teens and twenties, while 98FM used a pop-oldies format to attract an older audience. Using overseas experience, these formats were constructed by careful research of the tastes of the target audience (Hogan, 1990; Barbrook, 1990: 205-7). As with 2FM, the division of listeners by age and class was a rejection of the old vision of a homogeneous Irish audience united in a common national culture. Moreover, the Dublin commercial stations won large audiences by playing mainly Anglo-American pop music. Both Capital and 98FM refused to follow the self-imposed quota of domestic music adopted by RTE for fear of losing listeners. In 1990, 2FM was playing more records by Irish artists than 98FM, Capital and the national commercial radio station combined (*Playback*, 1990a).

In recent years, the internationalization of Irish rock music has developed further through the success of Sinéad O'Connor, the Hothouse Flowers and other bands. But the Dublin commercial stations have not nurtured this growth in local rock music. Because of the intense competition between stations, the commercial stations do not promote records by new artists (Hogan, 1990). Although their music policy pleases listeners in the short run, 'the conservative programming policies of the new radio stations' will cause long-term damage to the Irish music industry. While other European musicians are experimenting with computers and house rhythms, the formats of the Dublin stations are perpetuating the declining rock style within Irish popular music. In turn, this musical insularity lessens the chance of local artists achieving international popularity in the future (Graham, 1990). Ironically, commercial radio stations playing imported music have proved to be as culturally protectionist in their own way as Radio Éireann was in the past.

In addition, the expansion of advertising-funded broadcasting has already reached its financial limits. Although commercial radio attracted just under a quarter of all Irish advertising revenue during 1990, this revenue was insufficient to maintain all licensed stations in profit (Curran, 1990: 8). According to the advertisers, the financial difficulties of the commercial radio stations were caused by the limited size of the Irish economy. As they pointed out, the Irish Republic only had the same population as Greater Manchester in Great Britain. Yet, the Minister expected the advertising sector of this small economy to support three television stations and numerous radio services. Moreover, the spending on all forms of advertising by Irish companies was lower as a proportion of national expenditure than most other European Community states. Therefore, if other sources of broadcasting finance were not found, there were already too many stations to be supported by the small economy of Southern Ireland. When TV3 starts broadcasting, the commercial radio stations will experience even greater competition for advertising revenue. If TV3 is successful, the third television channel could 'suck up all the advertising' and send the commercial radio sector into a severe financial crisis (AAI, 1990: 1; Fox, 1990: 12; Hogan, 1990).

Already, Radio West Galway has gone bankrupt and has been taken over by the Dublin station, 98FM (*Playback*, 1990b). In the view of one station owner, only seven out of the existing twenty-four commercial radio licence-holders are likely to survive until 1992. As with Radio West Galway, the unsuccessful stations will be absorbed in a series of regional networks run by the more successful commercial radio operators (Hegarty, 1989: 17; Curran, 1990: 11). In part, the concentration of ownership within commercial radio was a response to the increased costs of legal broadcasting, especially the news quota. However, it was also caused by continuing

popularity of RTE's stations among Irish listeners. Despite commercial competition, RTE Radio 1 still had half of the total listenership in Ireland. As a consequence, it could sell more advertising slots than any other station in the country (O'Regan, 1990; Kenny, 1990: 6). When Radio West Galway collapsed, its owners partially blamed its demise on 'unfair competition' from the RTE radio stations (*Playback*, 1990b).

While the Fianna Fáil government expected some local stations to go bankrupt, the financial crisis of the national commercial radio station was far more politically serious. From the beginning, Century encountered major engineering and programming problems. In turn, poor reception and unfocused formatting resulted in low listening figures. In Dublin, Century not only failed to beat the RTE radio stations, but also came behind Capital and 98FM in the ratings (McCann, 1990; Kenny, 1990: 6). By the end of 1990, Century had already lost around IRE4 million in capital and running costs (Fox, 1990: 13). Faced with financial disaster, Century's owners attempted to blame their own failings on RTE. According to them, the reason for Century's low advertising revenue was predatory pricing by RTE. Using licence fee money, RTE was subsidizing 2FM to undercut Century's rate card. Therefore, Century's owners called for intervention from the Fianna Fáil government to save the national commercial radio station. In their view, there was a 'need to equalise the situation' between the licence-funded RTE and its competitors dependent upon advertising revenue alone (Kenny, 1989a: 1). What is more, Century was supported by TV3 in its demands for government action. Just as Century was squeezed by Radio 1 and 2FM, the commercial television station feared strong competition from RTE 1 and Network 2 (Kenny, 1989a: 1).

In 1989, RTE was still winning nearly half the audience among households connected to cable television networks. Ironically, despite this ratings success, RTE's share of national advertising spending in Ireland fell during the late 1980s. Contrary to Century's claims, new commercial radio stations and publications had already eroded RTE's dominance over the Irish advertising market. But although the corporation faced increased competition and a freeze on licence fee rises, RTE increased its profits during the late 1980s (Fox, 1990: 13; AAI, 1990: 2; RTE, 1989b: 2). During this period, RTE had been effectively transformed from a public service broadcaster into a multimedia corporation. After its restructuring during the 1980s, RTE was a powerful and determined competitor for the commercial radio and television station owners. Moreover, with advertising revenue limited, the success of the nationalized broadcasting company created financial difficulties for its commercial rivals. In turn, the fear of bankruptcy created growing pressures from the commercial stations on the Fianna Fáil government for some action against RTE. Thus, unless the competitive power of RTE was curbed, the commercial broadcasting sector was heading towards some embarrassing financial failures.

Fianna Fáil's war on RTE

In order to save his overambitious plans for commercial broadcasting, the Minister for Communications rapidly started searching for methods of restricting RTE's dominance over Irish broadcasting. Moreover, there were strong political reasons for Burke to save Century in particular. The two owners of the national commercial radio station were close friends of the Fianna Fáil leadership (McCann, 1990). Therefore, the Minister started repeating the charges against RTE made by his political allies at Century. According to Burke, RTE was using the licence fee to self-advertise at 'below cost' rates. The corporation had adopted this strategy to dominate the advertising market and to remove any competition from the commercial sector. In his view, Century's difficulties were not caused by the incompetence of its owners, but by the impossibility of 'fair competition' under the existing arrangements. Because of its dual funding from the licence fee and advertising, RTE had become too competitive for its commercial rivals (Burke, 1990a: 1573, 1990c). Therefore, the Minister proposed introducing measures to create a 'level playing field' between RTE and the commercial broadcasting sector. In place of his earlier enthusiasm for 'self-regulation', Burke now claimed that further legislation was needed to create 'fair competition' within Irish radio and television broadcasting: 'Examination of the process of transition from monopoly control or dominant market share to competition in any sphere . . . will show that it requires an increase in regulation and not deregulation' (Burke, 1990a: 1572; Ox Pictures, 1990).

In a few weeks, the officials of the Department of Communications drew up some 'hasty proposals' to remove some of the financial advantages enjoyed by the nationalized broadcasting corporation (Moran, 1990). At first, the Minister proposed to remove around one-fifth of the licence fee revenue from RTE, which would be reallocated to subsidize the 20 percent news quota imposed on the commercial radio stations (Moran, 1990; Fox, 1990: 12). Not surprisingly, both RTE and the opposition parties strongly attacked these proposals. In their view, the reallocation of licence fee revenue 'was making a gift of a large amount of public money to some of the wealthiest business people in the country' (De Rossa, 1990: 1615). Because many of these owners of commercial stations were supporters of Fianna Fáil, the public subsidy of private radio services was denounced as a form of political corruption (Spring, 1990: 1608). However, RTE and the opposition parties were too successful in their campaign to preserve the income from the licence fee exclusively for the nationalized broadcasting corporation. Under political pressure, the Minister was forced to abandon his plans for the redirection of licence fee revenue to the commercial radio stations. Instead, he decided to introduce new clauses into the 1990 Broadcasting Bill which limited the amount of advertising time on the RTE

stations. In addition, the Minister also introduced restrictions on the total amount of advertising revenue raised by RTE in any one year. Under this clause, the Minister capped RTE's total income from advertising to the amount of money granted to the corporation from the collection of licence fees (Irish Republic, 1990: 4).

According to Burke, these advertising limitations on RTE would divert around IR£12 million from the nationalized broadcasting corporation to the commercial radio and television stations, as well as the newspaper industry (Moran, 1990). In his view, commercial broadcasting and newspapers needed increased revenue from advertising to survive the strong competition coming from RTE (Ox Pictures, 1990; Burke, 1990c). Moreover, the Minister claimed that the cuts in RTE's income would not effect the quality or range of the corporation's radio and television services. He believed that RTE could make substantial savings by cutting the costs of programme-making through the better management of its resources (Burke, 1990c; Ox Pictures, 1990). However, the RTE management strongly disagreed with this optimistic view propounded by the Minister. According to its Director of Television Programmes, RTE had entered a period of 'structured decline' caused by rising costs and falling income. With the licence fee frozen and advertising revenue capped, RTE would be unable to raise its income in line with inflation (O'Brien, 1990). Therefore, soon after the 1990 Broadcasting Act was passed, RTE announced 200 immediate job losses among its staff, with another 350 redundancies to follow shortly (Ox Pictures, 1990; Dowling and Moloney, 1990). In turn, both the reduction of RTE's budget and the fall in the number of commercials screened severely affected the independent television companies. Working on short-term contracts, they were first victims of the cutbacks (Fox, 1990: 13). Thus, the decline in RTE's income inevitably led to an erosion in the quality of the radio and television programmes broadcast by the nationalized broadcasting corporation (Gagan, 1990).

As a state-owned institution, RTE was prevented from too strongly criticizing the government. However, the opposition parties had no such inhibitions. For some politicians, TV3 was like a 'cargo cult' for the Fianna Fáil government. Because TV3 represented the application of neo-liberal policies to the electronic media, Burke was willing to sacrifice RTE to prevent the failure of the commercial television station. The Fianna Fáil government was afraid that a major bankruptcy within the commercial broadcasting sector would discredit not only Burke's media legislation, but also Haughey's whole economic strategy (Higgins, 1990: 584). Moreover, many opposition politicians linked the restrictions on RTE with the long-standing hostility between the corporation and the ruling party. In an infamous incident, the Minister had promised to 'screw' RTE on the night of the 1987 election count because of its coverage of the health issue during the campaign (Mitchell, 1990a: 1585). For the opposition parties, the 1990

Broadcasting Act had turned this threat into reality. In his defence, the Minister claimed that he was protecting the diversity of opinions within the electronic media by creating external pluralism between many competing radio and television stations. In his view, he had a duty to ensure that there were sources of radio and television news outside the control of RTE. Therefore, the restriction of RTE's dominance over the Irish advertising market protected the freedom of communications within the Irish Republic: 'The whole principle behind this legislation is the need for pluralism of information and of the media generally and of entertainment within this country coming from Irish sources' (Burke, 1990b: 1240).

But, while the 1990 Broadcasting Act restricted advertising on RTE, there was no alternative source of television advertising in Southern Ireland. Although the restrictions came in force in October 1990, TV3 had still not started broadcasting. Moreover, there was also no guarantee that this new commercial station would win a large audience for the commercials shown within its schedule. Instead, the advertising industry predicted that many advertisers would switch their spending to Ulster Television (UTV), the British commercial station based in Northern Ireland. Already, UTV could reach half of the Southern Irish population and had more potential viewers within the Irish Republic than in Northern Ireland. Using the cable and MMDS networks, UTV will soon cover most of the rest of the Irish Republic. With programmes from other IBA regions, UTV will be able to challenge TV3 for its place as a third television channel within Southern Ireland. In the advertising industry's view, UTV will become a very 'cost-effective and attractive alternative option' for advertisers from the Irish Republic (AAI, 1990: 2-3; *Playback*, 1990c). Ironically, one of the unintended effects of Fianna Fáil's Broadcasting Act could be to end partition within Irish television broadcasting.

The national question and the electronic media

The 1990 Broadcasting Act was the result of a long process of change within the Irish electronic media. From 1921 onwards, the existence of an autonomous Irish electronic media has been closely associated with the political independence of Ireland from Great Britain. In the first years of independence, most Irish nationalists feared the continuation of cultural domination by an old imperial master. Despite the end of direct British rule, the early Irish governments adopted a policy of cultural protectionism against this perceived threat from Great Britain, including the establishment of a nationalized broadcasting monopoly. However, during the last thirty years, this cultural nationalist version of public service broadcasting has been slowly abandoned. Today, no major party within the Irish Republic advocates a return to the cultural protectionism of the past, especially within the electronic media.

But, there is no agreement on the future development of Irish broadcasting among the conservative and social democratic parties within Southern Ireland. On the one hand, the Fianna Fáil government has licensed commercial radio and television stations alongside the existing RTE services. In its view, new sources of news and current affairs must be established outside the control of the nationalized broadcasting corporation. Although the Fianna Fáil government is criticized by other conservative parties for favouring its political friends, both Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats have advocated similar schemes for a duopoly of private and public broadcasting organizations. Moreover, all conservative politicians believe that competition between the two sectors will increase the freedom of communications within the Irish Republic. For them, this political right is guaranteed by the external pluralism of competing radio and television stations.

On the other hand, the social democratic parties advocate the adoption of the Western European version of public service broadcasting in Southern Ireland. In their view, the licensing of commercial radio and television stations has only partially increased the freedom of communications. Because stations will be dependent on selling commercials, the advertisers can control the content of programmes more fully than old forms of state censorship (Gilmore, 1990: 969). In the battle for ratings, controversial views or unconventional music will be shunned as threats to the audience share of the new stations. Therefore, despite the regulation of commercial broadcasting, both Labour and the Workers' Party doubt that external pluralism between competing stations can fully protect the freedom of communications. Instead, they believe that this political right must be guaranteed by a strong nationalized broadcasting corporation. In the Western European version of public service broadcasting, freedom of communications is created through internal pluralism within its programmes. For some social democrats, this commitment can only be fulfilled in practice when RTE is not only adequately financed, but also democratically accountable to its audience and workforce (Workers' Party, 1990: 4). In addition, as defenders of RTE, many social democrats believe that a strong domestic broadcasting organization is needed to produce programmes expressing Irish culture. But this commitment to the local culture is not seen as a defence against moral corruption from abroad. Instead, these social democrats believe that the freedom of communications must include the right of Irish citizens to express their 'hopes and dreams' in radio and television programmes (McCartan, 1990; Ox Pictures, 1990).

Although their rhetoric often hides self-interest, both conservative and social democratic parties are using a common ideological discourse to argue about the future of the electronic media in the Irish Republic. Both sides claim that their media policies will increase the freedom of commun-

ications for the Irish people. As in other areas, the underlying ideological consensus within the Irish media debate reflects the dominance of secular republicanism over Catholic nationalism within the southern partition state. Today, no major party advocates defending the moral economy of the peasantry and petit bourgeoisie through censorship and protectionism against British cultural imperialism. Moreover, the availability of the electronic media has reinforced major social and cultural changes in Ireland. Nowadays, watching television remains the favourite leisure activity of the Irish, with the average viewer watching around three hours of television each night (Brown, 1981: 261; Ox Pictures, 1990). In modern Ireland, the television set is the centre of the new urban household. In their programmes and adverts, the radio and television stations usually reflect urban life, rather than the rural concerns of traditional culture. According to Bishop Cathal Daly, any foreign visitor watching local television stations would not guess that Ireland had the highest rate of church attendance in Western Europe (Ó Tauthaigh, 1984: 100). However, unlike the Church, the Irish electronic media have been able to articulate the new cultural and moral world of an urban Ireland. For example, in many people's view, Gay Byrne's radio and television programmes have encouraged the emergence of more liberal sexual attitudes in Ireland (Coogan, 1987: 2).

Once the economy was integrated within the Western European and global marketplace, the Catholic nationalist culture of Southern Ireland could no longer be protected from foreign 'pagan' influences. Moreover, although independence was only won after a long struggle, the Irish Republic has encountered less difficulties in pooling national sovereignty than the old imperial states, such as Great Britain or France. As a small state, the national economic interests of Southern Ireland are best served inside the framework of federal European institutions (Wickham, 1980: 69). In addition, the Irish Republic's enthusiasm for European federalism reflects the appropriateness of its political structures for further integration. While the British state is too large, the Irish Republic is already the correct size for a region-state of a future European federation (Fouéré, 1980: 78, 115-29). Under this form of European unification, the Irish Republic will not only maintain control over its domestic concerns, but will also be able to participate fully in decisions which have to be taken at a federal level. For both the President of the European Commission and most Irish politicians, this type of federalism is: 'a way of reconciling the irreconcilable . . . the need for a European power capable of tackling the problems of our age and the absolute necessity to preserve our roots in the shape of our nations and regions' (Delors, 1989: 1).

Because of European integration, the protection of the national culture has ceased to be a major aim of the broadcasting policies of the Southern Irish state. Therefore, the political debate over the future of the electronic media is nowadays conducted between different methods of ensuring the

freedom of communications for Irish citizens. As in other member countries, policies for the electronic media are justified in terms of democratic rights, not national self-determination. With the emergence of media regulation by the European Community, the broadcasting policies of the Irish Republic have to be consistent with those adopted by other member states. Therefore, the freedom of communications has replaced the struggle for national cultural identity in Irish broadcasting policy. From now on, the rights of Irish citizens will take precedence over the creation of a nation-state for Ireland.

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