

**The influence of neo-liberal
assumptions on media treatment of
political economy in Ireland**

Sean Phelan (BA)

Submitted for the award of Ph D in Communications

Supervisor Dr Peadar Kirby

School of Communications
Dublin City University
Submitted July 2003

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Ph D in Communications is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work

Signed Sean Phelan

ID No 84145138

Date 24/07/03

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank some of the people who formally and informally assisted me with this study since October 1999. Above all else, I would like to acknowledge the steadfast help and support of my supervisor Dr Peadar Kirby, who I approached with the germs of this research idea in early 1999. In short, this study would not be the coherent piece of work it hopefully now reads as without Peadar's rigorous - yet never mean spirited - attention to detail.

I would like to thank my external examiner, Professor Norman Fairclough, and my internal examiner, Dr Pat Brereton, for their helpful comments and flexibility in facilitating the PhD viva, and completion, process.

This study would not have been possible without the financial support of the DCU School of Communications. I would like to thank the various individuals who have served as School Head during my time in DCU: Professor John Horgan, Professor Farrel Corcoran and Brian Trench. I would like to thank Farrel, in particular, for his timely, and robust, critique of an earlier draft of this study. In addition, I would like to thank Dr Kirk Junker, who helped ground my understanding of rhetoric.

In the School of Communications, I was lucky enough to work with Dr Des McGuinness and Dr Helena Sheehan, who – along with the inspiration of sharp, responsive students - gave me an encouraging introduction to the world of third level teaching. The companionship of post-graduate research colleagues at the School of Communications was important, too. In particular, I would like to thank Patrick Martin, who I was lucky enough to “find” in 2000 and work collaboratively with throughout 2001 and 2002.

I would like to thank the staff of DCU library, particularly the Humanities Librarian Julie Allen who saved me an immense amount of time by introducing me to the powerful Lexis-Nexis database.

Outside the formal world of academia, I was lucky enough to have a group of friends both interested and curious (I think!) about my work. Thanks, in particular, to Syrena, Brian (especially for the proof-reading), Tom Mc, Tom Pius, Mike, Tara, Liam, Julie Mae, Ger, Murph and Stack

Finally, I would like to thank my family – including my brother Bryan and sister Elaine - for their love and support over the years. In particular, I would like to thank my Mam and Dad for their affirmation of my various “career paths”, no matter how wayward or indolent some of them might have seemed

Sean Phelan

July 24th, 2003

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Abstract	9
List of tables	10
List of abbreviations	11
Introduction	12
PART 1 - NEO-LIBERALISM	
Chapter 1	An overview 18
1 1	Introduction 18
1 2	Neo-liberalism in discourse 19
1 3	Neo-liberalism as political economy doctrine 21
1 4	Neo-liberalism a short political history 26
1 5	Conclusion 37
Chapter 2	Ideology 38
2 1	Introduction 38
2 2	Conceptions of ideology 38
2 3	Neo-liberalism as ideology a suggested framework 43
2 4	Constructing hegemony the mass media selling and promotion of neo-liberal ideology 50
2 5	Conclusion 55
PART 2 - THEORIES & METHODS	
Chapter 3	Analysing media 57
3 1	Introduction 57
3 2	The American empirical tradition 58
3 3	Ideological critique 64
3 4	The sociology of media qualitative turns 73
3 5	Analysing media discourse 78
3 6	Conclusion 84
Chapter 4	Critical discourse analysis theoretical 85

framework

4 1	Introduction	85
4 2	Bourdieu's social theory key concepts	86
4 3	Burke's theory of action key concepts	88
4 4	Critical discourse analysis key theoretical tenets	89
4 5	Criticisms of critical discourse analysis	101
4 6	Criticisms of Bourdieu	104
4 7	Criticisms of Burke	106
4 8	Analysing neo-liberal influence theory and methods	108
4 9	Conclusion	114

PART 3 - MEDIA TREATMENT

Chapter 5	European Union "economic reform"	117
	5 1 Introduction	117
	5 2 Methodological issues	118
	5 3 <i>The Irish Times</i> and Lisbon 2000	122
	5 4 <i>Irish Independent</i> and Lisbon 2000	133
	5 5 <i>The Irish Times</i> and Barcelona 2002	138
	5 6 <i>Irish Independent</i> and Barcelona 2002	145
	5 7 The textual and the social world	153
	5 8 Conclusion	156
Chapter 6	Neo-liberal assumptions and state intervention	157
	6 1 Introduction	157
	6 2 Methodological issues	158
	6 3 <i>The Irish Times</i> and the launch of the National Development Plan	161
	6 4 <i>Irish Independent</i> and the launch of the National Development Plan	173
	6 5 <i>The Irish Times</i> and the launch of the Special Savings Incentive Scheme	179
	6 6 <i>Irish Independent</i> and the launch of the Special Savings Incentive Scheme	185
	6 7 The textual and the social world	189
	6 8 Conclusion	193
Chapter 7	Editorialising on Eircom	195
	7 1 Introduction	195
	7 2 Methodological issues	196
	7 3 Preparing for the Market	200
	7 4 Market Fortunes	212

	7 5 The implications of the Eircom sale	235
	7 6 Different neo-liberalisms	243
	7 7 Editorial distinction and the social world	246
	7 8 Conclusion	249
Chapter 8	Talking “downturn”	250
	8 1 Introduction	250
	8 2 Methodological issues	251
	8 3 <i>Six-One News</i> – RTE - November 7 th	253
	8 4 “End of the Celtic Tiger?” The initial reportage and framing of Governor O’Connell’s comments	254
	8 5 <i>Six-One News</i> discussion	258
	8 6 <i>Tonight with Vincent Browne</i> – RTE – November 7 th	262
	8 7 <i>Morning Ireland</i> – RTE – November 8 th	271
	8 8 <i>News At One</i> – RTE – November 8 th	275
	8 9 <i>The Last Word</i> – Today FM – November 8 th	280
	8 10 <i>This Week</i> – RTE – November 11 th	288
	8 11 Neo-liberal assumptions and “the downturn”	294
	8 12 Social and institutional imperatives	298
	8 13 Conclusion	300
 PART 4 - THEORY & PRACTICE		
Chapter 9	The media and political authority of neo-liberal assumptions	302
	9 1 Introduction	302
	9 2 The discourses of neo-liberalism a hexadic formulation	302
	9 3 Neo-liberal discourses and the Irish media field	308
	9 4 Neo-liberal assumptions and the “order of discourse”	315
	9 5 Structural constraints the limits of agency	320
	9 6 Conclusion	323
Chapter 10	Neo-liberalism and practice	324
	10 1 Introduction	324
	10 2 The implications for media practice	324
	10 3 Contribution to the literature	327
	10 4 The implications for future research	328
	10 5 The implications for political discourse and the critique of neo-liberalism	331
	10 6 Conclusion	334
	 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 335

APPENDICES

	I
Appendix A - The Irish Times <i>and the Lisbon summit</i> sources and attributed sources	II
Appendix B - Irish Independent <i>and the Lisbon summit</i> sources and attributed sources	III
Appendix C - The Irish Times <i>and the Barcelona summit sources and</i> <i>attributed sources</i>	IV
Appendix D - Irish Independent <i>and the Barcelona summit sources and</i> <i>attributed sources</i>	V
Appendix E - The Irish Times <i>headlines National Development Plan</i>	VII
Appendix F - <i>The Irish Times</i> and the NDP sources and attributed sources	X
Appendix G - <i>Irish Independent</i> headlines National Development Plan	XVI
Appendix H - <i>Irish Independent</i> and the NDP sources and attributed sources	XVIII
Appendix I - The Irish Times <i>and the SSIS sources and attributed sources</i>	XXI
Appendix J - <i>Irish Independent</i> and the SSIS sources and attributed sources	XXIV

Abstract

This thesis examines how neo-liberal assumptions frame the way in which matters of political economy are represented and discussed in Irish media. The structure of the thesis is fourfold. The first part gives an overview of what is meant by neo-liberalism and drawing, in particular, on the work of neo-liberals Hayek and Friedman outlines its significance in terms of political economy, political practice and ideology. The second part presents an overview of analytical approaches to media analysis, and describes this study's theoretical and methodological application of a sociologically engaged, critical discourse analysis framework. The third, and most substantive, part analyses, and compares, the print, radio and television content of different Irish media. This section examines print media coverage of two European Union summits, print media coverage of the launch of the National Development Plan and the Special Savings Incentive Scheme, editorial comment about the privatisation of Telecom Eireann, and radio and television discussion (from November 2001) about the "downturn" in the economy. Based on the empirical findings, part four offers a theoretically informed account of neo-liberal influence in an Irish media and socio-political context.

List of tables

Table 2 1	The contours of neo-liberal ideology	49
Table 2 2	Bourdieu and Wacquant’s “ideological schema” for neo-liberalism	49
Table 4 1	Theoretical framework for examining the influence of neo-liberal assumptions on media treatment of political economy in Ireland	109
Table 5.1	<i>The Irish Times</i> and the Lisbon summit an overview of sources and attributed sources	128
Table 5 2.	<i>Irish Independent</i> and the Lisbon summit an overview of sources and attributed sources	135
Table 5 3	<i>The Irish Times</i> and the Barcelona summit an overview of sources and attributed sources	142
Table 5 4	<i>Irish Independent</i> and the Barcelona summit an overview of sources and attributed sources	149
Table 6 1	Summary of <i>The Irish Times</i> ’ headline framing of the NDP	161
Table 6 2.	<i>The Irish Times</i> and the NDP an overview of sources and attributed sources	165
Table 6 3	Summary of <i>Irish Independent</i> ’s headline framing of the NDP	173
Table 6 4	<i>Irish Independent</i> and the NDP an overview of sources and attributed sources	175
Table 6 5	<i>The Irish Times</i> and the SSIS an overview of sources and attributed sources	182
Table 6 6	<i>Irish Independent</i> and the SSIS an overview of sources and attributed sources	187
Table 8 1	The identity of contributors across programmes	297
Table 9 1	The discourses of neo-liberalism a schematic and cognitive overview	303

List of abbreviations

AEI	American Enterprise Institute
CAI	Consumer Association of Ireland
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CPS	Centre for Policy Studies
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
ICMSA	Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
IEA	Institute for Economic Affairs
IFA	Irish Farmers Association
IFSC	International Financial Services Centre
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SIPTU	Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union
SSIS	Special Savings Incentive Scheme
TINA	There Is No Alternative
WDC	Western Development Commission

Introduction

Neo-liberalism is the term generally used to describe a global shift in power from nation-state to market structures over the last 30 years. It can be conceptualised as a broad cultural shift, as the changes in economic structure have had, and continue to have, a considerable structural, and structuring, impact on a diverse range of socio-economic, political and cultural practices (see Bourdieu, 1998b, Gray, 1998a). Irish society, too, has undergone a radical cultural shift in recent times and, according to some commentators (see Kirby, 2002a, Kirby et al, 2002), the socio-economic, cultural and political transformation which took place in “Celtic Tiger” Ireland can be conceptualised as part of the “neo-liberal turn”. The exploration of that thesis in an Irish media context, and through the application of a sociologically engaged discourse analysis theoretical framework, is the *raison d’être* of this study.

Irrespective of one’s political disposition, the Irish “success” story of the 1990s has been remarkable. As Kirby recounts:

Ireland has been transformed in the 1990s. From being one of Europe’s economic and social laggards, performing well below potential since independence in 1922 and in decline relative to virtually all European states, east and west (Lee, 1989), it has in the 1990s become a showcase of successful development – Europe’s Tiger Economy held up internationally as one of the few countries which has made it in the new global e-commerce economy (Kirby, 2002a: 1).

For anyone who lived through these changes, this narrative will be a familiar and by now somewhat jaded one. It formed the bedrock of a transformation in national self-image. The bedrock of a shift in national political discourse. And it was the backbone of a new found belief and deference for the market system. In short, the country had arrived and unsuspectingly assumed its place as a *bona fide* member of the “new world order” (Gibbons, 2002: 100).

This was the backdrop to the origins of this study in early 1999. I had little informed understanding of neo-liberalism at the time, but my own humdrum experiences as a consumer of media, and follower of politics, had led me to conclude that “the market” had become the cornerstone of a new orthodoxy in Irish public life. I knew little, too, about formal analytical approaches to the study of media or language, yet a hunch of mine told me that the media orthodoxy could be understood in terms of rhetoric and discourse. It was not simply *my* hunch, of course, and the journalism of Professor Joe Lee in the *Sunday Tribune* and *The Irish Times* columnist John Waters were two important influences.

This study can be seen as the material outcome of these hunches. It is comprised of four distinct sections. The first outlines a conceptual description of neo-liberalism (chapters 1 and 2). The second offers an overview of theoretical and methodological approaches to the analysis of media (chapters 3 and 4). The third - the most substantial section - presents an empirical analysis of Irish media texts (chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8). The fourth offers a theoretical appraisal, and evaluates the question of neo-liberal influence in Irish media (chapters 9 and 10).

The central research question can be summarised as follows: how does the ideological view of the world known as neo-liberalism influence the way Irish media treat matters of political economy? It forms the basis of a series of secondary questions: What is neo-liberalism? What does neo-liberal ideology look like? What are the analytical approaches best suited, and most relevant to, the analysis of neo-liberal influence in the media? How do neo-liberal assumptions underpin print media framing and news treatment of political economy issues? What are the comparative differences between *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* with respect to this coverage? How do neo-liberal assumptions underpin editorial comment about privatisation? What are the comparative differences with respect to six Irish broadsheets? How do neo-liberal assumptions underpin radio and television discourse about the economy? Are there different kinds of neo-liberal discourse? What is the relationship between neo-liberalism and the political “order of discourse”? What is the theoretical relationship between the

articulation of neo-liberal discourses, media institutional practices and socio-political processes?

This study takes a broad interdisciplinary approach, incorporating elements of media analysis, discourse analysis, sociological analysis and political critique. It first examines the common use of the term neo-liberalism and gives it a concrete grounding in terms of the philosophy of political economy, its historical and political evolution (chapter 1), its significance as ideology and its relationship to media institutions (chapter 2). This first section is based around a broad literature review, and the works of neo-liberal intellectuals Hayek and Friedman are drawn on in particular. In addition, it offers a summary of the different theoretical interpretations of ideology, with particular reference to a critical and Marxist canon (chapter 2).

Section two is, firstly, a literature review of analytical methods and theories in the field of media research. It gives a broad overview of the field, with particular attention to those qualitative, and discourse-based approaches of relevance to this study (see chapter 3). Most importantly, it gives a detailed overview of the broad critical discourse analysis theoretical framework applied in this study. The epistemological foundations of this theoretical framework are outlined with respect to the work of three key theoretical influences: the critical discourse analysis theory of Norman Fairclough and Lilie Chouliaraki (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), the sociological theory of Pierre Bourdieu (see Bourdieu, 1991) and the rhetorical theory - quasi-framing analysis - of the American literary theorist Kenneth Burke (see Burke, 1969a). In addition, the relevance of the theory to the diverse range of methods applied in this study is considered.

The third section presents an empirical analysis of Irish media texts. It is based around a variety of methods, including comparative media analysis (chapters 5, 6 and 7), headline and source analysis (chapters 5 and 6), analysis of newspaper "attitude" (chapters 5, 6), editorial analysis (chapter 7), framing analysis (chapters 5, 6 and 8) and analysis of contributor stance (chapter 8). What unites them all is the critical focus on political economy discourse and, specifically, the question of neo-liberal influence,

which is conceptualised in terms of a complex interplay of textual, institutional (especially media) and socio-political processes

The empirical analysis is based around a diverse range of political economy issues Chapter 5 examines and compares the immediate news treatment of two European Union summits (Lisbon 2000 and Barcelona 2002) in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* newspapers The specific summits are chosen because they were both explicitly concerned, at an official policy level, with a neo-liberal inspired agenda of “economic reform” The same two broadsheets are examined and compared in chapter 6, but the focus, in this instance, is on the immediate news treatment of two policy initiatives committed to state intervention in the economy the Fianna Fail/PD Government’s launch of the 2000-2006 National Development Plan (NDP) in November 1999 and the same Government’s launch of a Special Savings Incentive Scheme (SSIS) in February 2001 Both of these stories are selected because they point to the compatibility of state-led policy initiatives and neo-liberal assumptions

Chapter 7 focuses on a particular discursive genre, editorials It examines editorial discourse about the July 1999 privatisation of Telecom Eireann (the former state owned telecommunications company now known as Eircom) over a two year period (1999 to 2000) in six Irish broadsheets *The Irish Times*, *Irish Independent*, *Irish Examiner*, *Sunday Independent*, *Sunday Tribune* and *The Sunday Business Post* Chapter 8 chronicles the trajectory of radio and television discourse about “the downturn” (the so called post 9/11 international, and Irish, economic downturn) over a five day period in November 2001 It is based around a sample of texts from one television and five radio programmes, five of which were produced by RTE, the national public service broadcaster the *Six-One News* (television), *Tonight with Vincent Browne*, *Morning Ireland*, *News at One*, *This Week* (all RTE) and *The Last Word* (Today FM)

The fourth and final section offers theoretical conclusions (chapter 9) and, with reference to the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 4, the empirical analysis of chapters 5 to 8 and the conceptual description of neo-liberalism in chapters 1 and 2, it sets out to theoretically consider the influence of neo-liberal assumptions in Irish media

(chapter 9) The relationship between neo-liberal discourse(s), media practice and the wider political and cultural “order of discourse(s)” is given particular attention. The implications of this study’s findings for media, research and critical practice are also considered (chapter 10)

This study does not affect some notion of academic “disinterest”. It assumes a self-consciously “critical” stance towards the contemporary authority and dominance of market structures, indeed, as the title suggests, that there will be *some* neo-liberal influence in media texts is assumed as something of a given. Hence, the decision to base a large part of the empirical analysis on what are transparently neo-liberal stories should not be regarded as a variant of some positivistic impulse to *prove* the relatively uncontroversial. It should instead be seen as part of a broader social scientific project (see Fairclough, 2001) committed to investigating the implications and dynamics of neo-liberal influence - not least for political processes and the prospects of a vibrant and diverse public sphere.

Critical engagement brings with it the danger of “aspect blindness” (Wittgenstein, 1967: 214) (that is, the danger that all one *sees* is neo-liberal influence), however, and this study is wary of analysing the question of neo-liberal influence in a way that *extricates* it from the various other ideological, phenomenological, production and audience considerations which affect media treatment of political economy issues. This means, in practice, that the empirical analysis of chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 is structured in a way that tries to be sensitive to how Irish media *generally* treat political economy news and discussion. The hope, therefore, is that the question of neo-liberal influence in media isn’t artificially displaced from the institutional context in which it operates.

PART 1

NEO-LIBERALISM

Chapter 1 - An overview

1.1 Introduction

First used as a description of the economic model that was adopted in post-war Germany (see Friedrich, 1955), neo-liberalism is a term used to refer to both the ‘paradigmatic shift’ (see Peters, 1996) in power to the market which has taken place in Western economies since the 1970s and to the guiding ideology, and the doctrinal engine, of the current era of economic globalisation. The neo-liberal “political programme of action” (Bourdieu 1998a: 95) did not arrive spontaneously, however, and it is ultimately traceable to the post World War 2 establishment of liberal groupings like the Mt Pelerin Society (see below), which galvanised support for liberal economic ideas at a time when they were politically unpopular, and whose most prominent members would later go on to provide the broad philosophical template from which the Anglo-American led policy shift of the late 1970s and 1980s was constructed (see Cockett, 1995).

The purpose of this chapter is threefold and can be outlined under the following headings:

- (a) *Neo-liberalism in Discourse* This section gives an overview of how the term neo-liberalism is used in discourse, particularly its use, and limitations, as a “loose term” or “label of convenience” (see Welsh, 1993) to describe the shift in political economy of the last 30 years.
- (b) *The Political Economy of Neo-liberalism* This section argues that, although a “loose term”, there remains a doctrinal view of political economy that we can call neo-liberal. Here I give an overview of what I take this doctrine to be and outline the circumstances of its political and theoretical emergence in the 1970s.
- (c) *Neo-Liberalism: A Short Political History* This section gives a brief summary of neo-liberalism’s political evolution from the work of Mt Pelerin liberals in the

1940s right through to the era of the so called “Washington Consensus” (Williamson, 1993) I also consider its relevance to the “Celtic Tiger” Ireland of the 1990s

1.2 Neo-liberalism in discourse

The term neo-liberalism is, perhaps, most commonly invoked by political activists who are philosophically opposed to it. Therefore, it is often spoken about pejoratively, as a synonym for political, and ideological, opposition to capitalism and the market. The definition of activists Elizabeth Martinez and Arnoldo Garcia is typical of a certain kind of trenchant, blanket description:

‘Neo-liberalism’ is a set of economic policies that have become widespread during the last 25 years or so. Although the word is rarely heard in the United States, you can clearly see the effects of neo-liberalism here as the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer (Martinez and Garcia, 1996: 1)

This antipathy to neo-liberalism, by those who tend to use the term, is evident in an academic context, too. Although widely associated with liberal, free market economics, few contemporary economists (with the exception of those working in the much more sociologically driven field of political economy (see Hargreaves-Heap and Hollis, 1984)) assume the neo-liberal moniker as their own and, as a descriptive term, it is typically used by academics working in other areas of the social sciences. The following examples are typical of the kind of critical allusions to neo-liberalism that one finds in the social science literature, and particularly in the more overtly political work of some academics (see Gray, 1998a, Bourdieu, 1998a)

The neo-liberal ideologues want us to believe that the economic and social world is structured by equations. It is by arming itself with mathematics (and power over the media) that neo-liberalism has become the supreme form of the

conservative sociodicy which started to appear some thirty years ago as the 'end of ideology', or more recently, as 'the end of history' (Bourdieu, 1998a 35)

It is precisely in its oppression of non-market forces that we see how neo-liberalism operates not only as an economic system, but as a political and cultural system as well (McChesney, 1998 9)

The use of the term neo-liberalism is evidently highly coloured and often entrenched in a stubborn pro-market/anti-market combat (see Sen, 1999) Yet, as a generic description, it has a clear analytical value similar to the common use of the term "Keynesianism" to describe the immediate post-war system of political economy (see Beaud and Dostaler, 1997) Indeed, the case for the use of the term, as a descriptive shorthand, finds another analogy in Welsh's (1993) argument for the use of an associated term the "New Right", who after expressing doubt about that label's analytical usefulness affirms

Nevertheless, such doubts apart, it could still be argued that the 'New Right' is as good a term as any to capture the fact that a number of like-minded individuals and groups have in some vague sense come together in the fairly recent past to define and pursue a particular set of ideas and purposes (Welsh, 1993 50)

Neo-liberalism can, therefore, be partly regarded as a "label of convenience" (ibid 50) a "loose term" which helps one to give shape to a wide range of complex, yet inter-related, social, economic and cultural changes of the past 30 years (which is to say that the use of the term itself is inherently ideological, for as Eagleton (1991) reminds us "the term ideology is just a convenient way of categorising under a single heading a whole lot of different things we do with signs" (Eagleton, 1991 193)) Yet, while the term has clear value in this regard, this study must first offer a much more concrete, and systematic, account of what is self-imagined, by neo-liberals, as neo-liberalism The use of the term in contemporary discourse does, at least, suggest various mental signposts which should be central to any attempt to do that

- Neo-liberalism refers to structural and ideological changes in political economy since the 1970s and 1980s, changes perhaps best associated with Thatcher in Britain and Reagan in the United States
- Neo-liberalism is now seen by many as the doctrinal engine of global institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the WTO (World Trade Organisation)
- Various commentators have drawn parallels to the 19th century political “engineering” (Polanyi, 1957, Gray, 1998a) of the “free” market As Bourdieu puts it, “in a general way, neo-liberalism is a very smart and very modern repackaging of the oldest idea of the oldest capitalists” (Bourdieu, 1998a 14)
- Neo-liberalism is a label rarely used by economists, but mainly by those who regard themselves as its philosophical opponents
- Although typically used to describe specific developments within economics, the impact of neo-liberalism is usually considered in terms of broad political, social, cultural and linguistic (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) change
- Neo-liberalism is widely assumed to be a hegemonic ideological force in the contemporary world (see chapter 2)

1 3 Neo-liberalism as political economy doctrine

In the collective memory of the West (if such a nominalized entity can be said to exist) the 1970s signifies, even still (see chapter 8), a time of worldwide economic crisis and instability The immediate post-war years had seen the (non Soviet) North undergo a period of buoyant economic prosperity – a growth path cushioned by general political support for two bulwarks against doctrinaire economic liberalism the direct intervention of the state in the market and the development of a strong welfare state

system (see Lacher, 1999: 243) These Keynesian (see Beaud and Dostaler, 1997: 48-61) tenets were very much at the core of post-war orthodoxy and they were the values thrown most in doubt by the ensuing “crisis”¹. More importantly, however, they were also the values most susceptible to a rhetorically well armed liberal critique.

The intellectual vanguard leading this critique had through their writings, and the galvanising activity of groups like the Mount Pelerin Society, been actively canvassing support for liberal ideas since the early post-war years (see Cockett, 1995). But it wasn't until the 1960s and 1970s that the liberal critique started to emerge from its position of political, and theoretical, heterodoxy. Western political elites were, for the first time, receptive to a thoroughgoing critique of post-war orthodoxy and the “liberal resurgence” (Beaud and Dostaler, 1997: 112) saw a renewed interest in various strands of liberal economics: monetarism, supply side, classical, Chicago and Austrian economics. These strands had their fair share of intra-familial methodological tensions, but they coalesced to form a unified political and economic vision, and common diagnosis of, what, in liberals' view, was the Keynesian malaise. Drawing on the summary account of Beaud and Dostaler (ibid: 112-125) and acknowledging, in particular, the influence of Friedman and Hayek (see Cockett, 1994: 156), this doctrine of neo-liberal political economy can be broadly outlined as follows²:

- (a) It was motivated by a “reaffirmation of the virtues of the market and competition”(Beaud and Dostaler, 1997: 118) and a general aversion to state regulation and intervention in the market. Prominent in the advocacy of this pro-market argument was Milton Friedman and his colleagues at the Chicago School of Economics, who, as Ashford puts it, “argue from their empirical analysis of the

¹ The idea of a “crisis”, of course, is itself a neo-liberal discursive construct; it is an internalisation of that perspective which I am interested in here.

² I use the term political economy, not economics, because (drawing on Hutton) of its allusion to the “wider operation of the social and political system” and rejection of any “attempt to isolate economics from other disciplines” (Hutton, 1996: xxvii). As Robbins puts it, political economy should be regarded “as distinct from Economics in the strict sense of the word”; as “that part of our sphere of interest which essentially involves judgements of value” (Robbins, 1981: 8). Barry Jones (1998) give a good overview of the philosophical and methodological issues relevant to political economy: “appropriate analytical and theoretical forms; the general association between politics and economics; the relationship between government and economy; the nature of, and interconnections among, such basic elements as states, communities and individuals; and, finally, the nature and reality of progress”(Barry Jones, 1988: 8).

consequences of Government actions that the market is more effective than Government in achieving social goals” (Ashford, 1993 19) Another figure central to the intellectual revival of market economics was liberal philosopher Frederick Hayek (see Preoteasa, 2002), who championed the virtues of what he regarded as the market’s “spontaneous order” (Beaud and Dostaler, 1997 143) over the coercive and inefficient order he associated with centralised state management of the economy (see Hayek, 1944 13) This championing of the market signalled in turn a broad shift in the balance of power from the producer to the customer, as it was liberals’ view that the preferences of the latter, not the trade union bound interests of the former, should determine what is produced in a properly functioning market system (see Budd, 1989)

(b) Drawing on what Friedman called the “unintended consequences” (Ashford, 1993 22) of government action, liberals had a generally sceptical view about the role of the state in the economy Whether it was monetarist concern at the effect of “arbitrary” political decisions on the stock of money, supply sider scepticism about the yield value of higher tax rates or the general support for cuts in public spending and the privatisation of state monopolies, liberals were innately suspicious of government activity in the economy (see Beaud and Dostaler, 1997, Ashford 1993) Yet, with the exception of the most vehement libertarians (see Beaud and Dostaler, 1997 119), most liberals envisaged a role for the state in the economy - but a much more limited and indirect role than was the post-war norm, what Hayek envisioned as a state “planning for competition not planning against competition ” (Hayek, 1944 31)

(c) The liberal resurgence brought with it a renewed emphasis on the need to combat inflation The key theoretical contribution in this respect was the monetarist critique of the Phillips curve, “one of the most popular instruments of Keynesian economic management” (Beaud and Dostaler, 1997 116) and one whose hypothetical assumption of a trade off between inflation and unemployment was seriously challenged by the statistical evidence of the 1970s As Beaud and Dostaler put it “The coexistence of inflation and a rising unemployment rate challenged the

certainties associated with the Phillips Curve and symbolized the failure of Keynesian policies” (Beaud and Dostaler, 1997 113)

(d) The emerging liberal critique saw a shift in analytical focus from demand side to supply side economics which was orientated more towards micro, as distinct from macro, economic concerns (see Beaud and Dostaler, 1997 118) Post-war Keynesianism was very much rooted in the idea of demand management as the instinctive economic, and political, response of government to market imbalances. In liberals’ view, this was a policy restriction which attested to the supply side constraints of the post-war welfare state. The focus on issues of supply was the defining mark of so called supply-side economics, but monetarists, critical at what they regarded as the inflationary effects of government attempts to stimulate demand, also stressed the importance of focusing on supply side questions (Beaud and Dostaler, 1997 118) Austrian economists, too, had long been evangelists of a micro economic approach and were similarly focused on supply side concerns (see Horwitz, 2000) This renewed interest in the micro economy was to subsequently influence the thinking of the so called new classical economics of the 1970s, which was an attempt “to give macroeconomics, whatever its colour, rigorous microeconomics foundations while escaping, once and for all, from the micro-macro dichotomy which characterized economic thought of the post-war period”(Beaud & Dostaler, 1997 137)

(e) The liberal revival was closely associated with what Beaud and Dostaler call “economics’ new imperialism”(ibid 113) the application of the much criticised (see Polanyi, 1957) rationality (or self-interest) postulates of neo-classical economics to new areas both within and outside economics. Beaud and Dostaler list several examples of this new found enthusiasm for neo-classical thinking: the Chicago school’s application of the theory of human capital (Beaud and Dostaler, 1997 119), Becker and Mincer’s application of “the rationality postulate to all human behaviour” (ibid 120), and the emergence of the Public Choice School, which saw the application of neo-classical postulates directly to the field of politics (see Ashford , 1993) However, not all of the neo-liberal vanguard were as

enthusiastic about this neo-classical revival, particularly Hayek, who was severely critical of the kind of simplistic social theory building that neo-classical methods tended to inspire (see Hayek, 1977, Gray, 1998b and Caldwell, 2000)

- (f) The liberal revival re-energised belief in the orthodox “economic growth” paradigm, as measured by indicators like Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Although belief in the paradigm is by no means exclusively neo-liberal, the symbiotic relationship between the commitment to economic growth, and the shift in power to the market, has been criticised by many (see Bourdieu, 1998a, Gray 1998a). Kirby summarises the core objection “the main criticism of this measure of growth is that it measures aspects of the productive capacity of the economy and is in no way a measure of national well-being, even though it is often used in public discourse as being equivalent to such a measure” (Kirby, 2002: 78)

The framework outlined above offers a broad, yet concrete insight into the nature of the liberal revival which took place in the 1970s.³ Again, I stress the generality of the claim, for one cannot ignore the substantial methodological disagreements within the neo-liberal family. Chicago and Austrian differences over the money supply and inflation (see Ashford, 1993: 30), and supply siders’ criticism of the monetarist preoccupation with the money supply to the detriment of their own focus on “the fundamental problem” of a “stagnation in productivity” (Beaud and Dostaler, 1997: 118). Nevertheless, as Gray observes (in a remark about the different policy prescriptions of post-Keynesian liberals) “I think, however, that these differences are in the end disagreements about transitional strategy rather than about the liberal goal” (Gray, 1986: 79)

Yet much of the critical literature seems to regard neo-liberalism and neo-classical economics as synonymous (see Arruda, 1996, Langley and Mellor, 2002). Williams and Taylor, for instance, talk about neo-liberal political economy as being grounded in the

abstract theoretical construct of “‘economic man’ the (proto) rational egoist constantly seeking to optimise his position”(Williams and Taylor, 2000 23) Likewise, in another clear allusion to the precepts and rhetoric of neo-classical economics, Bourdieu describes neo-liberalism as a “pure mathematical fiction, based, from the outset, on a gigantic abstraction performed in the name of a strict and narrow view of rationality, identified with individual rationality”(Bourdieu, 1998 94-95) The clear correlation between the renewed interest in liberal ideas and neo-classical economics is not being denied, especially with respect to the methodological framework of Milton Friedman (see McCloskey, 1986 9) and the neo-liberal preoccupation with economic growth (see Kirby, 2002 81) But one should not ignore Beaud and Dostaler’s caveat (also see Barry 1984 33) that

Even if they overlap considerably, *liberalism and neoclassical theory must not be confused* [italics added] Neo-classical economics can coexist with several ideological and political orientations However, since the end of the 1950s, the renewal and generalization of the neoclassical approach has gone hand-in-hand with the resurgence of liberalism, with the encouragement, in particular, of economists bound to the Chicago School (Beaud and Dostaler, 1997 119)

1 4 Neo-liberalism a short political history

It is a core assumption of this study, a widely held assumption, that from the 1970s onwards there was a significant change of emphasis in the policy orientation of Western governments As Ashford (1993) puts it

In the 1980s, a dramatic change was perceived in the rhetoric, style, programmes and policies of many politicians in the liberal democracies of the West and elsewhere, represented by Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States (Ashford, 1993 19)

The fact that these political changes had a strong economic dimension is clear (see Hutton, 1996) What is more tentative, however, is their precise relationship with the

liberal theoretical doctrine outlined in the previous section. As Beaud and Dostaler (1997) caution

The expressions Thatcherism, Reaganism and even 'Reaganomics' are sometimes used to characterise the new economic policies and, in particular, their monetarist association. But, as always, the relationship between theory and politics is neither univocal nor simple. It is to the pressure of events as much as to the inspiration - in part conceived a posteriori to rationalise the policies - that the political powers respond (Beaud and Dostaler, 1997: 122)

The argument that the Anglo American led policy shift was *initially* driven more by political necessity than ideological commitment has undoubtedly some merit (see Gray, 1998a: 24). Britain, it was widely felt, was badly in need of major political and economic reform in the 1970s and the first signs of a fundamental policy shift are traceable to the Callaghan Labour Government (see Cockett, 1995: 187). Additionally, specific policy decisions of the Carter Administration in the United States also bore the imprint of neo-liberal thinking (see Riddell, 1994: 21), in fact, some Democrats even made unsuccessful attempts to claim ownership of the supply side ideas that would later be seen as the very embodiment of Reaganomics (see Roberts, 1989: 23-24). Yet to conclude that the neo-liberal shift was merely a pragmatic response to political and economic circumstance would be wholly simplistic, for, above all else, it would fail to explain why neo-liberal policy nostrums were the perceived solution to the so called Keynesian "malaise". Neo-liberalism was the "obvious" political alternative because liberal philosophers and evangelists had laboured hard to position it as such, nowhere more so than in Britain and America, where the post-war championing of liberal ideas by an intellectual elite was ultimately to lead to their ideological penetration of the political mainstream in the 1970s. It is a story of the relationship between intellectuals and politics that, to be properly understood, needs to go back as far as post-war Britain, or, more precisely, the 1945 General Election, which was to shape and determine the broad philosophical direction of British political economy up until the 1970s.

Cockett (1995) offers a comprehensive historical account of the liberal revival in Britain, from an intellectually unreceptive 1930s to the Thatcher dominated political landscape of the 1980s. It was in the unsympathetic climate of the former that liberals like Hayek, Ludwig von Mises and Walter Lippmann made their first tentative attempts at organising an intellectual counter to what was, in their view, 'collectivism's'⁴ inherent antipathy to liberal ideals (Cockett, 1995: 9). Their efforts were very much thwarted by the subsequent outbreak of war, and it was not until the latter years of the war, and the anticipated defeat of Germany, that the latent interest in reviving classical liberal doctrine again gained momentum (ibid: 9-56). However, it was a revival that needed an intellectual focal point for what had, up to then, been a disparate coalition of liberal voices, and this it got with the March 1944 publication of Hayek's now classic liberal polemic *The Road to Serfdom*.

The book was a calculated attempt to influence British public opinion⁵ and to "make as much impact on the public debate on planning as possible" (78-79). The basic idea was far from original, as Hayek's Austrian mentor Von Mises was but one of the liberals articulating a similar thesis, in book form, at the time (77-78). Where Hayek's book differed, however, was in its clear accessible form. As Cockett's asserts

the originality of *The Road to Serfdom* lay in its polemical political style, transferring the more abstruse academic debate on planning of the 1930s to the centre of political discussion (79)

It was at the centre of post-war "political discussion" that the book soon found itself. Cockett argues that *The Road To Serfdom's* central thesis – that "there was no 'middle way' between totalitarianism and a liberal, competitive economic system" (79) – was "the central focus of the 1945 general election" (92) campaign in Britain. To liberally

⁴ In *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), Hayek describes collectivism as the impulse "to organise the whole of society and all its resources for [a] unitary end" (Hayek, 1944: 42)

⁵ Hayek was based at the London School of Economics (LSE) at the time (Cockett, 1995: 25)

inclined Conservatives, fearful that in the 1945 election debate over issues like the Beveridge Report⁶ their case would go unheard, the publication of *The Road to Serfdom* “appeared as manna from Heaven” for it gave them “at one blow, the intellectual apparatus to assail the gathering political enthusiasm for the post-war planning which they had, up to then, only managed to postpone” (91) And while many of the election principals - most notably Churchill (93) - possibly hadn’t even read the book, its influence was certainly evident in the Tories’ campaign rhetoric (94), and, even more overtly, in the direct interventions of the party to ensure, despite war-time paper rations, the book’s ongoing publication (93-94)

As we know, the Conservative’s appeal to liberal values was ultimately to fail and the Labour Party secured electoral endorsement for the post-war settlement that would shape the character of the British welfare state for the next 30 years Yet, from Hayek’s perspective, the 1945 election campaign illustrated what was to become a dominant theme in his future political writings the close correlation between ideas and politics and the central importance of winning the “war of ideas” (Hames and Feasey, 1994 233), as a precursor to political success Of course, that “war” was by no means a peculiarly British one and, in the immediate aftermath of its 1945 American publication by the University of Chicago Press, *The Road to Serfdom* “created the same sort of intellectual ferment in the USA as it had in Britain” (Cockett, 1995 100) And although it “divided opinion in America much as it had done in Britain (ibid 101), it illustrated to Hayek the international interest in reviving liberal ideas and ultimately led to the formation of the liberal Mt Pelerin society in 1947

Mt Pelerin was the brainchild of Hayek, and its 39 founding members included such intellectual luminaries as Milton Friedman, Karl Popper, Ludwig Von Mises and Michael Polanyi (brother of Karl) (107-114) Named after the Swiss Alps resort that was the location of its first meeting, the international liberal society and discussion group (it never actually published anything under the Mt Pelerin banner) “now became the focal point of [liberalism’s] international effort”(108) Made up “largely of

⁶ The Beveridge Report published in December 1942, though “not acted upon before 1945”(Cockett, 1995 63) was a comprehensive survey of social insurance schemes in Britain and contained the blueprint for the subsequent expansion of the Welfare State (ibid 59)

economists" (109), its composition reflected what Hayek had identified as the "three main intellectual centres of the revival of contemporary liberal thought London (the LSE), Chicago and Vienna" (29) While its importance is perhaps in danger of being exaggerated, and romanticised, by some neo-liberals (see Postrel, 1999), Mt Pelerin's contribution to the eventual mainstream revival of liberal ideas in the 1970s was immense

- (a) Firstly, through its formation alone, Mt Pelerin acted as an important focal point for liberal concerns Notwithstanding the centrality of Hayek's liberal thesis to the 1945 British election campaign, it was the accepted truism amongst liberals, at the time, that their ideas were on the defensive and regarded largely with contempt As Hayek put it in his inaugural Mt Pelerin address "The hopelessness of the prospect for the near future indeed is due mainly to the fact that no organized political group anywhere is in favour of a truly free system"(Cockett, 1995 111-112)
- (b) Secondly, the direct intellectual impact of Mt Pelerin's most prominent members was – and arguably continues to be - crucial Of the thirty eight people who gathered at the first Mt Pelerin meeting (ibid 109), the number who would go on to make significant contributions to the intellectual culture of the second half of the 20th century is impressive *The National Review* offers perhaps the best indicator of Mt Pelerin's place in the canon of (so called) conservative political thought, by including no less than four books, penned by authors present at the inaugural meeting, in its top ten non-fiction books of the century ⁷
- (c) Thirdly, as the prototype neo-liberal intellectual movement, Mt Pelerin had, through the mobilising effect of its very existence and the direct actions of many of its members, a major part to play in the emergence of a popular Anglo-American neo-liberal coalition in the 1970s Focusing mainly on Britain, Cockett maps a convincing network of Mt Pelerin, and particularly Hayek and Friedman, links to the emergence of an active political programme Two in particular stand out the

⁷ The books are Hayek's *Road To Serfdom* (No 4) and *The Constitution of Liberty* (No 9), Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (No 6) and Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom* (No 10) See full list at http://www.nationalreview.com/100best/100_books.html

foundation in 1955 of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) by Anthony Fisher (the man who Milton Friedman described as the “single most important person in the development of Thatcherism” (122), and the establishment of the Conservative Party think-tank,⁸ the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) in 1974, whose principal founder, Keith Joseph, was a regular Mt Pelerin attendee throughout the 1960s and 1970s (118) The work and personnel of both organisations was closely linked (232-237) As Cockett summarises, the CPS set out to do “in political terms for the free-market what the IEA had so successfully done in the wider intellectual community” (236) In this task they were later joined by the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) the “youngest, most aggressively ideological, and self confessed enfant terrible of the British think-tanks” (Hames and Feasey, 1994 223) But the impact of the Mt Pelerin intellectual network was not confined to Britain Hayek and his mentor Von Mises - the “doyen” (Hindmoor, 1999 251) of Austrian Economics - were important figures, too, in the American intellectual revival of liberal ideas (Cockett, 1995 23-24) However, of the Mt Pelerin members, it was Friedman who had the most influence in America, and his 1967 address to the American Economic Association is regarded by some as a milestone in the country’s re-evaluation of its post-war consensual politics (Niskanen, 1988 17) And, as in Britain, the liberal revival also made its mark through American think-tanks the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Hoover Institution (Hoover) and the Heritage Foundation (Heritage) were three important ideological antecedents to what would later become known as Reaganism in the 1980s (see Hames and Feasey, 1994 220- 221)

In summary, from the 1940s onwards, one can see the formation of an embryonic neo-liberal “class”⁹ committed to the patient intellectual, and ultimately political, revival of liberal ideas Delineating the precise nature of that class’s influence on the direction of political economy practice from the 1970s onwards is less straightforward – but that

⁸ A term “borrowed from World War 2 US military jargon” (Hames and Feasey, 1994 215), Ann Cooper describes a think-tank as “an aggressively ideological institution where young analysts synthesize the research of others producing terse, topical papers designed for mass consumption in Washington” (ibid 216)

⁹ Bourdieu defines class, more fluidly, as “classes in the logical sense of the word i.e. sets of agents who occupy similar positions and who, being placed in similar conditions and submitted to similar types of conditioning, have every chance of having similar dispositions and interests, and thus of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances” (Bourdieu 1991 231, also see chapter 2)

there were direct links is clear. Yet it was arguably at a more imprecise, but more fundamental level, at the level of everyday social and institutional practice, that its impact was most significant, a view consistent with Hayek's own emphasis on the need to secure the legitimacy of abstract philosophy at the level of everyday common sense (see chapter 2)

1.4.2 Neo-liberalism as Political Action: From Thatcherism to Universal Convergence

Although Britain (see Hutton, 1996: 11-12) and the US (see Niskanen, 1988: 4) are perhaps the two countries most associated with the neo-liberal turn, they were not, of course, the only countries that underwent a liberal makeover from the 1970s onwards. Several states carried out intensive "free market" experiments - some even prior to the election of Thatcher or Reagan. Henderson (2000) groups the international drift towards greater economic liberalisation under three headings:

- The OECD group (of which Ireland could be considered part – see below), whose most prominent members were US and Britain. "For most other countries aside from Turkey, and for the group as a whole including the European Community, the shift in policies dates from the early-to-mid 1980s. Conspicuous changes in direction took place in France (1982-3), Australia (end-1983), and Canada (1984) and – the most striking case – New Zealand following the change of government in mid-1984" (Henderson, 2000: 6-7)

- What Henderson calls the "developing countries". "The first major programme of reform was that launched by the Pinochet government in Chile in the mid-1970s [see Kirby, 2002]. Then in 1978 came the historic new departure in China. Besides Chile and China, the more radical reformers included Argentina, Mexico, Mauritius and Thailand, while South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, which were already more liberal than the rest at the end of the 1970s, have [since] moved further in that direction" (ibid: 7)¹⁰

¹⁰ Stiglitz (1998) questions the inclusion of many of these Asian economies under any generic banner of liberalisation.

- The countries of the former Eastern Bloc – with the “Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary and Poland” (7) amongst the leading reformers

The political ascendancy of “New Right” orthodoxy (see Welsh 1993, Ashford 1993), saw the shift in “doxa” envisioned by Hayek as a strident, and at times wilfully confrontational (see Adonis and Hames, 1994 244-245), rhetoric began to assert itself in political discourse. This new rhetoric was accompanied by a raft of policy changes, which Hutton (1996) describes, in summary, as the “adoption of the free market nostrums of the newly asserted free market economists” (Hutton, 1996 11). Indeed, the drift towards “privatization” had a major impact on patterns of media ownership too, as governments “sought to reduce support for publicly-owned media and at the same time to dismantle and reformulate the regulatory frameworks governing the private control of media” (Boyd-Barrett, 1996 191, see chapter 3). The theoretical vision of a market driven social order, enunciated by the Mt Pelerin intellectuals, was fast becoming the template of mainstream party politics. Yet the neo-liberal turn was not without ideological contradiction, and paradoxes are easily unearthed (see Galbraith, 1991 44, and Gray, 1998 25). What must be understood above all else, however, is that the changes took place at a fundamental level, and that the market was now seen as central to the organisation of *society* (see Polanyi, 1957) and the role of the state, as economic actor, was henceforth treated with suspicion (see Adonis and Hames, 1994 250).

“Accelerated by the collapse of the communist block in the later 1980s” (Boyd-Barrett, 1996 191), the changes initiated in the 1970s and 1980s have been central to the course of political developments ever since. In an epithet which one could perhaps extend to Thatcher, Gray (1998a) concludes that “what happened as a consequence of Reagan’s presidency may be more significant than what he did during it” (Gray, 1998a 108). Neo-liberalism’s ideological dominance of Western and global politics since the ousting from power of its most ostensible proponents can be partly understood in terms of the phenomenon that economists refer to as “path dependency” or “lock-in”. As Callon (1999a) explains

Lock-in denotes all the mechanisms through which the evolution of a market or an institution becomes more and more irreversible. The choices and decisions made during the first period play a part in limiting the range of possible choices and decisions during the second period. Progressively the range of possible options narrows down, closes and locks so that the agents have no alternative but to renew the choices made earlier. They are prisoners, trapped in network from which they have neither the resources nor the desire to escape, they are submerged in the very structures they helped to set up (Callon, 1999a: 48).

Assuming a structuralist perspective (see Hobson and Ramesh, 2002), one can therefore say that the range of political options open to Thatcher and Reagan's successors was partly pre-determined. Indeed, it was arguably not until the Democrats in America and Labour in Britain committed themselves to working within their predecessors' scenic¹¹ legacy (much of it formerly anathema to both parties) that they were again regarded as electable. This situation was mirrored internationally, and the governing principles of the neo-liberal turn soon became the consensual framework around which Western style liberal democracies started to function, and, moreover, the model of political economy that the West (through global institutions like the IMF, WTO and The World Bank) prescribed and exported to the so called developing world. The central tenets of this new "universal convergence" (Williamson 1999) were most famously outlined by Williamson in his ten point prescription for the developing world known as the "Washington Consensus"

- (a) Fiscal Discipline
- (b) A redirection of public expenditure priorities towards fields offering both high economic returns and the potential to improve income distribution, such as primary health care, primary education, and infrastructure
- (c) Tax reform (to lower marginal rates and broaden the tax base)
- (d) Interest rate liberalisation
- (e) A competitive exchange rate

¹¹ I'm drawing on the rhetorician Kenneth Burke's use of the term (see chapter 4) scene "in the sense of setting or background" to, in my case, political action (see Burke 1969: 3)

- (f) Trade liberalisation
- (g) Liberalization of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows
- (h) Privatization
- (i) Deregulation (in the sense of abolishing barriers to entry and exit) ¹²
- (j) Secure property rights (see Williamson, 1999 3-4)

As the lock-in theories would predict, this universalisation of a broadly neo-liberal, “economically correct” (see Arnt Aune, 2001¹³) template encountered little resistance among political elites. In fact, the 1990s saw social democratic parties adopt a much more benign stance towards the market, and none of the so called “Third Wayers” (see Reich 1999) have attempted to significantly contest the retreat of the state which has been one of the most salient features of western style political economy since the 1980s. What has undoubtedly changed, however, is the language (see Fairclough, 2000), and social democratic endorsement of neo-liberal principles is much more likely to be dressed up in the consensual rhetoric of the “Third Way” ¹⁴, or what Frank calls the discourses of “market populism” and “capitalist egalitarianism” (Frank, 2000: 42), than assume any overt “Thatcherite” form. Yet, whether one views the “Third way” as crypto-Thatcherism or statism by stealth (see Fairclough, 2000, Higgs, 2000, Lloyd, 2000 and Hutton, 1999), it can at least be seen as a *discursive* attempt to reconcile Thatcher’s trenchant advocacy of economic freedom with a sense of the collective good she so famously dismissed, and, moreover, a political lexicon modified to the realignment of the political right as political centre. In other words, it can be looked on as a post-Thatcher rhetorical construct, not necessarily a post neo-liberal one, and to regard the two as one and the same is to misinterpret the nature, and legacy, of the liberal revival and to, wrongfully, assume that neo-liberalism simply involves the

¹² With specific reference to the communication industries, Murdock suggests that what is commonly called “de-regulation” is something of a “misnomer”, as it more correctly involves a “re-regulation from public to corporate interests” (Murdock, 1997: 319)

¹³ Arnt-Aune’s preferred name for free market rhetoric is “economic correctness” (Arnt-Aune, 2001: 4)

¹⁴ Dahrendorf (1999) gives an overview of what he regards as the six core ideas of the Third Way’s “chief theorist” Anthony Giddens: “(1) A new politics or ‘second wave of democratisation’ by going directly to the people, (2) a new relationship of state, market and civil society that ‘joins them up’, (3) supply-side policies through social investment, notably in education and infrastructure projects, (4) the fundamental reform of the welfare state through creating a new balance of risk and security, (5) a new relationship to the environment by ‘ecological modernisation’, and (6) a strong commitment to transnational initiatives in a world of ‘fuzzy sovereignty’” (Dahrendorf 1999)

perennial application of combative Thatcherite doctrine. For, as Frank says of the US and UK in the 1990s, although the rhetoric may have changed, the embrace of a market driven social order continued apace.

the nineties were the age of the great agreement, as leaders of left parties in the US and the UK accommodated themselves to the free market faiths of their predecessors, Reagan and Thatcher. As both Clinton and Tony Blair made spectacular public renunciation of their parties' historic principles, the opposition literally ceased to oppose. In the service of the market and to safeguard its supposedly endless array of choice, they ensured the voters would have no choice at all over the larger direction their nations took. Americans traded their long traditions of electoral democracy for the democracy of the supermarket, where all brands are created equal and endowed by their creators with all sorts of extremeness and diversity (Frank, 2000: 17).

1.4.3 The Irish context

As in many other OECD countries, the Irish neo-liberal turn can be loosely traced back to the late 1980s and, specifically, to the election of the minority Fianna Fail government in 1987 (whose commitment to an austere fiscal programme has, *ex post facto*, been widely credited as providing the economic grounds for the Celtic Tiger success story of the 1990s (see MacSharry and White, 2001)). What is interesting about the Irish case, however, is the widespread denial of its neo-liberal pedigree. As O Riain and O'Connell claim "the Irish case is not 'a story of neo-liberal globalisation [as] the state has been central to each stage of the development, and under-development, of the economy and of the welfare state'" (Kirby, 2002: 160). Yet these blanket disavowals have been criticised by Kirby, who, operating within a critical framework, argues that they "presume [sic] that what characterises neo-liberalism is the *sidehning* [italics added] of the state in a situation where the market assumes pre-eminence" (Kirby, 2002: 160). Arguing for the recognition of "many and varied neoliberalisms" (ibid: 161), or what Phillips describes as "different neo-liberalisms" (Phillips, 1998: xvii), Kirby

maintains that the neo-liberal project should not be understood as crude anti-statism (see chapter 2), but one in which the state has a pivotal, pro-active role in reorganising society as “subordinate” (Kirby, 2002: 162) to the interests of the economy. Kirby concludes, therefore, that “this account of the neoliberal state, its subordinate relationship to global market forces¹⁵ and its megalitarian social impact, describes accurately the Ireland of the Celtic Tiger. The main difference in the Irish case is the basis for legitimacy that has been fashioned through the agency of social partnership for this neoliberal reformation”(ibid: 163)¹⁶

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the way in which neo-liberalism is used in discourse, outlined its “loose” coherence as political economy doctrine and chronicled its intellectual and political ascent from 1940s Britain to Celtic Tiger Ireland. Yet any understanding of neo-liberalism’s real-world authority is incomplete without a deeper understanding of its ideological foundations. This, along with a general overview of the topic of ideology itself, is the subject-matter of chapter two.

¹⁵ For the second year running, Ireland recently emerged as “the most ‘globalised’ country among 62 states

included in the annual *AT Kearney/Foreign Policy* magazine survey” (Taylor, 2003)

¹⁶ Walsh, Craig and McCafferty (1998) define social partnership as the “search for consensus on economic and social objectives between sectoral interests – trade unions, business, farming organisations – and government. Social partnership has strong cross-party political support [and] has in effect been elevated to a shared political ideology which infuses all aspects of public policy-making and with minimal dissent” (see Kirby 2002: 40)

Chapter 2 – Ideology

2.1 Introduction

An argument sometimes made by neo-liberalism's critics is that, as a coherent ideological project, it makes a mockery of the thesis that ideology is no longer a force in a post cold war world (see Gray, 1998a 119-121). Not only does it have a clear ideological bias, they say, but it is often a dogmatic one at that, imbued with the arrogance characteristic of most dominant ideologies (ibid 136). Of course, this kind of indictment of economic liberalism, or capitalism, is nothing new, and Marx, Polanyi and Veblen have all famously lambasted what they saw as the dogma inherent in much of liberalism's abstract philosophical assumptions about the human condition.

So what might this neo-liberal ideology be? And how can the concept of ideology aid our understanding of the doctrine of neo-liberal political economy outlined in chapter one? These questions are addressed here under three headers. Firstly, I give a short overview of the critical conception of ideology underpinning this study. Secondly, I outline a suggested framework for an understanding of neo-liberal ideology, drawing, in particular, on the work of Hayek and Friedman. Thirdly, I briefly consider the role of the mass media in the promotion of neo-liberal ideology from the 1970s onwards.

2.2 Conceptions of ideology

One of the “most widely accepted definition[s]” of ideology is Thompson's “meaning (or signification) [which] serves to sustain relations of domination” (Eagleton, 1991 5). As an outline definition, it has its clear merits. Ideology certainly works to legitimate and universalise the power of a dominant social group or class. But the notion that ideology is simply “meaning in the service of power” (Fairclough, 1995 14), as Thompson's outline definition suggests, leaves many questions un-probed: through what channels and practices is meaning produced?, is the service of power conscious or otherwise?, and can ideology, by definition, not serve the powerless?

Eagleton (1991) has considered the question of ideology in depth and emphasises the need for a wider treatment. He argues against any single definition and suggests ideology should be understood in terms of a complex amalgam of cognitive, epistemological and rhetorical strategies. In his view, “the word ideology, one might say, is a text, woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands, it is traced through by divergent histories, and it is probably more important to assess what is valuable or can be discarded in each of these lineages than to merge them forcibly into some Grand Global Theory” (Eagleton, 1991: 1)

Working within a Marxian critical and structuralist framework, Eagleton’s understanding of ideology draws on a range of “conceptual strands” including

- (a) The original, early enlightenment notion of ideology as the “scientific study of human ideas” and its subsequent semantic “inversion” as “systems of ideas themselves” (63)
- (b) The Marxian tensions between a social and cognitive definition of ideology. As Eagleton suggests, “To think of Marxism as the scientific analysis of social formations, and to think of it as ideas in active struggle, will yield two quite different epistemologies” (93) (also see Barrett, 1994). Interestingly, this tension between an economic (political economy) and idealist (cultural studies) conception of ideology is evident in the appropriation of Marxian ideas in the field of mass communications (see Murdock, 1997: 118)
- (c) Lukacs’ notion of ideology as class consciousness is linked to capitalist reification (see Eagleton, 1991: 93). The easy inference that ideological consciousness simply equals “false consciousness” is rejected by Eagleton. “Ideology for Lukacs is thus not exactly a discourse untrue to the way things are, but one true to them only in a limited, superficial way, ignorant of their deeper tendencies and connections. And this is another sense in which, contrary to widespread opinion, ideology is not in his view false consciousness in the sense of simple error or illusion” (ibid: 99)
- (d) The Gramscian notion of hegemony, “best understood as the *organization of consent* [italics in original] – the processes through which subordinated forms of

consciousness are constructed without recourse to violence or coercion” (Barrett, 1994 238) An influential concept in the field of critical theory and media studies (see chapter 3 and 4), hegemony emphasises the central role of the institutions of civil society (schools, churches, media, etc) in the process of social control and the ascent of dominant belief systems The idea was subsequently developed by Raymond Williams, who emphasises hegemony’s “dynamic character”, as against any “potentially static connotations of ideology” (Eagleton, 1991 115), and, like Althusser, considers the “reproduction” (see Althusser, 1994) of ideology in terms of “lived relations” (Eagleton, 1991 19) Interestingly, following George (1997), the historical development of a neo-liberal consciousness can be conceptualised in terms of hegemonic theory as it illustrates “the ways in which ‘popular’ knowledge and culture [can be] developed in such a way as to secure the participation of the masses in the project of the ruling bloc” (Barrett, 1994 238, see below)

- (e) Bourdieu’s notion of “habitus”, a “set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways” (Bourdieu, 1991 12) and which Eagleton describes as “the relay or transmission mechanism by which mental and social structures become incarnate in daily social activity” (Eagleton, 1991 156) Although “the term ideology is not particularly central to Bourdieu’s work” (ibid 156), Eagleton sees relevance, too, in his notion of “doxa” the term Bourdieu uses to describe the “taken for granted” (Bourdieu, 1977 166) everyday, common sense assumptions of a “social order in which power is fully naturalized and unquestionable, so that no social arrangement different from the present could even be imagined” (ibid, 157) Ideological labour, for Bourdieu, is conceptualised in terms of practices - as opposed to the Marxian stress on ideological consciousness “The Social World doesn’t work in terms of consciousness, it works in terms of practices, mechanisms, and so forth *By using doxa we accept many things without knowing them, and that is what is called ideology* [italics added]” (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1994 268) (interestingly, this is consistent with a Hayekian view of how ideas percolate opinion “until they become the possession of a majority who know little of their origin” (Hayek, 1960 112)) Bourdieu’s critical theory is a key element of this study’s analytical framework and is examined in more depth in chapter 4

(f) The post-modernist conception of ideology as discourse or rhetoric, a largely “discursive or semiotic phenomenon essentially concerned with *meanings* [italics in original]” (Eagleton, 1991: 194). Very influential in the field of media studies (see chapters 3 and 4), Eagleton credits the (broad) field of discourse analysis for “open[ing] up a new dimension in a theory of ideology traditionally concerned with ‘consciousness’ rather than linguistic performance, ‘ideas’ rather than social interaction” (ibid: 196).

I see analytical value in all these different interpretations and would echo Eagleton’s claim that “it is doubtful that one can ascribe to ideology any *invariable* [italics in original] characteristics at all” (ibid: 222). But what unites them all - in contemporary academic parlance - is their common “critical” pedigree, a label which, in Billig’s view, “tends to signal two related messages” - first, that the “critical” paradigm is committed to social analysis, “particularly the analysis of [capitalist fuelled] social inequality” and, second, that it is opposed to existing paradigms “which, among other failings, fail to address social inequalities” (Billig, 2000: 291).

Alongside these critically engaged, and essentially Marxian, conceptions of ideology, there are other “more inclusive and less pejorative notions” (Van Dijk, 1998a: 3), where ideologies are more neutrally defined as the “*basis of the social representations shared by members of a group*” [italics in original] (ibid: 8) - and not just the legitimating belief systems of elite or dominant groups. In that sense, Van Dijk’s theory of ideology “involves a shift from a (macro) politics of class (or social structure) to a (micro) politics of identity” and therefore “may be seen as offering a more serviceable and flexible definition [of ideology] than the classical Marxist starting point - ‘the ruling ideas in any epoch are the ideas of the ruling class’” (Montgomery, 1999: 452). Treating ideology as the interface between cognition, discourse and society, Van Dijk describes his “new theory of ideology” as having “three main components” (Van Dijk, 1998b: 23).

- (a) “*Social functions* A theory of the functions of ideologies for groups or institutions within societal structure This theory answers the simple question of why people develop and use ideologies in the first place” (ibid 23)
- (b) “*Cognitive structures* Within this framework, a theory is developed about the mental nature and the internal components and structures of ideologies This theory answers the question of what ideologies look like, and how they monitor social practices” (23)
- (c) “*Discursive expression and reproduction* A theory of the ways ideologies are expressed in, and acquired and reproduced by, the structures of socially situated text and talk” (24)

In terms of its application of a critical discourse analysis theoretical framework (see chapter 4), this study strives, in some respects, to straddle the line between a critical and descriptive or neutral (see Thompson, 1990) conception of ideology It is essentially concerned with the influence of neo-liberalism as ideology, but, following Van Dijk, does not want to imply that it is the only conceivable *ideological* position It strives, too, to check the pejorative implication of the word itself, which, in Bourdieu’s view “has very often been misused, or used in a very vague manner It seems to convey a sort of discredit To describe a statement as ideological is very often an insult, so that this ascription itself becomes an instrument of symbolic domination” (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1994 265) In short, the empirical focus of this study is on ideology as (media) discourse Yet it identifies with the critical and structuralist view that the practical workings of ideology cannot be understood as a matter of discourse *only* and that, following Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), ideological practice needs to be conceptualised in terms of a dialectical interplay of textual, institutional and social processes

2.3 Neo-liberalism as ideology a suggested framework

“ *the real aim of ideology is the attitude demanded by it, the consistency of the ideological form the consistency of the ideological attitude itself*” [italics added] (Žižek, 1989 83-84)

This section presents an overview of some of the key features of neo-liberal ideology, what can be looked on as the doctrinal “mental map” (Van Dijk, 1998a) which grounds the practical system of political economy outlined in chapter 1. As before, the main intellectual reference points are Hayek and Friedman (and, to a lesser degree, Buchanan). The features listed below should not be understood as exclusively neo-liberal, and many of them - at least in their generic form - can be considered core ideological tenets of Western civilisation, the capitalist system and modern liberalism (see Gray, 1986, Lukes, 1973, Hayek, 1944, Russell, 1961). Yet it is their cognitive and rhetorical “form”, in a particular historical and social context, which is of interest here.

(a) *Negative freedom*

Freedom is a key word in neo-liberal rhetoric. Hayek describes one of his most influential works, *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), as a “comprehensive restatement of the basic principles of a philosophy of freedom” (Hayek 1960 3), a proclamation of “the criteria by which particular measures must be judged if they are to fit into a regime of freedom” (ibid 5). The book titles alone indicate its central place in Friedman’s rhetoric: *Free To Choose* (1980) and *Capitalism and Freedom* (1960). Of course, rhetorical invocation of freedom is a likely characteristic of even the most vehemently anti-liberal of political ideologies (see Hayek, 1944 118). What is distinct about the neo-liberal emphasis, however, is its negative character. In Hayek’s formulation, freedom “refers *solely* [italics added] to a relation of men to other men, and the only infringement on it is coercion by men” (especially when it is exercised under the mantle of the state) (Hayek, 1960 12). Hence, it is a view of freedom which neo-liberals sharply distinguish from other more positive conceptions: “what is commonly called ‘political freedom’” (“the participation of men in the choice of their government” (13)),

“metaphysical” freedom or “freedom of the will”(15), and the “confusion of liberty as power”(17) As Hayek puts it, “these various freedoms are not different species of the same genus but entirely different conditions, often in conflict with one another, which therefore should be kept clearly distinct”(12) Thus, Hayek can argue “In the sense in which we use the term, the penniless vagabond who lives precariously by constant improvisation is indeed freer [because of the absence of direct coercion] than the corrupted soldier with all his security and relative comfort” (18)

(b) Economic freedom

The neo-liberal understanding of freedom is animated in turn by an emphasis on economic freedom – both as a value in its own right and as a counterpoise to (the coercive potential of) political freedom In Friedman’s view, “economic freedom [is] an end in itself an indispensable means towards the achievement of political freedom” (Friedman, 1962 8) He adds “for most citizens of the country [the US] if not for the intellectual” (ibid 8) [note the antithesis of populist everyman concerns and elite intellectual ones – see below] economic freedom is just as significant as political freedom” Indeed, he suggests that “there is no essential difference between the two” (8) in practice The importance of economic freedom, as a guarantor of political freedom, is foregrounded by Hayek, who describes the system of free market capitalism as “a precondition for the evolution of all our democratic freedoms” (Hayek, 1944 78) What is emphasised, above all else, is the view that economic freedom and political freedom must be kept separate, a stance largely defined by neo-liberals’ opposition to what they regard as the collectivist/socialist instinct to fuse both domains (Hayek, 1994 81)

(c) Individualism

Drawing on its philosophical commitment to freedom, neo-liberalism is grounded in the values of individualism (see Lukes, 1973) Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) is, amongst other things, a strong defence of individual liberty, a principle which the book argues was under severe threat in the political culture of the 1940s, typically dismissed as a “shallow western ideal[sic]” (Hayek, 1944 81) In addition, a commitment to

individual freedom informs Hayek's epistemological advocacy of a "methodological individualism" (Gray, 1998a 53)¹⁷ This emphasis on the individual is likewise mirrored in Friedman, indeed, the perspective advanced throughout his work is that of the embattled individual fighting off what he sees as the - typically negligible or counter-productive - interference of government in his or her life (see Friedman 1962)

(d) Hostility to collectives

Dialectically bound to neo-liberalism's prioritisation of individual concerns is its suspicion of collectives what Bourdieu trenchantly describes as the neo-liberal "programme of methodical destruction of collectives" (Bourdieu, 1998a 96) It is a suspicion of collective structures - indeed, any invocation of collective right - which generally informs the ideology of Hayek and Friedman be it a deep antipathy, on Friedman's part, towards government, state, trade unions and (superficially at least) corporate power (see Friedman, 1962) or Hayek's abiding suspicion of collectivist mindsets and epistemologies (see Hayek, 1943 9) It is (what Ricoeur calls) a "hermeneutic of suspicion" (Scannell 1998 254) shared by James Buchanan, a leading Public Choice figure (see chapter 1), who was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize for Economic Science (see Buchanan, 1987) Buchanan indicts collectivist thinking - buoyed by a fetish for mathematical modelling - for the particular damage he feels it has done to the discipline of economics (Buchanan, 1991 18) and for its fostering of the "romantic delusion stemming from Hegelian idealism [that] the state was, somehow, a benevolent entity and those who made decisions on behalf of the state were guided by consideration of the general or public interest" (Buchanan, 1989 8) It is a feature of neo-liberal ideology that was given its sharpest political expression by Thatcher, when she famously declared "There is no such thing as the social, there are only individuals and families" (Phillips, 1998 195)

¹⁷ Methodological individualism alludes to Hayek's belief that all knowledge claims in the social sciences are ultimately grounded in individual and subjective ways of knowing As Gray summarises "methodological individualism is an explanatory programme in which social explanations terminate in the acts, decisions and intentions of individual agents" (Gray, 1998b 53)

(e) *Teleological scepticism*

A corollary of the neo-liberal view of the collective is its deep suspicion of the teleological¹⁸ in politics and, moreover, its innate scepticism of the kind of collectivist moral rhetoric typically invoked by politicians (notions of the “common good”, “public good”, “general welfare”, “general interest”, etc) Best elucidated by Hayek, the neo-liberal view of morality revolves around a means-ends understanding of the function of public institutions and looks on any (formal and programmed) intertwining of politics and morality with suspicion¹⁹ Simply put, what I call teleological scepticism maintains that the social order should concern itself with means *not* ends, and that instead of prescribing a social or collective purpose(s) by which society should be organised, states and governments should focus instead on providing the means and the framework (i.e. the market) to allow individuals pursue their own ends (an ideological tenet which stems from Hayek’s critique of what he called constructivist rationalism²⁰) In other words, teleological scepticism amounts to a suspicion of the place of *purpose* in politics (see Buchanan, 1989, Burke 1969a), for, as far as the neo-liberal is concerned, moral pronouncements about the desirability of certain social ends, such as full employment and the ending of poverty, are illusory, even dangerous, if one thinks they can be met by institutions of conscious human design

(f) *Conviction politics*

Neo-liberalism’s scepticism about moral purpose in politics should not suggest moral indifference, for one can identify a strong moral sense underpinning its own rhetoric It

¹⁸ The Encyclopaedia Britannica definition of teleology informs my understanding of the term “teleology (from Greek *telos* “end”, *logos* “reason”), *explanation by reference to some purpose or end* [italics added], also described as final causality, in contrast with explanation by efficient causes only Human conduct, insofar as it is rational, is generally explained with reference to ends pursued or alleged to be pursued and human thought tends to explain the behaviour of other things in nature on this analogy, either as of themselves pursuing ends, or as designed to fulfil a purpose devised by a mind transcending nature” <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=73450>

¹⁹ In *The Road To Serfdom* (1944), Hayek argues that the Nazi State is more “moral” than a liberal state because it “imposes on its members its views on all moral questions” (Hayek, 1944: 57)

²⁰ In Hayek’s view, constructivist rationalism is defined as the belief that “human institutions will serve human purposes only if they have been deliberately designed for these purposes, often also that the fact that an institution exists is evidence of its having been created for a purpose, and always that we should so

is a view of morality which compels one to distinguish between the *Public* invocation of morality (macro-morality) and its individual appropriation (micro-morality), and the “rhetoric of anti-politics” (Buchanan, 1989 9) promulgated from the 1970s onwards should not be mistaken for a rhetoric of anti-morality. In fact, one finds in Hayek and Friedman an invocation of moral principle - drawn in part from their explicit deference towards bourgeois traditions (see Hayek, 1960 54-55) – which, in many ways, echoes the “conviction politics” and “the great moral truths of Thatcherism” (Welsh 1993 57) “rules of morality”, which, “like all other values”, are not “the conclusions” or “product” of reason but “a *presupposition of reason* [italics added], part of the ends which the instrument of our intellect has been developed to serve” (Hayek, 1960 63)

(g) *Suspicion of intellectuals*

Although partly a defensive response to what neo-liberals perceive as the widespread intellectual contempt for their “merely” economic concerns (see Hayek, 1944 17 and Nozick, 1998), an antagonism to intellectuals - or, more precisely, to *the political ruminations of left-leaning intellectuals not grounded in economics* - is another notable feature of neo-liberal ideology. Hayek, for instance, remarks on “the problem of having more intellectuals than we can profitably employ” (Hayek, 1960 383) and cites the activities of intellectuals as a threat to social order (see Hayek, 1960 383). Friedman is similarly wary of the involvement of intellectuals in politics and, like Hayek, cites specific historical examples to back up his case²¹. Buchanan too, who, in appealing to economists to get “their intellectual house in order”, argues that “[equipped] with a renewed inner-disciplinary confidence economists can expose the arguments of the intellectuals who discuss policy alternative as if there are no limits on the possible” (Buchanan, 1991 20). What this attitude cultivates is a rhetoric grounded in a dichotomy of the (laudable) common man and the (haughty) intellectual (Friedman, 1962 8), and what Frank, writing in a contemporary American context, describes as “market

re-design society and its institutions that all our actions will be wholly guided by known purposes” (Hayek, 1982, Vol 1 8-9)

²¹ Friedman holds American intellectuals to account for their advocacy of the New-Deal liberalism of the 1930s and for arriving at the overwhelming conclusion that “capitalism was a defective system inhibiting economic well-being and thereby freedom, and that the hope for the future lay in a greater measure of deliberate control by political authorities over economic affairs” (Friedman, 1962 196)

populism” the semantic inversion as “élites” anyone who dares question the place of market tenets in the social order (see Frank 2000)

(h) First modernity hubris (or the assumption of universality)

John Gray, formerly one of Hayek’s most articulate champions and now one of his most trenchant critics (see Gray, 1998b 146-161) has recently castigated neo-liberalism for its inherent tendency to arrogate itself as the “totalizing’ structure” of an imperialistic “universal civilisation” (Gray, 1998a 3) (also see Phillips’ description of “neoliberalism as ‘neo-modernization’” (Phillips, 1998: xii)) If one accepts Beck’s description of “first modernity” as “certitude cast in institutional form”(Beck, 1996 86) then neo-liberalism certainly conjures up the kind of hubristic rationalism we find in the positivism of Friedman (see McCloskey, 1986) and, less obviously, in the self styled modest, “evolutionary rationalism” of Hayek (see Hayek, 1982) What is clear enough is that many of neo-liberalism’s contemporary critics regard the Washington Consensus prescription of “economic good sense”, as promoted globally by the World Bank, WTO and G8 (see Stiglitz, 1998), as the realworld manifestation of the universal ideological mission to naturalize, normalize and legitimize a neo-liberal credo what Williamson rather assuredly calls “in some sense the economic equivalent of *these (hopefully) no-longer-political issues* [italics added] the sooner it wins general acceptance and can be *removed from mainstream political debate* [italics added], the better for all concerned” (Williamson, 1993 1330) Politically, this assumption of “unquestionable” universality was again most triumphantly articulated by Thatcher’s so called TINA (“There is no alternative” (Fairclough, 2001 129)) claim

2.3.1 Neo-liberal ideology an outline “mental map”

The features outlined above are not claiming to be fully exhaustive They should instead be seen as an outline description of what neo-liberal ideology looks like the set of basic propositions which give neo-liberalism its consistency of form and attitude (Žizek, 1989 84) Indeed, shaped as much by what it is against as what it is for, it could be said

that the inclination to polarise, and set up sharp ideological distinctions, is neo-liberalism's outstanding ideological feature (Nafissi, 2000: 233). Based on the analysis presented above, the key neo-liberal dichotomies and binary oppositions are outlined in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 The contours of neo-liberal ideology

<i>Neo-liberalism</i>	<i>Socialist "other"</i>
Negative freedom/Freedom from	Positive freedom/Freedom to
Economic freedom	Political freedom
Micro (individual) morality	Macro (public) morality
Market	State
Individual	Collective
Means	Ends
Common man	Intellectual

Based around a dichotomy of state/market, Bourdieu and Wacquant (2000) list a similar series of neo-liberal (as self-imagined) ideological oppositions (see Table 2.2)

Table 2.2 Bourdieu and Wacquant's "ideological schema" for neo-liberalism²²

State [globalization]	Market
Constraint	Freedom
Closed	Open ²³
Rigid	Flexible
Immobile, fossilized	Dynamic, moving, self-transforming
Past, outdated	Future, novelty
Stasis	Growth
Group, lobby, holism, collectivism	Individual, individualism
Uniformity, artificiality	Diversity, authenticity
Autocratic ('totalitarian')	Democratic

Considered in terms of Van Dijk's (1998a) three-tiered definition of ideology (as the discursive interface between the cognitive and the social – see above), these dichotomies, or set of oppositions, can be regarded as the outline cognitive structures of neo-liberal ideology – the mental map from which neo-liberal rhetoric and discourse then

²² Interestingly, Bourdieu and Wacquant's ideological schema is implicitly affirmed by Hayek enthusiast Postrel (1999), who maintains that what she calls "[the] two poles, stasis [state] and dynamism [market], increasingly define our political, intellectual and cultural landscape" (Postrel, 1999: XIV)

take their cue. In addition, the “basic propositions of self-presentation and negative other-presentation” point to a crucial social and organising function of ideology. Us versus Them identity thinking (see Van Dijk, 1998a: 57). How I ultimately propose to examine the influence of this ideology, in a contemporary media context, is addressed in chapters 3 and 4.

2.4 Constructing hegemony: the mass media selling and promotion of neo-liberal ideology

the influence of the abstract thinker on the masses operates only indirectly. People rarely know or care whether the commonplace ideas of their day have come to them from Aristotle or Locke, Rousseau or Marx, or from some professor whose views were fashionable among the intellectuals twenty years ago. Most of them have never read the works or even heard the names of the authors whose conceptions and ideals have become part of their thinking. So far as direct influence on current affairs is concerned, the influence of the political philosopher may be negligible. But when his *ideas have become common property* [italics added], through the work of historians and publicists, teachers and writers, and intellectuals generally, they effectively guide developments. This means not only that new ideas commonly begin to exercise their influence on political action only a generation or more after they have first been stated but that, before the contributions of the speculative thinker can exercise such influence, they have to pass through a long process of selection and modification (Hayek, 1960: 113).

Any understanding of neo-liberalism’s political ascent would be incomplete without some consideration of the channels and means used to sell and promote neo-liberal ideology from the 1970s onwards. The early neo-liberal intellectuals saw their task as the long term creation of a new political and economic “common sense” (Langley and Mellor, 2002: 50) - an ideological objective which necessitated the patient, and

²³ Phillips affirms this open/closed opposition, when she describes neoliberalism in Latin America as involving a “shift from ‘inward-orientated’ strategies of development promoting national self-sufficiency to ‘outward-orientated’ free trade aimed at total integration into the world market” (Phillips, 1998: xi).

deliberate, packaging of the abstract claims of political philosophy in ways that could successfully percolate the political mainstream. In short, neo-liberals understood that, to have the desired political influence, their ideas needed to be sold to the widest audience possible. As Friedman remarked in an 1995 interview

It takes many kinds of people to make a movement. And one of the most important things are publications. In any activity you have manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, and all three are essential and necessary. There are only a relatively small number of manufacturers of ideas. But there can be a very large number of wholesalers and retailers (Friedman, 1995: 9)

Hayek placed a similar emphasis on the importance of intellectual networks to the “rule of ideas” (Hayek, 1960: 112) and believed that the role of those whom he characterised as the “second hand dealers in ideas” (Cockett, 1995: 123) as decisive. Indeed, I would agree with George’s suggestion that one can (ironically) speak of a “Gramscian Right” (George, 1997: 1), who realised that “for ideas to become part of the daily life of people and society they must be packaged, conveyed, and propagated through books, magazines, journals, conferences, symposia, professional associations, student organisations, university chairs, mass media and so on” (ibid: 3)

The conceptual relevance of Gramsci can be expanded. As paradoxical as it might seem, the Mt Pelerin intellectual “class” (see chapter 1) can be described - at least initially²⁴ - as organic, as opposed to traditional, intellectuals. (Gramsci maintained that the legitimation of a dominant social order relies on the contribution of “traditional intellectuals” – those individuals who provide the kind of “moral, political and intellectual leadership in social life by diffusing one’s own ‘world view’ throughout the fabric of society as a whole, thus equating one’s own interests with the interests of society at large” (Eagleton, 1993: 117). In contrast, Gramsci championed the role of critical “organic intellectuals”, who, as Eagleton puts it, “are the product of an emergent social class” and whose “role is to lend that class some homogenous self-consciousness

²⁴ Anticipating the disclaimer, Eagleton remarks, “the distinction between ‘organic’ and ‘traditional’ [intellectuals] can be to some extent deconstructed. A traditional intellectual was perhaps once organic, but is now no longer so” (Eagleton, 1991: 120)

in the cultural, political and economic fields” (ibid 119) and liberate society from hegemony’s naturalising of the social order. The revival of arch free market doctrine certainly wasn’t the type of “organic” consciousness-raising that Gramsci had in mind. Yet Hayek and Friedman clearly encouraged neo-liberals to assume the identity of counter-hegemonic agents and see their critique of post-war orthodoxy as a subversion of what was then - at least in liberals’ minds - collectivist hegemony. The analogy is best illustrated by hypothetically aligning Hayek’s view of the neo-liberal intellectual with Eagleton’s description of the “organic intellectual” (the attributed Hayekian view is in italics)

What is needed is not just some paternalist endorsement of existent popular consciousness [*we will ignore short term public opinion*], but the construction of a ‘new common sense and with it a new culture and a new philosophy [*we will create a new liberal programme*] which will be rooted in the popular consciousness with the same solidity and imperative quality as traditional belief’ [*which, in future generations, will be the commonsense context in which politicians and politics will act*]. The function of the organic intellectuals, in other words, is to forge the links between ‘theory’ and ‘ideology’, creating a two-way passage between political analysis and popular experience” (Eagleton, 1991 120) [*our task, like that of the political philosophers of the past, is to forge links between liberal theory and commonsense experience*]. “To do this, however, means combating much that is negative in the empirical consciousness of the people – such common sense is a chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions – an ambiguous, contradictory zone of experience which is on the whole politically backward (ibid 119) [*most people assimilate ideas third and fourth hand ignorant of their origins. Common sense being what it is, this consciousness is difficult to fight. But, if we bide our time and create second hand intellectual passages of our own, this collectivist commonsense can be combated*].

The formal political impact of the neo-liberal exercise in consciousness raising has already been considered in chapter one. What I want to consider in this section is its

influence through intellectual osmosis – or what Bourdieu (1991) would call its “doxic” influence - especially through the agency of the media Drawing on Friedman’s commercial analogy (see above), the mass market selling and promotion of neo-liberalism can be described in the following terms

- (a) The first is the form assumed by the ideas of key manufacturers, Hayek and Friedman Both wrote books which targeted a popular readership (or, at least, Hayek’s “second hand dealers” and Friedman’s “wholesalers”) and both embraced accessible forms and media For instance, the two wrote regular pamphlets for the IEA in Britain (see Cockett 1995 149), and Friedman’s 1979 book *Free To Choose A Personal Statement* (written jointly with his wife Rose) became a National Best-seller in the US, and was accompanied by a television series of the same name which was timely broadcast in both America and Britain in 1980²⁵
- (b) The second aspect was the contribution of the think tanks – the key wholesalers - particularly through the media One shouldn’t perhaps overstate think tank influence on the neo-liberal turn of the 1970s and 1980, that is if influence is taken to mean “specific [and linear] examples of public policy that can solely or even predominantly be shown as the responsibility of the think tanks” (Hames and Feasey, 1994 227) Where they did have a clear influence, however, exercised in part through the deployment of aggressive marketing and public relations techniques (ibid 233), was on the media As Hames and Feasey put it “One important conclusion on the work of think tanks in the 1980s is that perhaps the most critical factor in determining a think tank’s prestige and influence is its ability to sway the media, especially the quality press The chief means by which conservative think tanks get their ideas and arguments into the public domain is through newspaper and television coverage of their various reports and proposals This is by far the most successful way of bringing such ideas to the attention of the policy-making community” (233)

²⁵ Free to Choose was shown “in other countries, including Australia, Holland, Japan, and Singapore An updated tenth anniversary edition of “Free to Choose,” consisting of five parts, was aired on CNBC early in 1991” http://www.friedmanfoundation.org/milton_vitae_shun

(c) The third notable aspect was the contribution of (so called) *conservative* intellectuals, who from the 1970s onwards served as neo-liberalism's front-line retailers in the increasingly important retail outlet which was the media (particularly television) Their presence and visibility gave an immense boost to the public credibility of ideological stances which had, up until then, "virtually no presence in the media" (ibid 234), for, as Hames and Feasey suggest, even the phrase conservative intellectual was seen as "virtually a contradiction in terms" (234) up until the 1970s Again, the influence of these intellectuals is not easily quantifiable But one can at least assume that they played a significant part in the promotion of "the rhetoric of anti-politics" (Buchanan, 1989 9) from the 1970s onwards and helped prepare the ground for the eventual political ascendancy of Thatcher, Reagan and others (see Bourdieu, 1998a 19-30)

The conclusion, therefore, is that, in line with Friedman and Hayek's emphasis on the need to infiltrate popular consciousness, neo-liberalism's securing of political consent has had a close relationship with the agency of the media Herman and McChesney, for instance, suggest that the global ascent of commercial media models is inextricably linked to US government attempts to "encourage private enterprise, open economies, and market based media systems throughout the world" (Herman and McChesney, 1997 150 – see chapter 3), while Jameson maintains that the representation of neo-liberal ideology has been enlivened and glamorised by contemporary media practice (see Jameson, 1994 292) It is this relationship, between neo-liberalism and the media, which is the key concern of this study, what is, in short, an Irish based enquiry to see if the (once controversial) ideas of Hayek and Friedman are now the mundane "common property" (Hayek, 1960, 113) that Hayek prophesied they could become

Before proceeding to examine the "war of ideas" (Hames and Feasey, 1994 233) in an Irish media context, this study needs to distinguish the Irish situation from Britain and the US, in particular the absence (heretofore at least – see below) of a similar think tank culture and the lack of direct Irish links to the Mt Pelerin neo-liberal class Indeed, it probably was not until the emergence of the Progressive Democrats as a political party in the mid 1980s that neo-liberalism found *organised* expression in an Irish context The

absence of transparent links does not invalidate the examination of the question of neo-liberal influence in an Irish context, though, for neo-liberalism can be understood as a structural shift (see Williams and Taylor, 2000) which delimits the agency of nation-state - and, hypothetically, nation-state media - actors. In that respect, the fact that Ireland was recently bestowed with the accolade of the sixth best country for “freedom” by an Irish based neo-liberal think tank²⁶ suggests the clear relevance of the research question to an Irish cultural context.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has considered the question of ideology. It offered an overview of the different critical and descriptive conceptions of ideology, outlined a framework for an understanding of neo-liberalism as ideology and showed how its ascent was linked to the agency of the media. The analytical approach of this study is grounded in ideological critique and treats ideology as a matter of, in part, discourse. Prefaced by a broader overview of the field of media studies, the issue of how one might formally investigate the question of neo-liberal influence in media is addressed in chapters 3 and

4

²⁶ According to *The Open Republic*, a recently launched Irish neo-liberal think tank, “The Republic [of Ireland] ranks sixth among economically free jurisdictions globally, according to the [CATO Institute compiled] *Economic Freedom of the World 2001 Annual Report*” (*The Irish Times*, April 20th, 2001).

PART 2

THEORIES & METHODS

Chapter 3 – Analysing media

3.1 Introduction

Even a casual perusal of media studies anthologies will indicate that one of the most salient characteristics of the field is its eclecticism (see Boyd Barrett and Newbold, 1995). Critical discourse analysis, reception studies and conversation analysis are but a sample of analytical approaches now practiced within a discipline, or field, that one could say - either in its favour or censure - has “never really acquired an institutional identity strong enough to keep its boundaries tidy” (Corner et al, 1997: 3, Livingstone, 1994: 36). This study takes the view (see Fairclough, 1995, Van Dijk, 1998, Halloran, 1995) that this fluid and creative identity is to the field’s academic credit and the basis of any critically engaged, and institutionally relevant, media research (see Halloran, 1998: 30).

Historically, the field of media studies and mass communications research (I refer to both terms interchangeably) has evolved around two broad and often quite polarised traditions: the “administrative” and the “critical” (see Livingstone, 1997: 23). It has its geographical centres too, with the administrative tradition largely associated with American media research, and the Marxian inspired critical approach much more influential in Europe. Lumping all the contributions to the field under a catch-all dichotomy is something of a blanket reduction (see Curran, 1995, Hardt 1995), and one would not want to assume an absence of dialogue, or overlap, between both traditions (see Livingstone, 1997: 23, Katz, 1987: 31). Nevertheless, it remains a useful, and widely invoked, shorthand, for understanding the evolution of media analysis (see Corner, Schlesinger and Silverstone, 1995).

This chapter offers a part methodological and part theoretical overview of different analytical approaches to analysing media. Although they overlap in various ways, the different approaches are listed here under four broad headers: (a) the American empirical tradition, (b) ideological critique, (c) sociology of media qualitative turns and

(d) analysing media discourse Priority is given to those methods and theories of most relevance to the analytical approach adopted in this study

3.2 The American empirical tradition

The origins of mass communications research, as a distinct field of enquiry, goes back to 1940s and 1950s America and is closely entwined with the historical arrival of mass media as fora of cultural and political importance (see Hardt, 1995, Lazarsfeld, 1952) It was in this context that a distinctly empirical led approach to the study of mass communications developed, which set out to challenge the so called “hypodermic” (see Gunter, 2000 10), or “magic bullet” (see Boyd-Barrett, 1995 69) assumptions of the Frankfurt school critical theorists, whose abstract theoretical models were criticised for assuming that the media had “the power to ‘inject’ a repressive ideology directed into the consciousness of the masses” (Gunter, 2000 10) ²⁸

Modelled on the hard sciences, the philosophical and epistemological challenge to the Marxian (see below) assumption of media omnipotence came from the explanatory schema then en vogue amongst social scientists Various referred to as “positivist”, “behaviourist”, “empirical” and “administrative” (see Gunter, 2000, Hall, 1980, Gitlin, 1995), this model of communication saw itself, in Schramm’s words, as “a science of human communication” (Hardt, 1995 11) – an epistemological approach which, in its simplest, most skeletal form, viewed communication as a “linear, one way process” measurable in terms of an elementary “stimulus-response model” (ibid 11) Criticised from the outset for its neglect of theory, practitioners of this approach maintained, in their defence, that they “were deeply interested in theory, but in the theory they can test” (ibid 11) The empirical approach certainly rejects the kind of grand-theoretical analysis offered by the Frankfurt School Yet, as Curran, Gurevitch and Woollacott (1995) argue, one should, therefore, not assume that it “constitutes an ‘atheoretical’ approach on the contrary, empirical communications research is based upon theoretical

²⁸ This is very much the conventional narrative used to explain the American origins of mass communications research But it is not without challenge (see Hardt, 1995)

models of society even if these are often unexamined and unstated” (Curran, Gurevitch and Woollacott, 1995 106)

The model of society on which the empirical approach is based is essentially a “pluralist”, liberal one (see Boyd and Barrett, 1995, Gitlin, 1995), for it is firmly grounded in the confident ability of a market led order to guarantee media choice and diversity “free” from the impediments and constraints of propaganda. Hence, the empirical approach has, what one might call a “hermeneutic of trust” (see Scannell, 1998) towards the media industry, which is often in strong accord with the imperatives of policy practitioners themselves. It is perhaps here, around this trust/suspicion axis, that the critical/administrative dichotomy is most acute, and when the “the dominant [empirical] paradigm” (see Gitlin, 1995) was subject to a critical assault in the late 1960s and 1970s, the most acerbic criticisms were often directed against its tacit subservience to policy imperatives (see below). Gitlin’s critique is a case in point.

We find, in particular, *an administrative point of view* [italics in original] rooted in academic sociology’s ideological assimilation into modern capitalism and its institutional *rapprochement* with major foundations and corporations in an oligopolistic high-consumption society, we find a concordant marketing orientation, in which the emphasis on a commercially-useful audience research flourishes, and we find, curiously, a justifying social democratic ideology (ibid 29)

Not surprisingly, those in defence of the tradition have taken issue with much of this critique. Halloran cautions against any blanket characterisation of the empirical paradigm as “slavishly administrative” (Halloran, 1995 35) and Katz accuses critics of sometimes mis-framing their target (see Katz, 1987). Yet Gitlin’s critique does pinpoint the tacit theoretical assumptions of mass communications research as generally practiced up until the 1970s and which, even today, still informs the bulk of American media research (Newbold, 1995 118).

Despite its philosophical and epistemological strictures, the work carried out within the empirical tradition was, and continues to be, methodologically rich and varied. The methodological approaches can be summarised under three main headers - the same triumvirate which Lazarsfeld (one of the early pioneers) used to describe the field in 1952 (see Lazarsfeld, 1952: 482) - (a) audience analysis,²⁸ (b) effects analysis²⁹ - and most importantly in terms of this study - (c) content analysis.

Content Analysis

Content analysis has its origins in the early research programmes of mass communications scholars like Lasswell (see Hansen et al, 1998, Janowitz, 1968). Based around a “quantitative” approach to the analysis of media content, Berelson’s classic 1952 definition offered, and still offers (see McChesney, 2000), the basic analytical blueprint:

Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication [italics in original] (Berelson, 1999: 204)

In Priest’s view, quantitative content analysis “must begin with a well-defined research problem that determines the questions and categories of interest” (Priest, 1996: 98). The point is given emphasis by Berelson, who describes “the formulation and definition of appropriate categories” as of “central importance” (Berelson, 1999: 206), for “Content Analysis stands or falls by its categories” (ibid: 205). The emphasis thereafter is on (narrowly defined) “scientific *method*” (200). In that respect, Berelson’s basic definition exemplifies the self-consciously scientific rhetoric in which a lot of content analysis is

²⁸ Essentially advertiser driven, audience analysis focuses on acquiring elementary quantitative data about audience consumption patterns typically through postal surveys, telephone surveys, personal interviews, trend studies, cohort analysis, panel studies etc. (see Gunter, 2000: 22-41)

²⁹ Largely defined by its rejection of Frankfurt School assumptions, effects analysis became the “new orthodoxy” from the 1950s onwards and dominated the field of mass communications research up until the 1970s (see Curran, James et al, 1995). Drawing on a similar range of methodologies to those applied in audience research, its sceptical view of media effects, and media power, is still best captured by Berelson’s famous dictum: “Some kinds of *communication* [italics in original] on some kinds of *issues*, brought to the attention of some kinds of *people* under some kinds of *conditions*, have some kinds of *effects*” (Klapper, 1963: 518, see also Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1995, Katz, 1987, Klapper, 1963)

carried out, and sometimes reinforces the perception that, as a mode of analysis, it is bound to a positivist and quantitative template, which is exclusively interested in *measurable* media content. Gunter (2000), for instance, describes content analysis as a “*purely* [italics added] quantitative” mode of analysis, concerned with “manifest content only” (Gunter, 2000: 56). Yet, while the rhetorical emphasis on “sampling”, “inter-coding reliability” and “data analysis”, all serve as signifiers of a detached, “scientific” credo, Hansen et al. (1998) remind us that “content analysis, of course, could never be objective in a ‘value-free’ sense of the word” (ibid.: 95), because

the content analyst starts by delineating certain dimensions or aspects of text for analysis, and in doing so, he or she is of course also making a choice – subjective, albeit generally informed by the framework and ideas which circumscribes his or her research – and indicating that the dimensions chosen for analysis are the most important or significant aspects to look for (ibid.: 95).³⁰

The debunking of content analysis’ confident “scientific” epistemology is nothing new. Revisiting Lasswell’s contribution, Janowitz criticises content analysis – as typically practiced – on fundamental grounds. He accuses Berelson and others of a “pervasive reductionism” (Janowitz, 1968: 653) and “limit[ing] the operational dimensions of content analysis to manifest content – a term which, despite its wide usage, remains highly ambiguous” (ibid.: 647). Indeed, writing in 1952, Kracauer maintains that an “overemphasis on quantification tends to lessen the accuracy of analysis” (Kracauer, 1952: 631) and that “quantitative analysis is more ‘impressionistic’ than its champions are inclined to admit” (ibid.: 636). Yet some contemporary practitioners argue that many of the typical indictments of content analysis, on theoretical grounds, are misplaced and misunderstand what is by definition a method not a theory, which in no way precludes its integration into richer, qualitative theoretical frameworks with the means to address questions of “significance” outside the competence of a strictly quantitative remit (see Hansen et al., 1998). In its favour, this defence of content analysis is consistent with a growing realisation that quantitative and qualitative content based methods are far from mutually exclusive and that, irrespective of the epistemic

³⁰ This assertion could, of course, be generically applied to most academic research.

posture of the researcher, a marriage of both can make for good research (see Fairclough and Chouliaraki, 1999 154, Eldridge, 2000) The point is well made by Hansen et al (1998)

Rather than emphasising its alleged incompatibility with other more qualitative approaches (such as semiotics, structuralist analysis, discourse analysis) we wish to stress that content analysis is and should be enriched by the theoretical framework offered by other more qualitative approaches, while bringing to these a methodological rigour, prescriptions for use, and systematicity rarely found in many of the more qualitative approaches (Hansen et al, 1998 91)

In spite of its dull epistemological credentials, content analysis has a broad appeal and is the “empirical” approach of most relevance to this study (what is essentially an examination of Irish based media *content*) Although I ultimately opt for the “depth theory” (see Scannell, 1998) of a critical discourse analysis approach³¹, this is not to preclude the use of elementary quantitative techniques (like the counting of sources in chapters 5 and 6), or the referencing of agenda-setting methods (see below) where helpful and appropriate It is to suggest, however, that the analysis of neo-liberal influence needs to be carried out at a deeper, subterranean level (at a level which probes the ideological and discursive assumptions *underpinning* media treatment of political economy issues), and cannot rely on a method, and a research tradition, which is best orientated towards a systematic examination of manifest content

Agenda-setting analysis

With its origins in the American behavioural tradition, agenda-setting research is essentially an attempt to link content and effects analysis The 1972 formulation of the agenda-setting hypothesis by McCombs et al was a seminal contribution

³¹ The very use of the terms “content analysis” and “discourse analysis” can be read as signifiers of the administrative/critical split

[the] hypothesized agenda-setting function of the mass media is most succinctly stated by Cohen, who noted that the press 'may not be successful much of the time in telling people to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about' While the mass media may have little influence on the direction or intensity of attitudes, it is hypothesized that the mass media set the agenda for each political campaign, influencing the salience of attitudes towards the political issues (McCombs et al, 1972 177)

Dearing and Rogers (1996) offer an updated definition "The *agenda-setting process* [italics in original] is an ongoing issue competition among issue proponents to gain the attention of media professionals, the public and policy elites Agenda-setting offers an explanation of why information about certain issues, and not other issues, is available to the public in a democracy, how public opinion is shaped, and why certain issues are addressed through policy actions while other issues are not" (Dearing and Rogers, 1996 1-2) They identify three distinct agenda-setting elements, each with their own research tradition "The agenda-setting process is composed of the media agenda, the public agenda, and the policy agenda, and the interrelationships among these three elements" (ibid 5) The "fundamental hypothesis" of agenda setting analysis, in Kwansah-Aidoo's (2003) view, is that "the public learns the relative importance of issues from the mass media" (Kwansah-Aidoo, 2003 47)

Katz, in a 1987 review of the mass communications field, describes agenda-setting research as one of the most significant challenges to the dominant "limited effects" (Katz, 1987 26) paradigm and a conceptual bridge to work done in the critical tradition (ibid 29) Similarly, in appealing for a "research détente" (Blumler, 1995 49) between (blanket) European and American approaches to mass communications research, Blumler insists "a more full and rounded version of agenda-setting still waits in the wings to be called into the research stage" (ibid 49) Agenda-setting's continued reliance on quantitative methods, and behaviourist modelling techniques, is one obstacle to progress "Despite the giant strides agenda-setting research has made since the first study [McCombs et al – see above], it still relies heavily on quantitative methods", Kwansah-Aidoo (2001) suggests, and "does not allow for the establishment of a

credible cause and effect relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda” (Kwansah-Aidoo, 2001: 522). Arguing for a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, he recommends that “agenda-setting incorporates some qualitative methods into its overall research methodology to back up quantitative data” and which can “help provide the evidence that will form the basis for a real and time-tested theory of agenda-setting” (ibid: 534).

The appeal has been heeded by many (see Werder, 2002, Kwansah-Aidoo, 2003, Dearing and Rogers, 1996, Nelson et al 1997) and one of the more significant developments in recent agenda-setting research is its synthesis with a qualitative framing analysis approach (see below). Both approaches are relevant to this study’s examination of the print media treatment of two European Union summits in chapter 5, which situates the place, and framing, of an agenda of “economic reform” in the overall summit and news agendas.

3.3 Ideological critique

As we have already seen in chapter 2, ideology is quite a problematic term. Understanding how ideology works cannot be reduced to a description of its essentialist qualities, and an over-emphasis on (ideological) consciousness to the detriment of (ideological) practice has arguably been a failing of much Marxist-influenced ideological critique in the past. The *raison d’être* for applying ideological critique (or what is sometimes called “critical theory” (see Billig, 2000)) to the field of media analysis was made clear in the first book publication by the Glasgow Media Group, which, along with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, was one of the forerunners in the development of a critical approach to media analysis.³²

³² The methodologies of the Glasgow and Birmingham schools should not, however, be spoken of in singular terms. Although they had Marx in common as a theoretical source, the methodologies of both schools were, initially at least, rather different. Content analysis complemented by some interviewing and covert participant observation was the research method favoured by the Glasgow group (see Eldridge 2000: 115), while cultural studies, drawing on semiotics in particular, was the preferred framework of the Birmingham School (see Hall 1984: 117).

Contrary to the claims, conventions and culture of television journalism, the news is not a neutral product. For television news is a cultural artefact, it is a sequence of socially manufactured messages, which carry many of the culturally dominant assumptions of our society. From the accents of the newscasters to the vocabulary of camera angles, from who gets on and what questions they are asked, via selection of stories to presentation of bulletins, the news is a highly mediated product (GMG 1976, P. 1) (in Eldridge, 2000, 113)

It is a research tradition which draws heavily on the mass society assumptions of the Frankfurt School (see Adorno and Horkheimer, 1993), which looks on culture as one of the key means of legitimising, and naturalising, the capitalist order. It is grounded, too, in the work of Marxian influenced cultural theorists like Althusser (1994) and Williams (1993) who, working with a Gramscian framework (see chapter 2), examine how ruling elites secure the passive consent of the masses. In short, this approach sees itself as a necessary critical antidote to a naive journalistic and academic empiricism which tacitly promotes the “‘common sense’ view that television news is a neutral product” (Eldridge, 2000: 114). Furthermore, it critically interrogates the cult of “professional individualism” (see Schlesinger, 1987) which implicitly downplays the close working relationships between media and political elites.³³ Summarising the Birmingham media group’s break with the “mainstream traditions and concerns of ‘mass-communications research’, as defined largely by American empirical social science practice” (Hall, 1984: 117), Hall makes four observations:

- (a) The group “broke with the models of ‘direct [media] influence’”,
- (b) It “challenged the notions of media texts as ‘transparent’ bearers of meaning”,
- (c) It “broke with the passive and undifferentiated conceptions of the ‘audience’ as it has largely appeared in traditional research”,
- (d) The role of the media in propagating “dominant ideological definitions and representations” now became central (ibid: 117)

³³ For example, one has only to consider the “embeddedness” of broadcasting units in the “coalition” side during the recent Gulf War.

Encoding-decoding model

The Birmingham School was “highly influential” (Scannell, 1998 253) in promoting a mode of analysis - “a mix of semiotic theory, Marxist aesthetics and literary criticism” - which viewed media products “as texts to be subjected to critical readings of their ideological effectivity” (Scannell 1998 253-254) One particularly important research contribution, in this respect, was Hall’s formulation of the so called encoding/decoding model (Hall, 1984 132-138), which treats meaning as the *co-creation* of producer and audience Working within a semiotic framework (see below), Hall shows how media texts are first *coded* (for meaning) by media producers, and then *decoded* (for meaning) by media audiences Drawing on Barthes, Hall describes these codes as

the means by which power and ideology are made to signify in particular discourses They refer signs to the ‘maps of meaning’ into which any culture is classified, and those ‘maps of social reality’ have the whole range of social meanings, practices, and usages, power and interest ‘written in’ to them (134)

Hall’s model shows how meaning is not pre-determined, “but the product of an articulation between two distinct moments” (136) In other words, “the moment of encoding cannot ‘guarantee’ that of decoding”, as “there will be highly varied degrees of symmetry (‘understanding’ and ‘misunderstanding’) between the encoder-producer and the decoder-receiver” (Allan, 1998 115) Based on these assumptions, Hall outlines “three hypothetical positions from which decodings may be constructed” (ibid 115)

- (a) Dominant-hegemonic The viewer/reader “decodes its message in alignment with its encoding” and accepts “the *authoritative, impartial* and *professional* signification of the news event as perfectly *obvious* or *natural*” [italics in original]

- (b) Negotiated “The viewer recognizes as *appropriate* the general legitimacy of the preferred definition, but identifies certain discrepancies or ‘exceptions to the rule’ within a specific situational context”

- (c) Oppositional “The viewer directly counters the logic of the dominant hegemonic position in such a manner that the authority of its definition is directly challenged” (ibid 115)

What these semiotic models lacked in Scannell’s view - a staple post-modernist criticism (see Eagleton, 1992 193-224) - “was any specific linguistic input” (Scannell, 1998 254), which was later supplied by linguists, and discourse analysts, who set out to demonstrate how the “ideological [can be] ‘shown’ in various ways” (ibid 254 – see below) Yet Hall’s model did signal new ways forward for those working within the critical tradition as “the contextual situated production of meaning by media audiences, was now seen as an empirical social question which could not be answered by merely specifying the ideological dimensions of media output through the use of a critical semiotics” (Dahlgren, 51 1997)

Reception analysis

Reception studies “are a particular kind of audience research, distinctive in the amount of interest they show in questions to do with the symbolic and discursive organization of media output and those processes of meaning production by which understanding, significance and pleasure are generated” (Corner, 1996 280)³⁴ Following on from Hall’s model, Richardson (1998) gives a good description of reception theory’s epistemological base

The standpoint of reception analysis as this has developed since the early 1980s is one which takes issue with ‘textualism’ that is to say, it takes issue with the assumption that meaning is always and only a product of the text alone In reception analysis, the claim is that meaning is negotiated between a text and its

³⁴ Illustrating the gap between “critical” and “administrative” approaches to media analysis, reception theory was initially heralded by many within the “critical” tradition as a radical new departure that “emphasized the inconsistencies, contradictions, gaps and even internal oppositions within texts” (Curran, 1995 506) But this implicit dismissal of the “effects analysis” tradition has been firmly rejected by many (see Katz, 1987, Bruhn Jensen & Rosengren, 1995)

readers (viewers, listeners) Hence, since media readers are plural, readings are likewise plural The assumption of textual determinacy is rejected (Richardson, 1998 221)

Corner lists “three main aims” of reception analysis “1) confirmation of the effective transformation of dominant political and cultural values, 2) the counter-evidencing to this of levels of immunity and/or resistance among audience, and 3) the indication of complexity and variety in the production of mediated meanings” (Corner, 1996 284) Alasuutari, in turn, summarises the development of reception studies in terms of three distinct phases

- (a) early reception research – which took its cue from Hall’s encoding-decoding model (Alasuutari, 2002 327)
- (b) audience ethnography - which “involved a move away from the media to [understanding and profiling] the ‘interpretative communities’ of the everyday” (ibid 330)
- (c) a constructivist view – where the broader “objective is to get a grasp of our contemporary ‘media culture’; particularly as it can be seen in the role of the media in everyday life, both as a topic and as an activity structured by and structuring the discourses within which it is discussed”

Reception theory is of limited relevance to this study, as the question of how audiences formally “decode” and “receive” media coverage of political economy issues (see Richardson, 1998) is outside the scope of this study

Critiquing ideological critique

The contribution from linguistics (see below) and reception theory has done much to offset the residual limitations of early ideological critique Two weaknesses in particular the “rather monolithic view of the role of media in ideological reproduction”

(ibid 28) and what Van Dijk calls the theoretical reductionism “that characterizes virtually all past and contemporary approaches to ideology” (Van Dijk, 1998 2) Yet Scannell (1998) criticises ideological critique on more fundamental grounds, for its *a priori* assumption of a “hermeneutic of suspicion” towards media content. Contrasting this mode of hermeneutic enquiry with the “hermeneutic of trust” underpinning the “administrative tradition”, Scannell doesn’t argue for the wholesale abandonment of either hermeneutic. But he does criticise researchers’ tendency to unreflexively identify themselves with one ontology only. His conclusion - that one mode of being (see below) should never swamp all others - is worth quoting in full

These two ontologies, each with their particular hermeneutic (distrust/trust), should not be thought in an either/or fashion. *To privilege one at the expense or exclusion of the other is to distort the manifold reality of the world we live in* [italics added]. To clarify their differences is to restore that manifold reality. Language and media can be thought in various ways, but to think them truly will be to return them to the common world that each and both, in their different ways, reveal as the world that we and they (language and media) are in (Scannell, 1998 267)

Before leaving the general header of ideological critique, it is necessary to allude to three other approaches of relevance to this study

Political economy analysis

Although not exclusively Marxian (see Gandy, 1997), another theoretical approach widely practiced in the field of media research is political economy analysis. Boyd-Barrett (1995) gives a good summary of the term’s application in the field

The term ‘political economy’ in media research has a broadly ‘critical’ signification, often associated with macro-questions of media ownership and control, interlocking directorships and other factors that bring together media industries with other media and with other industries, and with political,

economic and social elites. It commonly looks at processes of consolidation, diversification, commercialization, internationalization, the working of the profit motive in the hunt for audiences and/or for advertising, and its consequences for media practices and media content (Boyd-Barrett, 1995: 186)

In McChesney's (2000) view, "the scholarly study of the political economy of communication entails two main dimensions. First, it addresses the nature of the relationship between media and communications systems on the one hand and the broader social structure of society. Second, the political economy of communication looks specifically at how ownership, support mechanisms (e.g. advertising) and government policies influence media behaviour and content" (McChesney, 2000: 110). Political economy analysis differs from other Marxian, particularly Althusserian (see Golding and Murdock, 1997a) strands, in its emphasis on the determining impact of the overall economic structure. Garnham (1990) argues that analysts like Murdock and Golding "rightly criticize Hall and claim that, on the contrary, the ways in which the mass media function as 'ideological apparatuses' can only be adequately understood when they are systematically related to their position as large scale commercial enterprises in a capitalist economic system and if these relations are examined historically" (Garnham, 1990: 28). Yet this criticism of Hall (and others) is by no means a rebuff of the culturalist - or, indeed, the discursive - approach (see below), for Golding and Murdock "wish to argue for a position that retains the necessary stress on the relative autonomy of cultural production which characterises the work of Williams and Hall, but which takes the question of economic determination as a central category and focus of analysis" (Golding and Murdock, 1997b: 488). Although criticised by culturalists, in turn, for its own conceptual over-emphasis - what has been described as its rather "vulgar materialism and economic determinism" (Hall, 1995: 339) - political economy's sharp focus on questions such as media ownership, media reliance on advertising and media institutions' fundamental profit orientation, has proved a very useful framework for the analysis of media institutions and practices (see Smythe, 1997, Herman and McChesney 1997,), particularly when complemented, as it sometimes is (see Katz, 1987), with an analysis of the determining impact of technology on media practices.

The propaganda model

One particularly influential variant of a political economy approach is the propaganda model of Herman and Chomsky, which “traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests [especially corporate ones] to get their messages across to the public (Herman and Chomsky, 1994: 2)” The model identifies five broad filters (beyond the conventional idea of a “gate-keeping” filter (see Carter, 1958)) determining the effective definition of news: the “crucial structural factors [which] derive from the fact that the dominant media are firmly embedded in the market system” (Herman, 2000, 101). It suggests “that the five factors involved – ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak and anti-communist ideology³⁵ – work as ‘filters’ through which information must pass, and that individually and often in cumulative fashion they greatly influence media choices. In short, the propaganda model describes a decentralized and non-conspiratorial market system of control and processing” (ibid: 102). Although routinely dismissed by some as “conspiracy theory” (Schudson, 1996: 145), and criticised as “too mechanical and functionalist” (Herman, 2000: 107) by others, Klaehn, in a recent reassessment of the model, suggests it remains a “forceful and convincing” critique of how “journalistic self-censorship” works in the contemporary world (Klaehn, 2002: 173).

Public sphere analysis

Another analytical approach critical of the effects of capitalist structures is, following Habermas (1999), known as “public sphere” analysis. Herman and McChesney describe the “public sphere” as “all the places and [typically civil society] forums where issues of importance to a political community are discussed and debated, and where information is presented that is essential to citizen participation in community life”

³⁵ Reviewing the model in 2000, Herman suggests anti-communist ideology has been recast as “an almost religious faith in the market – at least among the elite” (Herman, 2000: 109).

(Herman and McChesney, 1997: 3) In their view, “the media are the pre-eminent vehicles of communication through which the public participates in the political process, and the quality of their contribution to the public sphere is an important determinant of the quality of democracy” (ibid: 40) Reviewing current “global media” ownership patterns, they outline two broad threats to the “integrity and quality of the public sphere” direct “government control” and “the bias and self-censorship of private systems of control” (ibid: 4)

As with political economy research, public sphere analysis is concerned with the question of media ownership and is explicitly committed to developing a “set of social relations which are distinctly political rather than economic” (Garnham, 1995: 245) It “insists on the analytic centrality of reasoned, critical discourse” (Dahlgren, 2002: 195) and aspires towards the creation of public discursive spaces which are free from the abuses, and excesses, of unequally distributed power. In addition, it is severely critical of a market dominated media context in which “the citizen is appealed to as a private individual [and consumer] rather than as a member of a public, within a privatized domestic sphere rather than within that of public life” (Garnham, 1995: 247) Public sphere theory is regularly drawn on by normative analyses of media performance (see McQuail, 1996, Deacon and Monk, 2001) and is widely invoked in the field of critical discourse analysis (see Preteasa, 2002, Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) It has been criticised on several grounds for its “virtual representation of a fictive [public] whole” (Keane, 1995: 263), Enlightenment nostalgia (see Curran, 1996) and for its idealised conception of language use (see Žižek, 2002, Bourdieu, 1991)

This study is wholeheartedly engaged with the subject of ideology. The critical discourse analysis theoretical framework (see chapter 4) applied in this study can be understood as a discourse based outcome of the ideological critique tradition.

3.4 The sociology of media qualitative turns

Much of the material reviewed in this section could be considered under the header of ideological critique, because, as Lindlof observes, the “science of qualitative research” is “thoroughly interested in its engagement with ideology” (Lindlof, 1995: 56). Nevertheless, the matter of “qualitative turns” is worthy of a header in its own right, primarily because of the sheer diversity of epistemologies and methodologies involved, many of which do not fit neatly under the banner of (politically engaged) ideological critique.

Lindlof (1995) outlines a crude, but useful, schema for understanding the qualitative break from quantitative orthodoxy and the “dominant paradigm in media sociology” (Gitlin, 1995).

<u>Quantitative</u>	<i>Versus</i>	<u>Qualitative</u>
Exact		Heremeneutical solutions
Determinacy		Agency
Representation		Interpretation
Objective Knowledge		Ideology

Qualitative research is negatively defined by its quantitative Other. “Qualitative methods are designed to explore and assess things that cannot easily be summarised numerically”, suggests Priest, and “qualitative researchers often reject the positivist assumption that everything of interest can be accurately measured” (Priest, 1996: 5). Arguing for a “qualitative” approach to content analysis as early as 1952, Kracauer likewise maintains that “qualitative exegesis penetrates textual dimensions which are completely inaccessible to quantitative techniques” (Kracauer, 1952: 639) and “unlike quantitative techniques, which draw guiltily upon hasty and incomplete impressionistic judgements, qualitative analysis is frankly and resolutely impressionistic” (ibid: 640). Yet the recent proliferation of qualitative methods in the field of mass communications

research has been criticised for encouraging dilettante academic practice. The objection is sharply observed by Halloran (1998)

Having rightly rejected the absolutism of positivism and all its universalistic implications for research, we must be careful not to jump out of the frying pan into the fire. In rejecting a position there is no logical necessity to adopt wholeheartedly its mirror opposite. Yet some do this. The danger in this thinking, knee-jerk reaction is that knowledge is reduced to mere perspectivalism – a riot of subjective visions – and a form of anarchy prevails. There are many examples today, inside and outside our particular field, which demonstrate the tyranny of the absolutism of non-absolutism, where anything goes and where systematic, disciplined research is dismissed (Halloran, 1998: 30)

Acknowledging these concerns, Carey nevertheless defends the empirical *bona fides* of qualitative research. Qualitative analysis, or what he broadly calls “cultural studies” (see below), “runs the risk of falling into a viscous relativism”, but it should be seen “more positively, [as] an attempt to bypass the rather abstracted empiricism of behavioural studies and the ethereal apparatus of formal theories and to descend deeper into the empirical world” (Carey, 1995: 371)

Several “impressionistic rather than numerically defined” (Gunter, 2000: 5) research methods and paradigms, have had an important philosophical influence on the way media content, and its effects, are now analysed. The most significant of these qualitative approaches (which are often tacitly synthesised together in practice) are considered briefly below.

Hermeneutics

Simply meaning “interpretation” or “interpretative understanding”, hermeneutics is a term synonymous with the qualitative turn in sociological research and the broader humanistic tradition of interpretative sociology (see Mueller-Vollmer, 1986). Although

“originally used [to describe a] method for the interpretation of biblical texts” (Foss et al, 1991: 248), hermeneutics has since been drawn on by those working on textual exposition in an array of fields. One of the most influential exponents of the hermeneutical tradition in a social science and communications context is Habermas, who regards hermeneutics as an alternative “method or way of knowing for the social sciences” (ibid: 248), a “historical and critical metatheory” grounded in the hermeneutical categories of language, communication and interaction (Mueller-Vollmer, 1986: 43). In some ways a sister term of discourse and rhetoric (see below), hermeneutics is a concept which has been fruitfully applied in media analysis (see Gunter, 2000, Scannell, 1998), though the epistemic, and ideological, posture of the researcher (be it Marxian, Freudian, Feminist etc.) has sometimes been criticised for over-determining the nature of the interpretative attention.³⁶

Cultural studies

Although the influence of cultural studies, particularly the Birmingham School, was touched on already (see above), its vast influence in the field of media studies necessitates an addendum. Cultural studies “is not an academic discipline quite like others”, in that “it “possesses neither a well defined methodology nor clearly demarcated fields of investigation” (Duning, 1993: 1). Consequently, its application in the field of media research is characteristically loose - which is to its credit, argues Dahlgren, who describes cultural studies as drawing on long established traditions of social scientific and humanistic enquiry, as well as a “whole alignment of post-positivistic trajectories, including critical theory, hermeneutics, feminism and poststructuralism” (Dahlgren, 1993: 50). Cultural studies, as practiced, is an eclectic, post-modernist melange of different qualitative strands³⁷, and has produced some notable analyses of media content and audience reception (see Ang, 1993; Allor, 1995; Radway, 1993). In addition, key concepts like cultural codes, audience agency and textual polysemy are now widely established axioms of communications research.

³⁶ The hermeneutical tradition is sometimes marked by a tension between disinterested, and critically engaged, modes of inquiry (see Mueller-Vollmer, 1986).

³⁷ Interestingly, cultural studies has recently had calls, from within its own camp, to take the empirical strands of orthodox macro sociology more seriously (see Dahlgren, 1997: 58).

Cultural studies has sometimes been criticised, though, for its tendency to immerse itself in a critical, and sometimes smugly apolitical (though self-imagined as radical, see Frank, 2000) quagmire and neglect, what Habermas calls, the need for ““positive knowledge””, and “larger emancipatory and reconstructive visions on which to base decisions and practices” (Dahlgren, 1993 59)

Phenomenology

Describing phenomenology as a “way of seeing” (Scannell, 1996 170) which has been neglected by media researchers, Scannell is one of the foremost advocates of phenomenological approaches to the analysis of media (see Scannell, 1996, Scannell, 1998) As a mode of philosophical enquiry, phenomenology is primarily concerned with the question of “being” (see Scannell, 1996), or what Heidegger, one its most influential proponents, calls the “thingness of things” (see Heidegger, 1975) Phenomenology is concerned with the question of consciousness, but, unlike philosophical idealism, assumes that “consciousness is always a consciousness about something” (Lindlof, 1995 32) Transposed to the landscape of media research, Scannell maintains that a phenomenological approach would be primarily concerned with understanding media’s “being in the world” (Scannell, 1996 1) Significantly, he explicitly distinguishes it from the “depth theories” (Scannell, 1998 256) of ideological critique and psychoanalysis, which, in his view, sometimes cultivate a “being in the [researcher’s] head” which privileges “consciousness at the expense of being in the world” (ibid 262)

Ethnography

Originally associated with the work of anthropologists in the 1920s, ethnography, simply put, means people (“ethno”) describing (“graphy”) (Lindlof, 1995 20) It is a form of naturalistic enquiry which doesn’t restrict itself to any “single method or type of data analysis”, but is primarily concerned with “participant observation” (ibid 19) One

of the most influential ethnographic studies of the media was Schlesinger's analysis of BBC television news production, where he set out to offer a "theoretically informed observation of the social practice of cultural production" by observing BBC backroom staff in the very production of its news over various time intervals from 1972 to 1976 (Schlesinger, 1987 xxxiii). The outstanding merit of this approach, argues Schlesinger, is that in contrast to external analyses of (finished) media products, like discourse and content analysis, an ethnographic mode of inquiry is "able to make inferences about the actual process of production inside cultural institutions and organisations" and, therefore, offers insights on "journalistic culture and the practices which sustain it" (ibid xxxii) (for an example of an ethnographic approach in an Irish media context, see Devereux, 1998). Ethnographic evidence, in the sense meant by Schlesinger, is outside the content based remit of this study.

Ethnomethodology

Simply put, ethnomethodology seeks to understand "how the taken for granted character of everyday life is accomplished" (Lindlof, 1995 36). It "refers not to scientific methodology but to the methods people use to construct sensible, orderly ways of doing things" (ibid 36). Drawing on the work of social phenomenologists like Schutz (see Tuchman, 1978 14), ethnomethodology is essentially concerned with understanding how intersubjectivity is achieved. It has had a particularly strong influence on the branch of discourse (and media) research known as conversation analysis (see below), which, instead of framing its work around prior hypotheses, concerns itself with an inductive search for the regularities that emerge out of the moment to moment understanding between conversation participants (see Greatbatch, 1998). Ethnomethodology has been described as a non-functional kind of ethnography (see below), in that, while concerned with participant observation, it is less concerned with the socially "functional status" of the observed activity (which is one reason why it has been criticised for being too solipsistic, relativistic and politically disengaged (see, Lindlof, 1998 37)).

Methodological Turns

The “qualitative turn” saw the application of a whole range of practical methodological techniques for the qualitative analysis of media. Often dealing in a more expansive way with the traditional research concerns of audience and media effects, these techniques include focus groups, field observation, case studies and intensive interviews (see Gunter, 2000). Wimmer and Dominick list five practical ways in which these qualitative methods differ from quantitative approaches: (a) *Role of the researcher* - “The qualitative researcher is an integral part of the data, in fact without the active participation of the researcher, no data exists”, (b) *Design* - “the design evolves during the research, it can be adjusted or changed as it progresses”, (c) *Setting* - “Qualitative researchers conduct their studies in the field, in natural surroundings. They try to capture the normal flow of events, without trying to control the extraneous variables”, (d) *Measurement instruments* - “the investigator is the instrument, no other individual could fill in for the qualitative researcher” and (e) *Theory Building* - “theory is ‘data driven’ and emerges from the data as they are collected” (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991: 139-140).

This study’s analysis of media content, or what it prefers to describe as media discourse, can be seen as part of this sociological and methodological turn. Since an amalgam of discourse based qualitative approaches informs the theoretical and methodological framework applied in this study, the topic of media discourse now merits a header in its own right.

3.5 Analysing media discourse

Media discourse can be analysed from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives. The approaches of most relevance to the sociological inclination of this study can be outlined as follows:

Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis, like the term discourse itself, can be conceptually understood in two ways. The first is grounded in the formal linguistic, and socio-linguistic, analysis of “spoken or written language use” (Fairclough, 1995: 55) and is essentially concerned with the “structural” (see Fowler, 1991: 27) analysis of language use in its own right. As Fairclough suggests, “the strength of this work is its attention to linguistic detail, to the form and ‘texture’ of texts” (ibid: 21). This approach has been criticised by sociologists like Bourdieu, however, who suggest that the “difficulty” with “this kind of ‘internal analysis’” is “the difficulty that vitiates all ‘formalist’ approach to language they take for granted but fail to take account of the social-historical conditions within which the object of analysis is produced, constructed and received” (Bourdieu, 1991: 28-29).

Following Bourdieu, the second conception of discourse, and the one underpinning this study, takes a much more expansive definition of the term and attempts to critically situate language use, indeed all forms of semiosis, in terms of social, cultural and political practice (for a particularly broad definition of discourse see Foucault, 1995). What is called critical discourse analysis (CDA) is, methodologically at least, basically an amalgam of various antecedent approaches to the analysis of discourse, including discourse analysis, social semiotics, sociolinguistics (see Fairclough, 1995), systematic functional linguistics and critical linguistics (see Fowler, 1991, Halliday 1994). There is no unanimity about what precisely constitutes CDA (see Chouharaoui and Fairclough, 1999, Jager, 2001, Wodak, 2001, Scollon, 2001), but it can be broadly defined as “the attempt to show systematic links between texts, institutional discourse practices, and sociocultural practices” (Fairclough, 1995: 17). It therefore involves, in Fairclough’s view, the “mapping [of] three different sorts of analysis on to one another” (Fairclough, 1998: 144), which he summarises as the

- Analysis of texts (spoken, written, or involving a combination of semiotic modalities, e.g. televisual texts),
- Analysis of discourse practices of text production, distribution and consumption,

- Analysis of social and cultural practices which frame discourse practices and texts (ibid 144)

Although different in emphasis, Van Dijk offers a similarly expansive, and ambitious, definition of discourse analysis. His work is particularly concerned (see chapter 2) with the development of a sociocognitive theory of ideology “embedded in a discourse analytical framework” (Van Dijk, 1998b 22). Insisting that there “is no one, standard way to do critical discourse analysis”, Van Dijk suggests that “the following practical suggestions may be derived for doing ideological analysis

- (a) Examine the context of the discourse,
- (b) Analysis of which groups, power relations and conflicts are involved
- (c) Look for positive and negative opinions about US and Them
- (d) Spell out the presupposed and the implied
- (e) Examine all formal structures that (de)emphasize polarized group opinions” (Van Dijk, 1998 61)

CDA, as formulated by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), is the broad theoretical framework underpinning this study and is examined more closely in chapter 4. I want to end this particular section by reflecting briefly on the signification of the “critical” tag itself. Billig argues that while “critical” paradigms were, from their inception, largely defined by their “otherness” to academic orthodoxy, the recent success of the critical “brand label” brings with it the danger that “critical” researchers may be as unreflexive in appraising their own “critical” precepts as those working within the so called uncritical academic paradigms (Billig, 2000 291-192). In short, Billig suggests that “our [he positions himself within the critical paradigm] success is potentially as troubling as the success of the Other” (ibid 292). Billig’s point is, I suggest, an important one, because, irrespective of the epistemic posture of the researcher, it affirms the need for reflexivity on their part toward the object of analysis (see chapter 4).

Rhetoric

In his overview of qualitative approaches to analysing media content, Gunter describes rhetorical analysis as “a kind of stylistic analysis – the organization as well as the presentation of a message and the choices the communicator has made are at the core of this type of analysis. It focuses on distinctive features such as composition, form, use of metaphors and structure of argumentation or reasoning” (Gunter, 2000: 89). Rhetoric is an important part of the theoretical framework applied in this study (see chapter 4). My understanding of the term is much broader than Gunter’s, however, and draws primarily on the work of Kenneth Burke (see Burke 1969a, Burke, 1969b). Burke defines rhetoric as “the use of words [and symbols] by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents” (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 1991: 173). McCloskey’s definition is also useful. She describes rhetoric as the economics of language: the apportioning of linguistic means to meet certain, *audience conscious* ends (see McCloskey, 1985). Rhetoric, as traditionally understood, was synonymous with the Aristotelian notion of persuasion (see Aristotle, 1994). This study’s understanding of rhetoric and use of Burke are examined more closely in chapter 4.

Semiotics

Semiotics, or semiology, is the study of the signs, signifiers and symbols used to produce meaning and signification (see Barthes, 2000). It has been a very influential form of media analysis, widely associated with cultural studies (see Dahlgren, 1997) and particularly the work of the Birmingham School (see above). Its appeal for earlier media researchers, keen to break with positivistic orthodoxy, has been summarised by Allan (1998):

The semiotic project offered the promise of breaking with those approaches which reduced language to a ‘neutral’ instrument through which ‘reality’ is expressed. By foregrounding the textual relations of signification, it suggested fascinating new ways to think through Williams’ theses concerning the lived hegemony of ‘common sense’. Moreover, semiotics allowed for the opening up

of what had become a rather empty postulate, namely that Televisual news texts are inherently meaningful, so as to unpack the *naturalness* of the ‘codes’ implicated in their representations of reality (Allan, 1998 113)

Basic semiotic concepts are drawn on, where illustrative, in the empirical analysis of chapters 5 to 8

Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis essentially considers “texts” as “stories” In Gunter’s words “the message is taken to be a presented or edited version of a sequence of events, of which elements are described and characterized as to their structure” Often impressionistic in style, narrative analysis sometimes treat news stories in terms of a loose combination of accessible short-term narratives and long-term narratives or mythologies (see Richardson, 1998) Narrative analysis is closely attuned to journalists’ instinctive need for narrative coherence for instance, in his analysis of the discourse structure of news stories using the (so called) journalists’ 5 W’s (what, where, when, who and why) and a H (how), Bell (1998) carries out what is effectively a kind of narrative analysis of news stories

Framing analysis

Framing analysis is an influential method and “research paradigm” (see Entman, 2002, 395) in the field of media studies (see Werner, 2002, Goodwin and Spittle, 2002) It examines the “key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images emphasized in a news narrative” (Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad, 2000 45) Drawing on the work of ethnomethodologists like Goffman (see Tannen, 1993), Gitlin defines news “frames” as the “principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters” (Allan, 1998 120) Like Tuchman (1978 192), he suggests these news frames have an important bearing on the routine way in which news is defined by journalists and audiences

largely unspoken and unacknowledged, [frames] organise the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports. Frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely to recognise it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences. Thus, for organisational reasons alone, frames are unavoidable, and journalism is organised to regulate their production (Allan, 1998: 121)

Iyengar's (1991) distinction between "episodic" and "thematic" framing (in some ways analogous to the agenda-setting distinction between issue based (diachronic) and temporally bound (synchronic) analysis (see Dearing and Rogers, 1996)) is given particular emphasis in the literature (see Devereaux, 1998). "Media stories typically exemplify either an episodic frame (focused on individual cases) or thematic frame (focused on broader social trends), with important consequences for how viewers make attributions about the causes of, and solutions to, such social problems as poverty and crime" (Nelson et al, 1997: 568). Werner (2002) affirms the distinction: "While thematic news framing is more objective, in-depth and analytic, it is also seen as dull and slow and, due to its 'subsurface' reporting style, vulnerable to charges of bias and editorializing. Episodic framing, on the other hand, is fast-paced, attention-grabbing and achieves 'objectivity' via focusing on the 'hard' news" (Werner, 2002, 222)

It has been said that "few studies to date have explicitly explored the link between framing and ideology" (Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad, 2000: 16). Framing analysis serves as an important link to the discursive (see Goodwin and Spittle, 2002) and ideological concerns of this study (see chapters 5 and 6). Its value is that it helps one locate the salient points of ideological emphasis in a broad sample of news media texts, and this study's application of Burke's hexad (see chapter 4) can be described as a quasi-framing analysis approach. Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad's affirmation of the link between ideology and framing analysis is especially apt: "the process of 'framing'

[is] a major mechanism through which 'ideological labour' is carried out in the media" (Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad, 2000: 46), as "both frames and ideologies

provide the people in a given society with a framework within which to [discursively] interpret events, define problems, define causes and seek remedies” (ibid 47)

Conversation analysis

Conversation analysis (CA) emerged from Garfinkel’s ethnomethodological interest in how the “taken for granted” nature of everyday life is routinely accomplished (see Greatbatch, 1998, Kitzinger and Firth, 1999, Heritage and Greatbatch, 1986) In a review of analytical approaches influencing his own work, Fairclough credits CA’s attention to the part played by “formulations³⁸” and “reformulations” in interviews and discussion (Fairclough, 1995 22) Although he criticises CA for its failure to link “properties of talk” with broader social “relations of power, ideologies, cultural values,” he commends its “detailed description of [the] organizational properties of media language” and sharp focus on the “relational aspects of conversation” (ibid 23) The methodological strengths of CA (i.e. its focus on formulations and the relational aspects of conversation) inform the analysis of radio and television discourse in chapter 8

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the eclectic and inter-disciplinary ways in which media can be analysed. It foregrounded the distinction between the “critical” and “administrative” traditions and focused, in particular, on the critical, qualitative and media discourse approaches in which this study is grounded. The theoretical and methodological basis of that (broad) critical discourse analysis theoretical framework is examined in depth in chapter 4.

³⁸ “A formulation is a widely used device interviewers use to summarize what interviewees have said. Formulations typically stress certain aspects of what has been said rather than others, and often elaborate what has been said by drawing out its implications” (Fairclough 1995 22)

Chapter 4 – Critical discourse analysis theoretical framework

4.1 Introduction

The theoretical approach underpinning this study's investigation of Irish media can be described as following Fairclough's (1995) prescription for critical discourse analysis (CDA) a model of language and semiosis⁴⁰ use concerned with the interplay of (a) the social (b) the discursive (what he also calls the institutional) and (c) the textual. Consequently, while it draws on the work of others, particularly the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and the American rhetorician Kenneth Burke, the work of both these theorists is clearly situated in a sociologically engaged CDA theoretical framework (see Chouliarakı and Fairclough, 1999)⁴¹

Since this study has already given a general introduction to the concept of CDA (see chapter 3), this chapter opens with a basic overview of the work of Bourdieu and Burke. I am drawing on Bourdieu largely because of his commitment to a critical sociological account of language use and Burke because of this study's application of his methodological schema known as the pentad (or hexad). The work of both theorists, particularly the congruities between them,⁴² are examined in terms of the CDA theoretical concepts of most importance to this study. Relevant criticisms of CDA, Burke and Bourdieu are outlined. Finally, considered in terms of the overall theoretical framework, the chapter concludes by outlining the basic methodological programme for this study's examination of neo-liberal influence in Irish media.

⁴⁰ That is "'visual language', 'body language' and so on" (Fairclough, 2001: 121)

⁴¹ It is important to note that Fairclough's own work draws heavily on Bourdieu's social theory (see Chouliarakı and Fairclough, 1999, Fairclough 1998, Fairclough, 1995)

⁴² I emphasise *congruities*: it is not within the scope of this study to offer a thoroughgoing, and comprehensive, comparison of Bourdieu and Burke's work

4.2 Bourdieu's social theory key concepts

The basic framework of Bourdieu's social theory was informed by his early anthropological work in Algeria (see Bourdieu, 1977). That work essentially provides the grounds for his whole theoretical project, and key concepts like "habitus", "fields", "doxa" and the various forms of symbolic and cultural "capital", were all developed within that ethnographic context. These concepts crystallise around Bourdieu's theory of practice, which criticises earlier sociological, and anthropological, accounts of practice for what he regards as their blindness to the analytical effect of the researcher's own theoretical precepts which he describes as the "objective limits of [a self-proclaimed and self-conscious] objectivism" (Bourdieu, 1977: 1). Bourdieu maintains that "both subjectivism and objectivism are inadequate intellectual orientations [for understanding the social world], but that the latter is less inadequate than the former" (Thompson, 1991: 11).⁴³ His fundamental theoretical instinct, therefore, is to try and transcend the strictures of a (false) objectivism bound to its own methodological rules what he describes as the need "to escape the *realism of the structure* [italics in original], which hypostatizes systems of objective relations by converting them into totalities already constituted outside of individual history and group history" (Bourdieu, 1977: 72). Bourdieu's critique of the typical 'objectivist' framework can be summarised as follows: the problem with orthodox accounts of practice is that the social world is made to fit with the ideational world - i.e. the theoretical constructs - of the theorist, when what they should be doing is *understanding practice from the perspective of practice*, while nevertheless avoiding any relapse into subjectivism, by retaining a strong sense of the determining effect of governing structures. His solution to this objectivist dilemma is based around his distinctive interpretation of the Aristotelian and Scholastic notion of "habitus". Thompson summarises Bourdieu's use of the term in his introduction to *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991).

⁴³ Thompson (1991) offers helpful summaries of Bourdieu's conception of both epistemologies: "By 'subjectivism' Bourdieu means an intellectual orientation to the social world which seeks to grasp the way the world appears to the individuals who are situated within it, by 'objectivism' Bourdieu means an intellectual orientation to the social world which seeks to construct the objective relations which structure practices and representations" (see Thompson, 1991: 11).

The habitus is a set of *dispositions* [italics in original] which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are ‘regular’ without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any [structuralist] ‘rule’. The dispositions which constitute the habitus are inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable (Thompson, 1991: 12).

A second key feature of Bourdieu’s social theory is based around his unique application of an orthodox economic paradigm to, what he calls, the analysis of different forms of cultural and symbolic capital. Contrary to “naively idyllic [sociological] representations of ‘pre-capitalist’ societies” (which, in his view, evoke the image of social practices grounded in altruistic and collectivist motives), Bourdieu argues that “practice never ceases to conform to economic calculation even when it gives every appearance of disinterestedness by departing from the logic of interested calculation (in the narrow sense) and playing for stakes that are non-material and not easily quantified” (Bourdieu, 1977: 177). Bourdieu’s essential point is not to suggest that economic readings of social practice are, by definition, wrong, but that they are all too partial, and that they apply the economic paradigm to matters of a strictly economic kind *only*, when, in his view, “the theory of strictly economic practice is simply a particular case of a general theory of the economics of practice” (ibid: 177). Therefore, Bourdieu applies the paradigm of self-interested calculation to other spheres, the spheres of the social, political, cultural and linguistic, and regards it as an attempt to understand our whole mode of “interested” interaction in the social world. This extract makes the point well.

The only way to escape from the ethnocentric naiveties of economism, without falling into populist exaltation of the generous naivety of earlier forms of society, is to carry out in full what economism does only partially, and to extend economic calculation to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as *rare* [italics in original] and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation – which may be ‘fair words’ or smiles, handshakes or shrugs, compliments or attention, challenges or insults,

honor or honours, powers or pleasures, gossip or scientific information, distinction or distinctions etc (ibid 177-178)

Bourdieu's sociological theory tacitly informs this study's empirical analysis of media texts. His theoretical formulation of practice, especially as it applies in a "media field" context (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), is considered in depth in chapter 9

4.3 Burke's theory of action key concepts

American born Kenneth Burke was a man of such intellectual range and ambition that some regard "Burkology" as his only fitting epithet (see Foss et al, 1991: 169). Foss, Foss and Trapp suggest "his primary perspective, however, could be considered a rhetorical one. His object of study is the communication medium itself – language – and he seeks to discover its nature, its ends, and what it does to us" (ibid: 169). Burke's contribution to our understanding of rhetoric is perhaps his most important legacy. He views "rhetoric as a subset of a larger category, symbolic action" (ibid: 177) and defines it as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce action in other human agents" (Burke, 1969b: 41). The originality of Burke's contribution lay in his understanding of rhetoric as "identification", a reformulation not intended to supplant the traditional Aristotelian view of rhetoric as "persuasion" but recognise what he called their "consubstantiality" or common substance (ibid: 46). By identification, Burke essentially means the way in which a speaker (or writer) uses language and symbols to identify his (or her) case with the perceived interests of his audience and, crucially, induce the audience to, in turn, identify themselves⁴⁴ with the ideological disposition that the speaker (or writer) affects. What is important to stress is that, like ideology - which he describes as a "kind of rhetoric" (88) - Burke sees this process of identification as sometimes working in unconscious, even mundane, ways and urges us to "think of rhetoric not in terms of some one particular address, but as a general *body of identifications* [italics in original] that owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and dull daily reinforcement than to exceptional rhetorical skill (26)". In some

⁴⁴ Some Burke scholars have drawn parallels to Foucault's idea of a discursively constructed self (see Blair 1995)

ways synonyms, the terms rhetoric and discourse are used interchangeably throughout the study. However, rhetoric will, following Burke, be typically used to describe those occasions where (amongst other things) a writer's modality, style and tone all strive to coax the reader into *identifying* with the suppositions of the writer's ideological stance (for example, see the pragmatic rhetoric on which *The Irish Times* grounds its support for privatisation in chapter 7)

The name that Burke gave to his own philosophical system was "dramatism". He explains his use of the term "The titular word for our own method is 'dramatism', since it invites one to consider the matter of motives in a perspective that, being developed from the analysis of drama, treats language and thought primarily as modes of action" (Burke, 1969 xxii). Structured around his use of the pentad (see below), dramatism can basically be described as a "philosophy of language" (see *ibid.* 184) which "makes explicit the idea that our thoughts and ideas are never free from the language we use to frame them" (Foss et al, 1991 181). It can be understood in terms of its 'otherness' to behaviourist and positivist philosophies, which Burke criticises for their reductionist analysis of language use *in terms of* animalistic 'motion' and empirical indifference to the complexities of human motivation (see Burke, 1969b 184). In addition, he formulated the notion of analytical "circumference" to describe the ways in which "one may place the object of one's definition in contexts of varying scope" (for example, he compares the "varying [analytical] scope" of behaviourist linear causation and Freudian "depth theory" (see Scannell, 1998), both of which might consider the "same" psychological condition, but define the problem, indeed the condition itself, in terms of radically different "circumferences" or epistemologies).

Burke's pentadic (or hexadic) analytical framework is an important methodological component of this study (see below).

4.4 Critical discourse analysis key theoretical tenets

The CDA framework applied in this study takes its cue primarily from the work of Fairclough – especially his recent collaborative work with Chouliaraki (see Chouliaraki

and Fairclough, 1999) The orientation of that work can be summarised as an attempt to give CDA a much stronger theoretical grounding, because, as Fairclough puts it, “CDA is in my view as much theory as method” (Fairclough, 2001) (Meyer’s, in a similar formulation, suggests “CDA must not be understood as a single method but rather as an approach” (Meyer, 2001: 14)) Indeed, in an implicit affirmation of this study’s assimilation of Bourdieu and Burke into a CDA theoretical framework, Chouharaki and Fairclough suggest ‘CDA can figure within properly ‘transdisciplinary’ (as opposed to merely ‘interdisciplinary’) research, involving a dialogue (or ‘conversation’) between theories in which the logic of one theory is ‘put to work’ within another without the latter being reduced to the former” (Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999: 2) ⁴⁵

This section outlines the epistemological foundations of the theoretical tenets of CDA of most relevance to the sociological disposition of this study The relationship of these tenets to Burke and Bourdieu’s theoretical perspectives on language use is also addressed

(a) Language as social action

CDA is primarily concerned with how language and semiosis use function as “traces” or “markers” of wider social and institutional processes It is based on an epistemological view of language use - in the case of Chouharaki and Fairclough (1999), a critical realist epistemology⁴⁶ - which regards linguistic utterances as forms of social action in their own right⁴⁷ and orientates it towards a core concern with the question of “which (fields of) social practices and which [broader] communicative events are represented in particular types of communicative event?” (Fairclough, 1995: 41)

⁴⁵ They define “transdisciplinary research [as research] in which the boundaries between disciplines and their categories are put at risk” (Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999: 112)

⁴⁶ Chouharaki and Fairclough describe critical realism as being based on the ontological assumption that “the various dimensions and levels of life – including physical, chemical, biological, economic, social, psychological, semiological (and linguistic) – have their own distinctive structures, which have distinctive generative effects on events via their particular mechanisms” (Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999: 19)

⁴⁷ The idea of language as “action” is one widely associated with Austin (see Nye, 1998, Rogers, 1999)

Action is a key term in the work of Bourdieu and Burke. Indeed, one could say it is Burke's central term: for instance, he describes rhetoric as an "inducement to action" (Burke, 1969b: 42) and dramatism as a commitment to the "study of 'action' as opposed to [behaviourist] 'motion'" (Foss et al., 1999: 181). Bourdieu likewise insists on the need to understand language use in terms of social action and explicitly rejects the Saussurian model's reduction of "action to [merely] an act of communication destined to be deciphered [only] by means of a cipher or a code, language or culture" (Bourdieu, 1991: 38). Both reject narrowly 'internal' approaches to the study of language use (those discourse analysis approaches which treat language as an autonomous, and dis-embedded, system of signs) and insist on the need to ground our analysis of the everyday discursive world in terms of social action and practice.

(b) *Discourse as a dialectic of the social and the semiotic*

Drawing on the work of the post-modern social theorist David Harvey (see Harvey, 1991), the tenet of language as social action has been given additional theoretical weight by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999). Harvey basically treats discourse as a "moment" of interaction between determining social structures and particular communicative events, though "he insists however that *discourse is just one moment of the social* [italics added], and that its relation to other moments is a matter for analysis and evaluation" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 28). Chouliaraki and Fairclough hence formulate a CDA theoretical framework which - modelled on Fairclough's earlier analytical triad (see above) - sets out to examine the dialectical interplay between (a) relatively stable long-term "structures", (a) "less durable" mid-term "conjunctures" and (b) momentary discursive events or "articulations" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, 144). Their specific discursive concern, thereafter, is with the ordering effect of social practice on language use.

Within the discourse (semiotic) moment of a practice, the elements that are articulated together are genres and discourses. We want to see a genre as a specifically discursive structuring or ordering of a social practice, a regulative device through which relations of power are realised as forms of control, and

we want to see a discourse as a construction or representation of one social practice from a particular perspective within another social practice (ibid 144)

The notion of habitus, as formulated by Bourdieu, is effectively grounded in the idea of a social-semiotic dialectic, as the “structured” dispositions he talks about (including linguistic ones) are basically the product of the social structures within which they are acquired. Indeed, Potter suggests that “the critical realist understanding of the relationship between social structure and action (in the abstract) is in effect concretized by Bourdieu’s substantive work” (Potter, 2000 230). Yet, although structurally orientated, Bourdieu does not regard the interplay of social and semiotic practice in simple deterministic terms, but as an active and reflexive process with at least the potential for change from each dialectical “moment” to the next, because, as he puts it, the “principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations [are] collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor” (Bourdieu, 1977 72). One finds a similar dialectical instinct in Burke. He conceives of the relationship – between structure and action - in the simplest of terms with what he describes as the “scene-act” ratio (see the hexad below). As he puts it, “using ‘scene’ in the sense of setting, or [social] background, and [linguistic] ‘act’ in the sense of action, one could say that ‘the scene *contains* [italics added] the act’” (Burke, 1969a 3). There is a similar dialectical emphasis underpinning Burke’s reflections on constitutions, which he describes as broad “structure[s] of motivations” (ibid 360) that “are of primary importance in suggesting what co-ordinates one will think [and hence talk] by” (ibid 367) ⁴⁸

(c) Language as an instrument of power

The formal analytical approach to language use on which CDA is based is systemic functional linguistics (see Halliday, 1994). Fowler outlines its central tenet “these theoreticians maintain that there is a causal relationship between semantic structures and

⁴⁸ Burke considers constitutions in both the narrow legal sense and, more broadly as metaphors or anecdotes for action (see Burke, 1969a)

cognition that our language influences thought, in the sense that its structure channels our mental experience of the world” (Fowler, 1991: 4). Based on this precept, what we now call CDA “assume[s] as a working principle that each particular form of linguistic expression in a text – wording, syntactic option, etc. – has its reason[s]” (ibid.: 4), which CDA suggests are partly structured, or determined by the wider power relations in a society.

Bourdieu’s theoretical analysis of language use is largely a counter to what he regards as orthodox linguistics’ traditional indifference to the question of power (see Bourdieu, 1991). Here language is seen as the instrument of power *par excellence* – and not just manifest exhibitions of power, but subtle, invisible kinds of “symbolic power” and “symbolic violence”⁴⁸ which serve to censor and streamline the terms of any discursive exchange. Take, for instance, his scathing critique of neo-liberal discourse, for the way it mobilises – through a kind of “collective misrecognition”⁴⁹ – certain theoretically preferred power relationships.

Its vocabulary, which seems to have sprung out of nowhere, is now on everyone’s lips: ‘globalization’, ‘flexibility’, ‘governance’, ‘employability’, ‘underclass’, ‘exclusion’, ‘new economy’, ‘zero tolerance’, ‘communitarianism’, ‘multiculturalism’, not to mention their so-called postmodern cousins, ‘minority’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘identity’, ‘fragmentation’, and so on. The diffusion of this new planetary vulgate – from which the terms ‘capitalism’, ‘class’, ‘exploitation’, ‘domination’, and ‘inequality’ are conspicuous by their absence, having been peremptorily dismissed under the pretext that they are obsolete and non-pertinent – is the result of a new type of imperialism (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2000: 1).

⁴⁸ Bourdieu describes symbolic violence as violence that is not recognized as such: ‘censored, euphemized i.e. unrecognizable, socially recognized violence’ (Bourdieu, 1977: 191), what he also calls the “gentle hidden exploitation [that] is the form taken by man’s exploitation of man whenever overt brutal exploitation is impossible” (ibid.: 192).

⁴⁹ “Collective misrecognition” is the term Bourdieu uses to describe the way in which social collectivities buy into the (flattering) official ideology of a particular social order and (mis)recognise through an explicit recognition, “second order” strategies as the primary grounds of social action (see Bourdieu, 1977).

Language's ability to serve – and mystify - dominant power relations is a key concern of Burke's. It is often around this question that one finds him at his most eclectic, as he examines everything from a Shakespeare sonnet (Burke, 1969b: 212) and a political speech by Cromwell (ibid: 111) to illustrate the ways in which language can be used to perform what Bourdieu calls acts of "social magic" (Bourdieu, 1991: 42).

(d) Language's market conditions

The view of language as an instrument of power consequently directs attention to the power relations governing its use, what Bourdieu describes as its market, or field, conditions (see Bourdieu, 1991). Unlike narrow linguistic approaches to textual analysis which abstract language use from the everyday world (or abstract the *langue* from the *parole* (see Harris, 1988)), CDA directs close attention to the extra-linguistic context of any discursive exchange and the background circumstances which circumscribe and partly determine the nature of a discursive act, or delineate the what can be said from the what cannot be said (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 99).

One obvious congruity in the work of Bourdieu and Burke is a shared concern with what Malinowski, the linguistic anthropologist, calls the "context of situation", or what Burke – see below - calls the "relation between the verbal act and its nonverbal scene" (Burke, 1969b: 205). Burke describes it as a principle that "may apply to all linguistic expression" (ibid: 206), which – in Malinowski's words - proposes

on the one hand that the conception of *context* [italics in original] had to be broadened and on the other that the *situation* in which words are uttered can never be passed over as irrelevant to the linguistic expression (ibid: 205).

Grounded in this broader conception of context (Bourdieu, 1977: 26), the institutional backdrop to any social (and linguistic) act is a central concern of Bourdieu's work – what he describes – in a religious metaphor that would appeal to Burke – as the "liturgical conditions" that govern the "public manifestation of authority" through language (Bourdieu, 1991: 113). The relationship between linguistic habitus (one's disposition to

talk, and perform, in a certain way) and linguistic market (a field's compulsion that you talk, and perform, in a certain way) is a key concern of Bourdieu's work and has been an important influence on CDA theory

(e) Order of discourse and interdiscursivity

A term appropriated by Fairclough from Foucault, order(s) of discourse alludes to all "the discursive types" used in a particular social or institutional context and the "point of the concept is to highlight the relationships between different types in such a set" (Fairclough, 1995: 55). It is, therefore, conceived as the location of class struggles in language "as one domain of potential cultural hegemony, with dominant groups struggling to assert and maintain particular structuring [of discourse *and* power] within and between them" (Fairclough, 1995: 56). Fairclough's conception of "discursive type" is very fluid and post-modern, with hybridity - that "irreducible characteristic of complex modern discourse" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 59) - at its core. The various discursive types are not looked on as some *a priori* list of features to be simply sought for in texts, but treated as a complex hybrid of genres, rhetorics, and discourses, the very stuff of language in action, which may serve to propagate or subvert existing power relations. The organic and reflexive nature of discursive class struggles have been neatly conceptualised by Chouliaraki and Fairclough, who describe it as taking place along a creative "dialectic of colonisation and appropriation" (ibid: 45), that continually throws up new discursive forms and hybrids with the power to neuter apparently "radicalising" discourses, but also challenge what a critical perspective would regard as the colonizing intent of official discourses.

Fairclough's interest in institutional and societal "orders of discourse" is specifically linked to his focus on interdiscursive analysis. He describes interdiscursive analysis as an examination of the configuration of diverse discursive elements such as genre (see above), register (i.e. the manner of speaking or writing specific to a certain function - for example, the language of a parent with a child), discourse (see above), discursive styles (i.e. tenor and rhetorical modes) and activity types (i.e. the link to a structured sequence of actions (see Fairclough, 1992: 124)). He suggests that inter-discursive relations

should be conceptualised as “discursive conventions” (ibid 104), which act as delimiting “constraints” (48) upon on any discursive formation

Dovetailing with the idea of a hierarchically determined “order of discourse”, and bound to their common interest in the mystifying effects of power, Bourdieu and Burke can both be described as critics of hierarchy (see Burke, 1969b 220, and Bourdieu, 1991 107) Both conceptualise class (i.e. hierarchical) struggle as partly a struggle of, and in, discourse. For instance, by debunking the attempts of each philosophical system to get us to see the world in *its* - often exclusive - terms (Burke, 1969a 503), Burke implicitly affirms Bourdieu’s assertion that social struggles are, in part,

struggle[s] over representations struggles over classification, struggles over the monopoly of the power to make people see and believe, to get them to know and to recognise, to impose the legitimate definitions of the divisions of the social world and, thereby, to make and unmake groups (Bourdieu, 1991 221)

(f) *The media field*

Although conceptualised in a specific media context by Chouliarakı and Fairclough, the theoretical supposition that social practice is a composite of different social fields is Bourdieu’s.⁵⁰ In Thompson’s view, the idea of a field is interchangeable with Bourdieu’s use of the term “market” and may “be seen as a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations [of individuals and groups] are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or ‘capital’” (Thompson, 1991 14). These forms of capital take diverse linguistic, symbolic, cultural and economic forms, all of which converge around the pursuit of social “profit” and “distinction”. The great merit in Bourdieu’s approach is the attention he brings to the way in which these relations can – even prior to any discursive exchange itself - determine the make up and structure of discursive events (see Chouharakı and Fairclough, 1999 99). However, Chouharakı and Fairclough criticise Bourdieu for

⁵⁰ Chouliarakı and Fairclough describe the order of discourse as “the specifically discursive organisational logic of a field” (Chouliarakı and Fairclough, 1999 114)

failing to conceive of a distinct media or journalistic field governed by its own particular market conditions⁵¹ He may recognise the media as a “space of interaction” that acts as the “locus of intersection between several different fields”, but “what is lacking”, they argue, “is a theory of contemporary forms of mediation, such as television, as an institutional complex or field with its own structural logic and forms of capital” (Chouliarakı and Fairclough, 1999: 103) In other words, they are suggesting that the formulation of an adequate theoretical account of the media field, and the social practices produced therein, needs to be augmented by the specific contributions of media sociologists such as Thompson and, in my view, Scannell (see Scannell, 1996), both of whom offer theoretical insights into the structural limitations and possibilities of the media’s role in the delivery of a “mediated publicness” (see Thompson, 1995)

(g) Textual exposition

This section has so far focused on CDA as a theoretical framework. But CDA is, above all else, grounded in detailed textual analysis of “discursive materials” (see Chouliarakı and Fairclough, 1999) themselves. It maintains that even the most (putatively) “neutral” of texts can be analysed in terms of ideological significance, so the choice for the critical discourse analyst is largely one of deciding which textual features will be the focus of his/her analysis. In that respect, the task of this study is clearly defined, as the formal textual analysis of chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, is guided by this study’s interest in the question of neo-liberal influence.

This study’s practical application of discourse analysis methods needs to be clarified. This study is *not* a linguistic study, but a sociological account of Irish media practice grounded in the materials of discourse. It, therefore, does not involve the detailed analysis of linguistic processes and transitivity which marks the formal systemic functional linguistics of Halliday (see Halliday, 1994, Halliday, 1978). Nor is it self-imagined as a thorough exposition of all the sociologically interesting linguistic features.

⁵¹ Bourdieu’s more recent book, *On Television and Journalism*, can be seen as an informal sketching of the outline characteristics of the media field (see Bourdieu, 1998b).

in the sampled body of texts (the sheer size of the sample (see below) would, in any case, preclude that level of intense textual analysis) It is organized, instead, around a critically engaged sociological question, which seeks to explicate, and illuminate, the question of neo-liberal influence with respect to the discursive construction and framing of political economy issues

This study's method of textual exposition draws on a number of influences - including, the rhetorical theory of McCloskey (1985), the critical linguistics of Fowler (1991) and the discourse analysis of Fairclough (1995, 1998) and Van Dijk (1998) Its specific textual and discursive, concerns include (the particular textual features are chosen because of what I regard as their illumination of the place of ideology in texts) the creation and reduction of difference through the use of antithesis and equivalence, the invocation of categorical ("it *is*") and modulated ("I don't think it *is*") truth claims, intertextual and interdiscursive analysis, the construction of authorial/speaker modalities (modality basically refers to author/speaker attitude), the use of agency and appeals to authority, textual presuppositions and degrees of explicitness and implicitness, the use of metaphor and metonyms, textual absences and elliptical constructions, the process of nominalization⁵², categorization and the attribution of labels of abuse and endearment, the use of the "pronouns of 'power and solidarity'" (Halliday, 1979-89), "global" and "local" discourse coherence⁵³, anaphorical rhetoric (i.e. repetition) and the use of lists, over-lexicalization and over-wording (i.e. the repeated use of synonymous and thematically linked terms), the use of active and passive voices, meta-opinions and discourse formulations

The study's most distinct methodological tool is Burke's pentad, or what he subsequently dubbed "hexad" in response to his addition of a sixth term "attitude" Burke describes the pentad constituents of *act, scene, agent, agency, purpose* (the use of

⁵² Fowler describes nominalization as a commonplace kind of clause transformation, whereby predicates (verbs and adjectives) are syntactically realised as nouns (Fowler, 1991: 79) Nominalization can assume various dense, complex forms (see Fairclough, 1998), and can be used to abstract agency and cement various, ideologically loaded presuppositions

⁵³ My use of the term is linked to Van Dijk's (1998a) theory of ideology, to distinguish between globally coherent (bona fide neo-liberal) and locally incoherent (neo-liberal with disclaimers) discursive expression

the terms is italicised throughout the empirical analysis) as the “five key terms” of his philosophy of dramatism and the “generating principle[s]” underpinning his investigation of the ambitious question of “what is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it” (see Burke, 1969a XV) He explains the basic inter-relationship between the terms

In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the *act* [italics in original] (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred), also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the *purpose* Men may violently disagree about the purpose behind a given act, or about the character of the person who did it, or how he did it, or in what kind of situation he acted, or they may even insist upon totally different words to name the act itself But be that as it may, any complete statement about motives will offer *some kind* of answer to these five questions what was done (*act*), when or where it was done (*scene*), who did it (*agent*), how he did it (*agency*), and why (*purpose*) (ibid XV) ⁵⁴

The hexad, which can be understood as a kind of framing analysis (see chapter 3), needs to be used sparingly Burke does *not* use it to mechanically locate the place of each term in every text under analysis, but uses it to creatively illuminate the internal relations between different hexadic elements (see Rountree, 1998) In this respect, he formulates the notion of hexadic ratios (*scene-act*, *scene-agent*, *act-agent* - see chapter 6), which point to “a relationship of propriety, suitability, or requirement among the elements” (Foss et al, 1991 186), and which “aid the critic in discovering *which term in the pentad receives the greatest attention by the rhetor* [italics added] and thus suggests in what term to look for the motivation of the act” (ibid 187) This study will not be outlining hexadic relations at every available turn, or on a formal text by text basis, but will focus instead on those discursive formations which offer most insight into the

⁵⁴ The hexad can, perhaps, be seen as a more elaborate and informal schema for understanding the basic transitivity relation (see Halliday, 1994, Fowler, 1991) between process (act), participants (agent and agency) and circumstances (scene)

question of neo-liberal influence⁵⁵ The hexadic analysis will concentrate on the (ideological) “framing” of particular articles and utterances, while the other methods of textual exposition will focus on the “frames” precise linguistic and semiotic construction

(h) Relations, representation and identities

The inherent danger with textual analysis is that textual exposition becomes the end of analysis itself⁵⁶ Fairclough (1995) suggests one way of avoiding an apolitical textual quagmire is by focusing attention on three broad sociological questions the issues of relations, representations and identities It is his working assumption “that any part of any text (from the media or elsewhere) will be simultaneously representing, setting up identities, and setting up relations”, an analytical triad that attempts to grapple with the questions of “(1) how is the world (events, relationships, etc) represented?, (2) what identities are set up for those involved in the programme or story (reporters, audiences, ‘third parties’ referred to or interviewed) [and] (3) what relationships are set up between those involved (e.g reporter-audience, expert-audience, or politician-audience relationships” (Fairclough, 1995 5))

The focus on relations, identities and representations gains additional theoretical weight through the specific conception of class advocated by Bourdieu “classes in the logical sense of the word i.e sets of agents who occupy similar positions and who, being placed in similar conditions and submitted to similar types of conditioning, have every chance of having similar dispositions and interests, and thus of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances” (Bourdieu, 1991 231) This study, therefore, is implicitly based around the hypothesis that there is a (de facto) neo-liberal class at work in Irish

⁵⁵ As Burke himself acknowledges (see Burke, 1969a 228), the hexad is compatible with one obvious schema for the analysis of media discourse, the journalists’ so called five Ws and a H (see Bell, 1998) who (agent/attitude), what (act), why (purpose), where (scene), when (scene), and how (agency)

⁵⁶ Some approaches to discourse analysis have been rightfully criticised for delighting in textual exposition in its own right and for making little attempt to link texts back to social structures and power relations As Eagleton (1991) puts it, with discourse analysis one can end up with an approach that is way too expansive and that fails to distinguish between a text’s discursive and ideological qualities (see Eagleton, 1991 202), what he describes as an “intellectual disingenuousness” on the part of a “post-modernist pluralism [that] here stands convicted of violently homegenizing quite different sorts of speech act” (ibid 201)

media, whose “*labour of representation*” [italics in original] (Bourdieu, 1991 234) takes place at the level of media practice, *without necessarily “reaching the level of explicit representation and verbal expression”* [italics added] (ibid 295)

(i) *Meta-discursive analysis*

CDA is essentially meta-discursive in character in other words, stripped of all theoretical ostentation, it is basically *talk about talk*. It is a meta-analytical orientation shared by Burke and Bourdieu, who describe their respective critical projects as attempts to gain a “perspective of perspectives” (Burke, 1969a 503) and “objectify all forms of objectification” (Bourdieu, 1991 243, also see Potter 2000). In short, all three theoretical perspectives encourage us to see the social world as a battle of (“objective”) representations, a battle of (“objective”) “naming” and, therefore, summon us to take a meta-critical, or what Chouliaraki and Fairclough call an “explanatory” attitude (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999 67), towards the social place of language and meaning.

The main point of this section has been to outline, with additional reference to the work of Bourdieu and Burke, the epistemological foundations of the CDA theoretical project to link textual, institutional and socio-political processes. This is the basic analytical framework (see below) underpinning the empirical analysis of media texts in chapters 5 to 8 and the theoretical account of neo-liberal influence in chapter 9. The next three sections outline criticisms of CDA, Bourdieu and Burke, and indicate how they are generally heeded by this study.

4.5 Criticisms of critical discourse analysis

CDA has been criticised on various grounds, including (in no particular order)

- (a) That it is wilfully eclectic, yet, paradoxically, indifferent to the contribution of other discourse based and sociological perspectives. Rajagopalan suggests that (true to its

inter-disciplinary character) CDA “must actually strive for a *critical articulation* [italics in original] amongst the different traditions and theoretical orientations rather than a melange of ideas haphazardly picked from here and there” (Rajagopalan, 1999: 450). He continues “eclecticism may well be a useful rule of thumb, but it is naive to expect that serious and sustained analyses of specific problems can be carried out with the help of a bagful of tools and tricks acquired from a week-end shopping spree at a flea market of ideas” (ibid: 450).

- (b) That it lacks a strong empirical base and is sometimes used as a banner for “studies which pronounce on the nature of discourses, without getting down to the business of studying what is actually uttered or written” (Billig and Schegloff, 1999: 543⁵⁷). In short, CDA has been accused of being a form of “theoretical imperialism” (ibid: 545) which rides roughshod over its research object (i.e. the text), which, in any case, is only being analysed to fit the pre-fabricated frame of the researcher (see Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999: 69).
- (c) That it mobilises what Scannell (1998) calls – in a general observation about ideological critique – “a hermeneutics of suspicion against media and language” (Scannell, 1998: 257). To this “constructivist view”, both the media and language are “conventional systems of representation which unreflectingly misrepresent the social reality (world) that they construct” (ibid: 257).
- (d) That textual exegesis simply involves the production of endless and circular verification of one’s theoretical model and assumptions (see Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999: 68-69), and, as might be said of this study, produces empirical evidence to neatly fit with the hypothesis of neo-liberal influence.
- (e) Although it predates the evolution of CDA proper, Golding and Murdock’s (1979) generic criticism of textual analysis is still relevant. “In addition to the problems of typicality common to any case study there is a fundamental methodological

⁵⁷ The reference does not refer to a collaboration, but an exchange between two theoretical perspectives in the pages of *Discourse and Society*.

difficulty in approaching social and structural relations through the analysis of texts. However well conceived and executed, *textual readings remain a variety of content analysis and such they suffer from the familiar but intractable problem of inference* [italics added]. In our view the sociology of communications has been seriously incapacitated by the tendency to over-privilege texts as objects of analysis. Textual analysis will remain important and necessary, but it cannot stand in for the sociological analysis of cultural production” (Golding and Murdock, 1997b: 484-485)

These criticisms are addressed in several ways. While I agree with Scannell’s assertion that a critical – and *a priori* - “ontology of being-in-the-head” can potentially swamp an ontology of “being-in-the-world” (Scannell, 1998: 267) (i.e. that the ideational concerns of the researcher can potentially override any precise analysis of the *actual* research object itself), he does not advocate a wholesale abandonment of a critical hermeneutic, because “to do so would be to replace one absurdity (the denial of the world) by another (the denial of self-reflecting reason)” (ibid: 267). What he – and this study - tries to do, however, is “draw attention to the existence of these two [conflicting] ontologies” (267), and emphasise the need for an analytical openness to a plurality of explanations of media discourse, some more suspicious, and some more trusting, than others.

Following Bourdieu (1977), this study strives to be reflexive about the analytical effect of its own theoretical framework. As Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) put it, researchers need be “aware of the distinctiveness of one’s own languages of description (the theoretical framework and the construction and analysis of the research objects) and be reflexive in managing their interplay” (ibid: 69). Failure to do so will, they argue, leave one open to the charge of “circularity” (“description of [texts] that are self-confirming of the theory”) and risk alienating the textual producers themselves, who, for ethical reasons, “should themselves be able to engage (agree or disagree) with the description made of them” (ibid: 68).⁵⁸

⁵⁸ This question can also be linked to the tensions between academic, interpretivist accounts of media texts and audiences’ divergent reception of the same texts.

Interestingly, the crux of the CDA response to the charge of loose textual inference is anticipated by Golding and Murdock later on in the same article (see above) “To focus on texts as ideology is to remain blind to the forces which lie behind the production of these texts”, they maintain (Golding and Murdock, 1997b: 498). CDA adamantly rejects the arch post-structuralist cliché that “textuality does not take place anywhere or anytime in particular” (Said, 1991: 4) and situates textual analysis within the broader process of social and cultural production. In that respect, this study sees itself as a response to Fairclough’s (2001) call that CDA be used as part of a more ambitious social scientific research project.

As Billig suggests, a defence of the field should not be read as a defence of dilettantish eclecticism indifferent to the *content* of texts (Billig and Schegloff, 1999: 581). Schegloff’s appeal to analysts, of all theoretical orientations, is, therefore, worth heeding.

[Analysis means] reading carefully, closely, seriously, open-mindedly reading to find out what the writer may be telling you that you did *not* know before, that you had not thought about *that way* before, that you had not entertained before – rather than to find out which thing you already know this is a version of, so that you can align with it or choose the critique to aim at it (ibid: 581).

4.6 Criticisms of Bourdieu

Bourdieu’s failure to conceive of a specific “media field” has already been recognised (see above). His theoretical framework – especially his view of language use – has been criticised on several grounds.

(a) Though he would reject the label, one has to ask: is Bourdieu’s theory overly deterministic (see Leander, 2001; Potter, 2000; Garnham and Williams, 1990) and guilty of overstating the social at the expense of an individual explanation?⁵⁹ Of

⁵⁹ Bourdieu concedes that the idea of the “organic” individual can “never be entirely removed from sociological discourse” (Bourdieu, 1977: 86).

course, if one can learn anything from Bourdieu, it is that this choice - between the social and the individual - is never a simple case of either/or Yet Bourdieu's theory does orientate an analyst towards framing individual discourse contributions in socially structured terms

- (b) The deterministic aspects of Bourdieu's theoretical perspective, as it specifically applies to language use, have been commented on by Chouliarakı and Fairclough They accuse him of denying the "specificity of [the] semiologic, [and of] reducing the semiological to the sociological by treating language as an epiphenomenon [i.e. a secondary phenomenon], differences of style which constitute merely one of various ways of realising sociological categories (Chouliarakı and Fairclough, 1999 105)" Moreover, they see this reductionism as "part of a more general tendency in Bourdieu's analyses to give the symbolic order less autonomy from the social order in analyses than he does in his theoretical formulations" (ibid 105)
- (c) Chouliarakı and Fairclough criticise Bourdieu for looking on the "power of discourse to constitute the social only as a power of certain social groups in certain circumstances"(Chouliarakı and Fairclough, 1991 30) They reproach him for failing to recognise the key CDA precept that - irrespective of one's "habitus" - "discourse is inherently constitutive of social life" (ibid 30) - and not just the property of a hegemonic class with an exclusive power to "name"
- (d) Chouliarakı and Fairclough also criticise Bourdieu for failing to analyse actual communicate events, bound as he is to a type of analysis that focuses more on the structural conditions of the discourse than the "content" of the discourse itself "In rightly arguing that a purely interactional analysis (which is how he sees 'discourse analysis') is indefensible, he [Bourdieu] effectively backgrounds interactional analysis altogether" (Chouliarakı and Fairclough, 1999 104)
- (e) Bourdieu's thought has been criticised (Garnham and Williams, 1990 85) for its unrelenting pessimism For instance, the paradigmatic view of language and communication that underpins his work is not the "typical hermeneutic paradigm of

the exchange of words [but] the paradigm of the *exchange of blows* [italics added] used by George H Mead” (Bourdieu, 1977 11) His reflections on the ubiquity of “soft, invisible” symbolic violence are similarly pessimistic “symbolic domination is something you absorb like air, something you don’t feel pressured by, it is everywhere and nowhere, and to escape from that is very difficult” (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1992 270)

These criticisms suggest that Bourdieu’s theoretical reflections on language use risk swamping analysis of the interactional “moment” itself Discourse analysis attuned to the social and the institutional is still *discourse* analysis, and no amount of helpful, and relevant, observation about pre-determined structures, pre-disposed social actors etc can forgo the need for close textual analysis

4 7 Criticisms of Burke

The main criticisms of Burke have been reviewed by Foss et al (1991) To “understand” them, however, is to “delve into paradox and antithesis”, they caution, for “while a number of critics can be found to praise Burke for a particular contribution or quality, the same number can be found who criticize his work for precisely that contribution or quality” (Foss et al, 1991 199) ⁶⁰ These criticisms include

- (a) That his work is nothing but a “‘vast rambling edifice of quasi-sociological and quasi-psychological speculation’ that rests ‘on nothing more solid than a set of unexamined and uncriticized metaphysical assumptions’” (ibid 200) ⁶¹
- (b) That Burke appears incapable of the “system-building” (Foss et al, 1991 200) which he craves This criticism has been rejected by Foss et al, who, drawing on Melia, describe Burke as “probably the most significant contributor to rhetorical theory since Cicero” and maintain that “his work represents near completion of a

⁶⁰ As Rueckert put it, views on Burke are often polarised around the “two opposing camps” of apologists suffering from “Burke-sickness” and adversaries suffering from “Burke-nausea” (see Foss et al, 1999)

⁶¹ The charge that Burke’s view of language is inherently metaphysical - even mystical - has been rejected by Southwell (1987)

coherent, thoroughly developed system explaining the operation of rhetoric in human life”(ibid 202)

(c) That what acolytes characterise as his work’s breadth is but rampant eclecticism Stauffer makes the point well “How long can we read with both attention and pleasure when, opening at random, we come on a single page that refers to, or quotes, Horace Gregory, Wallace Stevens, ‘another writer’, Descartes, ‘the idealist scientist Shelley,’ Leibnitz, an editor, Pascal, and Rabelais? Ambition here surpasses discrimination” (200) Burke’s work is certainly eclectic, and it does prompt the reader to question the value of his endless homological play - especially when many of the illustrative parallels are to subject matters which may mean little or nothing to the reader Yet one usually retains a sense of coherent intent amidst the seemingly chaotic textual exposition, which is not to pointlessly bamboozle the reader with ostentatious erudition, but cast analytical light on how language is used (whatever the form or genre)

(d) Burke’s failure to account for historical and social variation has been criticised There is a “serious failure on Burke’s part to see human histories as having an input on linguistic structures that is on the order of the input of human biology Dramatism as a method consequently does not encourage the critic to trace out the nature of the action that a speaking events constitutes – that is, to describe in detail what institutions are served by a victimage ritual⁶² and what actions repressed” (Condit, 1995 256)

If the last criticism can be read as an indictment of Burke’s lack of formal structural analysis, he certainly finds an adequate theoretical foil in Bourdieu Their assimilation into a CDA theoretical framework is an argument for synthesis, a point well made, with respect to Burke, by Foss et al

⁶² What Burke calls victimage ritual will be more commonly known as scapegoating, the process whereby “a victim is selected to be the representative of unwanted evils and loaded with the guilt of the victimizer’ (Foss et al, 1991 196)

as Burke explicitly suggests' and as he demonstrates in his own criticism, *the methods arising from his notions should not and do not limit the critic to these notions alone* [italics added] They are to be used only as guides for the critic to encourage an exploration of various perspectives and interpretations His methods, more than any others, allow for expansion and freedom, not reduction and confinement (Foss et al, 1991: 202)

This chapter has, up until now, outlined the basic theoretical, epistemological and analytical foundations of the broad critical discourse analysis framework applied in this study It is *not* uniquely applicable to the question of neo-liberal influence, and should be understood as a broad theoretical framework for understanding the dialectical relationship between semiotic and social processes The link between the theory, and the practical methods of media analysis applied in this study, are now examined

4.8 Analysing neo-liberal influence: theory and methods

This chapter has so far given an overview of a critically engaged theoretical framework for the analysis of media discourse The link between the CDA tenets outlined in section 4.4, and the assumptions underpinning this study's practical analysis of media texts in chapters 5 to 8, is outlined in table 4.1

<i>Key CDA tenets</i>	<i>Theoretical and epistemological assumptions</i>
1) Language as action	The discursive treatment of political economy issues in Irish media can be considered a form of social action in its own right
2) Discourse as a dialectic of the social and the semiotic	Media discourse is indicative of, and partly determined by, wider social, political and cultural processes in Irish and global society

3) Language as an instrument of power	Dominant discourses mirror, and reproduce, dominant power relations in Irish and global society
4) Language's "market conditions"	The immediate "moment" in discourse needs to always be sensitive to, and take account of, the extra-discursive context or "scene"
5) Order of discourse and interdiscursivity	One should anticipate a plurality of discourse practices and genres in political economy discourse and expect neo-liberal assumptions to manifest themselves in a variety of discursive forms. However, the socially structured relationship between different discourses should be the focal point of analysis
6) The 'media field'	The Irish media is a social "field" in its own right, with its own (implicit) structural rules and logic
7) Textual exposition	Any analysis of neo-liberal influence in Irish media needs, first and foremost, to be grounded in textual exposition
8) Relations, identities and representation	The functioning of neo-liberal ideology in Irish media needs to pay close attention to (the tacit) relations, (shared) identities and (common) representations of media actors (both institutional and individual)
9) Meta-discursive analysis	This study is an examination of how Irish media discursively frame matters of political economy – not a formal, economic analysis of political economy

This outline theoretical framework will guide the formal textual analysis in latent and implicit ways, for, in my view, one doesn't want the job of textual exegesis to be continually interrupted by justificatory, and abstract, theoretical reflection. Indeed, much of the theoretical and sociological reflection of the kind outlined in Table 4.1 is

not addressed until the latter sections of chapters 5 to 8, and chapter 9. The intention, therefore, is to examine the influence of the neo-liberal paradigm in Irish media, but in a way that doesn't blind this study from the conceivable validity of other perspectives (such as the working conditions - time constraints etc - of media professionals). In other words, this study is wary of seeing media treatment of political economy issues exclusively *in terms of* neo-liberal influence.

As I stated in the Introduction, this study is structured around the assumption of neo-liberal hegemony in the contemporary world and sets out to examine that hypothesis with reference to an Irish media content. That still begs the question *how* does one practically set about examining the influence of neo-liberal assumptions on Irish media treatment of political economy issues? After much consideration, it was decided that this study's methodological approach, and selection of media texts, would be guided by the following principles:

- (a) *Qualitative investigation* – Neo-liberal assumptions have been described as the “commonplaces” and “undiscussed presuppositions” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2000: 1) of contemporary economic and political discourse. Therefore, investigating the question of neo-liberal influence lends itself towards qualitative and “depth theory” (see Scannell, 1998) investigation.
- (b) *Discourse based* – Chouliarakis and Fairclough argue that the “internalisation in discourse [of political and economic power] has become more pervasive” in recent times (Chouliarakis and Fairclough, 62: 1999). This, therefore, underpins the need for a specific *discursive* examination of neo-liberal influence in Irish media.
- (c) *Be based on a representative sample of middle to high market media texts* – This study's newspaper sample is exclusively broadsheet (see chapters 5, 6 and 7), and the radio and TV sample is taken from a range of talk-intensive current affairs programmes (see chapter 8). The selection of media texts was influenced by various factors (the ease of access to print archives was one) and the selection bias in favour of middle to high market media is not to demigrate the likely relevance, or

fruitfulness, of tabloid analysis. Yet, because this study is interested in exploring the link between neo-liberalism's intellectual antecedents (see chapters 1 and 2) and contemporary media discourse, I think it is justifiable to focus on the more self-consciously "literate" and "high brow" end of the media market; or what can be described as a representative sample of institutional "opinion leaders" (see Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1995) in Irish media.

- (d) *Examine, and compare, a mixture of (in order of prioritisation) print, radio and television media* - This study was determined to examine a range of media forms - not just rely on monological print media. Therefore, while most of the primary analysis is comparative and newspaper based (see chapters 5, 6 and 7), it includes an examination of real-time, interactive discourse from a range of radio and television programmes (see chapter 8).
- (e) *Examine, and compare, a mixture of genres: reportage, opinion, discussion etc.* - This study was keen to examine a diversity of genres. Chapters 5 and 6 examine a range of reportage, analysis and opinion. Chapter 7 concentrates exclusively on editorial comment. Chapter 8 examines television reportage, but mainly radio discussion.
- (f) *Structure, along consistent lines, any comparative analyses* - Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are basically comparative analyses: that is, they compare the treatment of the same news event⁶³, or news narrative (see chapter 7), across different newspapers. In the interests of analytical clarity and consistency, these comparative analyses are organised along structured lines. Chapters 5 and 6 compare the headline news framing, use of sources and newspaper attitude across newspapers (see below), while chapter 7 examines the different editorial treatment of the Eircom narrative in thematic terms (see below).
- (g) *Include a case study element of an overt neo-liberal policy kind* - This is achieved in two ways. Chapter 5 looks at the comparative news treatment of two European

⁶³ The term "news event" is not used in the precise, narrow sense associated with Katz and Dayan (2002).

Union summits, both of which were explicitly concerned with a neo-liberal inspired agenda of “economic reform” Chapter 7 examines the comparative editorial treatment of the neo-liberal issue of privatisation

(h) *Be based around a sample of “normal” political economy discourse* - Although chapters 5 and 7 examine explicit neo-liberal issues, and chapter 6 examines what are posited as atypical neo-liberal policy issues, both of them sample – subject to temporal restrictions - the full range of relevant texts for each news event They are, therefore, based around newspapers’ *general* treatment of news events dealing with neo-liberal issues - and not simply a self-serving selection of manifestly neo-liberal texts Chapter 8, in turns, looks at (everyday) radio and television discourse about the economy over a five day period

(i) *Analytical width over depth* – Studies working under the banner of discourse analysis face one obvious methodological dilemma does one aspire towards intensive analysis of a narrow range of texts or, conversely, aim for a less intensive, but sociologically ambitious analysis of a wider, and more representative, range of texts? I ultimately favour the latter approach, because this study is not a study of discourse *per se*, but a broader social scientific project about the influence of neo-liberal assumptions in Irish media It, therefore, maintains that the treatment of the question of neo-liberal influence, in an Irish media context, necessitates analysis of a broad sample of media texts This is one reason why the analysis is streamlined around specific categories such as headline analysis and source analysis (see chapters 5 and 6), that way, some manageable order can be put on what is, in some instances, a very large textual sample ⁶⁴

Consistent with these principles, the examination of political economy discourse in chapters 5 to 8 can be summarised as follows

⁶⁴ For example, *The Irish Times* coverage of the National Development Plan in chapter 6 amounts to 41 articles and a total corpus size of just over 20,000 words

Chapter 5 – European Union “economic reform” a comparative analysis of the news treatment of the Lisbon and Barcelona summits in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*

This chapter examines the immediate “framing” (including reportage, preview articles and opinion) of two European Union summits in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* newspapers (the two papers with the largest national circulation) The two summits are the 2000 summit in Lisbon and the 2002 summit in Barcelona, both of which explicitly addressed, at an official policy level, the “need” for European “economic reform” Both summits are examined with reference to (a) the news agenda, (b) headline analysis, (c) source analysis and (d) newspaper attitude

Chapter 6 Neo-liberal assumptions and state intervention a comparative analysis of the news treatment of the launch of the National Development Plan and the Special Savings Incentive Scheme in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*

This chapter examines the immediate “framing” of the Irish Government’s launch of the November 1999 National Development Plan (NDP) and the February 2002 launch of the Special Savings Incentive Scheme (SSIS) in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* newspapers The two news events are chosen, because of what I regard as their illumination of the contemporary political authority of *certain* neo-liberal assumptions namely the authority of the individual over the collective (SSIS) and, in the case of the NDP, the authority of the market over society As chapter 5, both news events are examined in terms of (a) headline analysis, (b) source analysis and (c) newspaper attitude

Chapter 7 – Editorialising on Eircom A case study of six Irish newspapers in 1999 and 2000

This chapter takes the form of a specific case study It examines editorial comment about Eircom (formerly Telecom Eireann) in six Irish newspapers for 1999 and 2000 *The Irish Times*, *The Irish Independent*, *The Irish Examiner* (formerly *The Examiner*),

The Sunday Business Post, *The Sunday Tribune* and *The Sunday Independent* Eircom is chosen because it was the most high profile privatisation in the history of the Irish state, and 1999 and 2000 are chosen because they cover the period in which the company was “successfully” launched on the stock market, only to later have its market value dwindle dramatically I decided to focus on editorials, because I wanted to get a representative sample of the “institutional attitude” of Irish broadsheets to the privatisation of the company The chapter’s analysis is thematically structured in three parts (a) preparing for the market, (b) market fortunes and (c) implications of the Eircom sale

Chapter 8 – Talking “downturn” an examination of radio and television discourse from November 2001

This chapter takes a sample of political economy discourse from one television and five radio programmes broadcast between November 7th and 11th, 2001 RTE One Television’s *Six-One News*, Today FM’s *The Last Word* and RTE Radio One’s *Tonight with Vincent Browne*, *Morning Ireland*, *News at One* and *This Week* The particular timeframe was chosen because the comments of Maurice O’Connell, Governor of the Central Bank, on November 7th were “decoded” as confirmation that the Celtic Tiger “phase” of the Irish economy was “over” Each programme is analysed under three broad headers (a) asking the question, (b) discussing the “downturn” an overview of participants’ ideological stance and (c) media reflexivity

4 9 Conclusion

Following chapter 3, this chapter has given a comprehensive overview of the theoretical and methodological framework underpinning this study’s analysis of Irish media It is an analytical framework which is, above all else, grounded in an attempt to link textual, institutional and social processes It outlined some of the key theoretical tenets of CDA, and examined their relationship to the theories of Bourdieu and Burke Criticisms of CDA, Bourdieu and Burke were also presented Finally, with respect to this study’s

interest in the question of neo-liberal influence, it outlined the links between theory and method and gave an overview of the practical ways in which this study proposes to analyse Irish media content. That empirical analysis now forms the basis of Part 3.

PART 3

MEDIA TREATMENT

Chapter 5 – European Union “economic reform”

A comparative analysis of the news treatment of the Lisbon and Barcelona summits in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the immediate “framing” (see Entman, 2002) and discursive representation of two different European Union (EU) summits, the Lisbon 2000 and the Barcelona 2002 summits, both of which were explicitly concerned with a neo-liberal agenda of “economic reform.”⁶⁶ The chapter considers four broad research questions:

- (a) How do *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* represent what is, broadly speaking, a neo-liberal story?
- (b) What are the similarities, and differences, between papers?
- (c) What are the continuities, and differences, between the news treatment of the Lisbon 2000 and the Barcelona 2002 summits?
- (d) What is the link between print media texts and the wider social and political processes affecting, or affected by, the issue of “economic reform”?

This chapter first gives a short overview of methodological issues involved in the selection and analysis of material. It then presents the textual analysis itself. Finally, it gives an overview of the structural (i.e. socio-political and institutional) factors influencing the news treatment of both summits.

⁶⁶ The characteristic packaging of neo-liberalism as an agenda of “economic reform” has been chronicled by, amongst others, Chomsky (1998). The EU interest in “economic reform” can be seen in the context of the poor growth performance of many mainland European economies (especially France and Germany) throughout the late 1990s, in contrast to the buoyant growth of the American (and Irish) economy.

5.2 Methodological issues

This chapter, as well as chapter 6, examines content from the two biggest selling daily (i.e. Monday to Saturday) newspapers in Ireland *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent*⁶⁷ These papers were chosen for two principal reasons because (a) with the possible exception of the rival broadsheet the *Irish Examiner* (see chapter 7), one would expect both broadsheets to give the most comprehensive, Irish-based print media review of the summits and (b) because I wanted the chapter to include a comparative element Horgan (2001) gives a good overview of the historical, and contemporary, identity of both papers

- *The Irish Times* - Historically the paper of the Protestant commercial and professional classes, Ireland's de facto "paper of record" now has a broad middle class/urban appeal Pitched to the "upper end of the market" (Horgan, 2001: 165), and liberal and progressive in character, the paper has, since the 1960s, "to some extent informed, the changes that were then [and since] taking place in Irish society" (ibid: 93)
- *The Irish Independent* - Now part of the Tony O'Reilly owned Independent Group, the *Irish Independent* historically "appealed primarily to the growing Irish Catholic middle classes and to the farming community" and was "the first indigenous newspaper [sic] whose circulation was effectively national" (6) The *Irish Independent* still retains its popular base and was the biggest selling newspaper in the daily newspaper market in 1999 However, its front page editorial on the eve of the June 1997 election, urging its readers to vote for the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat coalition platform on the basis of "economic and taxation policy alone" (170) was an "unprecedented" (170) move and clearly signalled the Independent group's ideological view of economy

⁶⁷ *The Irish Times* typically devotes much more attention, in terms of word count, to each of the issues than the *Irish Independent*

This chapter analyses two summits of the European Council of Ministers (a) the Lisbon Summit of March, 2000 and (b) the Barcelona summit of March 2002. These particular summits were chosen because the summit agenda, on both occasions, was principally concerned with the key political economy - and neo-liberal - issue of further liberalising European markets, in fact, the Barcelona summit was specifically convened to complete the implementation of the so-called "Lisbon agenda". Yet, in the case of both summits, the specific issue of "economic reform" was only a part of the summit agenda. Therefore, any investigation of the specific question of neo-liberal influence needs to be prefaced by another analytical category, the "news agenda", which first establishes the immediate news context (apropos the summit) in which the political economy agenda is addressed and, moreover, allows me to sort out the relevant sample of articles - the EU political economy articles - from the others.

Since the subject matter is itself neo-liberal, any appraisal of neo-liberal influence based on content alone (which, in any case, is largely based around the discursive contributions of various summit "agents", it isn't discourse spontaneously *produced* by the journalist) tells us little enough about neo-liberalism's influence on the process of journalistic representation. Certainly, a paper's decision to report and highlight *particular* discursive contributions over others is a telling ideological indicator (see the source analysis below). But it is the issue of *how* a paper represents, and *frames*, a summit discourse(s), not the basic fact of it being reported in the first place, which is this study's precise analytical concern. In other words, to draw on Gitlin's (1980) conceptualisation of "news frames", this chapter is interested in the "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which [Irish based] symbol-handlers routinely handle [the] discourse" (Kwansah-Aidoo, 2003: 61) involved in, and concerned with, EU "economic reform".

The unit of analysis, in this instance, is *all* the textual genres (including reportage, analysis and opinion) which allude to both summits within a specified time-frame. The time-frame basically covers the period immediately before, and after, the staging of both summits. The textual analysis is largely linguistic - although, unlike chapters 6 and 7, this chapter briefly considers photos, mainly because of the prominence, post-

Seattle (see McMichael, 2000 and Frank 2000), of visual images of protest, and violence, in the news reporting of EU and global political summits. The work of Hall (1981) and Barthes (2002) on the representational effects of news photographs is relevant to this visual analysis.

The textual analysis of both summits, across papers, is structured according to the following headers:

(a) *The news agenda*

This section is qualitatively different from the others, as it basically considers the news treatment of the summit from the perspective of agenda-setting research (see Dearing and Rogers 1996). It considers the relative attention given to the “reform” agenda in the broader context of the summit news coverage, and its *salience* in terms of overt news indicators such as headlines, front-page prominence, number of articles etc.

(b) *Headline analysis*

This header examines how the issue of “economic reform” is framed (see Gitlin, 1995), and discursively structured (see Bell, 1998), in the relevant headlines. The emphasis on framing (see Gitlin, 1995) is important, because previous headlines analysis research has emphasised both their “replacement effect” (where “headlines stand in for the content of the article because few people read it fully”) and the “framing effect” (where “headlines frame the interpretation of the article content” (Condit et al, 2001: 379)). The headline is posited here as a particular kind of discourse genre, which foregrounds the thematic issues and discourses which dominate *The Irish Times*’ treatment of the summit. As with the other sections in this chapter, the headlines are considered in terms of Burke’s (1969a) hexad. The use of the hexad throughout the chapter should be understood as less of a method and more of an analytical “scaffolding”, parsimoniously used, to help illuminate the study’s central concerns. The point of its application is neither to show knowledgeable display of Burkean thinking or give substance to some potentially dull, mechanical form of analysis, but use it, *where appropriate* (i.e. where it

can illuminate important ideological emphases), to offer insight into how the summit agenda is mediated through the process of journalistic representation

(c) Source analysis

The relationship between journalist and source is a key journalistic relationship, especially in an age which has seen “a growing media dependency on sources” (Davis, 2000: 39). It is an important interdiscursive relationship, too, as the discursive contributions of sources have a clear framing impact on the discourse structure of an article. The identity of sources is particularly important, and “one striking feature of news production is the overwhelming reliance of journalists on a tightly delimited set of official and otherwise legitimized sources which are systematically drawn upon, through a network of contacts and procedures, as sources of ‘facts’ and to substantiate other ‘facts’” (Fairclough, 1995: 49). Herman and Chomsky maintain that this “reliance of the media on information provided by government, business and ‘experts’ funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power” (Herman and Chomsky, 1994: 2) has a propaganda or filtering effect on “the definition of what is newsworthy in the first place” (ibid.: 2). This section is structured around the discursive contributions (both direct quotes and attributed comment) of the different news sources. The source analysis is premised on the view that a paper’s decision to report, highlight, and seek out, *particular* discursive contributions over others, is a key journalistic decision, and crucial to the representational framing of any news event. Three questions are central: (a) who is the source/attributed source?, (b) what is their broad stance towards the issue of “economic reform”?⁶⁸ and (c) what is the kernel of their rhetorical position towards the “reform” agenda?

⁶⁸ To conserve word count in the body of the study, the quotes, and the attributions, of the different sources/attributed sources in chapters 5 and 6 are published in the appendices. In both cases, most sources/attributed sources are quoted only once. The selection of quotes thereafter (as, for example, in the case of widely quoted sources like Bertie Ahern) is geared towards finding the best illustration, and synopsis, of the source’s stance.

(d) Newspaper attitude

Again drawing on the hexad, this section will examine the full range of texts - but particularly analysis and opinion pieces - to look at the various ways both *papers* project distinct institutional, or authorial, attitudes towards the summit agenda of “economic reform”. It will examine the often subtle, lexical ways in which a paper’s *own* representation of events animates, coheres or subverts the attitude conveyed by the “official”⁶⁹ rhetoric which it reports on.

I focus on these four elements, because, taken together, they offer diverse ways of illuminating the “framing” differences and similarities between both papers and across summits. It is important to note that, with the exception of the formal listing of headlines, all the italicised emphases (unless stated otherwise) are those of the author (the same principle applies to the textual analysis of chapter 6, 7 and 8).

5.3 *The Irish Times* and Lisbon 2000⁷⁰

5.3.1 *The News agenda*

Covering the period from March 23rd to March 25th, 2000, thirteen *Irish Times* articles⁷¹ make some reference to the Lisbon summit. Thematically, they can be organised as follows (with reference to the date, the cited byline and section of the paper in which the article appears):

⁶⁹ By which I narrowly mean, for coding purposes, the discursive contributions of government and quasi-government agents.

⁷⁰ The particular Lisbon summit (there was a second one in 2000) was held on the 23rd and 24th of March, 2000. The sample of newspaper articles ranges from the 23rd to the 25th of March and includes preview articles. The material was sourced in two ways. The bulk of *The Irish Times* material was downloaded from the Lexis-Nexis website (see www.lexis-nexis.com) through a search for all the articles, within the specified timeframe, which made reference to “Lisbon” AND “summit”. The *Irish Independent* articles were sourced from a microfilm archive of the relevant editions. The sourcing of material relating to the Barcelona summit was selected according to the same procedures.

⁷¹ Unless it is stated otherwise, one can assume all the quoted extracts here are from the March 23rd, 24th and 25th editions of *The Irish Times*. The same principle applies in the case of the *Irish Independent* and the analysis of the Barcelona summit.

European Political Economy

- 1) *Dot com summit targets US success with EU values* Patrick Smyth, European Correspondent,⁷² sets the scene for today's Lisbon EU Summit
March 23rd, Business and Finance⁷³
- 2) *French out of step with EU's reforming zeal* EU leaders set to agree huge range of targets for decade of economic reform aimed at setting the union on course to rival US
Patrick Smyth - March 24th, Business Supplement⁷⁴
- 3) *EU Leaders back 10-year economic reform package* Taoiseach said a charter would free small business from bureaucracy and open access to venture capital
Patrick Smyth, European Correspondent - March 24th, Business Supplement
- 4) *EU signs trade pledge with Mexico*
Patrick Smyth – March 24th, Business Supplement
- 5) *EU targets of Commission and Portuguese Presidency*⁷⁵
Unattributed – March 24th – Business Supplement
- 6) *All lay claim to success at dot com summit*
Patrick Smyth - March 25th, Business and Finance
- 7) *Accord between EU and Mexico opens markets*
Michael McCaughan - March 25th, Business and Finance

Bruton Versus Ahern⁷⁶ (immigration row)

- 6) *Bruton calls on EU summit to condemn politicians who exploit immigration issue*
John Bruton [basically a transcript of his statement] - March 24th, 2000, Home News
- 7) *Bruton accuses Ahern of exploiting immigration*

⁷² The citing or non citing of specialist correspondents follows the way in which each article was published in the respective edition. This is the case throughout chapters 5 and 6

⁷³ In each case the headline is in italics and, where there is one, the sub-title is in normal font

⁷⁴ *The Irish Times* publishes a weekly business supplement on Fridays. March 24th, in this instance, is a Friday

⁷⁵ This "article" is simply an unadorned, and unmediated, listing of the summit's "official" agenda

Mark Brennock - March 24th, Front Page

- 8) *Ahern denies trying to make political gain out of immigration issue*

Miriam Donohoe, Political reporter - March 25th, Front Page

Northern Ireland

- 9) *Ahern seeking joint strategy with Blair*

Gerry Moriarty - March 23rd, Home News

- 10) *Trimble rejects tactics of RUC motion*

Frank Millar, London Editor - March 23rd, Home News

Miscellaneous

- 11) *Western Balkans given priority*

Patrick Smyth – March 24th, Business Supplement

- 12) *Government rejects ESRI⁷⁷ call on tax cuts*

Mark Brennock and Miriam Donohoe, Political Correspondent - March 25th, Home News

- 13) *Taoiseach says drivers have a good argument*

Mark Brennock - March 25th, Home News, Dublin Bus Strike

Photographs

- 1) Group picture of EU leaders with caption “Traditional EU Leaders’ photocall was disrupted as Swedish Foreign Minister Ms Anna Lindh did not want to stand beside Austrian Chancellor, Mr Wolfgang Schuessel (second row first left)”

Photograph Reuters – March 24th – small⁷⁸ picture, page 2 of Business section

⁷⁶ In March 2000, Bertie Ahern was (and still is) the Irish Prime Minister (Taoiseach) and John Bruton was the former Prime Minister and leader of the main opposition party, Fine Gael

⁷⁷ Economic and Social Research Institute, a state owned think-tank

⁷⁸ Small relative to the other photographs in this section

The first seven articles – basically those which relate to the political economy agenda of the summit - are the focus of analysis in this section. One can make several important observations about the paper's representation of the summit on the basis of story placement alone. The most notable feature, in this respect, is that the seven articles relevant to the sample are *all* published in the business section of the paper. Considered in semiotic terms, this signifies one key feature of *The Irish Times'* framing of the summit: that the summit agenda is perceived to be of little interest to a general readership, and of most relevance to a specialist, business and corporate readership (indeed, even the distinctly political article about the “Western Balkans” (see under miscellaneous) is published in the business section). As for the single photograph, also published in the business pages, all one can observe about it, from this study's perspective,⁷⁹ is its banality, being nothing more than a “traditional” summit “photocall”

Considering the overall coverage, what clearly stands out is the high profile attention given to the Bruton and Ahern immigration “row”. Immigration is in no way part of the official summit agenda, yet Bruton's attempt to embarrass Ahern in front of his Prime Ministerial colleagues, by calling on the summit leaders to “condemn politicians who exploit immigration issue”, is actually a front-page story on both the March 24th and 25th editions of the paper. This is to say that a fringe summit story (essentially an ephemeral and local political row transposed to a European stage) leads *The Irish Times'* coverage of the summit. That it should get this priority is, in one sense, understandable, given that it involves an elite personalised stand-off over a delicate political issue. The signification is nevertheless clear: it is considered of much more immediate news importance than – what is editorially positioned - as the specialist and technocratic economic concerns of the business pages.⁸⁰

The pre-dominance of national concerns is also evident in the other summit related news stories. Northern Ireland, for instance, features in two stories - both relating to a fringe summit meeting between Ahern and Blair “aimed at breaking the political

⁷⁹ The summit's cold shouldering of Austria is outside the scope of this study.

⁸⁰ See Galtung and Ruge's (1981) highlighting of personalisation as a key “news value”

deadlock in the North” (March 23rd) Ahern is asked to comment, while present in Barcelona, on two other two domestic stories the Dublin Bus strike and the publication of an ESRI report, which, although both concerned with matters of political economy, are outside the scope of this sample Yet the signification is again clear the most in-depth report (the article is 608 words in length) of the Irish Government’s comment on matters of political economy, and the only one published in the main section of the paper (in the context of a summit convened to discuss the EU’s proposed “10 year reform package”) is reserved for an immediate reaction to a local think-tank report, whose subject matter (a proposed freezing of tax cuts) is presumably regarded, editorially, as a matter of obvious concern to a general readership

5.3.2 *Headline analysis*

(The seven relevant headlines are outlined above, in chronological order, under the header of *European political economy*)

As the headline of the March 23rd preview article suggests, the putative *purpose* (see Burke, 1969a) of the summit is to marry what *The Irish Times* calls “US success with EU values” - in other words, the impression cultivated by the headline, is that the summit is an attempt to fuse the diverse *agency* of both geo-political *agents* (attributed here as metonyms for “success” and “values”) into some ideal formula for (nommalized) “*economic reform*” (The headline is premised on a syntactic and semantic ambiguity of *purpose* is the summit pursuing – or prioritising – “US success with EU values” or “US success with EU values?”) Indeed, the emphasis on reform is evident in the paper’s decision to categorize - like its political hosts, the Portuguese - the summit as the (modified) “*dot com* summit”, which functions as a metaphor for the EU’s desire to embrace the American dominated world of the (nommalized) “*new economy*” But the summit has a broader relational *purpose* too, one which alludes to a wider, and de facto, geo-political battle (*scene*), what one subtitle calls the “economic reform *aimed at* setting the Union on course to rival US”⁸¹

⁸¹ The hexadic categories are applied creatively throughout the study But *scene* can be partly conceptualised as the broad discursive and contextual backdrop to a particular linguistic and social act

The grand *purpose* (to bring about a “decade of economic reform”) and grand *scenic* backdrop (the EU challenge to US economic hegemony) are clearly cast. What is under-emphasised is *agency*, with no explicit headline mention of the proposed methods for achieving the ambitious target of a “10 year economic reform package” (note the density of the nominalization consistently attributed to the subject of “economic reform” – i.e. the ongoing collocation of the basic noun phrase with various presuppositions – and how it works to animate the impression that reform, and *the terms* of reform, is a simple bivalent proposition). There are hints of a philosophical, and distinctly neo-liberal, attitude in one assertion of Bertie Ahern’s “Taoiseach said a charter *would free* small business from bureaucracy and *open* access to venture capital”, a rhetorical stress evident in another headline “Accord between EU and Mexico *opens* markets”

The general headline impression is one of elite success, universal unity and consensus “*all lay claim to success*”, “EU *leaders back*”, “EU *leaders set to agree huge range of targets*”. Not all the EU political *agents* are represented as being fully on side, however “French *out of step with EU’s reforming zeal*”, one headline insists, which both foregrounds the notion of French exceptionalism, and tacitly attributes a singular *attitude*, infused by a “reforming [and, perhaps, implicitly ideological] *zeal*” to the rest of the nation-state *agents* which make up the EU.

5.3.3 Source analysis

With the outlines of a news frame evident from the analysis of headlines, the next step is to see how this frame is mirrored, or challenged by, the comments of sources. The full

(i.e. the background discourses relevant to the subject under discussion, in this case, the discursive assumption of US hegemony and the discourses which associate the EU with (social) “values” and the US with (economic) “success”, *act* can be understood as the basic linguistic or semiotic act itself (the *what* which was said, in this instance, the policies being enunciated), *agent* refers to the actors involved (i.e. the *who*), *attitude* refers to the – ideologically resonant – discourse types articulated by various actors (be they sources, institutional agents or individual authors), *purpose* (which can be either conscious or unconscious) relates to the end(s) being pursued (in this case “economic reform”) while *agency* relates to the means used to pursue purpose (in this instance the metaphorical agency of “EU values” and “US success”).

list of sources and attributed sources,⁸² including key quotes and attributions, is included in Appendix A. The findings are summarised below in table 5.1

Table 5.1 – <i>The Irish Times</i> & the Lisbon summit: an overview of sources and attributed sources		
<i>Source</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Stance</i> ⁸³
1) Bertie Ahern	Irish Prime Minister	Favourable
2) David O’Sullivan	Chef De Cabinet to the Commission President	Favourable
3) Romano Prodi	European Commission President	Favourable
4) Antonio Guterres	Portuguese Prime Minister and President of the Council of Ministers	Favourable
5) Jaime Zabludovsky	Mexico’s ambassador to the EU	Favourable
6) Peter Brennan	IBEC’s European director ⁸⁴	Favourable
7) Tony Blair	British Prime Minister	Favourable
8) Lionel Jospin	French Prime Minister	Ambivalent
9) Jose Maria Aznar	Spanish Prime Minister	Favourable
10) Goran Persson	Swedish Prime Minister	Ambivalent
11) Wim Kok	Dutch Prime Minister	Favourable
12) Pedro Solbes	European Commissioner for Economic Affairs	Favourable

⁸² Sources refers to all those individuals or groups that are directly quoted in an article, or part of an article, relevant to the sample. Attributed sources refers to the reported claims (without quotation marks) of specific individuals (“Ahern said”, “Blair said” etc.) or specific organisations (“the Institute of Chartered Accountants said”). What are not included, however, are the attributed stances of vague, unidentified collectivities like “they”, “leaders”, “unions” etc. The same principles underpin the selection of sources and attributed sources in chapter 6.

⁸³ The stances of sources, in the case of both summits, are broadly coded as follows: Favourable, Ambivalent, Unfavourable. If the source assumes a positive stance towards the agenda of “economic reform” he or she will be coded as “favourable”, if they express some notable, yet not major, objections they will be coded as “ambivalent”, and if they express major objections, or animate their “local” (see Van Dijk, 1998) objections with a strongly modalized stance, they will be coded as “unfavourable”.

⁸⁴ Irish Business and Employers Confederation

Many of the initial impressions of the headline analysis are reinforced by these findings. Of the twelve sources (all of whom are male⁸⁵), ten are generally favourable - many wildly so - and only two stances can be clearly characterised as “ambivalent”. Interestingly, eleven sources can be described as “official” sources, while the other source is a representative of the pro-business lobby group and hence, pro-reform, IBEC.

The signifiers of a successful, ground-breaking summit are many. Bertie Ahern’s categorization of the summit as affirmation of the Irish “model” and the “principles and values that underpin our approach at home”. The modality and ‘new economy’ discourse of Prodi (“we *must* deliver our E-Europe vision”). The revolutionary discourse of Guterres (this means “‘a *revolution*’ in the way we work”) and Blair (“this summit represents a *sea change in EU economic thinking*”), and Brennan’s excited sense of a new era having been categorically reached (“*The first time the business agenda has been* addressed by the EU”). Of the two stances characterised as ambivalent (the French stance is cast as ambivalent, because it ultimately sides with the need for reform – see below), it is only “the French” position which is emphasised (“The French the [presupposed] *only* ones out of step”), with Person’s “concerns” about the “effect on small countries of megatakeovers” implicitly cast as more of a “local” (see Van Dijk, 1998) criticism.

The most quoted source is the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern. His rhetoric is notable for its consistent thematic collocation of the economic and the social. For instance, while reportedly commending the vision of Romano Prodi for “seeing Europe as part of the global economy and challenging leaders to look *outwards*” (note the ellipsis - “look outwards” to where? - and the implication that the old, pre “reform” Europe was inward looking), Ahern affirms the importance of taking “account of the *social consequences* of the changes ahead” (incidentally, with the exception of some imprecise stance attributed to “the French”, the “social consequences” are not speculated on by the paper). In addition, Ahern’s tough “message” on the anticipated “competitive pressures” of greater market liberalisation (note the register that of a political leader managing and

⁸⁵ Connell (2001) has suggested a link between neo-liberalism and a hegemonic masculinity

addressing public expectations), and the need for collective (“we”) self-discipline, is soothed by vague, anodyne references to a (presupposed) “prosperity for everyone”, and, moreover, an interdiscursive amalgam of the comforting discourses of sustainability, egalitarianism and “community” with a discourse of economic “growth” “*It is therefore vital* [note the categorical modality] that *we adhere* [note the projected action] to the commitments agreed in the PPF (Programme for Prosperity and Fairness) if we are to maintain *continued sustainable growth* and *increasing prosperity for everyone in the community*” (note how the density of the two nominalizations work to neuter what are, potentially, a variety of discursive tensions between sustainability and growth, egalitarianism and prosperity)

5.3.4 Newspaper attitude

To best understand the attitude of *The Irish Times* towards the summit, one needs to start with its March 23rd preview, which, in its own words, “sets the *scene* for today’s Lisbon summit” Written by the paper’s European correspondent, Patrick Smyth, the article assumes a sceptical, and modalized, view of the grand claims being made in advance of the summit The rhetorical mode is descriptive, but the discursive style is ironic and sarcastic EU leaders “are *supposed*⁸⁶ to be redefining the union’s economic strategic objectives for the next 10 years and laying the basis of a new knowledge-based society Guterres, very much the driving force, *wants nothing less* than ‘to make the European Union the world’s most dynamic and competitive area, based on innovation and knowledge, able to boost economic growth levels, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion’” (note the interdiscursive mix of ‘new economy’ and social discourse types) The tone of the article gets even more sardonic, as the article offers an over-lexicalized, and quasi-lifeworld (see Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999), description of the summit agenda as a “familiar but spiced-up recipe for economic reform that combines a strong dash of Delors, more than a soupcon of Pdraig Flynn, a dose of the Third Way, a social conscience sauce and chips with everything” (again note the interdiscursive mix of economic and social discourses) The

⁸⁶ A string of three dots () indicates where textual material has been omitted in the case of chapters 5 to 8

article's scepticism should not be read as ideological opposition, however. In fact, it is anything but, as it cultivates an *attitude* which identifies and supports the *purpose* of "economic reform", but - based on its previous failure to *act* - is sceptical about the capacity of the EU (*agency*) to bring change about. "To remedy *the longstanding problem* [note the ideological inference of the nominalization that the failure to implement reform (to *act*) is commonly known and accepted], of the EU's inability to turn growth efficiently into jobs the summit will address the *old familiars of structural reform* [note the modalized appropriation of a euphemistic economic discourse, where "structural reform" becomes the nominalized cover for a raft of policy changes] of labour markets, education, training and research co-ordination, most of which were the preoccupations of the Delors White Paper of 1993"

The sceptical attitude is not as pronounced in the paper's reporting of what it categorizes as the "innovation *and* employment summit" (note how this simple description of the summit implicitly de-emphasises the tensions between "innovation" and "employment" discourses). Nonetheless, the news frame evident in the headlines and the source commentary is clearly animated by the paper's lexical representation of events. Take, for instance, its modalized characterisation of what it categorises as French "ideological discomfort": "*As expected* (note how the register speaks to what a specialised business readership might characterise as predictable French concerns) there was a *fudge*, courtesy of France, on targets for liberalisation of transport and energy. But French Prime Minister Mr Lionel Jospin, *facing massive union pressure at home* [this a crucial bit of *scenic* detail casting the unions as both the opponents of change and Jospin's power-brokers], told journalists later that, while there might be *legal and cultural reasons* [the paper may be paraphrasing Jospin's rhetoric, but it is interesting to note the absence of any "economic" reasons] why parts of the French public services would have to delay liberalisation or new technology, in the end "it *must* happen"

As in the case of Ahern's rhetoric (see above), the paper collocates its enthusiasm for "economic" reform with various "social" disclaimers. EU Leaders "insist" that the "reform package" puts "the Union on course to rival the US as a knowledge-based, competitive economy, *but with a social conscience*" (note the reaffirmation of the

scenic discourses, and the geo-political tensions, foregrounded in the earlier headline) As with the headline de-emphasis of market *agency*, the specific *market* gains are de-emphasised For instance, it is the issues of most probable interest to individual citizens, not corporate and business *agents*, which are given prominence, though discourse placement, in one summary of the summit's achievements and projected actions "Full employment is to be a key objective alongside pledges dramatically to expand *access* to the Internet, *lifelong training* [the cumulative citizen pitch], remove the barriers to e-commerce, and institute deadlines for *full liberalisation of markets*" (the market pitch) The total failure to agree on what the paper's preview article categorizes as the "*most ambitious*" poverty targets are also de-emphasized ("a casualty of the discussions before they began") Ignored by the sub-editors, the issue is only addressed in a brief quote from Jospin at the bottom of a March 24th report What is absent throughout is any concrete sense of oppositional discourses And where the most pointed "global" (see Van Dijk 1998a) criticism is expressed (near the end of an article on the EU-Mexico "free trade" deal', the counterpoising of conflicting perspectives is, of course, a staple of the reportage genre), its authority is somewhat de-legitimised by the absence of agency " *Critics of the NAFTA*⁸⁷ *accord* [a second Mexico article makes a similarly imprecise allusion to the Mexican "left"] claim that, while [Mexican] exports have boomed, domestic industry has collapsed and small farmers have gone bankrupt, unable to compete with superior US production rates"

The Irish Times' coverage contains one revealing allusion to British media representation of the summit which implicitly affirms a British 'Euro-sceptical' discourse Referring to what it suggests is the failed efforts of Tony Blair to excite domestic enthusiasm for the summit, the paper describes "his attempts to engage the British public in the great European debate [as being] thwarted by the BBC's preoccupation with his forthcoming paternity leave and the news that the British delegation had taken three jets to get to Lisbon" Given what this study reveals about the paper's own coverage of the "reform" agenda (consigned to the business pages, overshadowed by a local political "row"), one might suggest that *The Irish Times*

⁸⁷ North American Free Trade Agreement the trade deal signed in 1993 between Mexico, US and Canada

cannot afford to be too self-congratulatory, and unreflexive, about its own attempts to “engage” its Irish public in European issues

5.4 *Irish Independent* and Lisbon 2000

5.4.1 *The news agenda*

Within the timeframe of March 23rd to 25th, the *Irish Independent* published a total of seven articles, and two photographs, which allude in some way to the Lisbon summit. They can be organised thematically as follows:

European Political economy

- 1) *Nothing to be smug about in Lisbon*
Conor Sweeney, European Editor - March 23rd, Editorial page
- 2) *Eager EU leaders set to sign on the dot com line*
Conor Sweeney, European Editor - March 24th, News
- 3) *Eircom first target for EU plan to boost competition*
Conor Sweeney, European Editor - March 25th, News
- 4) *Summit 'great news' for Ireland*
Conor Sweeney - March 25th, News

Bruton V Ahern

- 5) *Bruton attempt to embarrass Ahern on immigrants*
Senan Molony and Tom Brady - March 24th, News

Miscellaneous

- 6) *Commissioner safe as Prodi recants*
Conor Sweeney - March 24th, News

7) *Russians agree to allow monitors into Chechnya*

Conor Sweeney - March 25th, News

Photographs

- 1) Medium sized picture of Bertie Ahern and Brian Cowen with the caption "Summit to smile about Taoiseach Bertie Ahern shares a light moment with Foreign Affairs Minister Brian Cowen shortly before the start of the EU summit in Lisbon yesterday"

Picture Reuters, March 24th, Page 6 (News)

- 2) Large picture of Bertie Ahern with the title and caption "State papers Taoiseach Bertie Ahern carries his papers as he arrives for the last day of the EU summit in Lisbon yesterday"

Unattributed, March 25th, Page 10 (News)

The first four articles - the ones relevant to the sample - are analysed below. Compared to *The Irish Times*, what is obvious, on first glance, is that there are less summit related articles in the *Irish Independent*, and that the four relevant ones are all published in the main news section of the paper. The *Irish Independent* covers the Bruton and Ahern row, but doesn't give it anything like the front page prominence attributed to it by *The Irish Times*. In fact, none of the summit related stories make it to the front page - with the exception of a one line preview (of an inside headline) at the very bottom of the March 24th edition ("Eager EU leaders set to sign on the dot com line The Summit, Page Six"). After that, Irish angles dominate the other two stories: the first a report suggesting Commission President Prodi has "backed down" on "his proposal to cut Ireland's automatic right to a Commissioner", the second, a Chechnya story, which opens with the unlikely line "Ireland has scored a diplomatic coup by persuading Russia". The focus on the local is also evident in the two photographs, both of which are politically un-contentious images of the two senior Irish representatives (Ahern and Cowen) attending the summit. The respective images connote (see Hall, 1981, Barthes 2002) an Ireland at ease with the summit agenda (anchored in the caption "summit to

smile about”) and a trustworthy Taoiseach earnestly committed to representing the interests of the Irish state (anchored in the caption “state papers”)

5 4 2 *Headline Analysis*

Based on its headlines, the *Irish Independent* frames the summit quite differently from *The Irish Times*, with events cast in, what Burke would call, a much narrower “circumference” or “scope” (see Burke, 1969a 77) There is no mention of the ambitious geo-political purpose (the challenge to US hegemony), no acknowledgement of the EU-Mexican trade deal, no allusion to French dissent or no recognition of the quasi-philosophical wish to marry US and EU values Attention is directed instead towards the summit’s impact on the local Irish *scene* what is anonymously, and triumphantly, categorized as “‘great news’ for Ireland” (note how the summit is implicitly attributed as “great news” for the entire Irish collective) The “EU plan to *boost competition*” (projected here as an instrumental *purpose* in its own right) is considered in terms of its effect on the “local” corporate *agent* Eircom The first paragraph of the March 23rd article confirms that the “smug” *attitude* reproached in the agent-less headline is a reference to “Irish” smugness, which is metonymically attributed to Bertie Ahern Yet, like *The Irish Times*, the impression of elite consensus and enthusiasm for reform is keenly projected “*Eager* EU leaders *set to sign* on the dot com line”

5 4 3 *Source analysis*

The various quotes from the sources and attributed sources used by the *Irish Independent* are included in Appendix B The findings are outlined below in summary form in table 5 2

<i>Source</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Stance</i>
1) Maria Rodriguez	Described as a “key aide to the	Favourable

	Portuguese government”	
2) Unnamed Commission spokesman	EU civil servant	Favourable
3) Lionel Jospin	French PM	Ambivalent
4) Antonio Guterres	Portuguese PM	Favourable
5) Tony Blair	British PM	Favourable
6) Peter Brennan	Described as a representative of the “Brussels-based Irish Business Bureau” ⁸⁸	Favourable
7) Romano Prodi	EU Commission President	Favourable
8) Bertie Ahern	Irish PM	Favourable

The *Irish Independent*'s use of sources has much in common with *The Irish Times*. For instance, all stances (all eight of whom are male) are favourable with the exception, once more, of Jospin, and all sources are “official“, with the exception again of Peter Brennan. The projected mood is similarly euphoric be it Rodriguez’s modalized insistence that “*we can overtake the US*”, Guterres’s insistence that the target of “*most competitive region in the world*” is attainable (note how the dense nominalization animates the implicit challenge to US hegemony), Blair’s confident prophesy of “full employment in *our* countries” (note the warm, suasive feel of the pronoun register) or Brennan’s categorical assertion “this *is* one of the best summits ever”

Ahern is again the most quoted source. The selection of quotes is different, but the discursive emphases are similar to those in *The Irish Times*. For instance, in an effort to insulate himself against the charge of ideology, Ahern categorically distances his own stance on privatisation from that of fervent ideologues. “*The argument* [i.e. the agentless argument] that you have to privatise everything to bring about change *doesn't* stand up in the Irish context. Telecom Eireann [see chapter 7] changed *radically* when it

⁸⁸ Peter Brennan is also quoted in *The Irish Times*, but described therein as a spokesperson for IBEC

was in state hands” Additionally, Ahern’s support of various economic initiatives is antithetically set against a modalized and interdiscursive stress on “social” concerns “The US has an internet penetration of 60pc The EU [note the paratactic linking of the US and the EU an implicit allusion to the geo-political *scenic* tensions foregrounded by *The Irish Times*] has a long way to go, *but we’ve also got to look at the social and not just the economic benefits*”

5 4 4 Newspaper attitude

As the headline analysis indicates (see above), the *Irish Independent* is much more focused on the specific Irish implications of the summit than *The Irish Times* Its March 23rd preview is largely framed in Irish terms and challenges the putative view that *our* success (“don’t *we* have almost full employment and a good grasp of e-commerce?”, it asks rhetorically) is based on the “very policies European leaders hope to nurture over the next two days” and thus affords (the metonymic) Ahern the “perfect opportunity” to “sit back smugly on behalf of the Irish nation and lord it over our European cousins” Yet the *attitude* of both papers, towards the summit agenda, has much in common For instance, the *Irish Independent* is equally sceptical about the EU’s ability to *act* and the seriousness of its challenge to the US “Today European leaders will, *not for the first time* [note how the paper’s register speaks to a reader bored with EU talk of “economic reform ’], finalise a list of proposals *to try and prove* that the EU can be *just as* [note the comparative relation] competitive and dynamic as the US” Accordingly, in the aftermath of the summit, the paper remains unconvinced about the triumphant talk, and projections, of “progress” it follows a pattern that many *weary diplomats* [note the modalized scepticism throughout the extract] have observed before Every few years, European leaders hold employment summits *promising* millions of jobs and *insisting* there is a new determination to carry through *necessary* reform [note the modal emphasis, an emphatic marker of the paper’s stance towards what it nominalizes as a “*series of measures to make Europe more efficient and cut down on red tape and inefficiencies*”] Judging by the 15m who are jobless across Europe, they have proved a *dismal failure* [note how the *scenic* unemployment failures are contextualised

exclusively in terms of the inability of political leaders to *act*] However, this time, the politicians insist *hand-on-heart*, it is different”

The image of French exceptionalism is similarly sketched to that in *The Irish Times* "France alone had spoken out [note the anthropomorphism of the entire country] against a [nominalized] *series of measures to liberalise major industrial sectors*" The dirigiste French domestic *scene* and its "militant" trade union *agents* are again the explanatory variables "In France, like many other European countries, these industries are *totally in state control* and changes *would* [note the confident predictive modality] provoke major confrontation with *the militant French trade union movement*" [note the nominalized, and ideologically loaded, description of the trade unions and the interdiscursive recontextualization of statist and militant discourses] Characteristically, Irish angles are sought, as the paper sets up a telling antithesis between the categorically laggard French and the future looking, pro-reform Irish "Just days after [Minister] Mary O'Rourke's plans to break up CIE⁸⁹ were revealed, the French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin conceded he simply *couldn't deliver* similar reforms in his country"

5.5 *The Irish Times and Barcelona 2002*⁹⁰

5.5.1 *The News Agenda*

In the period of the sample, *The Irish Times* published a total of 10 articles, and 3 photographs, which alluded in some way to the Barcelona summit. They can be organised, in terms of this study, as follows:

⁸⁹ The state owned Irish rail company. Mary O'Rourke was Minister for Public Enterprise at the time.

⁹⁰ The Barcelona summit took place on March 15th and 16th, 2002. The sample includes a March 15th preview article and follow up reports from March 16th and 18th (no edition of either paper was published on Sunday March 17th).

Political economy⁹¹

- 1) *EU leaders expected to discuss Middle East crisis*
Denis Staunton - March 15th, World News
- 2) *Ahern seeks EU pledge on neutrality before Nice vote*
Denis Staunton - March 16th, Front Page
- 3) *EU leaders at odds as Barcelona summit opens*
Denis Staunton - March 16th, World News
- 4) *Preparing To Revisit Nice*
Editorial comment - March 18th, Editorial Page
- 5) *Summit of EU leaders manages to avoid talking about Iraq* The meeting refused to address the prospect of US action against Baghdad, writes Denis Staunton
March 18th, World News
- 6) *EU countries endorse key energy agreement* Move hailed as breakthrough in ambition to make Europe world's most competitive economy
Denis Staunton⁹² - March 18th, World News

Irish interest

- 7) *Declaration on neutrality 'too little too late' says Fine Gael*
Alison O'Connor - March 18th, World News
- 8) *Cox to Campaign in new Nice referendum*
Denis Staunton – March 16th, World News

Zimbabwe

- 9) *Unions consider a mass protest over Mugabe's election victory*
Frank Millar - March 15th, World News

⁹¹ Irrespective of the thematic emphasis of the headline, these articles refer to all those stories where there is *some* consideration of the political economy matters relevant to the summit agenda

⁹² Although five of the relevant articles are authored by Denis Staunton, the focus in this instance (unlike say parts of chapter 8) is on the corporate personality of the newspaper, as opposed to the individual personality of the journalist

Middle East

10) *Diplomatic activity intensifies in spite of continuing violence*

Deaglan de Breadan - March 18th, World News

- 11) *Arafat wants Israeli forces to be withdrawn from Palestinian lands* In an exclusive interview, Deaglan de Breadan talks to the President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, at his West Bank office in Ramallah
March 18th, World News

Photographs

- 1) Medium sized photo with caption “Spanish riot police charge as anti-globalisation protesters scramble to get away in Barcelona’s central Ramblas yesterday Spanish riot police broke up a crowd of several hundred activists during a summit of European Union leaders”

Photograph Gustau Nacarino/Reuters – March 16th, Page 15 World News

- 2) Large photo with caption “An anti-globalisation protester handcuffed to a goalpost is grabbed by a private security member at the start of a Spanish league soccer match between Barcelona and Real Madrid at the Nou camp stadium yesterday Protesters also smashed up at least two Spanish banks during an anti-capitalist protest march in Barcelona on Saturday after the summit had ended in the city, police said”

Photograph Gustau Nacarino/Reuters – March 18th, Page 10, World News

- 3) Small photo with caption “A young man, who declined to give his name, waits to be treated at an ambulance after disturbances during an anti-globalisation demonstration in central Barcelona on Saturday The protest march was called to coincide with the summit in Barcelona”

Photograph Aranberri/AP – March 18th, Page 10, World News

The most obvious thing about the sample of six relevant articles above is that, while the body of each alludes, in some way, to what *The Irish Times* calls a summit agenda

“dominated by economic issues”, only one headline clearly refers to economic matters (“EU countries endorse key energy agreement”), while four of the five other headlines explicitly relate to non-economic issues. In effect, the economic agenda appears to be, at best, on a par with the issues of the Middle East, Iraq and, particularly, the (more local) question of Irish ratification of the Nice Treaty. What does distinguish the articles from *The Irish Times*’ coverage of the Lisbon summit, however, is that they are all published in the main section of the paper (although the fact that most of the articles are a composite of various issues, not just economic concerns, is one obvious explanation for that). Of the four articles outside this study’s remit, one refers exclusively to the summit’s declaration on Irish neutrality (which, incidentally, is the only issue to garner front page billing in the sample). The remaining articles are concerned with the Middle East, and the prospect of further sanctions against Zimbabwe.

The coverage certainly indicates a dramatic visual shift since Lisbon, as all three of the photos highlight the violent exchanges between the police and protesters. This is consistent with Hall’s observation that “the most salient, operational ‘news value’ in the domain of political news is certainly that of violence” and that “most news editors would give preference to a photo signifying violence in a political context” (Hall, 1981: 237). At a manifest level, the three photos simply denote violent exchange between the police and protesters. But what is ideologically significant about them is their implicit production of “codes of connotation” (ibid.: 226) which suggest that the “anti-globalisation” movement is a uniquely violent phenomenon, an impression which is further amplified by the discursive delegitimation of the “protesters” in the accompanying captions (see below).

5.5.2 *Headline analysis*

As was already noted, only one of the headlines relevant to this sample explicitly addresses economic issues (see above).⁹³ They nonetheless offer an outline account of how the summit’s economic agenda is framed by the paper. There are images of elite

⁹³ This is not, of course, to suggest that issues such as the Middle East and Iraq are without economic relevance, merely that they are outside the scope of this sample.

consensus (“EU countries *endorse* key energy agreement”), which are belied by another headline (“EU leaders *at odds* as Barcelona summit opens”) There are images of triumph (“move hailed as breakthrough”), though they are undermined somewhat by the absence of agency And there is, in the sub-title, a clear statement of *purpose* reminiscent of Lisbon the “*ambition to make Europe*”⁹⁴ *world’s most competitive economy*”

5.5.3 Source analysis

The full list of sources, and key quotes, relevant to the summit’s economic agenda are contained in Appendix C The summary findings are included in table form below

Table 5.3 – <i>The Irish Times</i> and the Barcelona summit an overview of sources and attributed sources		
Source	Identity	Stance
1) Tony Blair	British PM	Favourable
2) Lionel Jospin	French PM	Ambivalent
3) Anders Fogh Ramussen	Danish PM	Favourable
4) Bertie Ahern	Irish PM	Favourable

The table is revealing in several respects Firstly, there is the paltry amount of source comment on the specific economic aspects of the summit Secondly, the four individuals (again all six are male) who do feature are all “official” political sources - despite the fact that Barcelona was the site of protest for a large number of civil groups opposed to the process of market liberalisation (see above) Thirdly, there is the dearth of economic comment from Ahern (see below), whose utterances on the domestic, and

⁹⁴ Note how the EU and Europe function as interchangeable synonyms

European, issue of Ireland's ratification of the Nice treaty dominates media attention. And, fourthly, as with Lisbon, it is Jospin (a metonym for "the French") who is again the odd one out, his comments the only ones going against the grain of what is otherwise represented as a favourable reaction to the *substance*, at least, of the summit's economic agenda.

Of the quoted sources, the modality of Blair is particularly revealing: "*there is no-one really arguing about the direction. There may be [note the shift to a more modulated register] some arguing about the pace of the movement*" Blair is, in effect, suggesting that the (ideological) *purpose* of the summit is not in dispute, but that some *agents* may be concerned about the exact "pace" (i.e. *agency*) of the changed direction (i.e. Jospin, whose tentative commitment to the reform agenda is evident in the paper's reporting of his modified emphasis on "*controlled and gradual liberalisation*") Aside from that, there are the provocative comments from Ramussen, who in an echo of the thematic newspaper coverage of Lisbon (see above) indicts European politicians for their erstwhile failure to *act* ("too much foot-dragging) and foster the political *attitude* ("if there was a political will") necessary for economic "reform" and "change" (market *agency*).

5.5.4 Newspaper attitude

The Irish Times' coverage is downbeat, categorizing the economic discussions as a "*struggle to keep a programme of economic reform [agreed at Lisbon] on track*" Denis Staunton's March 18th review of the summit imagines a reader bored by the subject of "reform", as it describes the summit agenda as one "dominated by *dull, economic issues*, many so complicated that only a handful of officials in Europe's capitals understand them fully" In this sense, he tacitly – and interdiscursively – takes his cue from Tony Blair, and what the paper calls his "ironic assessment" of the summit as a "joy" (Blair is quoted as saying – in a rhetorical pitch to the "lifeworld" concerns of the everyman – "that he could think of more attractive ways of spending a Saturday morning than talking about the [nonetheless confidently projected] liberalisation of the European energy market") At the same time, we are told that "more than 200,000

people gathered in Barcelona to protest against the EU's economic policies" Which begs an obvious contradiction, unexplored by *The Irish Times* why is a "dull" economic agenda, so "complicated" (note how the categorization works to alienate "ordinary" concerns) that it is only understood by a "handful of officials" (elite *agents*), also the basis of a protest by "more than 200,000 people" (collective *agents*)?

The protests, and the protesters, are largely represented in pejorative terms. The labelling may vary, but the negative, as primary definer, is a constant in the "naming" (see Bourdieu, 1991) of the protesters as "anti-EU protesters", "anti-capitalist demonstrators" and "anti-globalisation protesters" (of course, these labels draw on a broader post-Seattle discourse about 'globalised' political protest). This is animated, in turn, by the paper's visual representation of the summit (see above) and (exclusive) foregrounding of violent images, which are collocated with (actively voiced) captions about "anti-globalisation protesters *scrambl[ing]* to get away", "protesters [who] *smashed up at least* two Spanish banks" and "a young man, who [tellingly] *declined* to give his name". The symbolic legitimacy of the protesters is further undermined by the consistent absence of spokespersons (*agency/agents*), and the paper's reformulation of their (invariably simplified) concerns either through the voice of vague, anonymous agents ("their leaders have promised") or the (singular) voice of an abstract collective "More than 200,000 people gathered to urge the leaders to pay more attention to the needs of working people" (considered in Burkean terms, this can be understood as a clear delineation of *purpose*, but a de-emphasis of means or *agency*, which, in the abstruse, technocratic context of the summit agenda is, arguably, another way of reinforcing the view that the protesters' ends-orientated (see chapter 2) agenda is unworthy of serious analysis). In fairness to *The Irish Times*, there are more considered characterisations too, including a modified description of the "protesters [as] against the *present form of globalisation*" and a vivid distinction between the "smaller" March 16th "demonstrations" (the ones foregrounded as violent) and "Thursday's [earlier] protest by European trade unionists which attracted tens of thousands of people".

As with the Lisbon coverage, “France” is again presented as the metonymical obstacle to EU consensus. The characterisations of the summit as a “struggle” are invariably collocated with a discourse of French recalcitrance: “European Union leaders *struggled* yesterday to *breathe life* into a [nominalized] *10-year plan to make Europe more economically competitive*. But [note the disclaimer] France remained firm in its opposition [note how the stance of “opposition” is uniquely attributed to France] to a key element of the plan, the deregulation of the energy industry”; “The leaders agreed at a meeting in Barcelona to a *partial* [note the modified emphasis] liberalisation of the European energy market by 2004 *but* [again note the disclaimer] *France succeeded* in preserving *its* [again attributed as a uniquely French interest] state monopoly for providing electricity to households”. As before, the explanation for France “dragging its feet” is, once again, largely⁹⁵ framed in quasi rational choice terms (see chapter 2): “With French presidential and parliamentary elections only six weeks away, neither Mr Jospin nor President Jacques Chirac want to antagonise powerful unions that oppose energy liberalisation” (note how it is the (self-interested) unions, not the French public/electorate, who are cast as the emphatic opponents of change). And, while Jospin is quoted as categorically asserting that “there *was no proof* that competition improve[s] service”, the specific *economic* objections to the summit agenda are effectively absent from *The Irish Times*’ representation of events, which implicitly assumes that the matter of French resistance can be understood in terms of pre-election posturing and special interest group power.

5.6 *Irish Independent* and Barcelona 2002

5.6.1 *The News Agenda*

The full list of *Irish Independent* articles which mentioned the Barcelona summit is 16, the number of photographs 3. They can be organised, in terms of this sample, as follows:

⁹⁵ The paper notes the fact that “other EU member-states are angry that [the French] state-owned electricity company has moved into a number of neighbouring countries” while, France itself, balks at

Political economy

- 1) *Ahern to sound out EU leaders on issue of neutrality*
Chris Glennon and Conor Sweeney - March 15th, News
- 2) *Neutrality deal clears way for Nice vote*
Chris Glennon and Conor Sweeney - March 16th, Front page
- 3) *Reform deadlock hits hopes for economic recovery*
Chris Glennon and Conor Sweeney - March 16th, News
- 4) *Riot police fire teargas as protests mar summit*
Chris Glennon and Conor Sweeney - March 16th, Front page
- 5) *New health card to aid worker mobility*
Unattributed - March 18th, News
- 6) *All sides claim a victory of sorts* Childcare plan agreed but concrete political goals still elusive
Chris Glennon and Conor Sweeney - March 18th, News
- 7) *Taoiseach stresses importance of 'yes' vote on Nice* Taoiseach Bertie Ahern has ruled out trying to raise the stakes in an attempt to win the second referendum on the Treaty of Nice
Chris Glennon and Conor Sweeney - March 18th, News

Nice Treaty

- 8) *Cox to take career break for Nice*
Unattributed - March 15th, Front Page
- 9) *Bertie bidding to avoid the triple whammy on poll defeats*
Chris Glennon - March 16th, News
- 10) *Nice Back on the Agenda*
Editorial Comment - March 16th, Editorial Page
- 11) *Cox under fire over plan for Treaty campaign*
Conor Sweeney - March 16th, News

Iraq

12) *Blair fails to win support for American-led Iraq attack*

Stephen Castle, Independent news service - March 16th, News

13) *EU gives White House its marching orders on Iraq*

Chris Glennon and Conor Sweeney - March 18th, News

Common Agricultural Policy

14) *Talks to iron out row over direct farm subsidies*

Unattributed - March 16th, News

Miscellaneous

15) *We'll have to think big for hosting future gatherings*

Chris Glennon - March 16th, News

16) *Parliament to play greater role as leaders praise Cox*

Unattributed - March 18th, News

Photographs

17) Large front page picture with caption "Two plainclothes policemen detain a demonstrator in Barcelona yesterday after 2,000 anti-globalisation activists protested during the EU leaders' summit in the city"

Picture Denis Doyle - March 16th – Front page

18) Two large, inter-related photos which take up most of the top half of page 10 with caption "Romano, have you heard the one about the Irishman, the Englishman and the Frenchman?", and subtitle "Summit to smile about British Prime

Minister

Tony Blair gestures as he talks during a break at the European summit in Barcelona yesterday. And whatever he said drew a great deal of laughter from French

President

Jacques Chirac, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern and EU Commission President Romano Prodi”

Pictures Reuters – March 16th – Page 10

19) Small aerial picture of the RDS with caption “The RDS in Ballsbridge the likely venue for the Irish summit in 2004 as Dublin Castle will be too small” Unattributed – Page 10 (bottom right hand corner)

The issues relating to the summit’s economic agenda (including the issues of “childcare” and a European “health card”) are explicitly alluded to in three of the seven headlines relevant to this sample, of the other four others, three relate to the question of Irish ratification of the Nice Treaty. In fact, if one takes all sixteen headlines into account it is clear that the issue of Nice dominates the *Irish Independent’s* coverage of the Barcelona summit – given headline prominence in a total of seven articles (including one editorial) and front page priority in two March 16th articles (indeed, the article about mooted changes to the common agricultural policy (CAP) could also be considered a generic Nice story, since it addresses the issue in the context of the Nice issue of enlargement). Along with the Nice story, the paper’s characteristic search for Irish angles is evident in two other miscellaneous stories (as it is in the other two photos) one of which speculates on the (hardly urgent) issue of Irish arrangements for hosting the EU summit of 2004 and another which champions the summit performance of Irish MEP, and leader of the European Parliament, Pat Cox. The *Irish Independent* highlights the international issue of the possibility of an “American-led” invasion of Iraq, though the paper’s geo-political lens is again somewhat narrower than *The Irish Times*, with no headline reference to either the Middle East or Zimbabwe.

As with *The Irish Times*, the summit is big news visually, and the *Irish Independent* gives front page prominence to a large photograph about the violent exchanges between police and protesters. The “implied [ideological] meaning” (Hall, 1981: 226) echoes that of *The Irish Times* the “anti-globalisation” movement is a violent, disruptive phenomenon, an impression which is further amplified by the accompanying front page headline “riot police fire tear gas as protests March summit” (These inherently polysemic images are open to contrary readings about heavy-handed police tactics etc

But it is how they fit with the balance of the paper's coverage which is the focus here) The other two photographs are less interesting ideologically. But the use of the caption "Summit to smile about", which was used by the paper in its earlier coverage of the Lisbon summit (see above), is interesting, for it does give some insight into the formulaic way (see Tuchman, 1972) regular, periodic news events like EU summits are likely to be treated by newspapers

5.6.2 *Headline analysis*

Of the seven relevant headlines (see above), three refer (I include the childcare headline), if abstractly (agency is consistently de-emphasised), to some element of the summit's economic agenda. A fourth, front page headline suggests a greater focus - juxtaposed with the emphasis of the accompanying photograph (see above) - on the issue of summit violence than in *The Irish Times*, a news frame which is animated in turn by the paper's pejorative, and blanket characterisation of the "protests *mar [ring the] summit*" and its de-emphasis (by its non-identification of the effected agent) of the police use of "teargas". One headline addresses the micro reform issue of a "new health card", which is explicitly related to the needs of individual economic actors ("card to aid worker mobility) rather than the structural imperative of labour market flexibility. As with *The Irish Times*, the general impression of the summit is one of [nominalized] "reform deadlock" and modulated consensus ("all sides claim a victory of sorts"). To interdiscursively trace it back to the paper's disclaimed affirmation of the Lisbon summit (see above), the summit is again represented as a political failure to *act* (set "concrete political goals") which is directly indicted ("hits") for undermining the incipient (*scenic*) "hopes for [a European] economic recovery"

5.6.3 *Source analysis*

The full list of sources, and key quotes, for the *Irish Independent's* treatment of the summit issue of economic reform are listed in Appendix D. The summary findings are included in Table 5.4 below

<i>Source</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Stance</i>
1) Lionel Jospin	French PM	Ambivalent
2) Tim Jones	EU analyst from Medley Global Advisers	Favourable
3) Bertie Ahern	Irish PM	Favourable
4) Pedro Solbes	EU's Economic Affairs Commissioner	Favourable
5) Unidentified EU official	Civil Servant	Favourable
6) Charlie McCreevy	Irish Finance Minister	Favourable
7) Jose Maria Aznar	Spanish PM	Favourable
8) Tony Blair	British PM	Favourable
9) David Davis	Conservative Party Chairman	Favourable
10) Pat Cox	President of the European Parliament	Favourable
11) Jack Straw	British Foreign Secretary	Favourable
12) Unidentified tourist	Tourist	Tangential ⁹⁶

Of the eleven relevant sources (all of whom are male), ten can be classified as favourable towards the summit agenda of economic reform, while the only ambivalent stance, again that of Jospin, could just as easily be characterised as one of tentative support. Nine of the sources can be described as “official” (six government politicians, two Commission sources and the President of the European Parliament), while the other comments are from the chairman of the staunchly neo-liberal British Tory Party and a market investment strategist. *The Irish Independent*, like *The Irish Times*, gives no direct voice to the various civil society groups protesting at Barcelona. Tellingly, the most ideological resonant comment, in this respect, is an unidentified tourist’s dramatic equivalence of the protests with “a sort of war-time atmosphere”

⁹⁶ By tangential sources, I mean sources who articulate, or imply, no stance towards the summit’s economic agenda, but whose comments influence the paper’s representation of events

The rhetoric (both directly quoted and attributed) of the sources is interesting in several respects. For instance, there is McCreevy's knowing and categorical, rational choice inspired description of the tactical behaviour of Chirac and Jospin: "They were going to huge efforts to ensure that *they didn't* agree to anything that could be exploited against them". The insistence, attributed to Straw, that - contra Hayek (1960) - the interdiscursive goals of a "free-market agenda" and "social justice" are harmonious. Blair and Solbes' limp, modulated defence of summit "progress" (what the former calls its "limited but solid" progress). Jones' metaphorical and categorical linking of Irish economic "confidence" (*agency* and *attitude*) to the buoyancy of the European economic scene: "Any *shot in the arm* [note the latent ambiguity of the drug-taking metaphor: is growth being constructed as an insatiable end?] for the zone *is a shot in the arm* for confidence in Ireland". And Cox's antithesis between the "rhetoric" and "real substance" of "reform". Finally, there is Ahern's lifeworld description of the summit agenda as dealing with the "bread and butter" issues (note how this discourse type mirrors the paper's own categorization of the specific energy issue as "technical rather than revolutionary"), along with his affirmation of the "global" ideological consensus of the leaders, whatever about the distinct "local" (see Van Dijk, 1998) emphases: "*We all agree on the objectives*, it's just that every leader places different emphasis in different areas")

5.6.4 Newspaper attitude

In its review of the summit, the *Irish Independent* expresses clear disappointment at what it regards as the political equivocation surrounding the summit's "main focus" its "controversial" (note how the categorization at least implicitly recognises protesters' anxieties) "plans" for "developing the EU into *the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world*" (note the collocation of competition and knowledge discourses, a feature throughout the sample). Consequently, the failure of politicians to *act* with the necessary resolve and conviction (what the paper describes as a test of the "EU's ability to take tough decisions for long-term gain") is consistently represented as a laborious struggle: "leaders were *deadlocked* last night on a package of *badly needed reforms*" (note the modal emphasis), "leaders *struggled* to overcome divisions on *free-market*

economic reforms” (the only instance of this precise nominalization in the sample), “EU leaders *scrambled to agree a compromise*” As in the case of the Lisbon summit (see above), the paper is underwhelmed by, and assumes a modalized stance towards, the post summit “*claim[s]* of success” “The *relieved* Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, *claimed* the 15 leaders had taken ‘a fundamental step’, towards a more liberalised market, *just 24 hours after* [note how the comparative works to poo-poo Anzar’s claims] they faced almost *total failure* His *rhetorical flourish* overstates many of the other changes, which were not provoking difficulties”

The attitude of reproach manifests itself in the paper’s (now familiar) characterisation of the French position. There is the categorical and rational choice informed explanation [the *only* explanation] of the behaviour of Chirac and Jospin “Both *were reluctant* to make concessions ahead of looming elections there next month - where they face off against each other” The eventual consent of the French is qualified by disclaimers “*After intensive pressure*, France agreed to break *its* [again attributed as a uniquely French situation] state monopoly on electricity supply by 2004 - *but* only for business users” The paper does suggest that the French may have allies in the Germans, it alludes to “reports that countries like France and Germany had resisted [Blair’s] call for further liberalisation of European markets” In addition, Charlie McCreevy, in an oblique homage to Irish flexibility - grounded in a neo-liberal discourse of market flexibility - sets up the antithesis that “comparing EU countries to ships, he said it was much easier to talk around small countries like Ireland than big ones like France and Germany”

As with *The Irish Times*, the protesters are again negatively categorized as “*anti-globalisation activists*” (most prominently in the caption accompanying the front page photograph), and colourfully collocated with the signifiers of violence (“scuffles”, “a hail of chairs”, “setting fire to rubbish bins”) It does, though, make a vivid distinction between the March 16th “trouble” and the “*peaceful* atmosphere of a 100,000-strong march by trade union activists a day earlier” Indeed, the activists’ putative agenda is sympathetically reformulated by the paper, though de-legitimated somewhat by the absence of identifiable organisations or spokespersons “They were protesting [sic] the

liberalisation agenda Unions fear liberalisation will be used as a cover word by employers to make it easier to sack staff”

5.7 The textual and the social world

Conceptualised within the terms of agenda-setting research (see Dearing and Rogers, 1996), one can say that, with respect to *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent's* coverage of the EU summit agenda of “economic reform”, the *media agenda* follows the *policy agenda* and that the only evidence of a distinct *public agenda* involves the “violent” opposition protests at Barcelona. It is as if both papers take their cue from Blair’s assertion that “there is no-one really arguing about the [ideological] direction”, as they proceed to represent and frame a world in which the official, and densely nominalized, summit agenda of “economic reform” – what IBEC’s Peter Brennan call the endorsement of the “business agenda” and what Bertie Ahern calls the “principles and values that underpin our approach at home” - meets with little *articulate, and reasoned* resistance. In other words, both project a social and political world in which a neo-liberal policy agenda, committed to market liberalisation and the privatisation of state assets, is largely uncontested at an official policy level, dominates the political economy, and media, “order of discourse” (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) (though it characteristically manifests itself as an ‘impure’, interdiscursive mix of economic and social discourses) and is presented, and presupposed, as a natural, inevitable and commonsense policy response to what the *Irish Independent* argues is the need for “necessary reform”

This hegemonic representation of the policy agenda, and symbolic undermining of dissenting perspectives, is evident in several ways. Firstly, both papers rely, nearly exclusively, on “official” political sources, the vast majority of whom predictably (see Herman and Chomsky, 1994, Davis, 2000) project excited “new economy” (see Frank, 2000) enthusiasm for the proposed policy changes. In contrast, neither paper seeks out, or reports, sources opposed to the changes – despite the fact that the Barcelona summit is the site of “a 100,000-strong march by trade union activists”. Secondly,

notwithstanding their coverage of the Barcelona protests, both papers implicitly cast the “reform” agenda as uncontroversial, by according it a low priority on the summit, and general, news agendas (as a mitigating factor, it had to, admittedly, compete with the news, and political, exigencies of a post 9/11 world by the time of the Barcelona summit) For instance, *The Irish Times* relegates its coverage of the Lisbon “reform” agenda, which Blair describes as “a sea change in EU economic thinking”, to the business pages, gives front page prominence to an ephemeral political row and explicitly refers to economic matters in only one of the relevant Barcelona headlines The *Irish Independent*, for its part, de-emphasises the broader “economic reform” agenda by focusing attention on the specific Irish implications of the (given) policy programme Thirdly, the Lisbon headlines of both papers, with some exceptions (see below), foreground the idea of EU unity and consensus - though the consensual imagery is, admittedly, somewhat jaded by the time of the second summit in Barcelona Fourthly, the two papers, especially the *Irish Independent*, articulate their overt support for the “reform” agenda - though this does not preclude wry journalistic appraisal of much of the heady “reform” rhetoric, and scepticism about the EU’s institutional ability to act and deliver what *The Irish Times* rather sardonically describes as the “old familiars of structural reform”

The consistent exception across papers, and across summits, is the representation of the recalcitrant and “out of step” French Both papers sketch a picture of a “reform” shy - if not wholly oppositional - France which doxa-like (see Bourdieu, 1991) draws, nearly exclusively, on various neo-liberal, and public choice (see chapter 2), discourses about a dirigiste state, self-interested political behaviour and the temerity of politicians in the face of (assumed) trade union power Charlie McCreevy’s neo-liberal characterisation of the French, particularly his knowing observations on the political machinations of Chirac and Jospin, indicate a close relationship between the media and political “fields” in the production, and propagation, of this doxa Indeed, this discourse of French exceptionalism, can be linked to wider discursive processes (particularly post 9/11), and what Frank describes as the committed efforts of neo-liberal “American pundits and journalists” in the nineties to establish “the perfidy of France (Frank, 2000 73), which

one commentator described as “perhaps the nearest thing the United States has to a serious ideological rival in the last decade of the 20th century”

The most obvious news difference, between summits, is certainly the foregrounding of the Barcelona violence. In contrast to the banal visual treatment of the Lisbon summit, the images of “violent” street protest are front page news in the case of the *Irish Independent* and one factor ensuring that *The Irish Times* coverage of the summit itself is no longer confined to the business pages. The protests are similarly framed across papers. The depiction of violent protest are given visual prominence, while the agenda of the protesters is de-legitimated by the absence of opposition sources and the blanket, doxa-like characterisation of the protesters as “anti-globalisation” and “anti-capitalist”. More starkly, neither paper seems interested in exploring the latent ideological tensions behind this very public opposition to the “reform” agenda, and what Bertie Ahern categorizes, on the other hand, as mundane “bread and butter” issues, where “we all agree on the objectives” (though, indicating that the ideological consensus is not without occasional challenge, *The Irish Times*’ Denis Staunton does explore these paradoxes in a letter style, opinion piece on March 19th (see Staunton, 2002))

There are some “local” differences in the coverage of the two papers. The most significant one is that *The Irish Times* - true to its cosmopolitan and authoritative institutional “habitus” - is much more global and outward looking in emphasis. Be it the paper’s characterisation of the “reform” agenda as a challenge to American economic power, or its headline foregrounding of international diplomatic issues such as the Middle East, Iraq and Zimbabwe. In contrast, the *Irish Independent* is much more interested in local news angles, and is characteristically inclined to frame the “reform” story in distinct Irish terms (as typified by the Lisbon headline, “Eircom first target for EU plan to boost competition”, and, above all else, by the Nice issue at Barcelona). In addition, the *Irish Independent* publishes its reports of both summits in the main body of the paper - unlike *The Irish Times*, which publishes its reports of the Lisbon summit exclusively in its business supplement (this could be more prosaically explained by the fact that then, as now, *The Irish Times* publishes its business supplement on a Friday - the day after the first day of the summit - while the *Irish Independent* publishes its

special business supplement on a Thursday) Finally, *The Irish Times*' coverage is generally more comprehensive, with longer articles than the *Irish Independent* – though the latter paper's decision to send its senior political correspondent, Chris Glennon, to cover the Barcelona summit (and to assist the paper's European editor, Conor Sweeney, who covered the Lisbon summit on his own) did dramatically increase the scale of the paper's comparative coverage

The analysis of this chapter suggests that the hegemonic consensus, about the neo-liberal agenda of EU "economic reform", is established, first and foremost, at an elite political, and policy, level Therefore, both papers could reasonably claim, in their defence, that *their* representation of events is simply a mirror of dominant social and political processes which they, as news gatherers, are obliged to report on Yet this fails to explain their own implicit affirmation of the "reform" agenda, their lazy characterisation of the opposition "protests" (itself an implicit collusion with elite political imperatives) or their ritualised (see Tuchman, 1972), and unproblematic, supposition of ideological consensus – all of which point to the broader media authority of a neo-liberal paradigm

5 8 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the news framing of two EU summits explicitly committed to discussing a neo-liberal agenda of "economic reform" in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* newspapers In light of the research questions set at the outset of the chapter, the findings suggests that both papers are deferential towards a neo-liberal agenda and, while there are some differences of emphasis between papers, represent it, across summits, as laudable and largely uncontested by *legitimised* social actors The next chapter examines two political economy news stories, in the same two papers, where the influence of neo-liberal assumptions is more subtle

Chapter 6 - Neo-liberal assumptions and state intervention

A comparative analysis of the news treatment of the launch of the National Development Plan and the Special Savings Incentive Scheme in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*

6.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the immediate news framing and discursive representation of two political economy policy initiatives: the Irish Government's launch of the National Development Plan (NDP) in November 1999 and its launch of a Special Savings Incentive Scheme (SSIS) in February 2001. The point of the analysis is to examine how *certain* neo-liberal assumptions underpin both the political selling, and media representation, of both policy initiatives.

The chapter considers three broad research questions:

- (a) How do *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* represent two Government policy initiatives dealing with state intervention in the economy, but which, in different ways, point to the contemporary political authority of *certain* neo-liberal assumptions?
- (b) What are the similarities, and differences, between papers?
- (c) What is the link between print media texts and wider social and political processes?

This chapter first looks at the different methodological, and theoretical, issues involved in the selection of material. The news treatment of both policy issues, in both papers, is then presented. Finally, the chapter considers the textual findings in terms of wider social and political processes.

6.2 Methodological issues

A very strict interpretation of neo-liberal orthodoxy might suggest it is ideologically incompatible with the idea of active and committed state involvement in the economy (see Kirby, 2002: 160). However, many analysts (see Heilbroner, 1986), even some neo-liberals themselves (Hayek, for instance, talks about the need to *plan* for the market and competition (see Hayek, 1944: 31), suggest that such an assumption is simplistic and maintain that the (so called) “free market” is in fact a state-sponsored imposition, as Karl Polanyi said of 19th century Britain, “there was nothing natural about [the arrival of] laissez-faire, free markets could never come into being merely by allowing things to take their course” (Polanyi, 1957: 139). Kirby puts the point well with reference to a contemporary Irish context:

If we understand neo-liberalism in its developed form to involve an extensive programme of reform of the state and its social policies, making them serve the needs of a competitive, liberalised market economy, then the Celtic Tiger can be seen to be a very successful example of neoliberal reform (Kirby, 2002: 162).

The broad thesis - that state-led policy initiatives and neo-liberal discourses are not incongruous bedfellows but likely to be interdiscursively blended together - is examined here in light of the news treatment of two Irish, indeed “Celtic Tiger” era (see chapter 8) policy initiatives: a) the Fianna Fail/PD Government’s launch of the National Development Plan (NDP) in November 1999⁹⁷ and b) the same Government’s launch of the Special Saving Incentive Scheme (SSIS) in February 2001⁹⁸. The two policy initiatives/news events have been selected because of what I regard as their illumination of the contemporary political authority of *certain* neo-liberal assumptions, principally

⁹⁷ The overriding purpose of the 2000-2006 NDP is summarised by Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy, in the foreword: “The plan will lay the foundation for Ireland’s continuing economic and social development into the next Millennium” (Government of Ireland, 1999: 5).

⁹⁸ The details of the SSIS were published as part of the 2001 Finance Bill. The basic terms of the scheme, which was designed to encourage greater savings in accounts directly promoted by financial institutions themselves, means “savers will be able to get £1 from the Government each month for every

- (a) *The subordination of society – and the concept of development - to the market, in the case of the NDP* To put it in hexadic terms (see Burke, 1969a), this study asks what is the ideological and philosophical conception of *purpose* (social or economic?) underpinning the NDP and the print media's representation of its launch?
- (b) *And, in the case of the SSIS, the assertion of the individual and the private over the collective* The study asks how is a scheme philosophically orientated towards the needs of individual savers, and the market interests of private financial institutions, represented in the print media?

This chapter is similar to chapter 5 in several respects. For instance, it draws on the same “agenda-setting” (see Dearing and Rogers, 1996) and “framing analysis” (see Entman, 2002) research literature. It analyses, and compares, the news coverage of the same two papers *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* (for an overview of both papers, see chapter 5). The unit of analysis is again *all* the textual genres⁹⁹ (i.e. reportage, news analysis, editorials and opinion pieces etc.) which allude to both news events within a specified time-frame. Methodologically, the empirical analysis is structured around headers introduced in chapter 5.

1) *Headline analysis*

The analysis starts with an examination, again drawing on Burke's hexad, of how both news events are summarily “framed” in the article headlines. Unlike chapter 5, however, neither news event necessitates a “news agenda” category in its own right, as they do not touch on anything like the range of issues which featured in the chapter 5 analysis of EU summits. Consequently, some of the analytical considerations addressed under the “news agenda” header (like, for example, front page prominence) are subsumed here into the headline analysis.

£4 they save under [the] scheme”, subject to “a minimum [investment] of £10 per month and up to a maximum of £200” (*The Irish Times*, February 16th, 2001)

This chapter's analysis of the NDP headlines is different in one significant respect. Because the number of articles published in relation to the NDP is far greater than in the case of the SSIS (or, for that matter, the Lisbon and Barcelona summits in chapter 5), the headlines are summarily compressed into different thematic categories and published in full in the appendices section. Furthermore, details regarding the newspaper section in which each article is published are not listed, as the overwhelming number of articles are published in special NDP sections in the main body of both papers (the two exceptions, in this respect, are front page stories and editorials, both of which are specifically cited in the analysis below)

2) *Source analysis*

As in chapter 5, the "unit of analysis", in this instance, is structured around the discursive contributions - both direct quotes and source attribution (and sometimes an intertextual combination of both) - of the different news sources. The same three questions are central: (a) who is the source/attributed source?, (b) what is their broad stance towards the subject matter of the article?¹⁰⁰ and (c) what is the kernel of their rhetorical position towards both policy initiatives?

3) *Newspaper attitude*

Again drawing on the hexad, this section examines the body of the SSIS sample of texts to look at the various ways both *papers* project distinct institutional, or authorial, attitudes towards the savings scheme. In the case of the NDP, the examination of newspaper *attitude* focuses on analysis and opinion genres (and mainly newspaper editorials) as the sheer size of the sample precludes close up, in depth analysis across a wider sample of texts.

⁹⁹ In this instance, I mean texts in the narrower linguistic sense, photos are not included

¹⁰⁰ Stances (towards both policy initiatives) will be graded according to the same criteria as chapter five: favourable, ambivalent, and unfavourable

The methodological assumption is that a close focus on these three aspects of the news coverage offer a thorough overview of the way in which both news events are treated by the two papers. As in the case of chapter 5, all italicised emphases (unless otherwise stated) are those of the author.

6.3 *The Irish Times* and the launch of the National Development Plan

The NDP was launched on November 15th 1999. The sample of articles, in the case of both papers, is taken from the November 16th editions (the sample is limited to November 16th because of the sheer scale of the coverage given to the NDP on that day).

6.3.1 *Headline analysis*

The headlines are reviewed in summary form in Table 6.1 below and published in full in Appendix E. The categories below have been organised as follows: where two or more categories are referred to in the same headline (for instance, like roads and housing in headline 12 – see Appendix E) the headline will be listed under the first category mentioned. Those headlines that are too few in number to merit a separate thematic category are listed under a header dubbed “miscellaneous”.

<i>Thematic Category</i> ¹⁰¹	<i>Number of articles</i>
General overview	11
Transport	11
Regional Development	4
Employment	4

¹⁰¹ The categories are organised as follows: (a) general overview: headlines referring to general aspects of the plan; (b) transport: those which mention, or first refer to, transport issues; (c) regional development: those which refer to regional/rural issues or are written by a regional correspondent; (d) employment: those which refer to employment issues; (e) those which refer to “social inclusion” or “poverty” issues; (f) miscellaneous: those which do not merit a thematic category in their own right.

Social Inclusion	3
Education	2
Miscellaneous	6
<i>Total number of articles</i>	<i>41</i>

The thematic organisation of Table 6.1 lists those aspects of the NDP which feature in *The Irish Times* headline coverage of its launch. As one would anticipate, the headlines are a mirror image of the thematic emphases which dominate the content of the plan itself (see Government of Ireland, 1999). On the basis of Table 6.1 alone, one can already surmise that the issue of transport infrastructure is a key element of the plan, which is explicitly addressed in 11 of the 41 articles. As one headline on, among other things, “traffic” problems categorically, and dramatically, puts it, “*Everything depends on breaking logjams*”. Apart from that, a focus on regional development, [nominalized] *social inclusion* and employment issues is also suggested. The other notable aspect of *The Irish Times* coverage is its scale: a total of 41 articles, amounting to a total corpus of just over 20,000 words.

Considered in terms of Burke’s hexad, one can make several observations about the headlines listed under the category of general overview. There is, for instance, the foregrounding of Bertie Ahern’s categorical predictive assertion about the plan’s national purpose: “Plan [agency] will ‘end imbalances [purpose] which have disfigured Ireland” (*agency-purpose*). In addition, there is his evangelical projection of the plan’s transformative potential: “Blueprint [agency] to transform [purpose] *all our lives*” (*agency-purpose*).

(Burke’s notion of a “ratio”, in many ways analogous to the idea of a “frame” (see Tannen, 1993), is worth a digression. By ratio, Burke basically means the internal relationship between the most important points of thematic, and ideological, emphases in any discourse. Burke suggests that “the ratios may often be interpreted as *principles of selectivity* [author’s italics]”, a definition clearly compatible with Entman’s claim that

“framing essentially involves selection and salience” (Entman, 2002: 391). The *agency-purpose* ratio, in the first example above, is used to describe the main relational inference of Ahern’s first assertion – that the guiding *purpose* of the “plan [*agency*]” is to “end imbalances which have *disfigured* [note the subtle appropriation of a critical discourse] Ireland”. The plan is given a similar emphasis in the second headline (*agency-scene*) when Ahern suggests that the “blueprint” (i.e. the plan – *agency*) will “transform [*purpose*] all our lives”. The hexadic ratios can throw up a whole range of permutations, and one could identify several other potential ratios in the above examples – for instance, the implicit citing of the plan as a means of improving the welfare of the entire nation (“all our lives, remedy national “imbalances”) could be conceptualised in terms of an *agency-scene* ratio. But, to repeat (see chapters 4 and 5), the point of the hexad’s application is not to indulge in endless deconstructionist play, but select those examples which help illuminate the central ideological concerns of this study – which, in the specific instance, are the claims being made about the plan’s ultimate ends).

There is the assertion in another (general) headline that grand purpose is not quite enough and that “if the plan is to succeed” “a new approach” (*attitude*) from Government (*agent*) (*attitude-agent*) is necessary – i.e. the proof that it can “speedily deliver” (i.e. speedily *act*) on its infrastructural commitments (its precise *purpose* – note how the scepticism about the ability of the state to *act* echoes the widespread scepticism about the EU’s ability to *act* in chapter 5). The potent symbolism of the plan is emphasised, and one headline represents it as the symbol of a changing political *scene* in which the Irish collective *agent* assumes control of its “own” fate (“funding from ‘our own resources’”) and is no longer dependent on the support of the EU supranational *agent* (“EU contribution will be *only* 12% of total budget”).

There are criticisms, too, of what the front page headline describes – in inverted commas – as this “historic” plan. John Bruton maintains that the plan is based on benign and hubristic assumptions about the future (the projected economic *scene*) and “makes no provision for any downturn”. Another headline suggests that the plan “avoid[s] tricky decisions” and categorically asserts that the Government “has farked key long term

political decisions in *its* [note the ‘distancing’ effect of attributing the plan to the Government] national plan”, in other words, it suggests that the plan is something of a surrogate for action, and that the sheer size of the “big spenders” financial commitment is being used, blitzkrieg-style, to compensate for, and deflect from, the Government’s failure to *act* decisively (in the interests of *national* - and regional - planning) Inevitably, though, in the mass of the coverage, this critical attention is deflected by the detailed review of what one headline describes – somewhat tongue in cheek – as “a national plan with something for everyone” The editorial headline (“The National Plan”) is quite banal Nevertheless, the presupposition that the plan is, in fact, “the national plan (and not just *the Government’s* national plan – see above) does not signal a critical response

The other headlines deal with means, or, in hexadic terms, consider the various (micro) instruments, or *agencies*, which make up the supra-*agency* that is the plan Although there is a broad diminution of agency, many of the headlines convey clear enthusiasm The move to “upgrade the roads” is “welcomed” (“roads and housing” are the two issues foregrounded in the front page headline), “public transport” is categorized as the “big winner” , while Frank McDonald, *The Irish Times* environmental correspondent, affirms modulated support for the financial commitment to public transport “Sun *finally* shines for public transport in Dublin” The transport provisions meet with a less favourable response from others, though, including an unidentified Chamber of Commerce representative (“traffic chaos *will* persist”) and economists John Fitz Gerald and Edgar Morgenroth (“A full strategy *is not* in place for Urban transport investment in Dublin”)

Based on the remaining headlines, the reaction to the other specific elements of the plan seems largely positive There is “scepticism” about its (projected) “delivery”, but the plan’s regional development “programme” is (passively) “welcomed”, and described as “impressive” by the paper’s regional development correspondent in other words, the sceptical *attitude* is again directed towards the question of the Government’s ability to *act*, and not the *agency*, or putative *purpose*, of the “regional development” programme itself The plan’s employment provisions are foregrounded as meeting with the

universal approval of agents as diverse as “employers”, “unions” and the “INOUE” (Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed) Its “heavy emphasis” on what one headline categorizes as “*the deprived*” is observed, and animated by a discourse committed to “*combat[ing] social exclusion*” The plan’s commitment to education is positively enlivened by the paper’s lexical choices (“*big investment*”, “*massive spending to come*”), as are the (sourced but agency-less) comments about “transform[ing]” the health service and the “unprecedented” fisheries allocation There are other, less favourable responses, however in the actively voiced headline “IBEC queries ports investment” and, more abstractly, in the agency-less headline “Childcare allocation draws fire”

6.3.2 Source Analysis

The full list of *Irish Times* sources (including direct quotes and attributions) is included in Appendix F The details are summarised in table 6.2 below

<i>Source</i> ¹⁰²	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Stance</i>
1) Taoiseach, Mr Ahern	Govt	Favourable
2) Minister for Finance, Mr McCreevy	Govt	Favourable
3) Tanaiste, Ms Harney	Govt	Favourable
4) Minister for the Environment and Local Government, Mr Dempsey	Govt	Favourable
5) Community Platform	NGO ¹⁰³	Ambivalent
6) The Forum of People with Disabilities	NGO	Unfavourable
7) The Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs, Mr Ahern	Govt	Favourable
8) Minister of State for Finance, Mr Martin Cullen	Govt	Favourable

¹⁰² The sources in table 6.2 are described exactly as they were in *The Irish Times*

¹⁰³ Non-Governmental Organisation

9) Mr Frank O'Donoghue, chief executive of Waterford Chamber of Commerce	Business	Favourable
10) Western Development Commission (WDC)	RA ¹⁰⁴	Favourable
11) The Council for the West chairwoman, Ms Marian Harkin	NGO	Favourable
12) Mr Liam Scollan, chief executive of the WDC	RA	Favourable
13) The Cork city manager, Mr Jack Higgins	LA	Favourable
14) Bus Eireann's Cork area manager, Mr Joe Fitzgerald	PS	Favourable
15) The chairman of the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly, Mr Tony Ferguson	RA	Favourable
16) North-west regional director of IBEC, Mr Brendan McGinty	Business	Favourable
17) Vice-president of SIPTU, Mr Des Geraghty	Trade Union	Ambivalent
18) An Taisce	NGO	Unfavourable
19) CIF [Construction Industry Federation] Director general Mr Liam Kelleher	Business	Favourable
20) The Transport Council of IBEC	Business	Favourable
21) SFA [Small Firms Association] director Mr Pat Delaney	Business	Favourable
22) The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed	NGO	Favourable
23) The Minister for Agriculture, Mr Walsh	Govt	Favourable
24) Mr Pat Ridge, chairman of BIM (The Fisheries Board)	PS ¹⁰⁵	Favourable
25) Fine Gael leader, Mr John Bruton	Opp ¹⁰⁶	Unfavourable
26) The Labour Party spokesman on finance, Mr Derek McDowell	Opp	Ambivalent

¹⁰⁴ Regional Authority

¹⁰⁵ Public service or state-sponsored/affiliated bodies

¹⁰⁶ Opposition political parties

27) Green Party TD Mr Trevor Sargent	Opp	Unfavourable
28) IBEC director Mr Peter Brennan	Business	Favourable
29) The general secretary of the ICTU [Irish Congress of Trade Unions], Mr Peter Cassells	Union	Ambivalent
30) Mr James Stone, manager of the Midlands Regional Authority	RA	Favourable
31) Midlands-based Mr Pat O'Rourke, deputy president of the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association (ICMSA)	Farming	Favourable
32) Dublin Chamber of Commerce president Mr Hugh Governey	Business	Ambivalent
33) Professor John Fitz Gerald of the Economic and Social Research Institute	PS	Ambivalent
34) Ms Mary O'Rourke, Minister for Public Enterprise	Govt	Favourable
35) Mr Robert Molloy, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Renewal	Govt	Favourable
36) Labour Party spokesman on the Environment, Mr Eamon Gilmore	Opp	Ambivalent
37) Minister for Health and Children, Mr Cowen	Govt	Favourable
38) Mr Tom Byrne, the director of the South East Regional Authority	RA	Favourable
39) A spokesperson for Cork County Council	LA ¹⁰⁷	Favourable
40) Dublin Chamber of Commerce	Business	Ambivalent
41) Mr Noel Davern, Fianna Fail TD	Govt	Favourable
42) The Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, Dr Woods	Govt	Favourable
43) Michael Martin, Minister for Education	Govt	Favourable

¹⁰⁷ Local Authority

In terms of stance, the 43 sources (all but 3 of whom are clearly identifiable as male) can be classified as follows: 32 favourable, 7 ambivalent and 4 unfavourable. In terms of identity, they can be organised along the lines of 13 Government, 10 statutory,¹⁰⁸ 8 business, 4 opposition politicians, 5 NGO, 2 trade union and 1 farming. Led by the Government agents, the dominant reaction of the sources to the plan is favourable. The excited rhetoric certainly suggests so: be it Bertie Ahern's invocation of patriotic and historicizing discourses ("investment on a scale never seen before in *our* history"), Mary Harney's nominalized equivalence of the Government's "*imagination* and *determination*", Michael Martin's promise of "megabucks" for education, or business representatives' modalized collocations and conjunctions: "imaginative and *ambitious*" (Small Firms Association), "*ambitious* and necessary" (Construction Industry Federation), "*ambitious* and comprehensive" (Irish Business and Employers Confederation). There is support from more diverse sectors, too: "this *should* [note the confidence of the modal auxiliary verb] improve the well-being of *all* [note the universal claim] rural families" (Irish Cream Milk Suppliers Association), "unprecedented" (Fisheries Board), a "decided improvement" on the 1994-1999 plan (Marian Harkin, Council for the West).

Given the largely positive response to the plan, the identity, and discourse, of the less impressed sources is revealing. Of the 4 sources whose reaction to the plan is categorised in Table 6.2 as unfavourable, 2 are NGOs (the Forum of People with Disabilities and the heritage body An Taisce) and 2 are political (Trevor Sargent of The Green party and John Bruton, leader of Fine Gael). The Forum's criticisms are directed towards its own specific disability concerns: "contains no specific details as to what resources will be directed at concrete, inclusive measures for disabled people over the next six years". The plan's transport provisions - one of its key elements - are criticised both by An Taisce ("lack of 'evidence of any *seismic* shift [the modifier does imply that there has been *some* shift] to public transport") and the Greens ("too heavy an emphasis on roadbuilding *at the expense* [note the setting up a direct comparative] of a 'coherent national public transport infrastructure'"). The anaphorical, soundbyte

¹⁰⁸ This category is a composite of regional authority, local authority, civil service and public service sources

friendly rhetoric of John Bruton, which is animated by a series of antitheses, is, perhaps, the most categorical philosophical indictment of the plan this is “a plan for roads *rather than* public transport a plan for those who can already afford housing *rather than* those who cannot It *is* a plan for bricks and mortar, *not for* services and improving the quality of life”

Of the 7 sources categorized as ambivalent, 2 are opposition politicians, 2 are trade union representatives, while the remaining 3 are from the NGO, business and public service sectors They are categorized as ambivalent because they don't, in my view, amount to a global, or sufficiently acerbic, critique of the plan, but are better described as “local” (Van Dijk, 1998) criticisms about its presentation and preparation, or, at worse, disappointed reactions to the inadequacy - as distinct from the fundamental *purpose* - of particular provisions For instance, the Labour party's Eamon Gilmore reportedly (and, of course, the only material which I can base my analysis on is *what is reported*) categorizes the social housing measures as “inadequate”, SIPTU categorizes the childcare investment as “small”, the Dublin Chamber of Commerce suggests, in a modulated construction, that “Dublin's traffic problems will *only be* *partially* alleviated”, ICTU's Peter Cassells' call for “a wider definition of social infrastructure”, and the Community Platform's expressed “disappointment” at the plan's equality measures is neutralized somewhat by a proceeding formulation of their position as one of “welcome” [sic]

The discourse of the Labour party's Derek McDowell is particularly interesting He deflects critical attention from the contents of the plan itself and focuses on the circumstances surrounding its preparation In hexadic terms, his stance can be described as a criticism of the (political) *agency* and *scene* involved in the preparation of the plan, but not a fundamental criticism of the policy *act* which is the plan itself, or its overriding *agency* or *purpose* His critique, however, is grounded in a modalized identification with the “*public domain*” and the use of strategic minded, media conscious, comparatives “It has been *at one level* shrouded in secrecy, with neither the public, the social partners nor the opposition given any real opportunity to input into it *On the other hand* it has been selectively leaked to the media for a number of months

now in an effort to generate coverage for the Government *Hopefully*, in future we will have the maturity to debate important issues like this in the public domain”

6.3.3 Newspaper attitude

The Irish Times’ editorial stance is one of firm, if modulated, support for the plan “There will be much debate on the detail [incidentally, the editorial does not object to any of its specific provisions], *but it is difficult to argue* [note the modalized affirmation] with the *overall thrust* of the plan” (which, in hexadic terms, can be read as an endorsement of the plan’s *purpose*) The “overall thrust” of the plan is defined in terms which foreground the *agency* of economic “growth”, yet also draws on “social” discourse types “The central goals of the plan are to address *the congestion* threatening to *strangle growth* [note the emotive characterisation of the agentless threat to growth] in Dublin, help lay the foundations for *growth* in the less-developed regions and tackle [nominalized] *social exclusion*” As far as the editorial is concerned, “economic growth” is the best *agency* of a prosperous “future”, though the paper’s implicit philosophical affirmation of conventional “growth” models (see chapter 1) is not without a salutary warning “This State now has an unprecedented opportunity to use the [nominalized] *fruits of economic growth* to lay the foundation for the future *It will not* [note the categorical modality] get a second chance”

The editorial shares the widespread concerns (see above) about the plan’s delivery “*The big issue* as recognised by the Taoiseach and senior ministers at yesterday’s launch [note the paper’s explicit identification with the official rhetoric of the Government], is whether the plan can be delivered”, in other words, “the big issue” does not relate to the plan’s (philosophical) *purpose* or (precise) *agency*, but centres on the question of whether its sponsoring *agents* - namely the Government and the various arms of the state - can *act* with the necessary urgency. Indeed, the editorial expresses firm, if again modulated, support for the IBEC proposal that the exigencies of the plan might necessitate some circumvention of normal planning procedures “People, *of course*, have a right to object and some project plans may thus have to be altered *but it is*

crucial [note the disclaimer and the shift to a categorical modality] that the whole process is expedited”

As I have already suggested, *The Irish Times* is careful - as are its authors - to interdiscursively stress the plan’s social and economic benefits “Spending on this scale is urgently needed to develop the State’s infrastructure *in all its forms*”, “the *most significant* increase in spending is on developing the State’s economic *and* social infrastructure” It insists, too, that the resources be used efficiently “there *must be* [note the modal emphasis] a clear and unrelenting focus on securing value for money” Yet the editorial ends by categorically asserting that the plan is no panacea for “all *our* [note the casual assumptions of the pronoun] economic problems” “The Government *must* also realise that the plan *is not* the answer to all *our economic problems*” (note how the latter emphasis reinforces the notion that the *National Development Plan* is, first and foremost, a plan for the economy)

Aside from the editorial, *The Irish Times* publishes several other articles (opinion pieces and news analyses) which offer a more subjective appraisal of the plan Some of these affirm the growth centred discourses of the editorial For instance, the modality of Jane Suiter, the paper’s economics correspondent, is categorical “This is *the most ambitious and detailed plan to date*, and *there is no doubt* that - *if implemented* [note how the modulated disclaimer here works to affirm the discursive concerns about the “delivery” of the plan] - *it will be* [shifting back to a categorical predictive modality] *good news for the economy, lifting growth and tackling* bottlenecks (note the agentless affirmation of the plan’s active *agency*) Kevin Rafter, in a similar emphasis, suggests that “if there is a *central theme* it is in the warning that the capacity constraints now so evident *across the economy must be* [note the modal emphasis] *tackled*” While IBEC’s Peter Brennan, in a special opinion piece, identifies the priorities of the plan (*agency*) as being “fundamental *to a competitive economy*” (*purpose*)

Other articles assume a more “locally” (see Van Dijk, 1998) critical stance Sean MacCarthaigh, in a humorous and ironic synopsis of the plan (interestingly, this article has its genre equivalent in the Miriam Lord article in the *Irish Independent* - see

below), is implicitly critical of the Government's expressed commitment to develop a communications strategy to raise awareness about the plan itself "So the Government can use taxpayers' money to persuade taxpayers their money is being well spent", he wryly observes Economists John Fitz Gerald and Edgar Morgenroth are broadly supportive, though they pointedly question the fact that "investment aid to the *private sector* is budgeted to increase over the course of the next seven years, *in spite of* [note the subtle inference that the Government has been over-attentive to the needs of the private sector] the very favourable business climate that already exists" And while Frank McDonald, the paper's environmental correspondent, ultimately affirms the plan's public transport provisions, they are - appropriating an environmental discourse - modalized as the belated policy response of a car-centric Government "while Government ministers may still see the world through the windscreens of their chauffeur-driven cars, *there can be no doubt that the penny has dropped* on traffic and transport in Dublin" In addition, the same correspondent suggests that the Government "still can't seem to decide what form regional development will take"

The firmest "global" (see Van Dijk, 1998) critique of the plan echoes McDonald's concerns about developmental imbalances and the planning procrastination of the Government As Denis Coughlan, the paper's senior political correspondent, sarcastically puts it "'Gateway' status is our new economic rosette And regional development policy will be based on it *eventually*" The crux of Coughlan's critical discourse is a clear indictment of the plan's market *agency* and neo-liberal priorities "Market forces, *rather than* [note the setting up of the antithesis] political planning dictate developments" The point is observed with a similar modal emphasis later in the same article "Ministers, it appears, *are relying on* the 'market' to do their planning for them The development of existing gateways and larger urban centres, the plan says *blandly*, 'will continue, *largely driven by market forces*'"

6.4 *Irish Independent* and the launch of the National Development Plan

6.4.1 Headline Analysis

The full list of *Irish Independent* headlines are published in Appendix G. They are outlined in summary form in Table 6.3 below.

<i>Thematic Category</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>
General ¹⁰⁹	7
Transport	4
Education	3
Regional development	3
Social inclusion	2
Employment	2
Health	2
Miscellaneous	5
<i>Total</i>	28

From Table 6.3, one can see that the *Irish Independent*'s coverage of the NDP is not as comprehensive as *The Irish Times* (28 articles compared to 41). As in the case of its market rival, the *Irish Independent*'s analysis is structured around general appraisals of the plan and specific issues like transport, regional development, social inclusion, employment and education.

In framing terms, the headlines listed under the category of general overview echo the thematic emphasis of *The Irish Times*' headlines. For instance, drawing on modernizing and patriotic discourses, the plan's symbolic importance (as a metaphor for Ireland's "coming of age as a wealthy [and hence, non-dependent] EU nation") is emphasised,

¹⁰⁹ The headlines here are categorized along similar lines to those in *The Irish Times*.

but specifically credited to “a strategic spirit of agreement” (what the subsequent article describes as a “spirit” of “national partnership” embodied in the series of national bargaining agreements going back as far as 1987) The distinction between the plan, and the Government’s ability to deliver the plan (its ultimate ends unquestioned) is reaffirmed “Cheque is in the post *now* for delivery” The only clear criticism of the plan, listed under the general overview header, is again made by John Bruton, who, while recognising the plan’s “long list of projects”, criticises its lack of “vision” (which can be understood, in hexadic terms, as an indictment of the plan’s failure to link *agency* to *purpose*¹¹⁰) The overriding impression, thereafter, is one of success a championing *attitude* epitomised by the front page headline “£40bn plan to keep the good time rolling” (note both the attributed link between the plan and the “good time” and the presupposition that “the good time” has been “rolling” all along for the (imagined) *Irish Independent* reader) In short, what Miriam Lord playfully characterises as “good news for Ahern” is, quite simply, projected as good news for all of “us”, or, as another dizzy headline puts it, “spending on a scale *we* never dreamed of”

One of the most salient features of the *Irish Independent* headlines, particularly those looking at specific provisions, is how they cultivate and affirm the impression of (near) universal support for the plan With the exception of the aforementioned Bruton censure, and a single headline reference to “hospital problems” (which turns out, on closer inspection, to be an allusion to some of the *scenic* problems in the health system which the projected actions of the plan promise to address) not one of the other 26 headlines point to even mild criticisms of the plan The agency-less signification is instead one of collective and egalitarian delight (“Funds a key to open up education *to everyone*”, “*Spreading* it around”, “Time to *level out* prosperity across the country”, “*Trickling down* to the poorest of the poor”), sectoral and regional approval (“Farming bodies *are* [note the categorical modality] happy”, “Third level to benefit”, “*Jubilation* over huge cash deal for rural Ireland”) and modalized projection of a benign post-implementation future (“£1.5bn *to release* capital from gridlock and ease commuter

¹¹⁰ Since “vision” is a quintessential rhetorical construct, Bruton’s criticism could be interpreted as a indictment of the plan’s “discursive style” (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999)

stress”; “*We’re on the £4.7bn track to transform road network*”; “high speed inter-city trains *will top 100 mph*”; “motorway speed-up”).

6.4.2 Source Analysis

The full list of *Irish Independent* sources (including direct quotes and attributions) are included in Appendix H. They are outlined in summary form in table 6.4 below.

<i>Source</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Stance</i>
1) Education Minister Michael Martin	Govt	Favourable
2) Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, Dr Michael Woods	Govt	Favourable
3) Minister of State Hugh Byrne	Govt	Favourable
4) Tanaiste Mary Harney	Govt	Favourable
5) Agriculture Minister Joe Walsh	Govt	Favourable
6) The Taoiseach Bertie Ahern	Govt	Favourable
7) Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy	Govt	Favourable
8) Health Minister Brian Cowen	Govt	Favourable
9) Fine Gael leader John Bruton	Opp	Unfavourable
10) Unidentified justice source	CS	Favourable
11) IBEC Research group head Dick Kavanagh	Business	Favourable
12) IBEC strategy director Peter Brennan	Business	Favourable
13) Environment Minister Noel Dempsey	Govt	Favourable
14) National Roads Authority (NRA) chief executive Michael Tobin	PS	Favourable
15) Public Enterprise Minister Mary O’Rourke	Govt	Favourable
16) Housing Minister Bobby Molloy	Govt	Favourable
17) IFA [Irish Farmers Association] and ICMSA	Farming	Favourable

18) Western Development Commission (WDC) Chief Executive Liam Scollan	RA	Favourable
19) Labour Finance spokesman Derek McDowell	Opp	Ambivalent
20) Government press secretary Joe Lennon	PS	Favourable

The *Irish Independent's* use of sources is significantly different to *The Irish Times*. As with its headlines (see above), the dominant impression is one of (near) universal support and enthusiasm for the plan, with only 2 of the 20 sources (both opposition politicians) categorised as other than favourable (1 ambivalent/1 unfavourable). The identity of the sources (all but 2 of whom are clearly identifiable as male) helps explain why, as a clear majority (11) are government representatives, 4 are statutory employees, 2 are business representatives, 2 are opposition politicians, while the other 1 is billed as the *de facto* voice of the farming lobby. Hence, in contrast to *The Irish Times*, the more sceptical stance of NGO, Green party and trade union spokespersons isn't represented at all.

The only clear unfavourable stance is that of John Bruton, whose catchy "bricks and mortar" soundbyte (see above) is also used by the *Irish Independent*. Derek McDowell's comments (categorized as ambivalent) amount to more of a technocratic critique, as he laments the lack of "imaginative thinking to source alternative finance" (in other words, he is criticising the plan's failure to attract the support of alternative financial sponsors, not the detail of its policy provisions or its ultimate philosophical *purpose*).

6.4.3 Newspaper attitude

Notwithstanding the ambiguous Yeatsian literary allusion of the title ("changed utterly"), the *Irish Independent* editorial ultimately declares categorical support for the plan ("this plan *is* a good plan") and excitedly projects its transformative potential ("this country *will be* transformed"). Interestingly, however, the editorial prefaces its support with an ambivalent, and somewhat unflattering appraisal of the "Celtic Tiger" era. Ireland "has been transformed over the last seven years. And not always for the better". And while, on the one hand, the editorial casually presupposes that the last seven years

have been a “boom” period for “all” of “us”, it nevertheless draws on the stands of various critical discourses “The Celtic Tiger boom *has made us all the richer* It has [note the categorical and anaphorical emphasis throughout] put hundreds of thousands of people to work *But* [note the disclaimer] *it has* also placed enormous strains on our creaking infrastructure *It has* made travel a misery and created a housing crisis *It has* helped to bring contaminated water supplies and polluted beaches And, despite our commitment to social partnership, class divisions have increased” As the editorial succinctly, and antithetically, puts it (while still presupposing to speak for a national collective) “*We* have the money, and all the signs are that *we* will continue to have it *But* the Celtic Tiger, having solved one problem, has created its opposite” Echoing the editorial stance of *The Irish Times*, the paper reminds its readers that the success of the plan is ultimately contingent on the state’s ability to deliver and will “depend *as much* on the plan’s implementation as on its contents” To which it categorically and pointedly adds “The one way that *will not* be done is by adding *more layers of bureaucracy*, at which the document appears, *disturbingly*, to hint” (the ongoing focus on the role of the state in both papers can, perhaps, be understood as the subtle invocation of an anti-statist discourse type, which is more palpable in the case of the *Irish Independent*)

The persistent use of pronouns is one of the most salient lexical features of the Irish Independent editorial Although only 602 words in length, “we” is used on 17 occasions, while “us” is used 14 times Consequently, a particular rhetorical, not to say ideological, effect permeates the whole editorial Take this one example, which is animated, in turn, by an anaphorical emphasis on what “must” be done in the labour market “*We* have severe labour shortages *We must* get more women into the workforce *We must* train and retrain And *we must* rely to some extent on immigration - which also means, as yesterday’s document remarks, that *we must* address the question of integration” What is perhaps most ideologically significant about its use is that it takes place in an editorial where the *agency* of the economy, economic growth or the market are nowhere mentioned, although the “the Celtic Tiger” admittedly does function as something of a metaphor The ideological implication of the pronoun register is nevertheless clear the plan is cast as the direct *agency* of collective

betterment (the collective *agent*, the national *scene*), with the intermediate *agency* of economic growth completely absent from the paper's (quasi) dialectic. In other words, one could say that the paper's editorial stance is premised on the notion that the *de facto* interests of the economy and the people are at one (what Burke would call "consubstantial" (see Burke, 1969a)), so much so that any need for explicit reference to the former disappears.

The specific provisions of the plan receive scant attention in the editorial. Indeed, the paper suggests that such an exercise is superfluous ("The contents have been so widely flagged in advance that *they now need relatively little analysis*") and that, in any case, what needs to be done is commonplace knowledge ("The two most *outstanding and urgent projects are of course* [note the combination of a commonsense register and a categorical modality] roads and public transport, and housing"). Where there are allusions to specific proposals the response is approving, although some of the modulated emphases work to tacitly reaffirm the discourse which suggests success is contingent on the ability of state *agents* to deliver. "Are the proposals adequate to solve the traffic gridlock in our major cities and upgrade our roads and railways? *Yes - if they work*. The *same answer* applies with at least *equal force* [note the implication of the casual equivalence i.e. the plan will work if the state will act] to housing". One aspect of the plan is clearly criticised, however. " *regrettably, the plan is weaker* on the environment - which in the next seven years *will come under greater strain, not less* [note the categorical predictive modality]. This plan *will not* genuinely improve our living standard if it harms our surroundings [note the appropriation of an environmental discourse critical of conventional growth models]. Transformed in whatever ways, Ireland 2006 *must be* Ireland beautiful".

The *Irish Independent* publishes several other (self-consciously) subjective reviews of the plan, but, in contrast to *The Irish Times*, there is little in the way of sceptical appraisal. The paper's Business Editor, Brendan Keenan, assumes perhaps the greatest critical distance, though his analysis is largely affirmative and, again, mainly concerned with the technocratic question of delivery. "The Plan itself certainly would transform the country. The question, as many comments yesterday noted, is *whether it can be*

delivered The record of *public Ireland* [note the critical focus on the ability of the nominalized state *agent* to facilitate a buoyant economic *scene*] is not very encouraging, after all” Rich in evocative detail, the analysis of Chris Glennon, the paper’s senior political correspondent, borders on the sycophantic “When Taoiseach Bertie Ahern was unveiling in Dublin Castle yesterday a seven-year plan to spend £40bn on *the last big issue in the economy* [note the doxa-like affirmation of the *end of ideology* thesis – see chapter 2] he was underlining *how we had come of age* as a prosperous European nation” The modernizing, coming of age discourse is reinforced with a series of flattering antitheses to the 1980s (see chapter 8) “Instead of looking at the 300,000 barrier being exceeded on the “live register” of those drawing social benefit, *we* [again note the paper’s preference for an intimate register] are on the brink of full employment”, “whereas the national debt stood in the late 1980s at 27pc more than the value of annual GNP, *we* are heading for the lowest debt/GNP ratio in the 15-member EU” The plan is given a buoyant historical narrative, too “Since Charles Haughey brought forward the first Programme for National Recovery (PNR) in 1987, there has been an *economic turnaround* [note the compressed nominalization of history] that not even the most optimistic could have predicted” Incidentally, Glennon’s heady rhetoric and penchant for the use of ideologically resonant pronouns is also evident in the first sentence of the main front page report “A £40bn *masterplan to transform our everyday lives* over the next seven years was *unveiled* yesterday”

6.5 *The Irish Times* and the launch of the Special Savings Incentive Scheme

The details of the Special Savings Incentive Scheme (SSIS) were published as part of the 2001 Finance Bill. The Bill was published on February 15th, 2001, and this sample is taken from the February 16th and 17th editions of *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*. Although some of the other measures in the Bill are referred to, the SSIS is the primary focus of analysis.

6.5.1 *Headline analysis*

The full list of articles which relate in some way to the 2001 Finance Bill are listed in chronological order below

- 1) *McCreevy Bill allows savings to be topped up by 25%* New tax regime on share options also to be provided
Jane Suiter, Economic Editor – February 16th, Front Page
- 2) *Savings scheme ignores the poor*
Ciaran Brennan - February 16th, Business and Finance
- 3) *New savings scheme welcomed*
Unattributed - February 16th, Business and Finance
- 4) *Savers to get £1 a month for £4 saved* Cash payment equivalent to return of about 9% after tax each year under scheme aimed at providing for the ‘rainy day’
Mary Canniffe - February 16th, Business and Finance
- 5) *Noonan’s leadership sets off alarm bells on all sides*
Drapier - February 17th, Home News
- 6) *Mr McCreevy’s savings scheme*
Editorial comment - February 17th, Editorial Page
- 7) *SIPTU fears for pensions*
Padraig Yeates, Industry and Employment Correspondent - February 17th, Business and Finance
- 8) *Timely opportunity to counterbalance culture of spend, spend, spend* The Minister should be congratulated on a scheme which has one great feature among others - it will get us back into the habit of saving, writes Martin Walsh (General manager and head of lending at the EBS Building Society)
February 17th, Business and Finance
- 9) *Savings plan gets an enthusiastic response* Consumers need to be vigilant to ensure they are not overcharged for taking part in the Government’s special savings scheme, writes Clare O’Dea
February 17th Business and Finance

Based on the headlines, the SSIS is clearly positioned as the most newsworthy element of the Finance Bill. It is mentioned in 7 of the 9 headlines, and is the subject matter of the lead front page story on February 16th and the editorial comment of February 17th. It is largely treated as a personal finance story, with 6 of the articles published in the Business and Finance section of the paper.

One can observe some obvious, yet important features in the headline framing of the SSIS. Firstly, there is the strong identification of the scheme with its sponsoring agent, Charlie McCreevy, as evident in the nominalized references to the “*McCreevy Bill*”, “*Mr McCreevy’s savings scheme*” and the modalized assertion that “the Minister *should be* congratulated” for the scheme. In contrast, only one of the headlines describes it as “*the Government’s savings scheme*”. Although largely framed through an absence of agency, the dominant impression is one of enthusiasm for the scheme (“*scheme welcomed*”, “a scheme which has one *great feature* among others”, “*savings plan gets an enthusiastic response*”), which is unsurprising given the intuitive appeal of headlines like “*Savers to get £1 a month for £4 saved*”. There is some evidence of dissent, however, in the agency-less headline “*Savings scheme ignores the poor*”.

The headlines merit closer hexadic analysis in light of the political rationale underpinning the scheme. For instance, in one headline, which describes the scheme as a “*timely opportunity* to counterbalance culture of spend, spend, spend”, the policy *act* of creating the scheme is championed for “counterbalanc[ing]” the inflationary pressures in the Irish economy”, or, to put it another way, the *attitude* behind the scheme is praised for its inflation sensitive “economic correctness” (see Arnt Aune, 2001). The scheme is, therefore, categorically pitched in quasi-collective terms (“it *will get us* back into the habit of saving”), and draws on “official” (including financial and business) discourses about inflation, and overheating, in the (collective) economy. What is quintessentially neo-liberal about the scheme, though, is its sense of *purpose*, which, as the headlines suggest, is essentially bound to the interests of individual (although imagined as collectivised) economic agents (“savers”, “consumers”) and not any collective interest like “the [nominalized] poor”. In other words, the policy of “providing for the ‘rainy day’” is one grounded in the imaginative concerns of

individual economic actors (individual *agent-purpose* ratio) and not any collective, or *socially* equitable, discourse of how the money could be used (collective *agent-purpose* ratio)

6.5.2 Source analysis

The full list of sources (including direct quotes and attributions) published in relation to the Finance Bill¹¹¹ are included in Appendix I. The findings are included in summary form in Table 6.5 below.

<i>Source</i>	<i>Identity</i> ¹¹²	<i>Stance</i> ¹¹³
1) Mary Harney	Tánaiste/Deputy PM	Favourable
2) Jim Mitchell	Fine Gael Spokesperson on Finance	Unfavourable
3) Derek McDowell	Labour Spokesperson on Finance	Ambivalent
4) Trevor Sargent	Green Party Spokesperson on Finance	Unfavourable
5) Unidentified Irish Life & Permanent Spokesperson	Ditto	Favourable
6) John McDonnell	SIPTU Spokesperson	Favourable
7) Paddy Keating	IMPACT National Secretary	Unfavourable
8) Rosheen Callender	SIPTU equality officer	Favourable
9) Brendan Burgess	Consumer personal finance consultant	Favourable
10) Grant Barrans	Hibernian (Investment company)	Favourable
11) Eddie Hobbs	Consumer Association of Ireland (CAI) Spokesman	Favourable
12) CAI	Ditto	Favourable
13) Brian Walsh	Chief Executive of The Institute of	Favourable

¹¹¹ I include all the quotes in relation to the *Finance Bill*, because, in some cases, the absence of a specific comment on the SSIS is quite telling.

¹¹² In the case of sources 16 to 21, source and identity are the same.

¹¹³ Stance refers to each source's disposition to the various measures in the Finance Bill, but especially the SSIS.

	Chartered Accountants	
14) Charlie McCreevy	Minister for Finance	Favourable
15) Martin Nolan	Irish Association of Investment Managers	Favourable
16) Irish Bankers' Federation	Ditto	Favourable
17) AIB and Bank of Ireland	Ditto	Favourable
18) Ulster Bank	Ditto	Favourable
19) Northern Rock	Ditto	Favourable
20) Irish League of Credit Unions	Ditto	Favourable
21) ESRI	Ditto	Ambivalent

Of the 21 sources (all but two of whom are clearly identifiable as male), I have classified 16 as favourable, 3 as unfavourable, and 2 as ambivalent. Admittedly, some of the favourable comments - particularly those from the financial institutions - are somewhat tentative, addressing the issue in terms of, as yet unspecified, product details. Yet, not surprisingly, none of the financial institutions take what could be characterised as a position of "global" opposition to the scheme. The bulk of the articles are published in the Business and Finance section of the paper, which largely explains why most of the sources are from the financial services sector. The full breakdown of sources is as follows: 10 (including the spokesperson from the Institute of Chartered Accountants) are employed in the financial services sector, 5 can be described as political, 2 consumer rights, 3 trade union and 1 (state) think-tank.

The Government's neo-liberal sales pitch is evident in the discourse of Mary Harney: be it her emphatic identification with the dispossessed taxpayer ("*returning* taxpayers' money to them") or her quasi-egalitarian rhetoric about "equal benefit" (which can be read as an implicit rebuttal of a socialist rhetoric of equality). The rhetoric of the minority assuming a more critical disposition towards the scheme is particularly interesting. For instance, what is most noticeable about the "ambivalent" stance of the Labour party spokesperson, Derek McDowell, is the absence of any specific comment

on the SSIS His *reported* comments (he could, of course, have referred to the scheme as part of a more comprehensive, and unreported, press statement) are directed instead towards another aspect of the Finance Bill and what he describes as the “‘unfair’ provision to introduce favourable tax treatment of share options” The absence is telling it suggests that whatever stance the Labour spokesperson took towards the SSIS, it was hardly a very strong one either way (favourable or unfavourable), otherwise, one suspects, *The Irish Times* would have considered it newsworthy The stance of Fine Gael’s Jim Mitchell can be more clearly described as unfavourable Yet his critique is replete with hedges and disclaimers “*at first glance*”, “*seems to be* riddled with difficulties”, “*the potential to be* a bureaucratic nightmare” What is more strident is the critical discourse of the Green Party’s Trevor Sargent, who criticises the scheme’s inadequacy in terms of “social equity” The modality of IMPACT Trade unionist Paddy Keating is the sharpest of all this is “*a lost opportunity* for those that need it most” (in contrast to the stance of the two other trade union (SIPTU) sources, who both take a broadly favourable view of the scheme)

6.5.3 *Newspaper attitude*

Many of the reports give a detailed overview of the scheme’s financial details in the finance and money supplement genres which have become a routine part of contemporary journalism This material is of little analytical interest to this study The primary marker of *The Irish Times’ attitude* is its editorial comment, which tentatively endorses what the front page headline categorizes as this “*radical* scheme” The scheme gives a “*welcome* boost to savings”, the editorial suggests, and will help combat inflationary trends by discouraging “immediate consumption” in the economy There is even the hint of a Harney style identification (see above) with the archetypal, illegitimately dispossessed taxpayer “the savings scheme does seem a reasonable way *to give cash back* to people” Additionally, the editorial frames its appraisal of the scheme in the scheme’s own preferred *individual* terms “*savers* will carefully examine”, “*savers* will be able to opt” The editorial is careful not to overstate the “debatable” macro-economic and anti-inflationary benefits of the scheme, though, which it suggests have more to do with the Government’s public relations attempt to

assuage “Brussels” concern about Irish inflation¹¹⁴ It ends with a modalized discourse of *fiscal* caution “If there is a very strong take-up of the scheme, the longer term implications for the public finances *will have to be carefully monitored* The incentives offered are generous and in many cases the State will effectively be giving money to people who would be saving anyway This may be all very well at a time of strong Exchequer surplus, *but* [note the disclaimer] could become an issue if growth slows and the surplus starts to *shrink*”

The paper also publishes an opinion piece from Martin Walsh, the general manager of the EBS Building Society, who declares his own interest in a scheme which “closely follows the submission made by EBS last August” Not surprisingly, his response is affirmative “In summary, the *great feature* of this scheme is that *it will get people into* the habit of regular savings and at the same time *give them* [note the categorical predictive modality] a high return” Indeed, his response comes with the emphatic injunction that “*all* opinion formers should encourage it”

6 6 *Irish Independent* and the launch of the Special Savings Incentive Scheme

6 6 1 *Headline analysis*

The full list of *Irish Independent* headlines relevant to the 2001 Finance Bill are as follows

1) *Look after the pounds*

Editorial - February 16th, Editorial page

2) *Saving scheme to spur cash war among banks*

Brian Dowling - February 16th, News

3) *Shares tax cut welcomed*

Brendan Keenan - February 16th, News

¹¹⁴ The Irish Finance Minister, Charlie McCreevy, had earlier in the same week been publicly reprimanded by the EU commission for breaching fiscal spending limits

- 4) *Bonus for savers in double your money plan*
Brendan Keenan and Brian Dowling February 16th, Front Page
- 5) *Charity begins away from home*
Unattributed - February 16th, News
- 6) *Charlie plays the golden goose in the national interest*
Brendan Keenan, Group Business Editor - February 16th, Editorial Page
- 7) *Minister's new scheme is set to transform the savings market*
Bill Tyson - February 17th, Your Money
- 8) *Save It's Charlie's May Day Call*
Jim Aughney - February 17th, Your Money
- 9) *Pension fear in new save scheme*
Senan Molony, Political Correspondent - February 17th, News
- 10) *Share options move a boon for techs*
Unattributed - February 17th, Your Money
- 11) *State top-up saving plan "will liven up market"*
Cyril Hardiman - February 17th, Business
- 12) *McCreevy making right moves* –
Bill Tyson, Personal Finance Editor – February 17th, Money Talks

The SSIS dominates the *Irish Independent's* treatment of the Finance Bill and is explicitly referred to in 8 of the 12 headlines (the *Irish Independent* publishes 3 more articles than *The Irish Times*) As in the case of *The Irish Times*, the link to the scheme's sponsoring agent, Charlie McCreevy, is emphasised, but additionally enlivened by a combination of intertextual play and personable lifeworld discourses "Charlie plays the Golden Goose", "Charlie's May Day Call" Yet, in contrast to *The Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent* treats the Finance Bill as more of a general news story, with 5 articles (including 1 front page story) published in the main news section of the paper, 2 on the editorial page and 5 in the business (including the aptly titled "your money") pages

The *Irish Independent's* headline framing of the scheme is much more colourfully animated than *The Irish Times* The dominant register is colloquially pitched to the

figure of the individual saver (“double *your* money”, “look after the pounds”) and the scheme’s projected *scenic* implications are evaluated in a market-centric discourse “plan ‘*will liven up* market’, “scheme *set to transform* the savings markets”, “scheme *to spur* cash war among banks” As with *The Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent* frame its reportage, and analysis, in terms of the scheme’s own preferred *agent-purpose* ratio (the individual saver), and any sense of collective *purpose* (or nominalized “*national interest*”) appears bound to the *agency* of the market In contrast to *The Irish Times*, the headlines suggest little in the way of solid opposition to the scheme, and the only dissenting headline is a vague reference to agent-less “pension fear”

6.6.2 Source analysis

The full list of relevant sources (included direct quotes and attributions) are included in Appendix J The summary of the findings are included in table 6.6 below.

<i>Source</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Stance</i>
Charlie McCreevy	Minister for Finance	Favourable
Rosheen Callender	SIPTU national equality secretary	Favourable
Ted McGovern	EBS	Favourable
Sheena Doggett	A & I Goodbody solicitors	Favourable
Irish Software Association	Ditto	Favourable

In contrast to *The Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent* draws on only five sources (only one of whom is clearly identifiable as female) in its coverage, and analysis, of the Finance Bill Of these, only three make reference to the SSIS All three are enthusiastic in their reaction to the scheme - the only moderately discordant note being Rosheen Callender’s “local” concerns about the “negative effect *on pensions*” What is completely absent from the coverage - in contrast to the formulaic (see Tuchman, 1972) overview of a broader range of stances in *The Irish Times* - is any comment from opposition politicians In addition, with the sole exception of the EBS spokesperson, who, interestingly enough, grounds his approval for the scheme in *scenic* concerns

about “the country’s savings ratio”, there is no other comment from financial institutions

6.6.3 Newspaper attitude

One recent contextual event is very much to the forefront of the *Irish Independent’s* analysis of the scheme – the European Commission’s formal reprimanding of Charlie McCreevy for breaching National spending limits. Consequently, the paper’s editorial is structured around a telling, and modalized, antithesis, between “the Brussels” view of McCreevy as a spendthrift, and the “prudent and parsimonious side to his character” that is embodied in this “innovative scheme”. The editorial lauds McCreevy for what it categorizes as “the sort of behaviour the powers that be in the EU Commission might have applauded had they not been so hasty with their censure”. Animating the counter-inflationary discourse articulated by *The Irish Times*, the editorial suggests that “*anything* that slows the *soaring* demand in a *rampant* economy has to be [elliptically] *welcomed*”

The colloquial championing of McCreevy is evident throughout the paper. For instance, Personal Finance Editor, Bill Tyson, responds with the ringing endorsement “Charlie McCreevy has done it again” (note how this assertion draws on an established discourse about the ‘daring’ and ‘innovative’ McCreevy), while, in another article, he staunchly defends the fiscal policy of (personable) “Charlie” in light of the “EU’s formal criticism”. Brendan Keenan, in the paper’s most considered appraisal of the scheme, compliments McCreevy for his “Kildare lateral thinking” (note the intertextual play of lifeworld nous and technocratic boldness), for his political and media savvy (“If Charlie McCreevy had announced a 20pc tax credit for savings, everyone would have yawned and turned to the sports pages”) and for supporting what Keenan describes as the “laudable” objective of “encouraging the habit of regular saving”. In addition, Keenan confidently asserts, in a policy elite register, that an estimated “£250m over five years is unlikely to cause the Exchequer any difficulty”

The Keenan article is more critical in other respects. His analysis ends with what is the paper's only hint of an (albeit) modulated critique framed in terms of a discourse of social equity: "The scheme *may end up* benefiting those who are already preparing for the rainy day, and merely provide them with a bigger umbrella". But, ironically,¹¹⁵ there is a neo-liberal edge to Keenan's critique, too, which is grounded in the Hayekian belief that Government lacks the knowledge to engineer, or change, individuals' behaviour in the economy (Hayek, 1961) "No-one really knows why people save, or don't save. Even the level of savings in the economy is not known with any certainty". Yet, overwhelmingly, the *Irish Independent* response is one of animated popular enthusiasm. This is exemplified by Tyson's interdiscursive mix of market-centric and lifeworld discourses: "*If you are thinking of salting away a few bob*, you would be well advised to wait and see what they [the financial institutions] have to offer". Moreover, it is evident in the accessible, intertextual imagery which frames a question and answer style review of the scheme: a photograph of Packie Bonner's penalty save, for Ireland, against Romania in 1990 and a caption that reads: "The Finance Bill included the biggest incentive to save since goalkeeper Packie Bonner faced Romania's penalties in the Italia '90 soccer World Cup".

6.7 The textual and the social world

As I indicated at the outset of the chapter, the neo-liberal pedigree of the NDP and the SSIS has its origins in the policy initiatives themselves, one of which points to the ideological authority of economic growth as a sufficient "national" development end and another which is premised on a clear philosophical commitment to individualism (see chapter 1). At the same time, both policy initiatives are interdiscursive constructs - signifiers of neo-liberal hegemony, yet, paradoxically, committed to active state intervention in the economy and society. The focal point for this study, therefore, is to (a) broadly compare the general news treatment of both policy initiatives in both papers

¹¹⁵ Ironic, because of McCreevy's putative pedigree as one of Ireland's most trenchant neo-liberals (see chapter 8)

and (b) examine to what extent the distinct neo-liberal element (what is hypothesized as such) is challenged, or naturalised, by print media representation

The general news treatment, and discursive representation, of both news events is subject to various mitigating factors, most obviously, the temporal constraints affecting the process of journalistic production itself. The NDP and the SSIS are the subject of Government press launches which - genre conventions would dictate - *must* be dutifully reported on, and analysed in, the next day edition, and since the bulk of the sample is taken from the next day edition, journalists could, therefore, legitimately claim that their working conditions preclude in-depth philosophical scrutiny of either policy initiative. Yet, in the case of the NDP, the evidence suggests that much of the content was known to elites in advance (as the *Irish Independent* editorial puts it, “the contents have been so widely flagged in advance that they now need relatively little analysis”) and one can, therefore, assume that well placed media and political “field” actors had adequate opportunity to prepare the outlines, at least, of a considered response. The second caveat relates to the comments of news sources, which, although presumably based on a combination of direct source interviews and PR statements, are ultimately determined by a paper’s (Gatekeeper) decision to publish certain sources, and comments, over others. It is therefore conceivable, at least, that some of the unused textual material contains important critical comment, though, news sources are by no means powerless in this process and, with the help of public relations specialists (see Davis, 2000), can try to foreground particular themes and discourse in their interaction with print media.

In summary, this analysis suggests that the newspaper treatment of both issues, in both papers, projects broad media and public enthusiasm for an “official” policy agenda.¹¹⁶ Unlike chapter 5, however, there are significant differences in the comparative news treatment of both news events. *The Irish Times* represents a social world in which the NDP and the SSIS meet with general favour but also some notable criticism. This is evident in the paper’s use of sources, which gives voice to representatives from a (comparatively) broader range of groups and political parties, some of which assume a

¹¹⁶ The international evidence would suggest that the approbation of state initiatives by “independent” media is far from unusual (See Herman and Chomsky, 1994)

more critical stance. Additionally, the paper is inclined to distance itself from, or at least desist from further animating, much of the heady “official” rhetoric which greets both policy initiatives.

In contrast, drawing on a triumphant patriotic discourse, the *Irish Independent* assumes – with some isolated exceptions – a much more bullish cheerleader stance towards both policy initiatives (unlike *The Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent* is less likely to acknowledge the intertextual make up – i.e. explicitly cite attributed comments or employ inverted commas – in its headlines), and projects a social and political world in which the SSIS and the NDP are uncontroversial, nearly apolitical, matters of policy. This populist framing of events is best exemplified by the paper’s use of sources, which, relying mainly on Government representatives, cultivates an impression of (near) universal support for the NDP and publishes no response from the more critical NGO, trade union and Green party spokespersons (it is conceivable, but highly unlikely that PR employees of these organisations neglected to send a press release to the biggest selling national newspaper). Its use of SSIS sources, draws on a similarly narrow spectrum of perspectives and publishes no response from opposition politicians (it draws on only 3 sources, all of whom are favourable). Indeed, one can say that the *Irish Independent*’s use of sources fails to comply with even ritualised journalistic definitions of “objectivity” (Tuchman, 1972: 665), and the genre conventions which compel journalists to seek out both sides of a story.

The institutional differences between the two papers are borne out by articles of a self-consciously opinionated kind. There is, clearly, editorially sanctioned space within *The Irish Times* for critical consideration of the plan, while the *Irish Independent*’s analysis is, in contrast, largely laudatory. The editorial stances of both papers, though, have more in common (perhaps a measure of the conservatism of the editorial genre – see chapter 7). Measured in its rhetoric, *The Irish Times*’ editorial expresses general support for the NDP, though it appropriates a discourse which is sceptical about the ability of the Government (and the state) to deliver its promises. The *Irish Independent* editorial is a deceptively complex amalgam of discourses and, amongst other things, echoes *The Irish Times*’ concerns about bureaucratic impediments and the state’s ability to *act*. It

nevertheless signals its categorical support for the plan and, through its ubiquitous use of an ideologically resonant pronoun register, cultivates an impression of public oneness with the respective policy ends. Although they both draw on inflation-sensitive discourses (itself a telling index of “economically correct” antenna), the comparable editorial reaction of both papers to the SSIS is much starker. *The Irish Times*’ reaction is one of cautious approval, while discursive style of the *Irish Independent* pays excited editorial homage to the principal political architect of the scheme, the Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy.

These differences aside, this analysis suggests that the neo-liberal element of both policy initiatives is largely uncontroversial. Indeed, with the exception of John Bruton’s soundbyte friendly indictment of the NDP as “a plan for bricks and mortar, not for services and improving the quality of life” (reported by both papers, Bruton’s oppositional stance could be more sceptically read as the obvious “field” disposition of the leader of the main opposition party), Denis Coughlan’s firm rebuttal of the NDP’s market bias in *The Irish Times*, and Green Party and Trade Union concerns about the “social equity” implications of the SSIS (reported in *The Irish Times only*), there is little in the way of sharp critical discourses. This suggests that neo-liberal hegemony in media texts is a failure of a critical politics too, and not just the direct, or unmediated, outcome of “media field” processes. This is not to say that there is no space for critical discourses: there clearly is, and *The Irish Times*, to its credit, constructs a broader public sphere than the *Irish Independent*. Yet the bulk of these critiques are technocratic and “local” (see Van Dijk, 1998) in nature, and desist from “globally” (ibid) questioning the neo-liberal assumptions underpinning both policy initiatives.

Interestingly, there are hints of various critical discourses in both newspapers - even in the rhetoric of those officially endorsing the NDP. For instance, Bertie’s Ahern allusion to a “disjointed” Ireland, can be read a loose “appropriation” of a critical discourse about the negative social impact of economic growth. *The Irish Independent*’s editorial response to the NDP is, perhaps, the clearest example, as it appropriates the “discursive strands” (Jager, 2001: 47) of a Celtic Tiger critique to lament “our creaking infrastructure”, “housing crisis” and (even) the increasing “class divisions”. These are

both, I suggest, vivid examples of how critical discourses can be “recontextualised” or “appropriated” (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 45) into what are, ultimately, hegemonic stances that is, they illustrate how an interdiscursive marriage of contradictory discourses can be used to *strategically* pre-empt criticism and insulate the stance of the rhetor, or paper, from critical attack (see chapter 9)¹¹⁷

The dearth of firm counter-hegemonic stances to the SSIS and the NDP can be understood prosaically, for active party political opposition to a scheme giving “free” money” to savers, and another promising a public spending commitment of over £40 billion is hardly the most attractive of political “field” positions. The discursive absences, nevertheless, do point to the tacit and (and largely) “invisible” ideological authority of a philosophical commitment to individualism and “growth is good” tenets, and the implicit “censorship” (see Bourdieu, 1991) effect they have on contemporary discussion of political economy issues.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has examined, and compared, the news treatment, in *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* newspapers, of the Irish Government’s launch of two policy initiatives, both of which were chosen because of their atypical (i.e. because they involve state intervention) neo-liberal character. In light of the research questions outlined at the start of the chapter, the findings suggest that, like chapter 5, the discursive representation of both policy initiatives points to the *tacit* authority of the neo-liberal paradigm in contemporary media discourse. Although there are some marked differences in the treatment of the two news stories in both papers (*The Irish Times* is more critically disposed, the *Irish Independent* more of a policy partisan), they both project a social and political world in which the two policy initiatives, especially their distinct neo-liberal elements, are mediated as relatively uncontroversial. The next chapter examines editorial discourse about the privatisation of Telecom Eireann, a

¹¹⁷ The interdiscursive mixing of discourses is also a marked feature of New Labour discourse in Britain (see Fairclough, 2000)

context where one would expect the authority of neo-liberal assumptions to be much more visible

Chapter 7 - Editorialising on Eircom

A case study of six Irish newspapers in 1999 and 2000

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is a case study of editorial comment from six Irish newspapers in 1999 and 2000 *The Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent*, the *Irish Examiner*, the *Sunday Independent*, the *Sunday Tribune* and *The Sunday Business Post*. It examines their respective editorial stances (or what Bourdieu might call their “position takings” (Bourdieu, 1998: 6)) towards the fortunes of Eircom, what was formerly known as Telecom Eireann,¹¹⁸ the state owned company which had its stock market flotation in July 1999.

This chapter considers three broad research questions:

- (a) What is the range of ideological attitudes which inform the editorial treatment of Eircom matters across the six newspaper titles?
- (b) To what extent are the different editorial stances infused with the assumptions of neo-liberal ideology and how do the papers differ in their (interdiscursive) articulation and appropriation of neo-liberal thinking?
- (c) How can the different editorial stances be understood institutionally and socially?

This chapter first gives an overview of the reasons behind the sample selection. The analysis is then presented in thematic terms, which are broadly structured according to the trajectory of the Eircom narrative over the two year period. Finally, the chapter considers the different editorial stances, and the distinctions between them in terms of institutional and social processes.

7.2 Methodological issues

This study was keen to include a case study element which would examine the trajectory of a neo-liberal “story” over a long term time period. Eircom is selected as that case study because it was, and remains, the largest, and most heavily publicised, privatisation of state owned assets in the history of the Irish state, and was for many Irish people their first active experience of participating in the stock market. The years 1999 and 2000 are chosen because they cover the company’s diverging fortunes in the period before, during and after its “successful” launch on the stock market in July 1999.

As the Eircom “story” is explicitly concerned with the key neo-liberal tenets of privatising state assets and liberalising markets, it is the basis of a case study for examining, through a kind of hermeneutical dig, the *overt* influence of neo-liberal assumptions in *opinion* based journalism. What I wanted to avoid, however, was an analysis of Eircom at one particular moment in time (either at a time of a market ‘high’ or ‘low’), but instead present a diachronic analysis of its mixed fortunes, as reflected through print media content, over a two year period. This posed an obvious methodological choice: would I concentrate on coverage across a wide range of print content genres in a narrow range of newspaper titles (for example, a combination of analysis, features, editorials and opinion pieces across two newspapers) or would I focus on an examination of particular genres across a broader range of titles? I ultimately opted for the latter approach and decided that a cross-comparison of editorial opinion, across a wide range of newspaper titles, was the most representative and consistent way of examining a genre-bound range of attitudinal stances.

Chapters 5 and 6 showed how ideological values cannot, despite routine claims to the contrary, be neatly demarcated from so called “objective” (see Tuchman, 1972) news reporting. Editorial “leaders”, in contrast, affect no pretension of being “value free” and are basically the genre equivalent of a newspaper’s *opinion*; its distinctive, and typically modalized, ideological and institutional voice. As one former editorial writer puts it,

¹¹⁸ The company is referred to as both Eircom and Telecom Eireann throughout this chapter; the name change took place in the latter half of 1999.

“‘we’, a personal pronoun frequently seen in editorials, stands for the editorial policy-makers of the newspaper. Editorials are the opinions of the paper. And that is why they are unsigned” (Rivers et al, 1988: 60). In Fowler’s view, editorial opinions are constructed from a common “repertoire of textual strategies” (or what one might call a series of discursive conventions)

What they have in common is a concern to highlight the judgmental character of discourse, a character which is backgrounded (but still present) in the news reporting pages. Various techniques are deployed to make salient the illusion of utterance by an authoritative speaker, addressing a particular kind of reader embraced in an ‘us’ relationship and taking a particular, marked stance in relation to the persons (‘them’) and topics referred to. [Editorial] texts illustrate a discourse of institutional power in the sense that it emanates from, and in turn helps construct, the newspaper’s claimed authority (Fowler, 1991: 221)

Chapters 5 and 6 chronicled the *background* influence of neo-liberal assumptions on Irish print media representation of the social world. The aim in this chapter is to examine their influence at a more overt level, in a discursive genre “which foreground[s] the speech act of offering values and beliefs” (Fowler, 1991: 209) on policy matters of a neo-liberal kind. The neo-liberal assumptions of central importance to this chapter are

- That the liberalisation and deregulation of the telecommunications market in which Telecom Eireann previously held a monopoly is a development which should be unanimously welcomed
- That the privatisation and stock market flotation of the state owned Telecom Eireann is desirable
- That the notion of direct state involvement in a modern communications market is archaic

- That wider public participation in the stock market is something that should be encouraged
- That there should be further privatisation of state-owned assets

Based on the empirical evidence of chapters 5 and 6, this chapter assumes, as an outline hypothesis, that the stance of most, if not all, of the newspapers will be broadly “neo-liberal”, but that this consensus does not preclude important discursive differences (differences of discourse, style and register), or differences of disposition, between newspapers. As in chapters 5 and 6, the sample is again biased in favour of mid to up market broadsheets. It includes the two biggest selling daily newspapers (*The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*), the biggest selling Sunday newspaper (*Sunday Independent*), while all six newspapers ranked amongst the top five in their respective national market (daily and Sunday) in 1999 (see Horgan, 2001: 190). Taken together, they represent a thorough sample of the quality end of the domestic newspaper market of interest to this study (see chapter 4).

Along with *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* (see chapters 5 and 6), this chapter analyses material from four other newspapers. Based on Horgan’s (2001) history of the Irish media, their putative identity can be described as follows:

- *Sunday Independent* - Now part of the Tony O’Reilly owned Independent Group of titles, the *Sunday Independent* has, like its sister paper, the *Irish Independent*, a strong popular base and national circulation. It has promoted a personality driven, polemical and pro-enterprise style of journalism since the 1980s, and remains the biggest selling Sunday newspaper in Ireland.
- *Irish Examiner* (daily) - Originally known as the *Cork Examiner*, the title has undergone several name changes in recent years – rebranded simply as *Examiner* in

1996, only to be relaunched again as *Irish Examiner* in 2000 (Horgan, 2001 175)¹¹⁹

Its readership remains predominantly middle market and Munster based

- *The Sunday Business Post* - Launched in 1989, the paper “was the brainchild of four journalists and became, effectively, the first modern newspaper to be launched by journalists rather than by businessman”(ibid 142-143) A former journalist with the paper, Lee maintains it “was instrumental in moving economics and financial reporting from the business pages of Irish newspapers to the front pages” (Lee, 2002 81)
- *The Sunday Tribune* - First launched in 1980, the *Sunday Tribune* quickly “developed a particular expertise in political reporting” (Horgan, 2001 111) and a “reputation for news exclusives and outspoken comment on public issues” (113) However, the paper ran into severe financial trouble in the late 1980s and it needed the Independent group’s controversial acquisition of a 29.9% share-holding (139) to secure the paper’s future

This chapter follows an elementary analytical structure which takes its cue from the trajectory of the Eircom narrative over the two year period

- (a) **Preparing for the market** – This section covers the period prior to the privatisation of the company on July 8th 1999 and examines each paper’s attitude under three headers (1) *Market liberalisation*,¹²⁰ (2) *Floating Telecom* and (3) *Public Participation*
- (b) **Market fortunes** – This section examines editorial comment from the day of floatation until the end of 2000 under three headers (1) *Initial “success”* (2) *Market decline – apportioning blame* and (3) *Shareholder revolt*

¹¹⁹ The paper is referred to as the *Irish Examiner* in this chapter

¹²⁰ The issues of liberalisation and privatisation are clearly inter-linked. Yet one could conceivably endorse the move to competition, while upholding the view that the market’s main player, Telecom Eireann, should remain - if only partially - in state owned hands. For that reason, I have included a separate header, *Floating Telecom*, to see how the specific question of privatising Telecom (which was ultimately sold off in full) is addressed by each paper

(c) **Implications of the Eircom sale** - This section broadens out the scope of the analysis and considers editorial attitudes towards (1) *Other privatisations* and (2) *Using the Eircom money*¹²¹

Some editorials invariably address issues in more substantive ways than others and, consequently, attract greater analytical attention. The full list of editorial titles, in each case, is provided in the footnotes.

7.3 **Preparing for the Market**¹²²

This section considers all the relevant editorials from the 1st of January to July 7th 1999 (the day before the flotation). Its essential purpose is to individually examine the editorials of each paper under three headers. They are as follows:

- (a) *Market liberalisation* - This section examines editorial attitudes towards the liberalisation of the telecommunications market.
- (b) *Floating Telecom* - This section examines editorial attitudes towards the imminent stock market flotation of Telecom Eireann.
- (c) *Public participation* - This section examines editorial attitudes towards the prospect of widespread public participation in the share owning process.

¹²¹ The material for this chapter was sourced in various ways from the Lexis-Nexis database, newspaper websites, microfilmed and hard-copy archives. The criteria guiding the selection of articles was simple: it is a sample of all the editorials, within the two year period, which mentioned either "Eircom" or "Telecom Eireann".

¹²² The use of italics in this chapter follows the pattern set in chapters 5 and 6 unless stated otherwise; all italicised emphases are those of the author.

7.3.1 Market liberalisation

*The Irish Times*¹²³

The Irish Times has little nostalgia for what it categorizes as the “bad old days” when the country was “forced to live with very high prices from a communications monopoly” (note the appropriation of a discourse of monopoly coercion and the implicit antithesis of the old and the new) (April 22nd). As its March 15th editorial baldly puts it, “monopolies are bad for the consumer”. Consequently, the paper welcomes the prospect of a liberalised telecommunications market where Telecom Eireann, and others, will have to “face the full rigour of fair competition (March 15th)” (note the interesting collocation of professional, fairness and competition discourses), and lauds the “brave decision making” of Mary O’Rourke, the Minister for Public Service, who determinedly “pressed ahead with deregulation in the communications sector, ending Telecom’s monopoly before she was required to do so by the EU” (January 8th). Indeed, such is the paper’s aversion to what it categorizes as “cosy monopoly status” (January 16th) that, in reflecting on developments in e-commerce markets, it warns, in a modalized voice, against “the danger of Telecom moving away from a monopoly position in one sphere only to establish a near monopoly in a new one”, that is, it suggests, a prospect “that should be very seriously guarded against” (March 1st).

*Irish Independent*¹²⁴

The *Irish Independent* is unequivocal in its support for what it categorizes as “the new era of open competition” (note the nominalized collocation of “new”, “open” and “competition” discourses – see Table 2.2) (May 14th). It grounds its strongly modalized enthusiasm, for this “remarkable change in climate, a change all for the good” (May 15th), in terms of projected consumer welfare “Telecom now faces a major competitor in the market place [NTL] a fact from which the customer can only benefit” (May

¹²³ The number of relevant *Irish Times* editorials for the period under review in this section is 10. The dates (all 1999) are as follows: January 8th, January 16th, March 1st, March 5th, March 15th, March 24th, April 6th, April 22nd, May 7th and June 12th.

14th). As the paper puts it, Telecom “first and foremost *must* satisfy its customers, and *to do that* it *must* enter wholeheartedly the world of competition” (May 15th) (this is an excellent example of what Burke (1969a) would describe as a perfection of the *scene-agent* ratio: i.e. in attempting to legitimise competition, the “world of competition” (*scene*) and “consumer” satisfaction (*agent*) are assumed to be consubstantial). Yet the paper suggests that if the challenge of “existing competition, and *the greater competition still to come*” (note the nominalized assumption of *more* competition in the future) (May 15th)” is to be successfully met, it will necessitate a “fight”: Telecom will “*have to fight* to retain the loyalty of domestic customers” (May 15th); “the semi-state *giant* is up against it with... [competitors] *breathing down its neck*” in this “new, highly *aggressive* commercial climate” (May 14th) (note how the paper gives anthropomorphic emphasis to the notion that the “new commercial...climate” (*scene*) necessitates an “aggressive” *attitude*: i.e. the *attitude-agent* ratio to accompany the earlier *scene-agent* ratio).

*Irish Examiner*¹²⁵

The liberalisation of the telecommunications market is treated as something of a given by the *Irish Examiner*, as the *specific* issue isn't explicitly addressed in pre-flotation editorials. There are hints of enthusiasm, however, in the paper's categorical assertion that “the economy *is ripe* for dramatic expansion of the telecommunications industry” (May 21st).

*Sunday Independent*¹²⁶

The specific issue of liberalising the telecommunications market is not explicitly broached by the *Sunday Independent*, though one can safely assume its support for competition (see below). What is clear, however, is the paper's categorical endorsement

¹²⁴ The number of relevant *Irish Independent* editorials for this period is eight. The dates are as follows March 8th, April 3rd, April 30th, April 22nd, May 7th, May 14th, May 15th and June 26th.

¹²⁵ The number of *Irish Examiner* editorials considered for this period is four. The dates are as follows, May 21st, June 5th, June 14th and June 24th.

¹²⁶ There is only one *Sunday Independent* editorial in the pre-flotation period (April 25th)

of the Hayekian view that government should “*plan [sic] for competition*” (see Hayek, 1945: 31): “The money raised [from the Telecom sale] *will be used* [note the categorical predictive modality] both to reduce the national debt and to finance part of the huge investment in infrastructure - roads and rail, water and sewerage - *that is required* if the Irish economy is to remain competitive” (April, 25th).

*Sunday Tribune*¹²⁷

The *Sunday Tribune*'s editorials are, perhaps, the most considered, and in depth, in the sample¹²⁸. The paper is just as categorical, as *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*, about the benefits, to consumers and the company itself, of a liberalised telecommunications market. The point is enlivened with a telling historical antithesis between the old and the new: “As recently as a few years ago the flotation of Telecom *could not have been allowed*. [note the elliptical diminution of agency: *who* wouldn't allow it?]. *Then* it was a monopoly. *Now* competition *has* changed all that. Telecom *has* benefited from competition, addressing business issues with more *intellectual rigour* [note the collocation of “intellectual rigour” (*attitude-agent*) with the *agency* of competition] than had been the case previously. The consumer was the biggest winner from the opening up of the market to competition” (May 9th). This endorsement of the twin benefits of greater competition is categorically affirmed in a later editorial: “Telecom Eireann *is a* perfect example of a company that has prospered when its management *was allowed* [note the subtle invocation of a discourse of monopoly coercion] to act in a commercial and competitive manner. Its profits improved out of all recognition, allowing it to pay off its massive debts, *and* [note the key conjunctive link] the consumer *has* benefited from better services and cheaper prices” (June 20th).

¹²⁷ The *Sunday Tribune* refers to Telecom in three pre-flotation editorials. The dates are as follows: January 17th, May 9th and June 20th.

¹²⁸ In general, the *Sunday Tribune* editorials tend to amount to a larger word count than the other papers.

Of all the papers in the sample, *The Sunday Business Post* predictably asserts the most modalized, and ideologically literate, pro-market rhetoric. A discourse articulating the universal authority of “market forces” is categorically affirmed on February 6th: “Recent events should have *taught the government one important lesson* [note the firm pedagogical register] that *attempts to preserve restrictive practices* in the state sector *are doomed to failure*. It is not just that European law provides for the systematic dismantling of such restrictive practices. *Market forces alone will dictate* that such practices become *unsustainable*. The *folly* of seeking to preserve entrenched positions was demonstrated most clearly in the case of Telecom Eireann” (February 6th) (note how unidentified state sector *agents* are consistently represented as active (“to preserve”) opponents of change (see Postrel, 2000) and self-interested purveyors of foolish “unsustainable” practices). The point is reinforced with a similar modal emphasis: “The government *stalled and stalled* on the deregulation of the telecoms sector, even to the point of getting permission for a temporary derogation from EU law [incidentally, this characterisation of the Government position - which draws on a discourse suggesting the Government is averse to the idea of privatisation - is in stark contrast to *The Irish Times* editorial of January 8th - see above] *But eventually market forces overwhelmed all other arguments* (February 6th)

7.3.2 *Floating Telecom*

The Irish Times

Although its rhetoric is, at times, modulated, *The Irish Times* expresses solid support for the Government decision to sell the full state shareholding in the company: “Effectively, Telecom will be a completely privately owned company, *fighting* it out [again note the pugilistic metaphor] in the marketplace. The decision to dispose of the *entire* [note the

¹²⁹ *The Sunday Business Post* refers to Telecom in six pre-floatation editorials. The dates are as follows: January 17th, February 6th, April 25th, May 2nd, June 13th and July 4th.

modifier] state shareholding will have been long debated by the Government, the company and its advisers *On balance* [note the considered, pragmatic register], it *appears the right course of action*" (June 12th) The paper suggests that Telecom has responded "well" to the new competitive *scene*, and expresses a modalized confidence about what it describes - through the appropriation of a historicizing discourse - as the "biggest privatisation in the history of the State" (April 22nd) "Telecom itself appears to be *in very good shape* [note the fitness metaphor and the implicit antithesis of a profligate public service with a healthy market] for flotation The company has been *dramatically turned around* in the past decade and has *adjusted remarkably well* to a more competitive environment" (April 22nd)

Yet the paper's editorial voice is interdiscursively infused with other discourses, too, some of which conceivably work to insulate *The Irish Times* against the charge that its stance is "ideologically" motivated For instance, the Irish experience of privatisation is clearly demarcated from the "unhappy British experience of privatisation" (April 22nd) in the 1980s, when, in the paper's modalized view, "public perceptions of privatisation ventures were *seriously damaged* by the sight of top executives *creaming off exceptionally large cash payments for themselves*" (April 6th) "It was this practice, *more than any other* [note the implication of the comparative privatisation is okay in principle] that caused scandal in Britain during the privatisation programme of the Thatcher years" (April 6th), it insists The paper occasionally "appropriates" (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), and gives categorical modal emphasis to, quasi-socialist/collectivist discourses, even if the political (and media) momentum, in this instance, is towards antithetical ideological ends "*It is important to reassert first principles*, the semi-state sector *is not* the preserve of any political party, *it is* (at least until after flotation) the *property of the people*" (January 16th), "*this is a State asset, the property of all citizens*, and no special deals should be done that would enrich individuals [the Telecom executive and board] excessively at the expense of taxpayers" (April 6th) In addition, the news that trade union employees at Telecom are to gain generously from the distribution of shares is greeted warmly "No fair-minded citizen would begrudge *the workers* [note the hint of a socialist register] their due" (April 22nd)

Irish Independent

The case *for* the privatisation of Telecom is presupposed as a given by the *Irish Independent* and it doesn't address the question of a retained state shareholding: as one editorial casually puts it, it is simply a matter of "when Telecom Eireann is privatised" (March 8th). The paper's view is categorically simple and uncomplicated: "the world *has* changed [*scene*], and TE [Telecom Eireann - *agent*] *must* change with it". Yet, like *The Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent* articulates a mix of discourse types, some of which try to distance the paper from unreflexive – and putatively pure – ideological stances. As it remarks in an editorial about Aer Lingus (the state owned aviation company): "The belief has grown that ...[the state] should have no involvement in airlines or telecoms, any more than in refining sugar" (note how "the [agency-less] belief", made in an editorial emphasising the "pragmatic", is implicitly distanced from the belief held by the *Irish Independent*).

Irish Examiner

The simple, declarative headline of the *Examiner*'s June 14th editorial gets to the crux of the paper's stance: "Telecom sale makes sense" (June 14th). It continues underneath: "over a million people [interestingly, this figure – repeated again on June 24th – is double the *Irish Independent*'s more conservative estimate of half a million] *stand to gain* [note the presupposition] as the Government unloads its shares in Telecom. *Analysts may debate* the wisdom of selling the State's entire 51% stake in the company, *but* [note the disclaimer] the move will be welcome news to small investors" (June 14th) (note how the question of the state retaining a shareholding is framed as a technocratic matter for "analysts" to debate and contrasted, in turn, with the uncomplicated desires of "small investors" and, by extension, an imagined *Irish Examiner* readership).

Sunday Independent

The *Sunday Independent* firmly supports privatisation. It draws an interesting and perhaps unexpected (because it looks to Europe, not the American economy – see

chapter 8) antithesis “In Europe, most countries have already privatised their State-run telephone companies Ireland [the laggard], by comparison, has been slow to embrace privatisation wholeheartedly [note the favourable, even warm collocation i.e. the intimation that privatisation should be affectionately *embraced*], but with the Telecom Eireann public offering, this is set to change” The paper is confident about the timing “The financial backdrop for the sale of part [note the assumption back in April the subsequent Government decision to sell the full state shareholding is not broached editorially] of the State’s shareholding in Telecom Eireann in June or early July could hardly be better, given the buoyancy of global stock markets” (April 25th)

Sunday Tribune

In the *Sunday Tribune*’s view, the Telecom “share sale *is* [note the categorical modality] an excellent idea” (May 9th) The decision to sell the entire state shareholding – in one fowl swoop – is greeted less enthusiastically “By holding back 15% the Government would have the opportunity to sell its remaining shares at a higher price in the future It has spurned that opportunity and is selling everything now” (June 20th) What is most interesting – and distinctly neo-liberal - about the paper’s editorial stance is its considered representation of Irish social change and its modalized labelling of those historically opposed to privatisation “A decade ago any government would have been fearful to contemplate the sale of a state asset of this size to the private sector *A vocal lobby, of relatively small size* and probably led by *elements in the trade union movement*, would have created *plenty of noise* about the sale of the ‘*family silver*’ [note the paper’s use of inverted commas to distance itself from a collectivist anti-privatisation discourse] [in contrast] there is [now] virtually no ideological opposition to removing the company from state control” (June 20th) The ideological characterisation is clear the unions’ principled, hectoring and unrepresentative stance was only ever a posture, indeed their timid assent, in the face of an “extremely generous” share deal, merely confirms “how easy *it was* [note the categorical truth claim] to buy off their ideological beliefs” (June 20th) Interestingly, what could, perhaps, be construed as a more sympathetic representation of the union position is also

embedded in the utilitarian assumptions of rational choice theory (see chapter 2) “there is no shame in their arguing this it is a *rational exhibition of self-interest*” (May 9th)

The Sunday Business Post

The Sunday Business Post is the only paper in the sample to pre-empt and advocate the sell-off of the entire company. Reviewing the different sale options, the April 25th editorial confronts the proposition interrogatively “But *why* not take a big deep breath and sell the lot. There *is no* [note the categorical truth claim] obvious or pressing reason why there should be a phased share sale, as was the case with Greencore and Irish Life” (April 25th). In short, the *act* of a full sale is assumed as a given, the debate, in the paper’s mind, concerns the exact means, or *agency*, of the sale.

7.3.3 *Public participation*

The Irish Times

The Irish Times is initially sceptical about what it describes as the share campaign “*bandwagon*” (April 22nd) (note how the paper can conflate its support of privatisation with a discourse type critical of privatisation hype), not because it is opposed to the principle of a public share offering, but because it thinks that “in truth, the opportunity for ordinary members of the public to acquire a *significant parcel of shares* is very limited” (April 22nd) (which begs two obvious questions: what, in the paper’s mind, is “a significant parcel of shares” and what constitutes an “ordinary” member of the public?). The subsequent news that the state is to sell all its shares in the company is warmly welcomed. Indeed, underpinned by proud images of a collective “Irish public” embracing the cosmopolitan world of the stock market, the paper’s rhetoric is imbued with a mix of modernizing, populist and historicizing discourses. “The *biggest offering of shares to date to the Irish public* is about to get underway, with Telecom Eireann to announce tomorrow the terms on which the public will be invited to apply to take a stake in the group. More than 1.2 million people have already registered their interest in buying shares and many of them are now likely to follow this up with share purchases.

Never before will so many people have had a stake in an Irish company floating on the market as will be the case when the Telecom shares launch in Dublin, London and New York in early July” (June 12th) At the same time, the paper is careful to remind its readers about the vagaries of market investment “Investors *should* [note the modality] understand that all stock-market investments involve risk They *should* also be prepared for the value of the shares to rise and fall in tandem with the *inevitable swings* in the market” (June 12th)

Irish Independent

The *Irish Independent* assumes a categorical stance towards the question of public participation “The Government *is right* to do all in its power *to encourage* wider share ownership, and the Public Enterprise Minister *is right to promise* ‘a bias to smaller investors’” (April 22nd), “wider share ownership *is a* worthy objective, and *the Government should do everything* in its power *to encourage* it” (June 26th) The paper consistently pitches to the “small guy”, the stock market virgins “Where better for *smaller investors*, especially those who have never before ventured into the stock market, to look than Telecom?” (April 22nd), it asks rhetorically This quasi sales pitch is underpinned by a confident and modalized view of the company’s future prospects “*The [investment] risk is almost non-existent* This flotation *is surely* on the way to success” (April 22nd), “we can *reasonably assume* that it [Telecom] *will remain* the biggest business, and that its shares *will hold* their value ” (May 15th), “by tomorrow afternoon, probably at least half a million people [again evoking images of a nation on the move] will have applied for shares in Telecom Eireann They *will have* made a *good decision* The risk is very low, *the likelihood of gains very high*” (June 26th) There is a hint of anxiety, however, as the paper insists that the whole “exercise *must be seen* to succeed” (June 26th) if the public are to be successfully “disposed[sic] to buy shares in other State-owned companies when these *are* [note the categorical predictive confidence] privatised” (June 26th)

Irish Examiner

As in the case of the *Irish Independent*, the *Irish Examiner*'s editorials are grounded in the discourse (and discourses) of "market populism" (see Frank, 2000) The paper's register is consistently pitched to the small guy what are variously categorized as the "ordinary punters" (June 24th), "small investors" (June 14th), "small savers" (June 14th), "ordinary people" (June 14th) and those "investing in the stock market for the first time" (June 24th) The paper shares the *Irish Independent*'s predictive confidence about the company's future "over a million people *stand to gain*" (June 14th), "investors *stand to make profits*" (June 14th), "investors *will reap handsome profits* when the shares are floated" (May 21st)

Sunday Independent

Like its sister paper, the *Irish Independent* (see above), the *Sunday Independent* regards the Telecom flotation as a welcome opportunity to effect a broad and, in its view, necessary change in Irish cultural attitudes to stock market investment It criticises the Government's handling of the share offering and, somewhat begrudgingly, compares the public offer of shares with the generous terms awarded to trade union employees "However *attractive* [the share issue] might seem to the public *it pales into insignificance*" when compared to the benefits accruing to those employees who "have managed to negotiate a 15 per cent share for themselves" (April 25th) (note how the paper's register speaks to an audience 'other' than the Telecom employees) The union deal is further rebuffed with a modalized appeal on behalf of the archetypal "taxpayer" " *it should not be* forgotten that Telecom Eireann was paid for by Irish taxpayers *They* have financed its development over many years *Their contribution should not be* lost sight of" (note how this characterisation draws on the remnants of a nationalisation discourse) In another neo-liberal emphasis, the paper issues a salutatory warning to Government about what it describes as the "pressing need" to create an Irish "equity culture" "If private investors feel shortchanged *by the Government* [note that it is Government, not market agency, which is cited] on this highly attractive issue, this *will*

[note the shift to a categorical modality] condition their attitude to privatisation in general and weaken the creation, of an equity culture - a pressing need *if* [note the creation of a paratactic *scenic* link] Ireland's economic boom is to be maintained"

Sunday Tribune

The *Sunday Tribune* is enthusiastic about the prospect of wider public involvement in the share owning process. It describes the likelihood of a high uptake as "indicative of the changing nature of Irish society" "Now [in contrast to "a decade ago" note the articulation of historicizing and modernizing discourses] the public sees things differently, proof that a decade is a very long time in the development of society and public attitudes" (June 20th). It is an editorial register tempered with caution, however. As the headline of the June 20th editorial categorically puts it "There's no such thing as a risk-free punt"(June 20th). The same editorial continues "Amid all the hoopla [again note the coexistence of pro-privatisation discourses with discourses types critical of the privatisation hype] surrounding the Telecom float investors *would do well* to remember that shares can go down as well as up. There *has been* a worrying assumption that the flotation will be priced to ensure its success" (June 20th). These concerns aside, the paper maintains that the "balance of probability [note the pragmatic and considered register] suggests that the flotation will be a success" (June 20th). It hopes that "the public can share in the expansion of the company" (May 9th) and, tellingly, pays "tribute" to "the effectiveness of the slick advertising launched to support the registration process and the *willingness of the media to promote* [note the active *agency* of a singular media and the paper's approbation of "hoopla" agents implicitly criticised earlier in the editorial] the attractiveness of the offer to the public" (June 20th). Yet, uniquely, the *Sunday Tribune* appropriates an egalitarian discourse to acknowledge another less affluent *public* for whom the purchase of shares is but a remote prospect "Now such is the relative wealth many - *but most definitely not all* [note the modal emphasis] - enjoy in the booming Irish economy that the 1.2 million registrations for shares in the share offer is met with almost a casual shrug" (June 20th). In addition, drawing on a nationalisation discourse, the paper nostalgically compares the new, perhaps complacent Ireland with a more egalitarian Ireland of old "It was noted (and

still applies) that whereas every citizen held a stake in companies owned by the state, *only those* with ready cash were able to buy shares in a company that joins the stock market” (May 9th)

The Sunday Business Post

The Sunday Business Post welcomes the prospect of broad public participation in the Telecom flotation and commends the facilitation role of Government. As one headline puts it – in a quasi-egalitarian discourse – this is “an opportunity *that can be shared by all*” (April 25th). Like the *Sunday Independent*, *The Sunday Business Post* assumes a more long term view and is excited about the prospects of “turning [sic] the Irish into a *race of share owners*” (note the conceptualisation of the Eircom privatisation as part of a grander neo-liberal project) (July 4th). It animates what it argues is the need for a broader cultural shift. “The Telecom flotation *represents* a unique opportunity to get tens of thousands of people interested in the concept of share ownership. It *is vital* [note the categorical modality] that this interest *be fostered and maintained*” (April 25th). Unlike some papers, however, it does foreground the risks involved, the headline on the eve of flotation is simply dubbed “Telecom *risks*” (July 4th). In light of what it categorizes as the “*heady expectations* out there [and] the *lofty predictions* that are being promulgated in pubs and workplaces” (note the absence of “predictions” being “promulgated” in the media) it suggests that “the danger exists that many investors have been brought along by *the hype* [note the latent critique of the privatisation promotional campaign] and could be in for a rude awakening” (July 4th).

7.4 Market Fortunes

This section is based around a sample of all the relevant editorial comment from July 8th, 1999 (day of flotation) up until the end of 2000. It is structured under three headers:

- (a) *Initial “success”* - This section examines editorial attitudes towards the sharp rise in Eircom share prices immediately after flotation.

- (b) *Market decline: apportioning blame* - Despite the initial rise in prices, the Eircom share price dropped steadily in the latter half of 1999, a trend which intensified throughout 2000. Drawing widely on the hexad, this section examines editorial attitudes towards the questions of ‘who’ (*agents*) or ‘what’ (*agency*) was responsible for that decline.¹³⁰
- (c) *Market populism* - This section looks at the representation of shareholders’ interests throughout the period of the share price decline. The weeks preceding and following the company AGM in September 2000 are particularly important, as popular dissatisfaction with the drop in share prices had by then reached an orchestrated peak and was the subject of a concerted media campaign. Attention to what Frank (2001) calls “market populism” is a key concern here: which he describes as the idea that “in addition to being mediums of exchange, markets ...[are imagined as]...mediums of consent...[that] express the popular will more articulately and more meaningfully than do mere elections” (Frank, 2001: xiv). Rhetorically, market populism can be understood as part of a general interdiscursive shift towards the esteeming of lifeworld experience, the conflation of lifeworld and official discourses and what Fairclough has described “as the conversationalization of public [in this instance market] discourse” (Fairclough, 1998: 160).

7.4.1 Initial “success”

*The Irish Times*¹³¹

The Irish Times’ editorial tone is one of firm confidence on the day of Telecom’s stock market launch: “The first major privatisation of a State company *looks set to* launch on the markets successfully. *All the indications are* that Telecom’s share price will rise significantly when trading opens this morning, as the major financial institutions *scramble* [note the lexical signification of chaotic market enthusiasm] to buy

¹³⁰ Because the question of “blame” covers a whole gamut of Eircom related issues, this sub-section is the longest in the chapter.

¹³¹ The total number of Irish Times editorials which mentioned Eircom for this period (July 8th 1999 to December 31st 2000) was 19. The 1999 dates are July 8th, July 17th, July 28th, December 1st, December 15th, December 30th. The 2000 dates are January 12th, March 7th, April 18th, May 12th, May 23rd, June 15th, July 19th, August 16th, August 18th, September 13th, October 10th, October 26th and December 22nd.

shares”(July 8) A week on, the mood is categorically upbeat “By any objective criteria, the flotation of Telecom has been an *outstanding success*” (July 17th), the paper declares in triumph “The Government and its advisers deserve some credit” for this, it adds, especially for setting “the flotation price (£3 07) at precisely the right level” (July 17th) The fundamental ideological lesson is categorically reaffirmed in a pedagogical discourse “the State *has no* business in the Telecommunications industry” (July 17th) Yet, in its advice to shareholders, the editorial register remains cautious “In the back of their minds investors should remember the *traditional warning* [a discourse type implicitly contrasted with hubristic ‘new economy’ discourses] that shares can fall as well as rise” (July 8th) especially “at a time when the sector is fashionable and market prices overall are buoyant, both factors which can change”(July 8th) Despite these *scenic* concerns, *The Irish Times* remains optimistic about the company’s future (even if that optimism is indirectly voiced as the attributed view of “most fund managers”) “there are few signs of any falling away in the share price over the medium term, buoyed up by *market confidence* [note the way the market *scene* is routinely spoken about in anthropomorphic terms] about a possible takeover, *most fund managers* are taking an optimistic view of Telecom’s prospects” (July 17th)

*Irish Independent*¹³²

The *Irish Independent*’s editorial mood and symbolism, the day after the flotation, is euphoric, one of child-like excitement and national exhilaration at *our* making it on to a world stage “On wall street yesterday the Minister for Public Enterprise, Mary O’Rourke, looked like a little girl opening her birthday presents And no wonder Wall Street, like the Dublin and London markets, had pronounced the Telecom flotation a big success This flotation *has* [note the categorical modality] wrought a [nominalized] *transformation* We have taken a major step towards becoming a *nation of share owners*” (July 9th) (note how the Telecom privatisation is recontextualised as part of a broader ideological project) Grounded in a modernizing discourse, and illustrated by

¹³² The *Irish Independent* alluded to Eircom in 17 editorials during this period The 1999 dates are July 9th, July 12th, August 19th, October 19th, November 20th, December 12th The 2000 dates are January 4th, January 12th, May 23rd, July 4th, July 24th, July 29th, August 18th, September 14th, September 22nd, September 28th and December 22nd

one very deliberative and modalized antithesis, the paper regards the Eircom flotation as nothing less than a metaphor for the country's welcome, and necessary, embrace of the new "Last week, in the context of the Telecom Eireann flotation, the foreign media presented a picture of Ireland as a thriving modern country whose Government had more money at its disposal than it knew how to spend [even with all the confident brouhaha around the flotation, it is interesting to note the editorial concern, and lingering national inferiority complex, about how "we" are perceived by "others"] Would their readers have recognised this Ireland yesterday? [note the shift to an interrogative mood] Had they been stuck in a traffic jam on the Dublin-Belfast road, or vainly waiting for a train to Cork, they would have seen *the old Ireland* [note the nominalized, and calcified, representation of the Irish past] in some of its less agreeable aspects"(July 12th)¹³³ The paper concedes that the Government's "decision on the price was justified", despite its own earlier concerns about it being pitched "on what seemed the high side" (July 9th 1999) And while there is a "note of caution" (July 9th), too, it is ultimately disclaimed by a benign long term view of the market "Vast numbers have borrowed money to buy shares They would be well advised to sell all or some of them and take their profit but they [specifically "those who paid out of their savings"] must remember that there is some risk involved *But* they should not be too despondent if they make small losses as well as gains *In the longer run, the gains should greatly exceed the losses*" (July 9th, 1999)

*Irish Examiner*¹³⁴

The *Irish Examiner*'s only editorial, in the months following the sale, was published on September 13th, 1999 and is merely a reference to the money recouped from the Eircom sale (which does point to a certain editorial detachment from celebratory post-flotation discourses)

¹³³ The main subject of the editorial is what the paper categorizes as the "wildcat strike" by the ILDA, the Irish Locomotive Drivers' Association (see July 12th)

¹³⁴ The *Irish Examiner* mentions Eircom in 9 editorials during this period The 1999 dates are September 13th, November 11th, December 20th The 2000 dates are January 12th, May 25th, September 13th, October 10th, November 6th and December 22nd

The *Sunday Independent* is just as triumphant as its sister paper “*Everyone* [note the egalitarian presupposition of the pronoun], it seems, *is a winner*” (July 11th, 1999) With an eye towards what it presupposes are “future privatisations”, it, likewise, accentuates the symbolic importance of the flotation “Last week some half a million people participated, or one-fifth of the adult population of this country This represents an *important landmark in the public’s fast changing attitudes to financial investment* Telecom Eireann has served as *a new symbol of the success of the Irish economy* and *also as an important trail-blazer* in ensuring that *future privatisations* [note the ideologically loaded nominalization of market and modernizing discourses] can hope to meet with an equal measure of success” (July 11th, 1999) The country’s perceived embrace of an equity culture is given a similar modal emphasis “Above all, the success of the public offering - the largest this year in world markets [reinforcing the image of a nation truly arrived, even innovative, on a global stage] - has ensured that a major step towards the *long-overdue development of an equity culture in this country* has been taken” (July 11th, 1999) As the headline “Telecom *teaches* the public how to invest” (ibid) illustrates, the paper clearly sees the Telecom sale as something of a pedagogical drive to make “the public” stock market literate Credit for a successful launch is categorically given to the Government “In the case of Telecom Eireann, the Government *has managed to get both the price and value right* It *has been careful* to protect the State’s interest by not selling the company too cheaply” (ibid)

As with the *Examiner*, the *Sunday Tribune* does not reflect editorially on the “success” of the initial flotation The only two editorial mentions of Eircom in the immediate aftermath of the flotation refer to the establishment, with the aid of money from the

¹³⁵ *The Sunday Independent* mentioned Eircom in 7 editorials during this period The 1999 dates are July 11th and September 19th The 2000 editorials are May 28th, July 30th, August 20th, September 10th and September 17th

¹³⁶ The number of relevant *Sunday Tribune* editorials published during this period is 9 The 3 1999 editorials are July 25th, August 9th and September 19th The 2000 editorials are January 23rd, August 20th, September 10th, October 29th, November 12th and December 24th

Telecom sale, of a national pension fund (July 25th 1999 – see below) and, secondly, the company's involvement in the Football Association of Ireland's plans for a new stadium (August 9th, 1999)

*The Sunday Business Post*¹³⁷

Of the papers which immediately respond to the flotation, *The Sunday Business Post* adopts the most cautious register. It describes the flotation as “a resounding success”, congratulates the Government for setting the “correct” share price, but, projecting ahead, doesn't share the *Sunday Independent's* confidence that the greater ideological goal, of turning “the Irish into a society of shareholders” (what Bourdieu (1991) might call the inculcation of a national share owning “habitus”) has been achieved. “The Telecom flotation has been a resounding success for the Government, *but it is premature* [note the categorical disclaimer] to conclude that it has turned the Irish into a society of shareholders” (July 11th 1999). “A proper judgement on the success of the Telecom flotation *in expanding share ownership* [note how the “success” of the flotation is placed in a much wider “circumference” (see Burke, 1969a)] can't be made for at least another year, when those who have *stuck the pace* [note the implicit comparative between what the July 4th editorial called those “brought along by the hype” (see above) and those who are *really disposed* to share-ownership] collect their bonus shares”, suggests the paper. In addition, the 574,000 who “signed up for the good story” are reminded about the vagaries - especially for those bereft of the *expert* hermeneutical powers of “professional advisers” - of market investment. “The risks attached to investing in a quoted company were largely ignored in the [flotation] debate and there is a danger that individuals, many of them don't have access to *professional advisers*, may be unclear about *how to interpret a blip or an upheaval*” (July 11th, 1999).

The Irish Times

Prompted by the news that “KPN/Telia, the Dutch-Swedish telecommunications alliance, [is] to sell its 35 per cent stake” (December 1st 1999) in the company, *The Irish Times*’ first editorial acknowledgement of a slump in Eircom’s share price is December 1999. Yet the paper remains sanguine – its optimism based on the view that “*the continuing good health of the Irish economy and Eircom’s dominant market share* [note the reaffirmation of this particular *scene-agent* ratio] will attract interest from some of the key players in the global communications business”. The share price is “continuing to hold up reasonably well,” it insists, and “while it lost ground yesterday, this was at least partly due to poor sentiment towards the sector” (December 1st 1999) (note the way the reference to the “poor” sectoral *scene* serves to deflect attention from Eircom’s own fortunes). By 2000, the mood is more downbeat, as the “new lows” (May 23rd 2000) in share price force the paper to consider the “break up of the former state company” (October 10th 2000). Yet the paper continues to situate Eircom’s misfortunes in a wider international (i.e. *scenic*) context: “The shares were already slipping last week, suffering from *an overall decline in telecommunications shares across Europe*” (May 23rd 2000), “*the drop in telecom shares internationally* [note how the density of both nominalizations serve to animate the scenic - i.e. globalised - dimensions] has also been a major factor” (September 13th 2000), “*the entire* [note the modified emphasis] Telecom sector is *depressed*” (note the attribution of mental processes to a singular market agent) (September 13th 2000).

There are other explanations, besides *scenic* ones, given for Eircom’s decline. The withdrawal of KPN and Telia from their “strategic partnership” (September 13th 2000) is identified, on one occasion (then the date of the lowest share price valuation so far), as the “*main factor* behind yesterday’s fall” (May 23rd 2000). The breakdown of that relationship is contextualised in turn as part of management’s failure to develop a clear

¹³⁷ *The Sunday Business Post* mentioned Eircom in 10 editorials in the period under review. The 1999 dates are July 11th and December 5th. The 2000 dates are January 16th, April 16th, August 6th, August 20th.

strategy, another rhetorical stress central to the paper's editorial critique "An alliance reached by the group with KPN of the Netherlands and Telia of Sweden has fallen apart And its [Eircom's] *future strategy* remains to be fully spelt out These issues are *part of* [note the modulated emphasis] the reason for the 33 per cent fall in the share price" (August 16th 2000), "But the *key issue is* [note the categorical modality] whether the company board and management have a *coherent strategy* mapped out for the future" (September 13th 2000)

The articulation of a discourse critical of management is not excessive For instance, there is something of a categorical volte-face by *The Irish Times* (see above), as it concedes "with the benefit of hindsight, [that] *it is now clear* that Eircom shares were overpriced when floated - as *its management correctly argued at the time*" (December 22nd 2000) In addition, the paper acknowledges that the company actually had "a reasonably healthy rise in profits last year" (August 16th 2000) - but, interestingly, doesn't critically connect this fact with the *agency* of the stock market, the structural *scene* in which it operates and, paradoxically, the company's declining share price And while the decision of the Eircom board to award itself, and senior management, with a generous share option scheme on the eve of the 2000 AGM is described as "extraordinary" (August 16th 2000), the general practice of awarding such benefits is accepted in principle – indeed, it is articulated in an editorial register clearly attuned to the values of corporate pragmatism "Big companies *need* [note the modal emphasis] to pay handsome salaries to attract the best management" (August 16th 2000) What is criticised, however, is the absence of transparency ("no precise details of the methodology used to calculate the payments are given" (September 16th 2000)), the size and timing of the bonus ("putting forward such a scheme *at this time* [note the implication of the modulated comparative i.e. that the bonuses would be okay at another time] is bound to raise shareholder ire" (September 13th 2000)), and the failure to "take into account the share price performance in determining appropriate bonus levels" (August 16th) Curiously, the paper downplays the issue of bonus payments on the eve of the well publicised AGM, insisting that while the latter question "will generate the most controversy", it is *the question of the company's future strategy*

August 27th, September 17th, October 29th and December 24th

which is described as “most important” (although still focusing on the role of management, this does deflect attention from the question of bonuses, the central media issue at the time, a rhetorical move which, perhaps, has the (desired) effect of distinguishing *The Irish Times*’ discursive style from that of its “media field” competitors and what it categorizes, somewhat condescendingly, as the “hysteria” (September 13th) of the company AGM)

Irish Independent

It is only in May 2000 that the *Irish Independent* expresses its first serious concerns about the drop in Eircom’s share price. In an editorial voice striving to be at one with the concerns of the “small investors”, “their woes” are attributed “chiefly to three factors: increased competition [*agency*] threatening the company, the *general bloodbath* of technology, media and telecommunications (TNT) stocks [*scene*], and most of all the intention of the two most dominant shareholders, the Dutch company KPN and the Swedish company Telia, to *dump* [note the pejorative categorization] their Eircom shares on the market” (May 23rd 2000) (corporate *agent-act*). The role of management, on the other hand, is not the focus of critical attention until August, when it is criticised for having “picked a *bad moment* [like *The Irish Times*, note the inference that there is a *good moment* for bonuses] to award colossal bonuses to executive directors and to propose a profitable share option scheme for up to 400 executives” (August 18th 2000). What is most marked about the latter editorial, however, is the subtle re-ordering of the hierarchy of blame: “The share price rose after the launch last year, then sank like a stone. This was less the fault of the company’s performance than of *original overpricing* [now posited as a key *act* and, remember, a Government decision which the *Irish Independent* belatedly supported – see above] and the [*scenic*] unpopularity of telecoms stocks on world markets” (August 18th 2000).

The question of blame is comprehensively addressed in the editorial the day after the company’s 2000 AGM. With media attention galvanised around the issue of executive bonuses, the culpability of management comes under unprecedented scrutiny. Yet, although overlexicalized, the paper’s criticisms of management remain, in one sense,

rather timid, as they are again centred around the timing and size (“Mr Kane and all the directors are *massively at fault* for attempting to bring in a *ludicrously generous* share option scheme for executives *at a time* [note the paper’s use of the same modulated comparative as *The Irish Times*] of shareholder misery” (September 14th 2000) if not the principle (“*there is nothing wrong* with an incentive scheme for employees”) (September 14th 2000) of the bonus pay-out. Drawing on anti-statist and anti-political discourses, there is a significant reattribution of “blame” to a list of high profile Government agents “Mr Kane [Eircom chief executive] *is not to blame* for the high price at which the company’s shares were set at the time of flotation last year. Those who shared responsibility were the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, the Tanaiste, Mary Harney, the Finance Minister, Charlie McCreevy, and the Public Enterprise Minister, Mary O’Rourke” (September 14th 2000)

The supposition that Eircom’s decline can be understood as a general failure of management isn’t clearly acknowledged until late 2000. “Shareholders have cause for dissatisfaction with a management which never seemed comfortable with the concept of competition”, the paper insists, and they are entitled to question “the timing of the sale, the management strategy, the future of Eircom - if any” (December 22nd 2000). Yet poor *scenic* circumstances again serve to deflect attention from the culpability of management. “management is not entirely to blame *Eircom shares plunged along with those of other telecoms companies*” (December 22nd, 2000). Tellingly, the paper’s most acerbic criticisms are directed afresh at the Government, indeed its whole “privatisation programme”. “they [shareholders] must wonder at the Government’s strategy, or lack of strategy. Setting a high price for Eircom’s shares is not the biggest indictment against it. *It* sold two banks at the wrong time. *It* [note the anaphorical linking of sentences] appears unable to decide what to do about Aer Lingus and Aer Rianta. In short, *it* has nothing worth the name of a privatisation programme” (December 22nd 2000).

Irish Examiner

The *Irish Examiner* initially voices concern about Eircom’s declining share price at the news of the KPN and Telia withdrawal. The Telia sale of its 14% stake “had been

expected”, the paper suggests, but it describes the “announcement that Dutch-owned KPN plans to unload its 21% stake” as a “complete surprise” (November 30th, 1999) And while it concedes that the company’s future is more “unclear” as a result, the paper remains optimistic and advises “shareholders not to panic, [and to] hold onto their shares and take *a long-term view* of their investment” (November 30th 1999) The paper’s editorial stance is more critical in 2000 Yet the unfavourable market “scene” is foregrounded throughout, a globalisation discourse type which sometimes serves to deflect attention from the role of Eircom management “technology shares continue to come under pressure in the global market”(October 10th, 2000), “with the telecom market in freefall around the globe” (December 22nd, 2000), “No doubt Mr Kane is under pressure because of Eircom’s poor performance on a stock market where technology shares are taking a hammering around the globe” (May 25th, 2000)

The paper’s criticism of the company’s controversial bonus payment scheme is quite mild It may oppose what it categorizes as the “massive cash windfalls” (December 22nd, 2000), and it does critically juxtapose the relative position of “small shareholders” and executives (“small shareholders are looking at losses while those who run the company, like chief executive Alfie Kane, have *liberally reaped* the benefits” (September 13th, 2000)) But the bonus issue is the main theme of only one editorial, and management are spared much of the kind of pejorative categorization heaped on them by other papers (although the “managers” are described, in one instance, as “*coming* millions” (October 10th, 2000))

One obvious hallmark of the *Irish Examiner’s* editorial stance is the absence of anti-statist and anti-political discourses For instance, the paper distances itself from what it reformulates as the “startling claim” of Eircom chief executive, Alfie Kane, “that the Government deliberately over-priced the stock when it launched on the market last summer” Drawing favourably on the agency of Public Enterprise Minister, Mary O’Rourke (“In *characteristic fashion*, she has stoutly defended her role and told Mr Kane to tend to the business of running his company” (May 25th, 2000)), the paper lambastes Kane for the potential damage of his comments on [nominalized] “investor confidence” (May 25th, 2000) The single reference to Government, in the context of

the 2000 AGM, is similarly devoid of reproach and assumes Government identification with the interests of “small shareholders” “Hopefully, the Government’s influence, through their nominee shareholder Mary O’Rourke as Public Enterprise Minister, will be exercised firmly *on the side* of the 488,000 small shareholders” (September 13th, 2000) About the only thing which belies this favourable characterisation of Government is the paper’s overlexicalized description of a public “*mesmerised* and, some would say [note the reliance on anonymous agency], even *seduced* by [the Government’s] *aggressive* marketing campaign” (December 22nd, 2000)

Sunday Independent

The *Sunday Independent* recognises Eircom’s stock market problems as early as September 1999, when the “sharp decline in Eircom’s share price” is indirectly attributed to neo-liberal discourses about “public sector pay demands”, “wage inflation” and Ireland’s “international competitiveness” (September 19th, 1999) Assuming a more global perspective, the paper offers a similarly *scenic* explanation of the company’s problems in May 2000 “The rise in US interest rates and the fall in value of technology shares have *depressed* [again note the anthropomorphic characterisation of the market] the telecoms sector In that adjustment process the Eircom share price has been a significant casualty” (May 28th 2000)

Yet, as in the case of its sister paper, it is the Government, above all else, which is indicted in the *Sunday Independent*’s first in-depth diagnosis of the share price decline The anti-political discourse is carefully modulated, however, as the paper effectively tries to justify its own formerly affirmative stance (see July 11th, 1999) in the process The Government’s “role in setting the [share] price obliged it to balance a number of conflicting considerations”, the paper admits, and it accepts that “*in the very short term*, the Government managed to reconcile both interests” (which it describes as “protecting [sic] the interests of the Exchequer” and “pricing the shares attractively” (May 28th, 2000)) “*However*, it is now evident the Government placed far too much reliance on its own financial advisers while *blithely ignoring* [contrast with the July 1999 characterisation of the Government decision as “careful” (July 11th, 1999)] the

warnings from Eircom that the offer¹ price was far too high” (May 28th 2000) Furthermore, the Government is categorically accused of undermining the broader ideological goal (see above) of wider share ownership “By overpricing Eircom *it* [the Government] *has checked the development of an equity culture in this country*”, the paper suggests and “*it has* also made it harder to sell future privatisation issues” (May 28th, 2000) And, drawing on an anti-elitist discourse, the corporate minded good guys are clearly demarcated from the self-interested bad “unfortunately, the Cabinet took more heed of its own financial advisers - whose fee income amounted to £58m, and *who stood to gain* more from a higher than a lower flotation price *In contrast*, Eircom [management and board] was concerned with the long-term sustainable value of the company And its judgement has been proved correct” (May 28th, 2000)

The belief that the Government “*clearly* [note the modal confidence] overpriced the issue in the first instance” (September 17th, 2000) is reaffirmed immediately after the 2000 AGM However, critical attention, on this occasion, is focused more precisely on the issue of the executive bonus payments The criticism is fierce, indeed, the *Sunday Independent's* censure of management and board is even more colourfully animated than the *Irish Independent's* Nevertheless, the criticisms still centre on the issue of the *timing* of the payments and animate the antithetical tensions between executives and shareholders “The revelation of extravagant salaries, large bonuses and multiple perks given to Eircom’s top executives, *at a time* [note the same modulated comparative] of heavy losses for its shareholders, is bad enough But the news that the *same fat cats* are now seeking even greater rewards is indefensible”(August 20th, 2000) What is “even more galling”, the paper suggests, is the revelations about the poor “commitment from virtually every board member to the company itself” (ibid) Interestingly, the paper castigates one board member in particular, which, moreover, allows it to lampoon the principle of public ownership and articulate an anti-statist and anti-nationalisation discourse “Most members have no specialist experience of the telecoms sector And this includes Mr Dick Spring who, just over three years ago as Tanaiste and Labour party leader, was *totally opposed* [note the absolute characterisation of Spring’s previous stance] to the privatisation of Telecom Eireann, as it then was He argued *the state* [note how it is “the state”, not “the Irish people” (May 28th, 2000), which is

invoked] should maintain majority control in the company *Clearly* he has since had something of a *Damascene conversion* [note the modalized sarcasm] to the merits of full privatisation *Yet* [note the paratactic conjunction] Mr Spring is the only Irish director without a single share in the company” (September 17th)

The *Sunday Independent's* general critique of management is quite tame. In fact, there is only a single mention of the company's “strategic” failures. “There is little sign of any *clear sense of direction* or *strategic vision* from the company. Eircom has made no investment of any significance during its first year of operation” (September 17th, 2000)

Sunday Tribune

The first signs of shareholder dissatisfaction with the declining share price meets with little sympathy from the *Sunday Tribune*. “*Greedy Eircom punters blind to vagaries of market*” (September 19th, 1999), insists the modalized headline, as the body of the editorial goes on to deride shareholders' use of the media to air their discontent. “Callers to radio programmes during the week demanded the board of Eircom be sacked and that the Government should compensate investors for their losses. *This is hilarious stuff* that shows a complete *lack* of understanding as to how stock markets work” “These are the sort who demand their money back from the bookies when their nag doesn't win the Grand National” (September 19th 1999), it adds (the bookie metaphor is also employed by *The Sunday Business Post*)

The paper holds the Eircom management and board partly accountable for the falling share price and, list-style, attributes blame to one individual in particular - the company's chief executive, Alfie Kane. “*Kane* has to take a lot of the responsibility for the collapsing share price. *His failure* to get it on with the company's strategic partners, KPN and Telia, was a factor in their decision to announce plans to sell their shareholding. *Kane's declaration* in a radio interview that the original flotation price was too high also helped to undermine the value of the company” (August 20th, 2000) “*However*, Kane should not get all the blame”, the paper disclaims, indeed, it later categorically concedes that he “*was right* when he said that the shares were sold to the

public at too high a price”(December 24th 2000) In addition, both ex-politicians on the board (former Tanaiste and EU Commissioner, Ray McSharry and the aforementioned (see above) Dick Spring) are singled out for their failure to “represent the interests of the small shareholders” (ibid)

Yet, in attempting to distinguish its stance from what it implicitly characterises as the braying of some of its competitors, the paper is keen to avoid casting the company *agents* as scapegoats and distances itself from what it categorizes as the “popular and populist” impulse to “blame the management for all of the ills of the company” - especially around the issue of the bonus payments, which the paper describes (in a corporate register) as “an *entirely legitimate* means of rewarding executives and directors” in “the *normal course of events*” (August 2000) It also offers a *scenic* explanation “Eircom has not done badly in profit terms in the past year and its share price performance is *largely down to factors outside its control*”(September 10th), “*Eircom’s woes are by no means unique to the telecommunications industry* Many other international companies have seen profits and share prices dive by far greater amounts over the last year The entire industry has borrowed too much money - with Eircom ironically being one of the rare, honourable exceptions” (December 24, 2000)

The *Sunday Tribune* has some critical, if temperate, observations to make about the role of the Government, motivated, in part, by what it feels is the over-zealous attack on management at the 2000 AGM and the popular neglect of “targets other than Kane” (September 10th, 2000) For instance, while recognising what it describes as the “wonderfully high price [raised] on behalf of all taxpayers” at the time of the flotation (September 10th, 2000), it regrets that it was set “*at the expense* of those who bought shares” (ibid), what it characterises as a poor “political” decision which, it warns, could have a damaging long term effect “It [the Government] *will want to sell shares* [note the casual presupposition that future privatisations are inevitable] in some publicly owned companies in the future and will now find it much harder to do so at the right price” (December 24th 2000) Furthermore, it belatedly criticises the Government “sales campaign”, which “actively encouraged people to buy the sharers as a long-term investment and the offer of a bonus of one new share for every 25 held at the end of the

year was proof of this” (December 24th, 2000) (note the neo-liberal pedigree of the bonus scheme: a Government reward for *market* loyalty). “They could not have expected the elected government - *guardians of the common good* - to sell them a *pig in a poke*” (note the idiomatic lifeworld discourse) (ibid), it suggests (note how the paper seems to be, on the one hand, criticising the Government for coaxing the public into giving a long term commitment to the *agency* of the market, while at the same time, implying that Government responsibility for the “common good” - the paper’s sarcastic invocation of a socialist discourse - obliges it to assume a “guardian”, quasi representative role in the very same (‘free’) market). The paper’s characterisation of Mary O’Rourke, the Minister with responsibility for the flotation, is particularly caustic: “It has been reported that the *ever populist* Minister for Public Enterprise Mary O’Rourke is going to the AGM to cast the government’s remaining shares against the company. Is this not somewhat cynical?” (September 10th, 2000).

The Sunday Business Post

The most obvious feature of *The Sunday Business Post*’s stance is that it largely desists from the blame game. Indeed, it assumes an ironic and interrogative *attitude* towards the proposition itself: “...*why do* newspapers commission opinion polls with questions such as the following: ‘Who do you blame for the fall in Eircom’s share price - the company management, the stock exchange or the government?’” (August 20th, 2000). Drawing on a neo-liberal discourse which imagines a deep-rooted media (and popular) antipathy to the market, the paper castigates the populist, media campaign around the 2000 AGM and blames it, if anything, for the company’s woes: “*The lesson* [note the pedagogical register] of recent weeks is that Eircom shares have been very significantly undervalued by the stock market, *partly due* to the quite unwarranted abuse heaped upon the company by various media commentators and *small stockbrokers* [note the dig: Shane Ross, Business Editor of the *Sunday Independent*, and the de facto leader of the campaign, is also a stockbroker] intent on making a name for themselves¹³⁸ (October

¹³⁸ Interestingly, for much of 2001 and 2002, the then editor, and co-founder, of *The Sunday Business Post*, Damien Kiberd regularly appeared as a co-panellist with Shane Ross on the TV3 current affairs show, *Agenda*. Kiberd also occasionally appeared on Eamon Dunphy’s radio show *The Last Word*, on

29th, 2000) Uniquely, the paper's *attitude* towards the controversial management bonuses is one of categorical approval "The directors have been asked to perform various tasks, one of which was the sale of the company to the public, and they have delivered to a considerable extent therefore *they are entitled* to be adequately remunerated" (August 20th 2000)

The Sunday Business Post's criticisms of management are, by and large, temperate "Its [Telecom's] managers are decent, worthy people *but* they have no particular expertise in *creating value for stockholders* [note the paper's intuitive appropriation of a corporate discourse], despite the obvious strength of their business Eircom lacks a marketer who can sell its story to the global capital markets" (October 29th 2000) Tellingly, the paper's sternest indictment of management is reserved for what it describes as their "softly softly" approach to dealing with the trade unions (October 29th 2000), who, like some neo-liberal sketched prototype (see chapter 1 and 2 the paper's appropriation of a trenchant anti-union discourse is every much in the mould of the belligerent neo-liberalism of Thatcher), are characterised as the "featherbedding" beneficiaries of "a massive dowry from the company in terms of shares, share options, severance pay and grandiose pensions" (October 29th 2000) Eircom's poor stock market performance is ultimately understood – and defended - in terms of a discourse of categorical market rule "But as we said at the outset *this is a free market* shares can fall as well as rise And *there are no certainties* at all in stock markets" (August 20th 2000), "People who buy shares on the stock market must be aware that the shares can fall as well as rise *That is what capitalism is all about*" (September 17th 2000)

7 4 3 *Market Populism*

The Irish Times

With "some 574,000" (July 17th, 1999) people initially purchasing shares in Eircom, it is, perhaps, no great surprise that the editorial register of most papers is pitched towards

which Ross was a regular contributor (see chapter 8) One therefore needs to acknowledge the parochial media context – or old boys' network - in which many of these digs are traded

the (imagined) concerns of what *The Irish Times* calls “small investors” (August 16th 2000) The fate of Eircom is clearly regarded as a matter of *public* interest, which, in *The Irish Times*’ case, is evinced by the number of editorials which allude to Eircom in the two year sample (twenty nine) What is even more telling is the way *The Irish Times*, like the other papers, regards the flotation as an opportunity to inculcate a popular disposition towards equity markets Consequently, the implications of any perceived failure are unequivocally lamented “The hope was that the successful flotation of a supposed blue-chip company like Eircom would *whet the public’s appetite* for [what are casually projected and presupposed as] *further State sell-offs* But the disappointing performance of Eircom’s share price will scarcely encourage the *share-buying habit*” (December 1st, 1999)

What *The Irish Times* doesn’t do is animate the highly charged atmosphere around the September 2000 AGM (one “field” dynamic inhibiting it from doing so is the fact that the shareholders’ campaign is spearheaded by the Business Editor of a market rival – see below) It does frame the issue of shareholder disgruntlement in terms of the discursive construction of an elite/popular dichotomy, as, for instance, in the headline “Eircom Pays Well - For Some” (August 16th 2000) Yet, consistent with its pre-flotation stance (see above), the paper reminds its readers of the vagaries of market investment “Much of the *hysteria* [note the pejorative characterisation] surrounding today’s meeting is overdone Yes, people were encouraged to buy shares in the company But equally it is long established that share prices fall as well as rise” (September 13th 2000)

Irish Independent

The *Irish Independent*’s rhetoric is grounded in quintessential market populism It takes two distinct forms Firstly, there is the perennial homage to competition and the consumer benefits of a liberalised market, as one editorial categorically puts it “*one thing is clear competition works*, and at last Irish consumers have begun to enjoy its benefits” (July 4th, 2000) The second, and by far the most prominent form, is constructed around the paper’s ongoing allusions to the archetypal “small investor”,

which, drawing on an interdiscursive mix of market, populist and democratic discourses, can't but enliven the notion that the market is the quasi-democratic forum of the common man. It orientates the paper towards upholding a popular/elite dichotomy (see Frank, 2001), which, in striving to "identify" (see Burke, 1969b) with the (putative) "small" guy, seeks to ameliorate feelings of shareholder woe through the scapegoat figure of the "expert" (see May 23rd, 2000). The paper's modalized reproach of a whole corporate clique of managers, directors and financial institutions in the aftermath of the 2000 AGM is typical: "Eircom directors got the fright of their lives yesterday. And they thoroughly deserved it. This sentiment will find no echo in *Dublin's plushiest boardrooms* [vividly illustrating the gap between "them" and "us"]. Most of the financial institutions which hold shares in the company cast their votes in favour of the directors and management at the annual meeting. *They* were always going to override the wishes of the "retail investors" (September 14th 2000). Grounded in a discourse of revolution, the same editorial is hyperbolic about what it sees as the arrival of new forms of shareholder resistance: "But the institutions, if they do not share the fright, should at least view yesterday's events with some anxiety - and humility. They too have something to fear from the *spectacular arrival of small shareholder power*" (September 14th, 2000). (The editorial stance here is very telling, because, while shareholder indignation is clearly projected, it isn't directed at the *agency* of the market itself. What is animated instead is the unfairness of its corporate dominated structures, and the contempt of the "plush [sic] boardrooms" for the *small guy*. The paper clearly pines for some vague form of market egalitarianism, though the paradoxes in its casual equivalence of market rule with some quasi-democratic imperative go un-probed.)

The *Irish Independent's* stance towards the AGM is institutionally comprised, for the "leader" (September 14th 2000) of the shareholder group is Shane Ross, the business editor of its sister paper the *Sunday Independent*. Therefore, given his senior position within the *Independent* group, and the campaign's additional alliance with *The Last Word*, the Today FM radio show hosted by Eamon Dunphy (see chapter 8), the paper expresses modalized support for what it characterises as "an unrelenting ["media"] campaign against the option scheme" (September 14th 2000). Yet, despite all the mediated gloom about the company's poor market performance, the paper re-articulates

and reaffirms a market populist discourse “Those concepts have been tarnished, and the prospects for [presupposed] *future privatisations* diminished *More serious, however*, is the discouragement of widespread share ownership *Surely* [note the modality] the Government [the predictable neo-liberal scapegoat] and the financial institutions, think this goal desirable? To that question, too, a disillusioned public must have an answer” (September 14th 2000)

The *Irish Independent*'s triumphant defence of the market necessitates a postscript, as it eventually voices its own doubt about the virtues of “popular capitalism” In fact, it even tries to strategically distance itself from the proponents of market populist discourses “The Eircom sale is a reminder of how hollow has been *the talk* [as if the agency-less “talk” had nothing to do with the *Irish Independent*] about markets, competition and popular capitalism” (December 22nd 2000)

Sunday Independent

As attention converges around the 2000 AGM, it is the *Sunday Independent* that most explicitly conflates a democratic discourse, infused by a discourse of revolution, with the campaign to assert what it implicitly characterises as shareholders' market-based rights Led by the paper's business editor, Shane Ross, the campaign is variously categorized as a “shareholders' *revolt*”, a testament to the power of “small shareholders, once *mobilised*” and a vivid instance of “*shareholder democracy* an idea whose time has come elsewhere, but here, for *obvious reasons* [note how this characterisation draws on a discourse which assumes an Irish cultural hostility to privatisation], has been slow in arriving”(September 17th, 2000) Even more luridly, the paper sets up an equivalence between corporate voting structures and “old Soviet-style trade union conferences”, where “placards were held up with one man from a large union maybe casting ten million votes”(September 10th, 2000), and collocates these images with what it colourfully describes as a “current *massive protest* from small shareholders [and] a *spontaneous revolt* against this system”(ibid) Like its sister paper, the *Sunday Independent* animates the sense of shareholder indignation by articulating a discourse which juxtaposes the interests of the small man and a coterie of

complacent elites "Who owns Eircom? *Not, so it seems, the several thousand shareholders* expected at the AGM in Dublin on Wednesday. *Not, apparently, [note the anaphorical linking of sentences] the 18,000 who have already voted 'no' to the contentious options and bonus scheme for its top executives. Eircom is owned [note the categorical modality] by big institutions.* They will ensure that the directors' wishes are granted (September 10th, 2000)

The populist neo-liberal discourses underpinning the paper's evangelical commitment to a *market democracy* are clearly articulated in the immediate aftermath of the flotation "Stock market investment should not be seen as the preserve of the privileged and rich few, and large-scale privatisations such as this one are an ideal means of bringing the [presupposed] *benefits* of greater share ownership to a new and wider audience" (July 11th, 1999). Animating this discourse of quasi class warfare, the corporate elites are variously labelled as "unelected pension fund managers", "financial moguls", "the company's chiefs", "Ireland's powerful investment cartel" (September 10th, 2000) and "fat cats" (August 20th, 2000), while shareholders - or, more correctly, the archetypal shareholder imagined in the editorials - are conversely described as "half a million disillusioned shareholders", "first-time investors in the stock market" (May 28th, 2000) "long-suffering shareholders", "the small shareholder" (*ibid*) and "small shareholders" (September 10th and 17th, 2000). One August 2000 editorial categorically evokes these tensions in a nutshell "It [Eircom] *is* now a company whose consumers are unhappy and whose shareholders are miserable, *while* its management *is* vastly enriched" (August 20th, 2000)

Irish Examiner

The editorial voice of the *Irish Examiner* is populist, popular and consistently pitched to a beleaguered public of stock market novices what it describes, *inter alia*, as "thousands of first-time players in the Irish stock market" (November 11th, 1999), "many first-time investors who bought Telecom shares" (December 20th, 1999), "thousands of small shareholders" (January 12th 2000), "the 500,000 people who bought Telecom Eireann shares" (May 25th 2000), "thousands of hard-pressed

shareholders many of whom were venturing into the shark invested waters of the stockmarket for the first time” (October 10th 2000) and “half a million Irish shareholders many first-time investors” (December 22nd 2000) Like the *Sunday Independent*, the *Irish Examiner* enlivens its description of the 2000 AGM with a revolutionary discourse, describing it as a “*revolt* by the company’s totally disillusioned *army* of small shareholders” (September 13th, 2000) The paper gets wildly hyperbolic about the meeting and predicts “that the temperature at today’s eircom [sic] annual general meeting will be almost sufficient to generate a minor nuclear explosion”(ibid) It also predictably draws on the wider discourse which juxtaposes the interests of “corporate” elites and what it calls “ordinary” shareholders, lamenting the ineffectual power of the latter “In a business dominated by *corporate interests*, *ordinary Eircom shareholders* will have relatively little clout at a special general meeting to clinch the deal [to endorse the sale of Eircell, the Eircom subsidiary, to Vodafone] in March” (December 22nd)

Sunday Tribune

The conflation of market and democratic discourses imbues the *Sunday Tribune*’s analysis of the 2000 AGM, which it describes as “a rare opportunity for an exercise in *shareholder democracy* in Ireland” (September 10th, 2000) Moreover, the overriding purpose of the shareholder campaign is categorically affirmed “the principle of holding directors account publicly *is a good one*” (ibid) Yet, assuming a more discerning register, the paper distances itself from the “populist” assault on the company “some of the criticism has been misplaced, or exaggerated, and shamelessly populist, designed only to enhance the careers of those who made it”¹³⁹ (December 24th, 2000), while its judicious use of punctuation marks (“over 350,000 ‘*small investors*’”) tacitly alludes to the casual presuppositions behind the campaign rhetoric Ultimately, the paper laments the potential damage to the prospect of a stronger equity culture in Ireland “The

¹³⁹ While the targets of this criticism go unnamed, one should not simply assume it is the so-called campaign leaders, Ross and Dunphy, since the (then) editor of the *Sunday Tribune*, Matt Cooper, had, at the time, a working relationship with both through his occasional guest presentation of Dunphy’s radio show, *The Last Word* At the same time, Ross and Cooper are also competitors in the same Sunday newspaper market, although any enmity between the two titles is likely to be constrained by their co-dependence on the financial support of the *Independent* group (see Horgan, 2001)

experience - especially if this is their first - is likely to dampen many people's interest in the stock market *This would be a great pity*" (September 19th, 2000)

The Sunday Business Post

The Sunday Business Post has little time for the "so-called [shareholder] *revolt*" spearheaded by "Messers Dunphy and Ross" (September 17th) (the move can be partly understood in marketing terms, as a way of distinguishing *The Sunday Business Post* "brand" from its "media field" competitors, especially given the fact that "Ross" is a senior figure at a market rival) The paper is parsimonious in its sympathy for shareholders and illustrates the point with a *bona fide* neo-liberal metaphor "The flotation of Eircom was, after all, an arrangement entered into by *consenting adults* who had a view to making capital gains"¹⁴⁰ (August 20th) Assuming a barbed, market realist (see Arnt Aune, 2001) register, its representation of shareholders' disillusionment is, at times, quite pejorative "*shareholders who ranted and raved* at the board of Eircom were well aware that much of what they had to say was *mere spleen*" (September 17th) And while the paper describes their "annoyance" as "to an extent understandable", their position is nonetheless presented as naive, irrational and un-worldly "In a way their position was as absurd as that of a person who had backed a horse in the local bookmakers' office and who, when the horse lost, felt impelled to complain to the owner of the bookmakers' office about the result of the race" (ibid)

The Sunday Business Post is disdainful of what it regards as the naive market populism - the interdiscursive conflation of market rule with some quasi-democratic imperative - underpinning the dominant editorial reading of the Eircom AGM It nonetheless categorically defends the market system Invoking a neo-liberal anti-intellectual discourse (see chapter 2), it launches a hyperbolic counter-attack against media elites it regards as contemptuous of market structures "Some of the abuse being poured on the heads of Mr Kane and Mr Fallen is driven by *outmoded ideology* (various

¹⁴⁰ This is a clear echo of Robert Nozick's metaphor about "capitalist acts between consenting adults" (see Arnt Aune, 2001 89)

newspapers in this country are still riddled with *legions of retired Stalinists*)” (August 20th)

7.5 The implications of the Eircom sale

This section briefly considers editorial stances, where they are pronounced on, towards two peripheral issues related to the Eircom flotation a) the privatisation of other state assets and b) using the financial proceeds of the Eircom sale ¹⁴¹

7.5.1 Other privatisations

The Irish Times

The Irish Times makes a comprehensive editorial statement on the prospects of future privatisations only days after the Eircom flotation. Drawing on a historicizing discourse, the dramatic shift in political attitudes is acknowledged “Given the [consensual] response to the Telecom flotation, *it scarcely seems credible* that privatisation was a dirty word in political circles only a very short time ago” (July 17th, 1999). Characteristically, the paper skilfully distances its own pro-privatisation stance from what it implicitly casts as the more ideological stance of the Fianna Fail/PD government “Fianna Fail has also been too sceptical [about privatisation], for far too long - even if it now in Government has something of *the zeal of the convert* about it” (July 17th, 1999)

The Irish Times' register is self-consciously pragmatic, maintaining, in a modulated rhetoric, that everything should be decided “on a case-by-case basis” (July 17th 1999). Nevertheless, the July 17th editorial juxtaposes a modalized discourse of oppressive, and inefficient, state control with a benign and liberatory discourse of competition and deregulation “Some State companies could clearly benefit from being *freed from the shackles of day-to-day control* from a Government department. Others desperately

need a *healthy dose of competition to shake them out of their stupor*” (July 17th 1999) And, where specific cases are cited, there seems to be little equivocation “There seems *no compelling reason* why, for example, Aer Lingus or Aer Rianta should not be sold off” (July 17th 1999) Downsides of the privatisation experience are acknowledged, but again (see above) tacitly attributed to the negative British experience “The situation is less straightforward when it comes to public utilities like the ESB ¹⁴² *the experience in Britain and Northern Ireland* is that privatisation in some public utilities has raised prices and actually lessened competition” (July 17th 1999) The end of the same editorial is infused with some urgency, the clear inference being that, on the back of the Telecom “success” (*scene*), it is “now time” to *act* (*scene-act* ratio) “After the success of the Telecom flotation, *it is now time* [note the categorical modality] for the Government to take stock, to begin a detailed debate on the future of the State companies and to decide on a case-by-case basis *what is best for the State, for the public and, not least, for the companies themselves*” (ibid) (note how the rhetorical flourish at the end of the sentence does not list the once “powerful” unions)

Irish Independent

In the case of the *Irish Independent*, the prospect of future privatisations is simply constructed as a categorical and benign presumption Eircom “*will dispose* private investors to buy shares in other State-owned companies *when these are privatised*” (June 26th, 1999), Eircom “is an exciting example for the *further privatisations of State assets in the pipeline*” (July 9th, 1999), “*Down the line we await* [note the presupposition that more privatisation is something eagerly anticipated by both paper and reader] the coming to the market of Aer Lingus, Aer Rianta, and Bord Gais Eireann” (March 8th, 1999), “*Still to come are* further privatisations and the sell-off of CIE property” (January 4th)

Sunday Independent

¹⁴¹ The section is based around the full 1999 and 2000 sample of all six papers

¹⁴² The Electricity Supply Board

The *Sunday Independent* exudes the same casual confidence in the privatisation process as its sister paper Telecom Eireann is an “important trail-blazer in ensuring that [the projected *act of*] *future privatisations* can hope to meet with an equal measure of success” (July 11th, 1999) The Government “hopes [or, more correctly, the *Sunday Independent* hopes that the Government hopes] to sell less attractive State companies - Aer Lingus or Aer Rianta - at a later date (April 25th, 1999) The paper laments the damage the Eircom experience has done to the public’s “appetite for future privatisation issues” (September 17th, 2000), for – in the *Sunday Independent*’s long term view - “*the flotation was designed* to whet the appetite for further initial public offerings of state assets, like Aer Lingus, Aer Rianta and possibly the ESB” (ibid)

Irish Examiner

Drawing on the remnants of an anti-privatisation discourse, the *Irish Examiner*’s stance towards future privatisations seems to be one of modalized opposition Addressing the issue directly, it reproves what it characterises as the perceived ideological fervour of the Government “*Obsession* with selling off State assets, which characterises the Government’s undisguised strategy of raising billions of pounds for infrastructural development [note the way the Government’s “obsession” is, nonetheless, ascribed a benevolent motive], appears boundless Judging by Minister Mary O’Rourke’s *philosophy*, the country is heading for *wholesale privatisation* of public companies” (December 10th, 1999) The anti-privatisation discourse is animated in turn by emotive lexical characterisations about assets being “stripped to the bone”, “Aer lingus being *groomed* for flotation” and “*Thatcherite* policies [which do] not inspire confidence” (ibid) (although, like *The Irish Times*, the paper situates the “negative fallout” of the latter in a distinctly British context) Yet, deferring to a discourse of neo-liberal inevitability, the editorial is ultimately fatalistic about the chances of resisting the momentum towards privatisation and ends with a much more modest, quasi-collectivist plea “*In the public interest*, whatever revenue is generated by *selling off the family silver* [again note the interdiscursive appropriation of anti-privatisation and collectivist discourses] should go towards providing affordable housing and improving the country’s neglected and chronically under-funded road and rail networks”(ibid)

Interestingly, the paper's allusions to future privatisations are much more presumptuous, even tacitly supportive, in 2000 "The public will not be so easily seduced next time round *when more* State-owned assets such as Aer Lingus, Aer Rianta, ESB and Bord Gais are *finally* [note the modal emphasis] *sold off*" (December 22nd, 2000), "his [Kane's] remarks could also weaken investor confidence in *the* [nominalized and presupposed] *future privatisation of other State companies*" (May 25th, 2000)

Sunday Tribune

Drawing clearly on a discourse which is critical of the market, the sternest appraisal of a privatisation culture where "the market prevails" is voiced in a *Sunday Tribune* editorial entitled "*There are* [note the categorical modality] some state assets not for sale" (May 9th, 1999) "*Once* nobody in any government - almost irrespective of party affiliation - believed in the sale of state assets", the paper observes, but "*now* [note the appropriation of a modernizing discourse which sets up an antithesis between past and present], it seems that virtually every commercial entity in state ownership is for sale, or soon will be" (May 9th 1999) The current Government's privatisation policy is driven by ideology, the paper implies, and what it categorizes as the simplistic "*stack 'em up high and sell 'em' approach* [note how the interdiscursive mix of scare quotes and a (simplistic) lifeworld discourse serve to distance the paper from unreflexive, pro-privatisation stances] the Government (especially its PD members) seems to be adopting at present" (May 9th 1999)

Like *The Irish Times*, the *Sunday Tribune*'s editorial register is self-imagined as pragmatic. As it put it, "some sales make sense, but others don't" (May 9th 1999). Yet, wary of drifting too far from a market realist (see Arnt Aune, 2001) stance, there is no outright rejection of privatisation options, in fact, the paper's opposition is always conditional and modified "there is no justification for the sale of Aer Rianta, *because* of the absence of competition", "RTE should never be privatised *but* there are good reasons why it should be forced to divest of certain operations", "there *could be* a role

within state ownership for ACC Bank and TSB”, “there should be serious doubts about the advisability of allowing the ESB to join the stock market *in the absence* of effective competition in power generation” (May 9th 1999)

A January 2000 editorial raises some serious doubts about the convictions of the *Sunday Tribune*'s stance. Indeed, it amounts to nothing less than a dramatic, and categorical, rebuttal of its earlier, open-ended position (see above) towards the state-owned banks. “*The state has no reason to be involved in the banking sector*. In those circumstances, the state-owned banks - TSB, ACC Bank and ICC - *belong to a different era* [i.e. note the appropriation of a modernizing discourse to conjure up images of an old, and irrelevant, pre-privatisation world]. Sale of the assets is the *only* option” (January 23rd, 2000) (note how the paper's editorial voice is ultimately colonized by a discourse of neo-liberal inevitability)

The Sunday Business Post

As with its stance towards the Eircom flotation (see above), *The Sunday Business Post* regards future privatisations as part of a greater ideological project to inculcate a national “appetite” for shareholding. “The government seems confident though that this *entire exercise* [note the pedagogical register] will give individuals a *taste* for Stock Market investing and an *appetite for further privatisations*, including possibly Aer Rianta, Aer Lingus and Coillte” (July 11th, 1999)

7.5.2 *Using the Eircom money*

The Irish Times

Some months before the flotation, *The Irish Times* suggests, in a modalized editorial voice, how the money raised from the sale should be spent. “The Telecom flotation *should provide* a windfall of at least £1.5 billion, but with some £4.7 billion of investment required to bring our infrastructure up to modern EU standards, the case for spending it on transport or other infrastructure *is clear-cut*” (note the categorical

emphasis) (April 22nd, 1999) Yet the subsequent Government decision to use the bulk of the money to set up a National Pension fund is implicitly welcomed and the infrastructure argument goes unmentioned it “has received a generally favourable welcome from the social partners and the financial institutions [note the way the paper legitimises its stance by drawing on the agency of generic sources] [and it] is a significant departure in terms of forward planning” (July 28th, 1999)

Irish Independent

The reaction of the *Irish Independent* to the establishment of the pension fund is one of categorical approval “Yesterday Mr McCreevy [the Minister for Finance] acknowledged that money could be earmarked from the Telecom flotation to boost pension funds for our ageing population *It is hard to conceive of a more constructive use of public money than the establishment of a new pension fund*” (July 24th, 1999) In fact, it is envisioned as the template for all future privatisations “The Government has *prudently set aside* [note the discourse of fiscal rectitude] the Telecom privatisation proceeds for pension purposes It *must* [note the modal emphasis] deal similarly with *other privatisation gains*” [note the casual presupposition] The characterisation of the decision as *prudent* is particularly revealing, because it is collocated with the same editorial’s alarm at what it describes as the “real threat” of inflation and the “intolerable” rise in public spending (July 24th, 1999) The neo-liberal bias of the editorial stance is clear the decision is regarded as laudable because it prioritises an “economically correct“ discourse (see Arnt Aune, 2001) – i.e. which emphasises the need to control inflation and spending - over any infrastructural or public spending requirements (no matter how desirable – see chapter 6)

Sunday Independent

The *Sunday Independent* doesn’t broach the issue of how the Eircom money should be used and doesn’t comment on the establishment of the National Pension Fund

Irish Examiner

The *Irish Examiner's* support of the pension fund is asserted in a modulated editorial voice "The long-term provision for pension funding as planned by Minister for Finance Charlie McCreevy is, *in principle*, a very commendable strategy, *but* it should not be blind to the pressing needs of those on less than adequate pensions at the moment" (November 6th, 2000) It accedes to a discourse asserting the "prudent" orthodoxy about the future "financing of pensions", but wants the Government to use some of the money "to improve in a practical way the lifestyle of those who are depending on pensions *right now*" (November 6th, 2000)

Sunday Tribune

Although concerned that the pension fund might be "*gobbled up* by public servants" (note how this lexical characterisation draws on a neo-liberal discourse about the insatiable demands of public servants), the *Sunday Tribune* lauds the decision for its foresight and is hyperbolic about the scale of future pension "problems" (July 25th, 2000) "Charlie McCreevy *is to be* congratulated on facing up to *one of the biggest problems that will face us as a nation in the next century* [note how the density of the nominalization works to animate the paper's hyperbole] - the provision of pensions for an aging population" (July 25th, 2000) Grounded in a discourse of fiscal prudence, the paper's praise for McCreevy is categorical and adulatory "*Our current economic boom* [note the casual assumptions behind the use of the pronoun] has provided *us* with an opportunity such as *we* never had before to start planning for the future and McCreevy *has seized it* with both hands *By adopting the philosophy of the wise Pharoah in the Old Testament* who put aside resources in the years of plenty to tide his people through the lean years, the Minister for finance *has acted* with a foresight not normally associated with Irish politicians" (July 25th 2000)

(One can't resist placing the paper's hyperbolic response in a broader temporal context For in July 2002 the *Sunday Tribune* – under the same editor - enunciated a dramatic and categorical *volte face* of its previous editorial stance "*How much better it would*

have been had the Eircom Money been earmarked for capital projects and the commitment to investing 1% of GNP not entered into And *there was no real need* [note the dramatic shift in modality and register] for this fund, given that our population is ageing at a slower rate than ever before and considering that more people should be encouraged to take responsibility for funding their own retirements anyway” The “wise Pharaoh” McCreevy, the erstwhile epitome of fiscal wisdom, is conversely characterised as a gambler “But then again wasn’t finance minister, Charlie McCreevy, *who is well known for his love of a flutter* [again note how personable lifeworld discourses converge around the personage of McCreevy – see chapters 6 and 8], the man who once compared the stock market [where the fund was invested] to a casino” (The Sunday Tribune, July 14th, 2002)

The Sunday Business Post

In advance of the flotation, *The Sunday Business Post*, like *The Irish Times*, maintains that the money should be spent on infrastructure and worries “that the authorities may adopt *too conservative* an approach to fiscal management - perhaps using most of the cash surplus to cut the national debt” (June 13th, 1999) “There are *lots of problems with the public service* which need to be addressed and addressed *urgently*” it suggests, and “in macroeconomic terms, there is also a *pressing case for huge investment* in infrastructure” (June 13th, 1999) (note the *apparent* irony of the staunchly pro-market *Sunday Business Post* foregrounding – in a modalized editorial voice - a “public service” discourse type, though, in a telling *agent-scene* ratio, and knowing neo-liberal register, the same editorial cites the “obvious” danger that “the public service unions [*agent*] might push for demands that could undermine the future competitiveness of the country” (*scene*)) The subsequent decision to establish the pension fund isn’t broached editorially by the paper

7.6 Different neo-liberalisms

This chapter has examined editorial discourse about Eircom in six Irish newspapers. The findings confirm the initial hypothesis that each paper's editorial stance is firmly embedded in neo-liberal assumptions and - attesting to the intertextual flow of discourses across papers - a broad consensus about the issues of market liberalisation, the privatisation of Eircom, public participation in the stock market and the future privatisations of other state assets. Additionally, they all share, at a basic level, a common diagnosis of Eircom's market decline, for none of them seriously question - though some vaguely lament - the authority of market structures, the dynamics of global competition or the initial decision to *fully* privatise the company. In summary, all six papers support and legitimize the *new* climate of market liberalisation and privatisation and none of them seriously object to the ending of the *old* statist order.

But the evidence points to a plurality of editorial stances, and field positions, too. It suggests that there are indeed "different neo-liberalisms" (Phillips, 1998: xvii - see chapter 1) and that the *discursive* articulation of neo-liberal assumptions doesn't conform to some rigid, singular template, but manifests itself as a creative, interdiscursive mix of various discourses. Some papers are *more* self-consciously neo-liberal than others and some seem to be swayed more by a doxa-like (see chapter 2) deference to the authority of the market. This suggests that neo-liberal convergence takes place at an elementary "global" level and doesn't preclude significant "local" differences (i.e. differences of discourse, style and register) between papers. With particular attention to the cross-comparative representation of state/government and market, the different editorial stances and neo-liberal *attitudes*, what can be conceptualised as the product of different institutional "habitus" (see Bourdieu, 1991), can be summarised as follows:

- *The Irish Times* - Grounded in a modernizing discourse which views privatisation and market liberalisation as progressive and modern. Characterises state control and monopoly as oppressive. Pragmatic and modulated in its rhetoric and register. Keen to avoid impression that its pro-market stance is ideologically motivated.

Occasionally appropriates collectivist discourses Encourages “share owning habit”, but continually warns its readers about the vagaries of market investment Self-image as modern, reasoned and balanced Avoids anti-political discourses and scapegoating of government Insists privatisation policy should no longer pander to unions Pointed, if temperate in its criticism of management Sensitive to broader market *scene* Aloof from AGM “hysteria”

Neo-liberal attitude Something of a *closet neo-liberal* Offers a considered analysis, but is reluctant to use *overt* neo-liberal discourses, conflate market and democratic discourses, animate shareholder disgruntlement or indict Government Imagines itself pro-modernisation, more so than pro-market

- *The Irish Independent* - Champions “new” era Welcomes privatisation as symbol of Irish modernisation Supremely confident about flotation Articulates a strong market populist discourse continuously agitates on behalf of the “small investor” Treats future privatisations as benign and inevitable Scapegoats Government, and individual politicians, for share price decline Appropriates trenchant anti-statist and anti-political discourses, indicts Government’s privatisation inertia Attentive to broader market *scene*

- *The Sunday Independent* – Even more of a market evangelist than its sister paper Articulates anti-statist and anti-collectivist discourses, lampoons opponents of privatisation and begrudges union deal Regards flotation as “trail blazer” for a wider cultural shift Employs explicit pedagogical discourses Sensitive to hostile market *scene* Conflates democratic, egalitarian and revolutionary discourses in its trenchant assertion of market-based rights Indicts Government for share price decline Contemptuous of corporate elites Castigates “timing” of bonus scheme

Neo-liberal attitude Both Independent papers can be described as *neo-liberal populists* They self-consciously champion the market agenda, disdain elites¹⁴³ (both political and

¹⁴³ The Independent papers’ hostility to media elites is quite ironic given the very powerful position of its owner, Tony O Reilly, in Irish media (See Horgan, 2001)

corporate) and imagine some form of market democratisation. Government still the problem, even post flotation (even a Government which the *Independent* Group supports (see Horgan (2001))

- *Irish Examiner* – Scant analysis sale simply “makes sense” Articulates a populist rhetoric, imbued with caution and concern for the fate of the small investor. Foregrounds hostile market scene. Benign view of government. Appropriates discourse of revolution in response to AGM campaign. Draws on an anti-privatisation discourse to affect oppositional stance to future privatisations. Ultimately colonized by a discourse of neo-liberal inevitability.

Neo-liberal attitude Best described as a *commonsense neo-liberal*. Supports the move to the market, but not in a self-consciously neo-liberal, or anti-statist, way. Significantly, one of its most trenchant editorials denounces the “obsession” with privatisation.

- *The Sunday Tribune* – Self image as thorough, robust and reflexive. Draws on a modernizing discourse which emphasises how far “we” have come as a country. Neo-liberal literate in its representation of unions and privatisation opponents. Lauds shift in public attitudes to market. Risk conscious about investment. Draws on collectivist and egalitarian discourses to acknowledge another, less affluent public. Hints of egalitarian nostalgia. Supports “shareholder democracy”, but little sympathy for “greedy” shareholders. Aloof from “populist” campaign. Scene conscious. indicts management and government in equal measure. Laments damage done to equity culture. Questions unthinking assent of market ideology. Wavering stance towards future privatisations. Lauds pension fund “foresight”.

Neo-liberal attitude Something of a *reflexive neo-liberal*. Its editorial voice is an interdiscursive amalgam of an “economically correct” register (see Arnt Aune, 1991), knowing neo-liberal discourses and even critical, anti-neo-liberal discourses. Imagines itself to be non-ideological and intellectually thorough.

- *The Sunday Business Post* – Polemically pro market Articulates a discourse asserting universal authority of “market forces” Proactively calls for full sale Its focus is on the larger neo-liberal project to “turn Irish into a race of share owners” Foregrounds risks Desists from blame game Disdainful of “shareholder revolt” Characterises shareholder ire as irrational and unworldly Draws on anti-intellectual discourses to imagine a quasi-socialist media conspiracy Appropriates an anti-collectivist discourse to indict “featherbedding” unions Voice of staunch market realism views share price decline in terms of firm market rule Strong defender of management and company Keen to prepare grounds for future privatisation

Neo-liberal attitude A *neo-liberal belligerent* Articulates a knowing, confrontational neo-liberal discourse in the spirit of Thatcher Sees the world in terms of *no-nonsense*, market rule

(The different neo-liberal attitudes, or discursive styles, should not be regarded as rigid, mutually exclusive categories The *Sunday Tribune* isn't *uniquely* reflexive indeed all papers could conceivably claim to be in some way reflexive about their stance, they are not to be confused with ideological automatons Yet the categories do serve to codify important differences between papers)

7.7 Editorial distinction and the social world

This chapter has analysed editorial stances only It is not assumed that they represent, or sample, the *full* spectrum of opinion about the Eircom privatisation in Irish media *or* political discourse Indeed, leaving aside the dearth of anti-privatisation discourses, one can surmise that they don't represent the full range of available discourses, as editorial positions (and editorial topics) are, by definition, *consensual* genres, which (in theory) are “discussed and formed at editorial board meetings” (Rivers et al, 1988: 60) (the evidence of this study would suggest that they are inherently conservative genres, too, constructed around a register which addresses the practical exigencies of the ‘realworld’) In addition, cultivating an illusion of balance, it is customary journalistic

practice to use the op-ed pages of a newspaper to publish opinion pieces (both in-house and once-off) sometimes in disagreement with the editorial stance of a newspaper (see chapter 6)¹⁴⁴ What the Eircom editorials certainly evoke, however, is a pre-dominant national, and ideological, mood. Writing a week before the flotation, the political implications of this ideological consensus are succinctly observed by Cliff Taylor in *The Irish Times*

there is no mileage politically for any of the major parties to take an anti-privatisation stance. *Even the Labour Party* [italics added], which traditionally would have favoured State enterprise, is now taking a pragmatic *case-by-case* view [note how Taylor attributes the Labour Party with the same “case-by-case” argument used by *The Irish Times* itself – see above] (*The Irish Times*, June 30th, 1999)

This political realignment is symptomatic of an international, third way politics (see chapter 1). Moreover, it illustrates the *internationalisation* of politics itself (the editorials’ ongoing allusions to a broader market context can be conceptualised as the articulation of a globalisation discourse type), for, as several papers acknowledge, the political impetus to liberalise the telecommunications market is ultimately a response to EU dictates. The result is a partly pre-determined political, and discursive, *scene*, a homogenous political “field” (see Bourdieu, 1991) where the stylistic difference (i.e. the different interdiscursive hybrids) between parties, and media, assume a new “brand” significance. This chapter has outlined some of the ways newspapers try to distinguish themselves from their “media field” competitors in the face of such global ideological consensus.

But the inter-paper distinctions point to more than just discursive differences. They are affected by cultural and institutional variables, too. For instance, ownership imperatives help explain the market evangelism of the *Irish Independent* and the *Sunday Independent* - a supposition which gains retrospective authority from the fact that the

¹⁴⁴ It must be said that a computer aided search of *The Irish Times* archive (available at lexis-nexis.com) for January-July 1999 found little in the way of opposition to the Telecom privatisation.

Independent Group become the main shareholder – and effective controller - of Eircom in 2001 (see Beesley, 2002) Interestingly, the *Irish Independent* editorial was already flagging the group's intention to be a market player in January 2000

Independent News & Media, of which this newspaper is a part, is determined to be at the forefront of the new developments [although it cites Eircom, the editorial is largely a reaction to the announcement of the Time Warner/AOL merger] we, too, combine first-class content with the new methods of delivering that content, and we intend to maximise our advantages in this weird, but fascinating, world (The *Irish Independent*, January 12th, 1999)

Different variables impinge on other papers Self-imagined as a left leaning newspaper (see Horgan, 2001), *The Irish Times*' "pragmatic" register is essentially that of the Labour party articulate a "we" which favours modernisation, but couch your support in a way which doesn't alienate your readers by trenchantly articulating an overt neo-liberal discourse¹⁴⁵ The fact that it is in a middle of a national relaunch, and an attempt to boost circulation, conceivably influences the *Irish Examiner*'s determination to foreground the concerns of the "small investor" The *Sunday Tribune*'s pitch to the intellectually discerning, *public* minded reader is arguably constrained by its financial dependence on the Independent group And the staunch pro-market stance (or what can be described as the purer neo-liberal discourse) of *The Sunday Business Post* is unsurprising, gives its avowed commitment to unapologetically serve a business agenda

Mapping the full range of cultural and institutional factors impinging on each newspaper's stance is clearly beyond this study In any case, newspaper-specific variables should not be read as simple deterministic explanations of stances Yet there is one variable clearly impinging on them all that is, the 574,000 who initially bought shares in the company The editorial salience of the Eircom issue and the cross-paper attempts to cultivate a relationship with the (imagined) "small investor" can be

¹⁴⁵ As Fowler suggests, "readers are implicated in the ideological position of the [editorial] 'we'" (Fowler, 1991: 214)

interpreted as something of a “bottom line” battle for these 574,00 potential readers and customers, indeed, a battle for advertisers too

7 8 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed editorial comment about the privatisation of Telecom Eireann/Eircom in six Irish newspapers. Considered in terms of the research questions outlined at the start of the chapter, the empirical evidence affirms the basic findings of chapters 5 and 6 that the discourse of Irish broadsheets is firmly embedded in a neo-liberal paradigm, but that ideological convergence does not preclude the possible appropriation of critical discourses or significant stylistic and interdiscursive differences between papers. As in the case of the analysis of EU summits in chapter 5, the findings suggest that neo-liberal media hegemony is, first and foremost, a product of a social and political world in which neo-liberalism is largely unchallenged. The next step is to analyse the influence of neo-liberal assumptions in a different media context - that of radio and television.

Chapter 8 – Talking “downturn”

An examination of radio and television discourse from November 2001

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of six samples of discourse (five radio and one television) broadcast from November 7th to November 11th, 2001¹⁴⁶. The samples come from a range of broadcast genres, including television reportage, one-on-one interviews and loose, panel style discussions. They all share a common concern with what was then perceived as “the downturn” in the Irish - and global - economy, what was also part of the ongoing post-mortem on the economic impact of the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington. But the discourse had a more immediate, and local, trigger too: the November 7th news reports that the “Celtic Tiger” phase of the Irish economy was “over”.

This chapter considers four broad research questions:

- 1) How is each discussion/report *generally* “framed” (see Tannen, 1993) by the respective anchor/broadcaster?
- 2) What is ideologically significant about the discourse deployed by each of the contributors – especially, but not exclusively, in light of this study’s interest in neo-liberal assumptions?
- 3) What are participants’ relationships to the “media field” context in which they perform?
- 4) How do these clips illustrate the social and institutional authority of neo-liberal assumptions?

This chapter first gives an overview of the methodological issues involved in the selection of texts. The different programmes are then analysed in temporal order and

¹⁴⁶ All the samples were either recorded directly onto audio tape from radio, or downloaded as sound files from the RTE news archive in May 2001 (see www.rte.ie/news)

according to particular analytical categories. Finally, the chapter considers the different discussions in terms of institutional and social processes

8.2 Methodological issues

This chapter is different from chapters 5, 6 and 7 in several respects. The most obvious difference is that the analysis involves a different kind of media, radio and television, and hence involves a switch to a different mode of speech spoken over written. Secondly, the comparative element is less significant, as five of the programmes are produced by RTE, the Irish public service broadcaster (writing in 2002, Flynn reminds us that “approximately 70 per cent of RTE’s income is currently derived from advertising, by far the highest percentage of commercial income of any public service broadcaster in Europe and one which has increased consistently throughout the 1990s” (Flynn, 2002: 170)). But the most important difference underpins the thematic selection of media texts themselves, which, unlike the print media texts of chapters 5, 6 and 7, are *not* posited here as having anything inherently neo-liberal about them.

The sample of texts is posited here as representative of the general way in which the economy is talked about in “serious” Irish broadcast and current affairs media (the fact that the sample is biased in favour of the output of a traditional public service broadcaster bolsters this assumption). Indeed, before considering the specific question of neo-liberal influence, this chapter is interested in finding out the general contours of the discourse. To repeat: the selection of material was not guided by overt neo-liberal concerns, but by the simple fact that the six clips relate to the general discussion of the “downturn”. The analysis can, therefore, be partly understood as a quasi-ecological examination of the current affairs and economic “doxa” (see Bourdieu, 1991) over a five-day period.

Of the six programmes, five are broadcast on *RTE*, the Irish state broadcaster (*Six-One News* (television), *Tonight with Vincent Browne*, *Morning Ireland*, *News At One* and *This Week*), while a sixth (*The Last Word*) is broadcast on the privately owned national

radio station, Today FM. The sample is not based around the full content of each programme, but specific clips which relate to the discussion of the “downturn”. Following on from the empirical analysis of print media texts, the basic hypothesis is that the trajectories of the “downturn” discourse will be tacitly governed by the (interdiscursive) influence of neo-liberal assumptions and that individual contributions will work within these strictures.

With the exception of the *Six-One News* television clip (see below), all the clips are individually analysed, in temporal order, under the following headers:

- 1) *Asking the questions* - This section will consider two matters: a) the “framing” (see Tannen, 1993) resources used by each anchor to orientate the discussion and set the agenda (see Dearing and Rogers 1996) and b) the “broadcasting identity” cultivated by each anchor/programme (see Scannell, 1996).¹⁴⁷
- 2) *Discussing “the downturn”: an overview of participants’ ideological stance*¹⁴⁸ - This section will analyse the discourse, and the “discursive style” (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), of each of the (non-anchor) discursive participants, with a view to understanding the *kernel* of their ideological stance on matters of political economy. In other words, particular discursive fragments are parsed in an effort to sketch – as much as possible - the outline ideological position of each contributor, and its relevance to the question of neo-liberal influence. The focus on individual contributions is important, because, in this study’s view, the broadcasters and contributors analysed herein are some of the more influential opinion leaders, and economic pundits, in the Irish public sphere.
- 3) *Media reflexivity* - This section will briefly consider two inter-related issues: a) the extent to which discursive participants are reflexive about their own - and others - use of media and b) the “media field” (see Fairclough and Chouliaraki, 1999)

¹⁴⁷ Scannell describes broadcasting identity as the various ways (through voice inflection, mix of the personal and public etc.) in which a presenter accomplishes his “identity” on air (Scannell, 1996: 118).

¹⁴⁸ The decision to examine the rhetoric of each participant, and the content of each programme, separately should not be read as indifference to the matter of discursive interaction *between* participants or *between* participants and anchors.

relations between the different programmes and contributors over the course of the five days

Finally, a note about transcription method. Since this study is primarily concerned with the discursive influence of neo-liberal ideology, the transcription method is very basic and simply strives to record the content of each individual contribution. Although spoken discourse is, strictly speaking, without punctuation (see Phillips, 2000: 15), the content is transcribed with clause boundaries intuitively marked and attention is sometimes brought to ideologically significant instances of voice inflection. In addition, some elementary transcription symbols are employed: a dot in parentheses (.) indicates a short pause of less than a second, (see Fairclough, 1998: 155), observations about visual, aural or interactional aspects of texts are contained in square brackets (as in the case of the other chapters, square brackets are also more generally used to bring attention to interesting discursive features), block capitals denote emphasis, while, as in chapters 5, 6 and 7, a string of three dots (...) indicates where material has been omitted from the analysis.

8.3 *Six-One News* – RTE - November 7th

Co-anchored by Bryan Dobson and Una O'Hagan, the *Six-One News* of Wednesday, November 7th was the first of the six programmes to be broadcast. The sampled clip comes in two distinct parts and is an amalgam of two discursive genres: the first, a news report of Maurice O'Connell's comments at the very start of the programme, the second, a follow up, one-on-one discussion of O'Connell's comments, with an economist, later on in the programme. The analysis of the *Six-One News* clip is different from the other five clips in two important respects. Firstly, since it is the only television clip in the sample, elements of visual semiosis are alluded to where appropriate. Secondly, the fact that it is the only clip to feature a conventional news report, necessitates the inclusion of a supplementary header to analyse the initial news "framing" (see Entman, 2002, Tannen, 1993) of O'Connell's comments. That report is,

in effect, posited here as setting the *scene* for the discourse which follows over the five day period ¹⁴⁹

8.4 “End of the Celtic Tiger?” The initial reportage and framing of Governor O’Connell’s comments

The *Six One News* of November 7th leads with the Maurice O’Connell story. In its previewing of the lead stories at the very outset of the programme (the programme’s signature jingle is playing in the background throughout the introduction), the Governor’s comments are formulated by Dobson: “Central bank governor says the Celtic tiger phase of *our* economy *may be*¹⁵⁰ over [note the modulated emphasis and the use of the pronoun] and the short term outlook is not good”. The introduction is then intertextually juxtaposed with a clip of O’Connell himself declaring “I’d say at the moment growth is *probably* flat [again note the modulated emphasis]”. Yet the framing intent of this introduction can only be understood in light of the paratactic link to the next two lead stories: one a reference to the fact that “the aircraft maintenance company SFS aerospace has announced up to 200 jobs are to go at its Dublin operation”, the other the news that “Sabena [the Belgian state airline] is declared bankrupt. Belgium’s transport minister says Europe can no longer afford national airlines in every state”. The clear effect of juxtaposing all three stories together is to produce a narrative coherence which draws on a broader (and already established) discourse of economic “doom and gloom”, an intertextual, and *scenic* link (*scenic* in the sense that the hostile local and global economic climate is foregrounded in each instance) which is crystallized by Dobson’s formal introduction to the O’Connell news report: “*On a day when further job losses were announced*, the governor of the central bank Maurice O’Connell said ”

The bulk of the O’Connell story is presented in a news report by RTE’s economic correspondent, George Lee. The discourse of “doom and gloom” is dramatically animated at the outset. Although essentially a summary/paraphrase of O’Connell’s

¹⁴⁹ An edited version of the same report was later broadcast on that evening’s *Nine O’Clock News*

¹⁵⁰ As in the of chapters 5, 6 and 7, all emphases, unless otherwise stated, are those of the author

comments, the combination of a short, sharp vocal delivery, a “discursive style” which draws consistently on anaphorical structures (see below) and list style paratactic links, vivid televisual imagery, and Lee’s dramatic reformulation of the Governor’s comments as the news that the “Tiger may be *dead and gone*”, all work to present an overwhelmingly negative impression, which is further enlivened by the reporter’s own stern admonition and meta-interpretation of the Governor’s comments at the end of the passage

[1] The Celtic Tiger may be dead and gone [shot of a busy shopping street buoyant with consumers a visual signifier of Celtic Tiger prosperity] [2] The outlook is not good [3] The recovery could be delayed considerably [shot of a woman working on a computer assembly line a signifier of Ireland’s “knowledge” based economic success and record employment rates] [4] All eyes are on the US economy [second shot of a computer assembly line, signifying the corporate links between Ireland and the US], and recovery there may be more distant than previously thought *Make no mistake about it* [shot of O’Connell flanked by two others note the dramatic register of the report] the message from the Governor of the central bank today was *by far the most negative* we’ve heard from official quarters for many years [sound of committee members mumbling in the background]

The report then moves to a visual shot, accompanied by direct audio, of O’Connell’s appearance before the Dail committee His modulated assertion, foregrounded in the introduction, that the growth rate is now “probably flat” is repeated, indeed, he repeats it a second time after an unclear, but presumably clarifying intervention by an unidentified member of the Dail [the Irish Parliament] committee The tentative discursive style of O’Connell is then categorically reformulated by Lee “Decoded that means *no growth at all* That the *economy has come to a halt* [another shot of the computer assembly line] *Some might say* [note the agency-less view] potentially on the verge of recession, a suggestion [shot of Harney addressing Dail] strongly rejected yesterday by Tanaiste Mary Harney”

Harney is directly quoted “Well the first thing I want to say *we’re not in a recession*, the country continues to grow [and after an unclear, but most likely sceptical intervention by another member of the Dail, she emphasises] Well growth *The country is growing, it’s not in a recession, it’s in a growth situation*” (note the categorical emphasis throughout) The report’s appropriation of Harney’s comments is important in two respects. Firstly, it acknowledges the fact that her comments were made “yesterday”, which suggests that concerns about a “downturn” in the economy were part of a discursive thread which existed before any intervention by O’Connell. Secondly, following the reportage genre conventions which play one version of events off another, they are clearly framed in a way which positions Harney in some sort of oppositional relation to the stance taken by O’Connell.

The news focus on a potential conflict of opinions is reinforced by the report’s next sentence “*However* [shot of government buildings], it was a different story from the Government today. Taoiseach Bertie Ahern said the world economy is plummeting”. The report moves to direct audio from Ahern, who, in articulating concerns about the unfavourable economic climate which could “carry into next year”, deploys a characteristically populist and quasi-collectivist rhetoric (see chapter 5 and 6) grounded in a discourse of budgetary caution “*we’re* [note the categorical use of the pronoun and the anaphorical structure] going to have to be cautious, *we’re* going to have to be careful, and *we’re* going to have to make sure that our fiscal and monetary policies are well controlled. *And we have* to serve the people by doing the right thing for the country. *And that’s what we’ll do*”.

The focus of the report switches back to Lee’s continuing summary of O’Connell comments, which, like the Dobson introduction, amplifies the sense of a general economic malaise, with hints of a viral contagion (“*spreading*”) across different sectors of the economy. “The central bank governor [shot of an Aer Lingus (the Irish national airline) plane landing – another intertextual link to the Sabena story] said the worst effects of the downturn to date have been felt in the airline [shifts to a shot of a stationed plane], tourism and computer sectors, but that the downturn [shot of the front

of the central bank the institutional guardian of Irish economic welfare] is now *spreading* more widely throughout the economy”

The report moves to a final direct comment from O’Connell, whose consistent use of pronouns (like Ahern) reinforces the notion that any economic “slowdown” is a matter with implications for the whole Irish collective and that “our” economic success, or failure, is ultimately globally (and passively) determined “As I said earlier opinions differ as to how long *we* must wait for a significant recovery But the scale and the spread of the slowdown that *we* are now experiencing is really a sober reminder of how vulnerable *we* are here to outside events or outside shocks” This globalising discourse type (i.e. the recognition of “our” interconnectedness to global, and particularly American, economic fortunes) is reaffirmed by Lee’s penultimate comments “The governor of the central bank said that deepening recession in the United States has consequences everywhere, *not least in this country*” Finally, the report consolidates the view that “*our own downturn*” (note the shift to a national register, as the “local” and the “global” downturns are aligned) is now in process, surmises that the modest (by recent standards) economic growth rates will be beyond *us* in the immediate future and ends with ominous predictions about the effect on “*our* national debt” “He [the Governor] said that if our own downturn intensifies, then there’s no way we’re going to grow by the 3½% rate predicted by the ESRI only yesterday The upshot of that is that the addition to our national debt next year may well be in excess of half a billion pounds”

Although there is no explicit comment from O’Connell about the Celtic Tiger (this is a crucial point one could ask to what extent is the whole report a “decoding”?), the outlines of a gloomy narrative frame are ultimately provided by the Governor himself It may be dramatically enlivened by Lee, and it may be a *Six-One News* editorial decision to position them as the lead story, but O’Connell is presumably media savvy enough to understand the news implications of his discourse (no matter how euphemized), particularly at a time of growing concern about the fate of the economy (on a somewhat grander scale, one has only to consider the way in which, like hermeneutical scholars, the global business media weigh up every coded utterance of Federal Reserve

Chairman, Alan Greenspan) This points to a prosaic, yet important, conclusion it is not so much the *what* being said which is determining the news agenda, or reconstituting the growth-centred “order of discourse”, but the “symbolic capital” of the *who* (O’Connell) that is saying it (i.e. the Central Bank Governor and *de facto* agent of the collective economic good)

8.5 *Six-One News* discussion¹⁵¹

Broadcast about half-way through the *Six-One News* programme (which usually broadcasts for just under an hour), the discussion features a one-on-one interview between co-anchor Dobson and Austin Hughes (introduced as “Chief Economist with IIB Bank”) The format is typical for the programme, which customarily returns to the subject of the lead story with a follow up interview/discussion later on in the programme The short interview – which, as a discursive genre, involves a shift to a more personalised and relaxed register - is analysed here under the structured headers applied to the analysis of the five radio programmes

8.5.1 *Asking the questions*

Dobson puts four questions to Hughes, each of which is formulated in an elaborate, and somewhat roundabout discursive style Taken together, they can be conceptualised as the framing resources used by Dobson to a) manage the interview with Hughes, b) interpret and analyse the lead story and c) communicate their interaction to an imagined audience of television viewers¹⁵² Several observations can be made in this regard Firstly, drawing on a “doom and gloom” discourse, Dobson explicitly interprets the earlier report in pessimistic terms, describing O’Connell’s comments - in one single

¹⁵¹ The analysis of the *Six-One News* discussion is concerned with the linguistic interaction between the two speakers The visual presentation of both speakers is not considered, as it doesn’t jar, in any notable respect, with the discursive emphases

¹⁵² How that interaction is ultimately received by an audience is clearly beyond the scope of this study Yet one can at least imagine the kind of broad, popular audience that might be watching the *Six-One News* (the flagship news programme of the national broadcaster) and, in turn, imaginatively conceived by Dobson

question - as “a rather gloomy warning” and a “pretty gloomy prognosis” (both propositions which Hughes is invited to assent to) Secondly, the growth situation tentatively described as “*probably flat*” by O’Connell is reformulated by Dobson as a confirmed “downturn” which “has occurred” already Thirdly, Dobson maintains that the “speed” of the “downturn” has taken “almost everybody” by surprise and wonders why it “seems to have really left *very many people in authority* really searching for answers” (although agency-less, this can be interpreted as an oblique nod to the inconsistency of the government position highlighted in Lee’s report, note, too, the fact that the “people” in the discourse type assuming a questioning disposition towards “authority” are implicitly identified as political, not market-based, agents) Fourthly, he wonders about the budgetary implications of the new economic *scene* and - in a subtle interrogatory allusion to the discourse of a gloomy pre-Celtic Tiger era - asks Hughes “Is that not a little worrying, when as soon as *we* () *we* hit choppy water it’s *back to borrowing* again? Finally, Dobson finishes by explicitly placing Hughes in a different attitudinal camp to O’Connell (“clearly you’re not as gloomy, perhaps, as Maurice O’Connell, ah, is today”), while nonetheless suggesting to Hughes that the economic situation is “likely to get worse before it gets better”

What is most significant here, in terms of framing, is Dobson’s general appropriation of the negative interpretative and discursive frame provided by Lee and, moreover, his explicit positioning of Hughes in some kind of discursive “field” (see Bourdieu, 1991) relation with O’Connell And while he may be without a psychological profile of his *Six-One News* audience, the interrogatory frame proffered to Hughes by Dobson can also be read as signifying the dramatic news that not alone is the “Celtic Tiger era over”, but that there is the prospect of a return to the bad old days (“back to borrowing”), which could be considered symptomatic of some fatalistic sense at the heart of Celtic Tiger prosperity, some deep residual fear, in the collective Irish psyche, that “our” success story is too good to be true

The stance of Hughes is interesting, because while he partly defers to O’Connell’s bleak assessment of the Irish economy (describing O’Connell’s assessment - albeit with some modification - as “*technically right*”) his “*economic outlook going forward*” (note the elliptical and nominalized discourse of the commercially minded economist) is much more positive than the Governor’s. Hughes implicitly accepts Dobson’s characterisation of his own position as less “gloomy” than O’Connell’s, and generally assumes a much more benign attitude towards the future. Yet he still tries to straddle something of a halfway house between optimism and pessimism. For instance, he makes several concessions to the Governor (“*We’re* [note the categorical use of anaphorically linked pronouns] not going to see the same investment from overseas companies. *We’re* not going to see the same strength of demand in export markets”), and he accepts Dobson’s proposition that “*we’re* going to see further redundancies () further companies in difficulty” in the short term. “It’s undoubtedly the case. *We’re* going to see *the bad news* [note the nominalized formulation of the ‘doom and gloom’ narrative] really proliferating over the next couple of months”. Although modulated, his prognosis is discernibly more upbeat than O’Connell’s. “The Celtic phase of boom *is over*. *But I don’t think that necessarily means* that we’re looking into a very poor economic outlook going forward”. “There are a lot of positives here”, he maintains, amongst which he lists the “low interest rates” and “falling” international oil prices (which he colloquially suggests is “putting money in people’s pockets”). In addition, he issues the very neo-liberal, or, more precisely, supply-side (see chapter 1) suggestion that “there’s scope for tax cuts to try and boost the economy”. And he is not as anxious as Dobson, or Lee, about the prospect of the economy being “back to borrowing”, a move which, in his view, may be necessary to “*put confidence*” back into the economy (note the way confidence is constructed as an active process), though his support has two caveats: borrowing should be limited to “capital projects” only and as long as “we’re borrowing to improve not only the short term outlook, but the way this economy will be in 5 years time, I think that’s prudent” (note how the modalized emphasis on “capital projects” and future economic growth tallies with the conflation of growth-centric and infrastructural discourse types in chapter 6)

What is perhaps most ideologically salient about Hughes' discourse is his implicit homage to American style management of the economy. For instance, in response to Dobson's question that the Irish "downturn" has taken local elites by "surprise" he suggests "it [the downturn] started in the US. And it took them by surprise there, *but they* [note the antithesis] have done a lot about it. The Federal reserve, we saw last night, cut interest rates *aggressively* again [note how US policy makers are imputed with the necessary aggressive *attitude*] 10 cuts this year. We have seen a move by the, ah, Bush administration to implement wide ranging budgetary support to the economy.¹⁵³ *There's very strong determination on the other side of the Atlantic* [note the same *attitude-agent* ratio. America policy actors categorically attributed the necessary "determination"] to do as much as is possible to turn the situation around". He ends with a telling, and strongly modalized, equivalence "But what *we need* to see now is action being taken, *as it's been done in the States*. *Hopefully*, in Europe tomorrow with the ECB, and *hopefully* also action by Charlie McCreevy in the December budget" (note how there's a slight hedging ("hopefully") of confidence in Europe and McCreevy, in contrast to Hughes' decisive characterisation of the US).

8.5.3 *Media reflexivity*

Aside from the obvious allusions to Lee's earlier report, there is little explicit reference to the media in the *Six-One News* broadcast. Dobson, in the introduction to his interview with Hughes, does refer to "the downturn in the economy [which] continues to dominate the news today" (a "news" agenda which Dobson – as a senior news reporter – presumably has some role in "naming" (see Bourdieu, 1991)). More subtly, there is a telling comment from Hughes, which casts some light on the motivation behind his own, more sanguine analysis "I would be worried that people pick from these comments [O'Connell's] that the end is nigh for the Irish economy. It's going to be different, *but* it's not going to be disastrous". What these remarks suggest (particularly the latter disclaimer) is that, like Dobson, Hughes is sensitive to his audience and alert

¹⁵³ This "budgetary support" can, ironically, be understood as "bastardized" Keynesianism (see Wray, 2002).

to, and concerned about, the negative interpretation which “people” might take from the earlier news report. This impulse to talk optimism is conceivably motivated by the fact that Hughes is a discursive agent institutionally accountable to a commercial bank. But it also suggests that he sees his own “media field” intervention, and discursive activity, largely as an antidote to O’Connell’s, again unsurprising, since genre conventions would suggest that the reason Hughes was presumably invited on to the programme in the first place was to offer some meta-appraisal of O’Connell’s economic prognosis.

8.6 *Tonight with Vincent Browne* – RTE – November 7th

Tonight with Vincent Browne was the first programme in the sample broadcast after the *Six-One News*. Usually starting at 10.00pm, the programme normally broadcasts four nights a week (Monday to Thursday) on Radio 1, RTE’s main radio channel.¹⁵⁴ Its eponymous presenter, Vincent Browne, is one of the best known and – most senior – figures in Irish journalism. The format, on the evening in question, is typical of the programme: a loose discussion of the main news issue of the day (in this case, “the downturn”) involving Browne and two others: George Lee, the RTE economic correspondent who produced the earlier *Six-One News* report, and Professor John Fitz Gerald of the ESRI (the Economic and Social Research Institute), a state affiliated, yet independently run, economic and social think-tank.

8.6.1 *Asking the questions*

Before considering his framing and management of the discussion, one needs to give a brief overview of the broadcasting identity cultivated by the show’s eponymous presenter. Vincent Browne has the justified reputation of being one of the most dogged and persistent Socratic style interlocutors in Irish journalism. His cantankerous discursive style is not without a certain dollop of charm though – a broadcasting

¹⁵⁴ *Radio 1* is largely a talk based radio station which provides a regular mix of news, current affairs, phone-in discussion and adult orientated arts and music.

identity, which strives to be both serious in its current affairs intent, yet alert to a popular audience's need to be informed *and* entertained Hence, *Tonight with Vincent Browne* often displays an instinct for the theatrical - be it Browne's animated bemusement at the media "consensus" on a particular issue, his utter exasperation with the euphemized contributions of a particular guest (usually a politician) or his fierce indignation at the condition of public services in Ireland Curiously, however, the atmosphere on November 7th is a lot more affable (the absence of a politician from the discussion is one explanation for this But, perhaps, it also says something about the way in which an elite coterie of economic pundits are deferentially treated in the Irish media, even by a tough, irascible broadcaster like Browne)

Browne makes a variety of discursive interventions (questions, comments, asides, interjections) in the sampled discussion He is essentially in interrogatory mode throughout and, with a series of curt, probing questions, angles the discussion towards clarification of the analysis offered by both contributors "John, why are you so confident there'll be an upturn in about 18 months time?", "George()why are you dissenting from that, ah, prediction? Browne's line of questioning essentially works towards marking out a clear relation between the modalized stance of both contributors, with Fitz Gerald categorized as the "confident" and "hopeful" one (at least with regard to the economy's long term prospects), while Lee is variously labelled as "dissenting" and "very sceptical" Indeed, on one occasion (see below also), Browne playfully suggests to Lee that his stance is almost jaundiced "You're saying that as almost () as almost you disapprove of the growth rate, [the] high growth rate last year"

Browne's discursive style demands predictions In fact, in his introduction to the programme, he foregrounds Fitz Gerald's "symbolic capital" as an esteemed economic forecaster "John was, I think, the first economist to predict the () boom *we've* experienced [note the presupposition of the pronoun] for eight or nine years Eh, John, are you now predicting a downturn of 8 or 9 years?" Browne's questions are firmly orientated towards eliciting precise, sometimes quantifiable, predictions from both guests "So you think it's [the "slowdown"] going to be what's now called () a v-

cycle¹⁵⁵, that, ah, we're going to have a sharp downturn but then a sharp upturn again? "What growth next year?", "What will this recession do to house prices?", "What's the shortest duration the () recession could last for, John"? In addition, drawing on a globalizing discourse type, both contributors are asked to factor in the impact of global political events "Suppose something like that [9/11] happens, what would that do to () our () your predictions"?

Following on from his interest in predictions, Browne clearly situates the discussion within the terms of an orthodox economic worldview (the epistemological terms of his two economic "field" guests) which assumes economic growth is a sound barometer of economic and societal welfare (see chapter 1) In that respect, his programme is no different from any of the other programmes analysed in this chapter, all of which point to the central importance of growth-centric discourses in the political economy "order of discourse" (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) But the intervention with the most precise ideological, and psychological, resonance, is Browne's allusion to the 1980s – a discourse often invoked by political and economic elites to outmanoeuvre critiques of Celtic Tiger Ireland (see *This Week* below) Browne's allusion to the 1980s is more subtle He nevertheless establishes a clear historical antithesis between now and then (later affirmed by Fitz Gerald), which ultimately serves to undercut, and contextualise, the current projections of gloom "but in comparison with what happened in the mid '80s, which is the recession that most people recall () Even if it's [the present slowdown] as bad as you say it is () it'd be pretty good by compared with what happened then"

All three participants make some, non-critical allusion to Maurice O'Connell's comments during the course of the programme, and the programme is introduced as a discussion with "two economic experts on how bad *the economic () downturn* [note the nominalized confirmation of the downturn] is going to be" (the implicit deference towards O'Connell can be understood as a signifier of the shared public minded "habitus" of both contributors Fitz Gerald is an employee of a state think-tank while, as

¹⁵⁵ This reference to a metaphorical (see McCloskey, 1985) "V cycle" is interesting, because it was the central metaphor of a report published by some of Fitz Gerald's ESRI colleagues earlier that week

well as being an RTE journalist, Lee is an ex-employee of the Central Bank (see Lee 2001) The discussion proceeds as if the earlier news is already known to listeners, which suggest some assumptions, on Browne's part, about the current affairs literacy of his audience

8.6.2 *Discussing the "downturn" an overview of participants' ideological stance*

John Fitz Gerald

Since many of the questions put to Fitz Gerald seek to elicit predictions, much of his contribution is grounded in disclaimers, modulated academic caution and the rhetoric of quantification "I think that *the probability is* [in response to Browne's suggestion of an "upturn in eighteen months"], *but () I cannot be certain*" [and later on in the same answer] *But you can't be a 100% certain It may come earlier, it may come later*" He is humble about the predictive ability of economists ("economists are not good at forecasting turning points"), and modest about some of the ESRI's past predictions "And() yeah () in our medium term review published in 1999 we actually forecast that () the slowdown would occur last year We got it wrong We were much too pessimistic"

The outlines of Fitz Gerald's economic philosophy are intimated on several occasions One moment is particularly interesting, revealing, as it does, an underlying congruity in the perspectives of Lee and Fitz Gerald Prompted by the former's warning that one of the key "risks" now facing the Irish economy is "un-competitiveness", Fitz Gerald articulates, in a modalized rhetoric, a discourse emphasising the importance of (neo-liberal) "competitiveness"(as the basic principle around which Irish economic success is organised) and, as a corollary, expresses the "hopeful" wish that the future "expectations" of "employers" and "trade unions" will "see" what he euphemistically describes as "an adjustment" The key extract is worth quoting from in-depth

one of the interesting things, and one of the reassuring things in the past we thought () multinational firms [switches register, assumes a tone of ironic

confidence], *'they'll always shut down their branch plants in Ireland before they shut down their home offices'* The () the ironic thing is if you look at the US high tech firms, they've cut a higher proportion of their employment in the US, or the UK, than they've cut in Ireland The reason being () we're more competitive than either of those two Now, at the rate with which we're losing competitiveness in the last 2 years () we could have run in to serious problems Em, in one sense, the recession may () stop wage rates getting totally out of hand, and losing competitiveness to an extent that () that would be seriously damaging But I would be hopeful that you will see sensible decisions made by employers, trade unions, which will leave us in a reasonably strong position to recover Em, and I would be hopeful that, that, that when, when the world economy picks up, we'll, we'll, we'll do well

This extract's rich hybrid of discourses is ideologically interesting in several respects for its consistent use of pronouns ("we", "us" etc), which - drawing on a loose appropriation of a social partnership discourse - implicitly encourage the listener to regard the economic dilemma facing the economy/country as one "we" all face which needs to be addressed in some collective - and, by implication, classless - way, for its explicit antithesis between "our" positive, present-day experience and negative, "past" experience of "multinational firms", which can be read as an appropriation of modernisation discourses about how far "we've" progressed since the 1980s (see chapter 6), and for Fitz Gerald's obvious pride in pointing out the fact Ireland is now "more competitive" than the US or the UK (the two pioneering neo-liberal economies - see chapter 1) But, again drawing on a collectivist partnership discourse, perhaps the crucial ideological inference is his gentle, euphemized admonition to "employers" and "trade unions" that they now make "*sensible decisions*" Considered in hexadic terms, the underlying ideological coherence of what Fitz Gerald views as "sensible" can be understood as follows the need for competitiveness (the supreme *purpose*) and the unfavourable economic *scene*, necessitate a new *attitude* of modesty from "employers" and "trade unions" (who, under the Irish social partnership model (see chapter 1) effectively act as *de-facto* collective *agents*) At the same time, the only variable explicitly cited as a threat to "our" competitiveness by Fitz Gerald is the *act* of "wage

rates getting totally out of hand”, indeed, he implies that the unfavourable *scene* may be something of a blessing in disguise, for the dampening effect it might have on *unreasonable* wage expectations. In other words, although framed in a quasi collectivist discourse, which emphasises the responsibility of *both* social partners (i.e. the basic capitalist relation of employer and worker), it is clear that Fitz Gerald has a particular kind of social *agent* in mind (workers and their “wage rates”) when he talks about the “readjustment” which needs to be made if *our* (collective) competitiveness is to be sustained. Drawing on a neo-liberal discourse of market flexibility, the crux of this position is again asserted later on in the discussion: “So, I think that the unemployment situation could get much worse. However, *if we are more moderate, if we are more flexible in the labour market*, em, we could, em, avoid, em, the worst of that”

Linking back intertextually to the earlier *Six-One News* report about what he calls the “Sabena disaster”, Fitz Gerald asserts the importance of Aer Lingus to the Irish economy. And although he accepts the need for improved “competition policy” in the airline industry, he explicitly distances himself from the free market evangelism, and the anti-statist rhetoric, of Michael O’Leary, the chief executive of Ryanair,¹⁵⁶ one of Aer Lingus’s main market rivals. “*I have a problem with () Michael O’Leary* I just find been offensive () em, his tactics utterly offensive. *But* he does have a point () in terms of competition policy”

George Lee

As the journalist in the discussion, Lee’s discursive style is qualitatively different from the academically correct rhetoric of Fitz Gerald. In short, he regards his discursive function as something of a common sense foil to Fitz Gerald, and assumes the role of interpreter, on behalf of his audience, of some of the more technical economic discourse used by the latter. “Let me tell you what that means”, he interjects on one occasion. Lee is very much attuned to the (imagined) concerns of the prototypical every-man and his (or her) assumed need for a “lifeworld” (see Scannell, 1996) interpretation of the

¹⁵⁶ O’Leary is well known for his trenchant broadsides against the Irish state owned aviation authority, Aer Rianta (see Beesley, 2003)

abstract world of economics. The effect is achieved in various ways through his 'layman' scepticism about the value of professional economic forecasting ("I don't think anybody really knows the truth", "*you cannot model* what happened on September 11th") and his easy appropriation of lifeworld discourses ("The high tech industry is clearly *bandjaxed*, "it's *shag all* use to you if you've lost your job and you have a mortgage to pay") It underpins his consistent reformulation of the gloomy economic narrative in a way which is empathetic to everyday concerns. For instance, take his riposte to the view that the downturn will be nothing like the experience of the 1980s "But for *the people* [note the combination of an anaphorical structure and a list style rhetoric] who are younger () *the people* who have the £100,000 mortgages plus, *the people* who are last in their jobs, and then we're talking about last in some cases over the last number of years()who *are indebted up to the eyeballs* [again note Lee's appropriation of lifeworld discourses] compared to *people* who were () eh () in those positions even 6 years earlier. For them, it might as well be, where we were before"

Lee's fundamental analysis of how the Irish economy can deal with the global "downturn" essentially coheres with Fitz Gerald's. In a modalized register, which is enlivened by the use of pronoun and anaphora, he echoes the latter's (neo-liberal) concerns about the erosion of competitiveness and the danger of unrealistic wage "expectations"

The Irish economy is strong but it faces a lot of risk. The risks are un-competitiveness, the risks are on () all of the infrastructure that we don't have. The risks are on the exchange rate. We () we () the risks are on our labour costs. *And the risks are on our attitudes*, because at the moment people are still looking for very high redundancies payments. They're still looking for very high tax cuts in the budget. They're still looking for very high wages. Most people haven't co () come up to the point where they realised that we have screeched to a halt, and *expectations have to be cut back*. And all of those things the longer they go on the worse we make it for ourselves whenever this upturn does come

Lee characteristically animates “the risks” in a much more dramatic way than Fitz Gerald and – invoking the spectre of a capital flight from Ireland – internalises the discourse of global capital “A lot of those companies who are operating in Ireland have been finding Ireland *increasingly expensive increasingly expensive for wages* [note the foregrounding of wage concerns], *increasingly expensive* in terms of congestion at all levels They’ve cut back now immediately on their costs () When() the events come around, things pick up, those companies are owned by shareholders - *shareholders who want a return on their assets* [note Lee’s explicit identification with the imperatives of a corporate discourse] They’re most likely going to say ‘*well, we’ve cut costs to the bare minimum in a place like Ireland* [note the shift to an explicit corporate register] *It eh () now is relatively an expensive country to operate in, and particularly if the dollar* [note the globalizing discourse type implicit reaffirming “our” dependence on the US] *goes the other way*’ Will they start looking if they’re going to expand in the future into Eastern Europe in 5 years time? Or will we be able, ah, to () to pick up where we were? *I don’t think we will be able to pick up where we were*” (note how Lee’s interrogative appeal is immediately answered in the negative) Nevertheless, Lee remains sanguine about the Irish state’s institutional ability to compete “I mean they [the IDA¹⁵⁷] have very big advantages in terms of the IFSC¹⁵⁸ and the tax advantages that they can offer companies who want to locate there () *The IDA are the best in the business at what it is that they do*”

8 6 3 *Media reflexivity*

Although the discursive genre has changed, as in his *Six-One News report*, the *opinionated* contribution of Lee is clearly grounded in a ‘doom and gloom’ discourse The point is put to him by Browne near the end of the discussion (worth quoting from in-depth)

George () could I put a point to you finally, and it’s this that () you know () my regard for you as () an economic commentator on RTE, and you’ve done

¹⁵⁷ The Industrial Development Authority the agency responsible for attracting global capital to Ireland (see Kirby 2002 20)

wonderful stuff over the last several years. But () over the last while, there's () there's been almost a relentless negativity to your reportage. And you could just as easily say 'yes, *we're* going into a recession' [again note the ubiquitous use of the pronoun], but, as you said yourself a moment ago, we're in a better position now to ride out the recession, and to take advantage of the upturn than we ever were previously. This isn't going to be anything as bad as the recession of the () () mid '80s [again note the comparative spectre of the '80s] which I think is the recession that a lot of people would remember. Or the recession in the '70s. That, look it, things aren't that bad, YEAH, we'll go through a difficult enough year, year and a half, but we're () we'll get back on track and we'll have high growth rates again.

Not surprisingly, Lee's response, to what is partly a critique of his modal style, is rather defensive. "Well I don't know how long you think I've been negative. I don't think I've been negative that long () And in terms of the news which has been there for the last couple of days, it's as negative as you're going to get. And I don't think that telling people, look, ah () you know two and a half thousand people are going to lose their jobs in Aer Lingus, and the company might close. *The Irish Times might close*, but don't worry [assumes an ironic register]. You know at some point in the future. *News is news ultimately. And I think () it's negative at the moment and () that it isn't a case that it's my fault ()*" At one stage, Lee is abruptly cut off by Browne who disparages the notion that "*The Irish Times is going to close*" (note the reformulated, categorical truth claim). Indeed, he considers Lee's "even mentioning *The Irish Times is going to close*" as a lurid example of the very criticism he is levelling. The exchange then comes to an end, with Lee drawing on the comments of Conor Brady, editor of *The Irish Times*, to support his claim. Browne responds by dismissing Brady's comments, describing them as merely the "sort of things [one says] in negotiation with Unions" ¹⁵⁹

From a media culture perspective, what is most interesting about this exchange is the contrasting definitions of news offered by both participants. Browne seems to view the

¹⁵⁸ Irish Financial Services Centre

¹⁵⁹ *The Irish Times* was in financial trouble in the latter half of 2001

news as essentially a kind of narrative, which, although based on “fact”, is ultimately capable of being creatively and interdiscursively moulded into a variety of different narrative forms (some optimistic, some pessimistic) Lee, in contrast, articulates a very non-reflexive view about his own news making role (“news is news ultimately”) and appears to interpret the over-riding sense of gloom as an incontrovertible fact, and not a discourse which he, as a high profile economic journalist, has a key role in constructing and propagating (see Tuchman, 1978) This, in a roundabout way, brings the focus back to the dynamics of the “media field”, for Lee’s scepticism doesn’t exist in a discursive vacuum (as can be said, *a fortiori*, of the more optimistic stances subsequently assumed by other commentators) Tacitly drawing on a discourse of journalistic professionalism and independence, he makes a telling allusion to the motivations behind his own pessimistic stance earlier in the discussion, what he implicitly casts as his refusal to placate elite imperatives “I am very much aware that policy makers, policy advisors, politicians and everybody () think that there’s *always a need to give people some positive news* And even today listening to the Governor of the Central Bank, eh, one of the questions put to him was ‘you said that the economy was quite healthy here in this sentence, could you elaborate on something positive?’ Em, we need () we have to be positive at the moment”

8.7 *Morning Ireland* – RTE – November 8th

Morning Ireland has been Radio One’s flagship early morning current affairs programme for more than a decade and, since 2001, broadcasts from 7 to 9 am Normally co-presented, the show typically features reports from different RTE correspondents The short clip examined here is one of those reports the interview based part of Geraldine Harney’s Business Report, which she normally presents just before the 8.00 am news headlines

Harney’s interview is with “Dr Dan McLoughlin”, who is introduced as “the chief economist with the Bank of Ireland group treasury” The particular clip has been chosen, because McLoughlin has arguably been one of the most impressive, and high

profile, media commentators on economic issues during the Celtic Tiger era. It was also chosen because of the intertextual link to the other November 8th clips in the sample, most obviously, McLoughlin's additional participation in *The Last Word* discussion (see below)

8 7 1 *Asking the questions*

Cued by Harney's introduction, much of the discussion is a critical reflection on the media's cultivation of a "doom and gloom" discourse (see below). As in the case of Lee (see above), the discursive style, assumed by Harney, is very much pitched to the lifeworld. "There's very little on the front pages this morning to cheer you up, if you happened to be worried about the economy." Before he utters a word, McLoughlin is clearly framed as a counter-point to the dominant narrative. "So is it all doom and gloom? Well, one person who does not think so is Dr Dan McLoughlin, the chief economist with the Bank of Ireland group treasury, and he joins us now." The issue is personalised at the outset, as Harney's first question confronts the immediate source of gloom - the previous day's comments from O'Connell. "Can we first of all go to the comments said yesterday by Maurice O'Connell to the Oireachtas sub-committee. Ah, he was pretty negative, em, *he pretty much said that the Celtic Tiger is dead* [note the stark, if modulated, way in which Harney, like Lee, reformulates the Governor's initial comments] and that *we* [again note the casual use of the pronoun] are facing into very, very difficult times. Would you agree with him?" Animating the sense of political, and elite, confusion, (as did the *Six-One News* report - see above), Harney further personalises the issue by interrogatively demanding "*the* [singular] truth" from McLoughlin. "Can you clear up something? The Tanaiste, the day before yesterday, told the Dail that there is till growth happening in the economy. *But* [note the cue for the antithesis] yesterday between Maurice O'Connell and word from the Taoiseach, there seemed to be a message coming across that there is no growth happening in the Irish economy at the moment. Now, you are a person who works at this subject all day, *can you tell us what is the truth?*"

Harney clearly holds McLoughlin in high regard. For instance, she refers to him as “Dr” in the introduction and twice in her termination of the interview. It is evident, too, in her easy recall of his previous predictions. McLoughlin reminds listeners about predictions he previously made “on this programme actually”, which were dismissed as “nonsense” at the time but later “proven right”. “I remember” is Harney’s softly spoken response (note how this short exchange affirms McLoughlin’s “symbolic capital” as expert economic pundit).

8.7.2 *Discussing the “downturn” an overview of participants’ ideological stance*

Dan McLoughlin

McLoughlin’s discursive style is direct, combative and trenchant, and doesn’t balk at positioning his stance in stark contrast to O’Connell’s. His immediate response to Harney’s opening question, “*would you agree*” [i.e. would you “identify”? (see Burke, 1969a) with the Central Bank Governor, is unequivocal: “*I think that’s nonsense* [O’Connell’s analysis] “I don’t think there’s *any* [note the absolute modifier] evidence the economy’s not growing”. He reproaches O’Connell for not being familiar with the available empirical “data”: “Ah, there’s a lot of, em, data which () ah indeed the Governor *should be* [note the use of the modal auxiliary verb] a bit more familiar with than some”. The appropriation of a scientific discourse and list-style juxtaposing of different economic facts to forcefully rebut the claims of O’Connell and others is an important feature of McLoughlin’s rhetoric and modal authority. The resulting barrage effect - momentarily interrupted by Harney’s quiet affirmation (“okay”) - is vividly illustrated in one flourish, where he juxtaposes favourable statistics about “mortgage lending”, the number of “new cars on the road”, the unemployment rate (“extraordinarily low by normal standards), the “record trade surplus” and the value of “retail sales” to decry “a lot of the commentary that’s out there”. And when Harney suggests McLoughlin’s growth forecast is “way above what Maurice O’Connell told us yesterday” McLoughlin’s put-down of the Governor is categorical and his predictive confidence strong: “*Well I think he’s wrong*. And I think *I’ll be proven right* [note

McLoughlin's enthusiasm for the prediction game] the talk of, we're seeing right now is, I think, silly in the extreme"

McLoughlin is clearly disdainful of what he regards as the media's fatalistic (see below) cultivation of a discourse which assumes that the economy has suddenly stopped growing " it would *seem extraordinary to me* [note the modal emphasis] that *we've* [again note the use of the pronoun] gone from 13.2% to zero in a few months. Ah, the economy has slowed down, *but* [note the disclaimer] I think *we're* still growing positively and () next year we'll be growing very strongly again, *led by* the United States" Drawing on a globalizing discourse type, "our" symbiotic relationship with the US economy is emphasised on several occasions. In fact, he mentions the US seven times in the course of the short interview. Tellingly, it is there McLoughlin looks to support his declarative assertion that "*history* [note how it is referred to in the singular] suggests there always is" a "recovery"

8.7.3 *Media Reflexivity*

The most interesting aspect of the discussion is how it is consciously set up, as a genre type, to counter what both interviewer and interviewee regard as the "rather depressing reading" in the morning papers. In other words, it can be conceptualised as an attempt to actively *put* some "confidence" in the all too bleak talk of "downturn". McLoughlin isn't just asked to respond to the Governor's comments, he is also tacitly invited to respond to the question of media framing. It is an issue which he certainly doesn't shy away from addressing "it's not the *end of the world* [note how the dominant news frame is colloquially reformulated as an apocalyptic narrative], em, and I think a lot of the reportage at the moment is overstating the case", "*no doubt* there'll be people on this programme at the very same time saying it's the end of the world" [note the knowing media attitude which draws on a neo-liberal discourse that imagines a (left-liberal) media hostility to capitalism], "the *real issue* [note the modal emphasis] is that ah we are in a downturn, but I think, ah, *we're talking ourselves into a deeper one*" McLoughlin is the first economic pundit (in the sample) to position himself in such stark contrast to O'Connell, and the first to assume such a brash, dismissive

performative style. Therefore, one would expect his intervention to have some influence on the “field” positions subsequently assumed by other contributors and broadcasters, as Harney herself acknowledges at the very end of the interview: “And I’m sure we will have, ah, comments on what Dr McLoughlin has to say later in the programme”

8.8 *News At One* – RTE – November 8th

News At One is Radio One’s main lunch time news/current affairs programme and is usually broadcast, Monday to Friday, from 1.00 to 1.45 pm. The programme is normally presented by Sean O’Rourke (at it was on this occasion) and, like the other programmes in the sample, is a genre mix of live interviews and reportage from various RTE correspondents.

There are two distinct parts to the short clip: the first, a formal political interview with the Tanaiste (the Deputy Prime Minister) Mary Harney¹⁶⁰, the second, a linked (and more casual and personable) follow-up discussion about interest rate cuts with George Lee, RTE’s economic correspondent. As the latter has already featured in the analysis of the *Six-One News* and *Tonight with Vincent Browne*, the main focus will be on Harney and O’Rourke (though the thematic continuities of Lee’s contribution are briefly considered).

8.8.1 *Asking the questions*

In the lead-in to his interview with Harney, O’Rourke implicitly positions her stance in an oppositional relation with O’Connell’s: “Speaking in the Dail [that morning], Ms Harney said *our* economy [again note the use of the pronoun] was still the most successful one in Europe and was still growing() with unemployment below 4%. The Tanaiste’s comments came less than 24 hours after the Governor of the central bank declared *the era of the Celtic Tiger to be over*” (again note the dramatic, and now

firmly established reformulation of the O’Connell’s comments) O’Rourke’s opening questions seek to clarify, and interrogate, the relation between both stances, as he frames the interview around the potential of a personalised stand-off between the Tanaiste and the Governor “Ah, Tanaiste first of all *do you agree with Maurice O’Connell about the end of the Tiger?*”, “ he also says Tanaiste that, eh, there may be no growth at all in the economy at the present time *Do you agree with that?*” The issue is then further personalised with tacit reference to McLoughlin’s *Morning Ireland* appearance, as O’Rourke tries to explicate Harney’s discursive allegiances with what he euphemistically calls “other commentators” “And *are you more in tune* with Dan McLaughlin say than you might be with *other commentators?*”, he asks And, like Vincent Browne (see above), O’Rourke seeks to elicit predictions from Harney, presumably motivated by the idea that her symbolic authority, as deputy Prime Minister, accords her a prophetic authority “Well, what’s *your own* [growth] expectation for next year? “Okay, but how long will it [“the downturn”] last?”

8 8 2 *Discussing the “downturn” an overview of participants’ ideological stance*

Mary Harney

Harney’s response to O’Rourke’s opening questions about O’Connell’s comments is both modulated and diplomatic Nevertheless, her modal emphasis suggests that she sees his remarks as little more than a statement of the obvious “Well, *clearly* Maurice O’Connell is a member of the ECB and *he’s entitled to his opinion* - he’s an independent member Em, if () if by, em, that comment Maurice O’Connell means that the high rates of economic growth are over for the moment, then *WE ALL* agree with that [note the mildly sarcastic emphasis]” Though deferring to the commonplace view that “*clearly we’re* not growing at the rate *we were*” [again note the use of the pronoun used ubiquitously by Harney throughout the interview], Harney distances herself from O’Connell’s pessimistic analysis “But we remain in a *very healthy position*, and as I

¹⁶⁰ Mary Harney and her cabinet colleague Charlie McCreevy (see *This Week* below) are perhaps the two best known neo-liberals in Irish political life Incidentally, Harney is also a sister of Geraldine Harney, the *Morning Ireland* interviewer

said () *we're the()best performing economy in Europe*" (note the categorical equivalence of "our" collective health and economic performance)

The assumption that "*the fundamentals in this economy are sound*" [note her appropriation of a nominalized, economically correct discourse type] is reinforced by Harney throughout the interview. The point is illustrated in various ways, and with reference to different neo-liberal tenets (see chapter 1) by her flattering comparison of 1993 job figures with present-day figures, by her recognition of our "*very low taxes on business and personal income taxes*" (note the casual conjunction of a "business" and "personal" tax agenda), by her acknowledgement of "our very good budgetary situation" (a discourse of fiscal rectitude which is reaffirmed by her modal insistence that "we have a *prudent responsible budget*") and, interestingly enough (given the observations earlier in the chapter about the psychological spectre of the 1980s and Ireland's economic past) by her categorical reassurance, to listeners, that "the economic stability of Ireland *is not in jeopardy as it was in the past*". She draws on buoyant lifeworld anecdote "I'm here this morning at an Enterprise Ireland seminar with chief executives of Irish companies. The *mood is confident* [the necessary *attitude*]. People know there are [*scemic*] difficulties, but they want to see how () they can work to overcome the difficulties" (note the implicit affirmation of forward looking economic *agents* determined to *act* with the necessary *attitude*). Tellingly, Irish economic health is also affirmed from the perspective of the prototypical global capital operation, which attests to Harney's easy appropriation of euphemistic, corporate discourses ("companies currently *restructuring* and *reviewing* their operations) and her enthusiastic commitment to, and unproblematic discursive conflation of, national policy imperatives and corporate *purpose* ("*we can help solve some other [company] problems*") The thematically linked thread is worth quoting from in depth

What's important is the fundamentals are good [note the categorical modality], that Ireland continues to be the most successful economy in Europe, most successful economy for investment. That many of the companies currently restructuring and reviewing their operations () can find that through investment in Ireland we can help solve some other problems. Companies that are

consolidating their activities in Europe may well decide to consolidate that activity into Ireland. And the IDA are working with some of the foreign companies who are currently involved in restructuring and review processes to encourage them and to point out the benefits that Ireland () has to offer

Harney categorizes her own economic prognosis as “optimistic” but grounded, as she puts it, “I am () by nature a confident person, but I hope I’m a realistic person” In addition, the wider importance of the “*very precious* ingredient” of confidence is stressed *We have to* [note the modal emphasis] *maintain confidence in this economy*” And, before any cue from O’Rourke, she intertextually invokes the agency of the “respected” Dan McLoughlin, to support her case “ it is important as () Dan McLaughlin said this morning, *one of the most, em, I suppose, respected economic commentators* () I mean he () his comments this morning were very different from some of the other comments. And sometimes people look at the same set of facts and take a very different view”

As with Hughes and McLoughlin in the earlier programmes, Harney draws on a discourse which looks towards the American economy (in contrast, Europe is the subject of the unflattering antithesis that “unemployment [in Ireland] is under 4%, [while] some of our European counterparts have unemployment levels of 9, 10%”) In response to the question “how long will it [the downturn] last”?, she reiterates McLoughlin’s earlier statistic about the average length of American recessions (reinforcing, in turn, the symbiotic – and globalised - link between Irish and American economic performance) “well()the average in America *they* say [note the agency-less appropriation of the historicizing discourse of McLoughlin, perhaps Harney is keen not to overstate her identification with his stance] () for downturns is about 7 months” She also implicitly lauds, and identifies with, what she nominalizes as “the American attitude” “The American economy, em, is a *very robust one*. Ah, *the American attitude is a very different one*, perhaps, from the attitude in *other parts of the world* [arguably a

tacit comparative to mainland Europe¹⁶¹], and I believe that the American economy will recover quicker than some people anticipate”

George Lee

The pessimistic register which was the hallmark of Lee’s contribution to the other programmes is again evident. In this instance, he calls on the agency of four central banks to support the view (first attributed to the Bank of England) that the economic “slowdown will be LONGER and DEEPER than previously thought. “The Governor of the Central Bank here yesterday said the same. The European Central Bank is saying the same. And on () Tuesday the Federal Reserve bank in America () said that for the foreseeable future they will be concerned about economic slowdown.” His modalized response to the ECB decision to cut interest rates by half a per-cent (which draws on a discourse which casts the ECB as an inert, conservative institution) serves to animate the seriousness of the slowdown. “The fact *that they’ve come* with a half a percent *just indicates how much they have switched* - how concerned they are” Lee is ultimately sceptical about Harney’s attempts to brew optimism. “*I know* it’s important to be confident() and *I know* the Tanaiste has a job to do() and *I know* [note Lee’s ongoing penchant for anaphora] that there are very good things about the Irish economy, *but* () *this is the news this week - none of that is good*” (note the categorical reaffirmation of Lee’s earlier unreflexive view of “the news” – see above)

8 8 3 *Media reflexivity*

The analysis of the *News At One* clip bolsters the uncontroversial notion that the particular discussion is self-consciously imagined as part of a broader media, and political, “market” (see Bourdieu, 1991) context. In other words, the discursive action is very much situated in an intertextual and interdiscursive “media field”, as is evinced by

¹⁶¹ This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that Harney has a track record of evoking provocative parallels between Europe and America, what has become known in Irish political discourse as the Boston versus Berlin debate (see O’Donohue, 2003)

Harney's implicit allusion to McLoughlin's earlier interview, Lee's recognition of Harney's public relations "job" to talk/perform confidence and the various euphemized references to "other commentators", "pessimistic commentators" and "some of the other comments" The audience gets a brief insight into the workings of the media, and its close, routinized relationship with other institutions of power, near the end of the clip, as O'Rourke, in conversation with Lee, considers the prospect of lower mortgage rates "I'm not sure what's happening outside in our, eh, news-room George, but normally, by now, on a day when a half per cent cut was announced by the ECB, you'd already have your first fax in () from one of the financial institutions saying 'oh, we're passing this on, but, eh, no sign of that just yet'"

8 9 *The Last Word* – Today FM – November 8th

Then presented by Eamon Dunphy¹⁶² (at the time one of the most high profile, and reputedly best paid, journalists/broadcasters in the Irish media) *The Last Word* is the main current affairs show of *Today FM* – the privately owned national radio station which was originally launched as *Radio Ireland* in 1997 Usually broadcast five evenings a week (Monday to Friday, from 5 00 to 7 00pm, with a special weekly highlights programme on Saturday mornings), the programme's broadcasting style was quite innovative, in an Irish context, at the time of its 1997 launch

The format on the evening in question is typical of the programme's discursive style an informal and personable (approximately) 40 minute discussion of "the downturn", with up to three different contributors The sample is comprised of two distinct, yet inter-related, parts the first a short interview with "Senator Shane Ross, Business Editor of the *Sunday Independent*" (the programme's regular economic pundit, also see chapter 7), the second a longer discussion involving "Jim Power, Investment Strategist of Friends First" and the aforementioned "Dan McLoughlin of the Bank of Ireland"

As with *Tonight with Vincent Browne*, *The Last Word* cannot be understood without reference to the broadcasting identity cultivated by its regular presenter Eamon Dunphy (both shows are, by far and away, the most personality driven in the sample) An ex-football professional, Dunphy has assumed several roles throughout his media career that of sports journalist, television pundit, newspaper columnist, biographer and even game show host But it is perhaps in his longstanding, *de facto* role as Ireland's arch controversialist and polemicist (some might say self-publicist) that he is best known All of which needs to be said because, in many ways, this grand personality and biography forms the tacit backdrop to the complex, and delightfully contradictory, broadcasting identity cultivated by the presenter - particularly in the personable and playful way he interacts with his guests, his easy communication of "lifeworld" concerns, the programme's informal code of speech ethics ("we don't interrupt each other on this show"), and his masterful cultivation of a sincere, respectful relationship with his audience ¹⁶³

The bulk of the sample deals with the discussion between Jim Power and Dan McLoughlin Although the latter is absent from the start of that discussion ("we thought we'd lost you in the traffic" Dunphy jests on his arrival), his pugnacious rebuttal of O'Connell's comments on *Morning Ireland* are alluded to at the outset of the programme "The governor of the central bank yesterday, Maurice O'Connell, said that, em, the Celtic tiger *was finished, done with* [note Dunphy's lifeworld reformulation] Ah, Dan McLoughlin of the Bank of Ireland, ah, came out this morning and said that was nonsense" This conscious framing of the discussion around a polarised O'Connell/McLoughlin axis - who function in turn as metonyms for pessimistic/optimistic discourses - is continually reinforced by Dunphy For instance, there is a foregrounding of McLoughlin's remarks in Dunphy's second question to Power "I mean, what Dan McLoughlin said was that the view that the Celtic tiger was dead was nonsense" O'Connell's remarks are cited in Dunphy's first, playful question

¹⁶² Dunphy left his position as the presenter of *The Last Word* near the end of 2002

to McLoughlin “Dan, em, on *Morning Ireland* this morning, em, you said that, ah, what the governor of the central bank, ah, Maurice O’Connell said yesterday about the Celtic Tiger being, ah, dead, or deadish, or going, or gone [DM laughing] was nonsense Em, you’re, you don’t appear to share his views Tell us why you don’t share that view”?

Then, in the course of a reply where McLoughlin describes “some of the talk about the Irish economy [as] just simply silly”, Dunphy is quick to interject with the interrogative “including the governor’s, ah, of the Central Bank’s”?

The personalities are again foregrounded when the discussion switches back to Power (the attributed pessimist) “Okay Jim Power Ah, Dan is much more optimistic *than many of you guys* [note the colloquial description of the “expert”] And, ah, he says that the comments of the governor of the Central Bank make no sense to his, in his analysis”

And when the programme returns after an advertising interval these antithetical tensions again cue the discussion, this time through Dunphy’s modalized reformulation of Power’s final contribution before the interval “Dan McLoughlin, *you have to* take the economy in aggregate, and what the governor of the Central Bank said yesterday, Maurice O’Connell, was not silly, it was *eminently sensible*, Jim Power says” (it a characteristic of Dunphy’s to play the competing views of Power and McLoughlin off each other throughout the discussion)

Similarly, Harney’s *News At One* contribution is tacitly alluded to twice first, in a one-on-one exchange with Power (“People are saying that *The () Tanaiste said that at lunch-time today* She said, things are fundamentally sound, shouldn’t talk ourselves into a recession), and secondly, in a direct question to McLoughlin (“Are you among those Dan who believe, like the Tanaiste for example, that *we can talk ourselves* into a recession?”)

The ideological disposition of the presenter is most clearly intimated in the earlier discussion with Ross¹⁶⁴ Drawing on a ‘Euro-sceptical’ discourse, the knowing characterisation of a conservative and risk averse ECB (see above) is particularly telling “Just a final question Shane about the European Central bank and European concerns They’ve cut the rate by half a point [SR em] *which, for them, is a fairly*

¹⁶³ The programme has a telephone comment-line and calls are usually read out unexpurgated throughout the programme

¹⁶⁴ Dunphy is on record as being a friend and admirer of the neo-liberal Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy and has also spoken of his admiration for Margaret Thatcher

radical move [SR em em] Ahem, concerns about the German economy in particular I imagine and also the French economy?" (Dunphy makes a similarly modalized allusion to a "notoriously cut-shy" ECB in a later exchange with McLoughlin) The ideological significance of these comments is that they can be linked to the increasingly vocal and confident, criticisms, articulated by some Irish media intellectuals (many of them contributors to *The Last Word*) about European economic policy¹⁶⁵ Considered in this context, the crucial assertion is Dunphy's remark about what he attributes as "German" and "French" economic "concerns", which, to the aforementioned ideological disposition (typified by Ross), acts as a cue to a critical discourse about an EU monetary and economic policy dominated by a Franco/German centre and ultimately indifferent to the plight of small, peripheral states like Ireland Predictably, Dunphy is categorically lauded by Ross for his shrewd observation, who then proceeds to give full voice to the latent critical - and anti-'superstate' - discourse " *you put your finger on it Eamon* The German economy is the one which I suppose matters more than anyone in Europe Those are the economies that really matter in European terms Ours doesn't And ours probably needs you know, it doesn't even count in the () in the councils of Europe But we got, yeah *let's have no illusions about it* Even though it is not the Bundesbank anymore, *it's the ECB and the German economy is the one which it () it looks at first as being the priority*"

8 9 2 *Discussing the Downturn an overview of participants' ideological stance*

Shane Ross

Ross's contribution to the programme is short and, maybe because of their shared journalistic "habitus", has much in common, stylistically, with Lee He, too, strives to make commonsense pitches to the layman, couches his argument in anaphorical structures and is even more sceptical about the predictive ability of experts Ideologically, there is little to match his trenchant characterisation of the ECB (see above) Yet, just before Dunphy raises the matter of the ECB interest rate cut, Ross -

¹⁶⁵ This critical disposition towards "Europe" (which crosses any left-right divide) was replicated on a broader social level by the defeat of the first Nice treaty referendum in June 2001

drawing on a discourse which valorises the US economy - projects a much more flattering representation of the US Federal Reserve, the clear implication being that “*even*” the (hallowed) “Fed” is “in the dark” about the scale of the downturn “The one thing, I think, that we got to be certain of is that *we got to be* [note the modal insistence and the use of the pronoun] prudent at this stage, because we are, to a certain extent, operating in the dark, in a situation which *even the US Fed is completely and utterly mystified* by and hasn’t been able to resolve by 10 cuts in interest rates”

Ross holds O’Connell in high esteem. His credentials, as agent of the collective economic good, are deemed “impeccable” and implicitly set against those other commentators (like McLoughlin) who are ultimately accountable to the private, financial institutions which they work for. “Maurice O’Connell () will be going, I suppose, in the next year, very regrettably. And *he’s entrusted with one thing and one thing alone*, and that is, to look after, what he sees, as the nation’s finances. And what he said yesterday was coming from an *ABSOLUTELY impartial, impeccable viewpoint*” McLoughlin’s stance isn’t disparaged (that’s “a very honestly held view as well”), though his grounds for optimism are given short shrift. “But I think anybody who says that, you know, growth is going to () who makes any rash, positive predictions of growth in the near future is ignoring to a large extent what they see around them”

Jim Power

Power identifies with the position of O’Connell. “Well, the comments that the Governor of the Central Bank () made yesterday make eminent sense to me” Interestingly, Power downplays the value of McLoughlin’s statistics (“Okay, we don’t have statistics to prove it [his own stance] at this point in time”) and draws instead on hfeworld, common sense discourses. “I think if *you talk to anybody* out there in the economy at the moment, *anybody* doing business, *they will tell you* [note the categorical formulation of an agentless view] that the situation has deteriorated very seriously over the last six months” Echoing O’Connell observations about the dependence of Irish economic success on global events (see *Six One-News* above), Power asserts “We’ve been

subjected to *three serious external shocks, totally outside our control* in the last 12 months Foot and mouth disease in the spring, the ongoing problems with the US IT sector and September 11th” (this is one of several allusions to the US economy) Grounded in a globalizing discourse type, and animated by the kind of dramatic and, in the specific instance, anthropomorphic metaphor he deploys throughout the discussion, the point about Irish impotence in the face of global slowdown is categorically reinforced “the international economy *is on its knees, is struggling very badly* It’s *nothing to do with Ireland* in terms of causing it But we are now becoming victims of it” “Our” philosophical options in the face of this challenge, and what he calls the “absolutely horrendous” “news-flow”, are starkly cast in binary terms “*You can do one of two things* You can face up to that problem or you can bury your head in the sand and pretend it’s not happening I [the self-imagined realist] would prefer to adopt the former approach”

Power’s ideological view of economy is evident on various occasions Responding to Dunphy’s question about Harney’s “lunch-time” comments, he affirms her analysis “I think the *very important point is* [note the modal emphasis], you know, *there are solid fundamentals here* [note the appropriation of an economic ‘fundamentals’ discourse type articulated by Harney] *Our* fiscal situation is still very strong *We* [again note the casual assumptions behind the use of the pronoun] have almost full employment in the economy So, fundamentally we’re a lot better than we would have been in the mid 80s” (again note the modernizing and historicizing discourses which set up an antithesis between the ‘80s and the present) Like Ross, he takes a caustic view of the ECB and is parsimonious in his praise for its decision to cut interest rates, in contrast to a favourable characterisation of the Federal Reserve and the Bank of England ‘*This Week* we’ve had three major central banks cut interest rates by a ½ % the Federal Reserve and the Bank of England *It’s what you would expect from those institutions* [note how the register affirms the “symbolic capital” of these institutions] because they recognise, clearly recognise, the depth of the problems *I think what really brings home the gravity of the situation* to us is the fact that the European central bank actually went a ½% The European central bank has been *denying all along* [note how the ECB policy of inaction is cast as an active process of resistance] that there has been a real problem

Em, by cutting rates by a massive 1/2 % today, they *are now putting their hands up* [note the metaphorical intimation of ECB guilt] and saying, yes, there is a serious threat to the global economy”. But it is perhaps his mulling over the definition of the Celtic Tiger which is most illuminating, posited, as it is, on the simple axiom that growth equals good. All indicators of growth, even the dramatic increases in house prices, are attributed as equivalent markers of economic success: “Well, em (.) how do you define the Celtic Tiger? I mean I would define it as the last five years *we* had average annual growth of just under 10% per annum; house prices more than doubled over the period and we also had phenomenal employment growth. Looking forward, *that sort of performance* will not be repeated”.

Dan McLoughlin

The bullish nature of McLoughlin’s stance will already be clear from the *Morning Ireland* clip (see above). O’Connell’s analysis is again dismissed (“I thought to myself (.) that didn’t make *any sense*”), though, in this instance, McLoughlin does proffer a disclaimer: “*I was not making a personal attack on the (.) on the governor*, I just think, ah, that he’s mistaken in (.) in (.) ah, the, the remarks he made - *particularly in the timing*” (note how the modal emphasis on “the timing” dovetails with a discourse type stressing the vagaries of “consumer confidence” – see below). He categorically reinforces the close, symbiotic relationship of Irish and American economic fortunes (“the United States economy will be growing again *and* we will benefit”), again insists on the need to “talk” confidence (“...consumer confidence is fragile and some of the talk that’s going on right now is not going to help the situation”) and outlines *bottom-line* (neo-liberal) grounds for optimism (“there’s very few firms that you can point to that are moving somewhere else *because it’s cheaper to do business*”). Additionally, he indicates his firm ideological identification with Celtic Tiger orthodoxy, particularly the policies of the Fianna Fail/PD government established in 1997: “Well I think we’ve got to (.) ah be careful at this moment in time, in distinguishing what is a short-term cyclical downturn from, ah, *the main structural improvements* that we’ve made in the economy over the last 10 years or *particularly in the last 5 years*”. And articulating an unsentimental, nearly boastful, pro-market rhetoric reminiscent of Milton Friedman (see

Friedman, 1962), McLoughlin reveals something about his own philosophical conception of a “healthy” economy “In terms of job losses Last year there was 13,000 notified redundancies This year so far we’ve had 15,000 Yes, it’s higher, but to put it in context *in any healthy economy there are job losses* There are always companies that are badly managed and, ah, will go to the wall, *which is a GOOD THING* [note the categorical modality] in a healthy economy”

8 9 3 *Media Reflexivity*

As already observed, there are intertextual references to earlier media interventions throughout the discussion In addition, there is self-reflexive acknowledgement of the media’s penchant for fostering conflict as Dunphy playfully puts it to Power and McLoughlin, “I don’t want to start a row But it wouldn’t be bad” Yet, as in the case of the *Morning Ireland* clip, McLoughlin’s annoyance with what he perceives as the media’s lazy amplification of a doom and gloom discourse (what he sarcastically categorizes as that which “the consensus currently believes”) is the most provocative media issue The point is clearly illustrated in one particular exchange with Dunphy, which, interestingly, meets with a knowing, wry “yes” from the presenter “*What I’m really () arguing against is ()* [note McLoughlin’s modal emphasis and the implicit acknowledgement of the purpose of his media intervention] is some of the selective reportage that we see Take a simple example there was () an article in one of the, ah, newspapers last week and the headline said 14,000 job losses, right You read the article and *what it actually said* is that in IDA companies they () expected 14,000 job losses this year, off-set by 14,000 job gains” In addition, he indicts the media for its failure to report good news “All we do know in terms of GDP in Ireland is that in the first quarter it grew at 13.2 %, ah, *which didn’t get much coverage in () in the papers but nonetheless is true* - which is the second highest ever” (note how McLoughlin again draws on a discourse which imagines a media antipathy to the economic field)

Broadcast on Sunday afternoons from 1 to 2 pm, *This Week* is Radio One's main current affairs review programme of the week. Jointly anchored by two in-studio presenters – in this case Gerard Barry and Rosin Duffy – the programme typically offers a mixture of reports, interviews and discussion.

The sampled clip consists of two linked political interviews: the first, an out of studio George Lee interview with the Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy (one of Ireland's best known neo-liberal politicians), the second, a Rosin Duffy in-studio interview with the Labour Leader, and "former Finance Minister", Ruairi Quinn. The scene for both interviews is set by Gerard Barry's introduction: "*According to whom you believe* [this can be read as an oblique nod to the personalised debates chronicled in the other programmes] the economy is in deep, deep recession, *or* has simply hit troubled waters, which will smooth over by the end of next year [note the reaffirmation of the polarized terms of the week's debate]. One thing, however, is certain. Awash with money since he became Finance Minister more than 4 years ago, Charlie McCreevy finds his huge increases in tax revenue have suddenly disappeared into the night. He may even have to start borrowing again. Tax cuts will be minimal in next month's budget. But the Minister is not fazed. As he's been telling our economics editor George Lee, *he's seen it all before*" (note the implicit affirmation of McCreevy's lifeworld wisdom at the very outset – see below).

8 10 1 *Asking the Questions*

George Lee

Lee's questions are specific, probing and clarifying, partly because of McCreevy's tendency to meander and prevaricate in his answers. "So what does that mean? Does that mean that you're going to be very tight in the budget?", asks Lee on one occasion, indeed, he interrupts McCreevy's response with another "What does that mean?" His questions about the budgetary implications for the National Development Plan (see

chapter 6) are similarly insistent “Are we looking at the proposals in the National Development Plan being slowed up in terms of delivery?”, “You mean adapt [the plan] to a longer period than seven”? (seven years its original timeframe)

The discussion is broadened out in various ways, yet remains firmly anchored in an economic perspective throughout. McCreevy is asked if he is going to ignore the advice “coming from many quarters” which says it’s okay to start borrowing again”, if he’s “going to look like Scrooge” when he publishes the Book of Estimates on Thursday and if the “*reforming*” period which has defined his tenure as Minister is “over”? He is asked about the dented prospects of a “give away budget”, much to the chagrin of “your party colleagues” on the eve of a “coming” election (note the articulation of a public choice discourse (see chapter 1) representing the politician as a calculating, self-interested agent primarily concerned with his (or her) own political livelihood). And, in reference to the Government’s much hyped commitment to health spending (as Lee anaphorically puts it, “*we read again and again and again and again* all about the spending *you’re* about to unleash on health”) he asks, “what exactly is going to change to make *you* [note the ongoing substitution of McCreevy for the Government] happy enough to put all that money in?” when, in Lee’s words, at “one of your first press conferences” McCreevy offered the quintessential neo-liberal diagnosis (grounded in a discourse assumption of public service inefficiency) about the “*awful lot of money* being *wasted* in that area”

Roisin Duffy

The second, shorter interview with Ruari Quinn is carried out by Roisin Duffy. As with Lee, the genre is that of the journalist interrogating the political subject. But, more precisely, it also follows the genre conventions of a certain type of political interview, which casts, or demarcates, Quinn’s contribution in light of McCreevy’s comments. After summarising the McCreevy interview as “lowering expectations for the forthcoming budget” and speculating on the attributed “impact all that [will] have on the opposition”, Duffy strategically affects something of a defensive alignment with McCreevy. “First, isn’t this more cautious approach being adopted by Charlie

McCreevy the right one?” “*His* [McCreevy’s] priorities seem to be the right ones in a very uncertain climate” What about *his* [McCreevy’s] PRSI reforms?” “In this climate of great uncertainty globally [note the appropriation of a globalising discourse type], should *he* [McCreevy] forego all tax cuts?” Duffy’s focus on what Quinn would do now, if he was McCreevy, is such, that it is not until the very last question that the specific matter of Labour policy is broached “Now, last year() *you published* [note the substitution of Quinn for the Labour Party] () *your* document *New Directions, New Priorities* [note how the title of the policy document – the “new” register - can be linked to *New Labour* discourse in Britain] in which *you promised* an extra 3 billion in [not clear] public expenditure over and above what the government was committed to Do *you* not have to revise [not clear] *you* do have to?”

8 10 2 *Discussing the Downturn an overview of participants’ ideological stance*

Charlie McCreevy

McCreevy insists that his responsibilities, as Finance Minister, prelude him from playing the speculative game “I don’t have the luxury of saying, well, eh () I’ll take the optimistic view *If I wanted to be irresponsible, eh () I would go down that particular course*, because there is an election coming next year” His modalized stance is self-categorized as the “*cautious* approach” and “*conservative* view” the “*prudent* course to follow” (note the discourse of fiscal rectitude) in a polarized choice of “very gloomy” and “optimistic” extremes Yet, while he maintains that he is institutionally compelled to identify with a pessimistic discourse, he doesn’t disparage the optimists, though, with a characteristic appeal to “the past” and sprinkling of folksy, commonsense wisdom, he accepts it would be a “foolish” premise on which to base policy

The job of the present time in a small open economy like Ireland which is dependent on world conditions is to take a cautious view going forward It MAY BE that the world economy is going to, ah, and the United States in particular [again the note the symbiotic bind between Irish and American economic fortunes] is going to () take off, ah, very, ah, early in the new year, maybe the

latter half of the year. But it'd be very foolish to plan on the certitude of that happening. *Because what we can learn from the past is been*¹⁶⁶, that not to () not to close your mind to what is happening. Don't pretend that it is not happening. Ah, em, *I think it's an important rule in business and in government, and - people's personal lives - to face this, to face up to the reality of what is there*

The place of Ireland's recent economic "past" in McCreevy's rhetoric is certainly striking. As he categorically puts it: "The Irish economy has slowed down, and we [again note the ideologically resonant use of the pronoun register] *don't want to pretend that it is not happening, 'coz that's what we did in the '70s* and as a result of not pretending that there was a crisis about that particular time, it was always going to turn up () [unclear] *We made foolish decisions, that took us the best part of 20 years to unravel* [note how the policies of the past are implicitly cast as a denial of reality of what was then "happening"] So, em, as Minister for Finance, and this government is not going to do anything in the budget or into the future which is going to put that at risk and *to go back from where we came from*" The crux of the latter admonition, its inference being that, if not managed properly, "the downturn" could imperil Ireland's elevated economic status, is repeated: "I don't want to set us off in the spiral, ah, downwards *from where we came from*"

One of the most salient features of McCreevy's rhetoric is his folksy discursive style and easy appropriation of lifeworld concerns. For instance, homespun, populist logic is used to deflate calls for more health funding: "I know that people demand () *the people's demands* [note the populist pitch to a nominalized collective] are an awful lot higher. I know that there's greater technology, *but* I can't believe that in the past 8 years that the problems, health problems now () [in] the country have quadrupled as well. *The people are not 4 times more sick than they were a number of years ago*" McCreevy's proud, self-consciously neo-liberal posture is evident, too. Relishing the mantle of the tough Finance Minister, the "quite ridiculous" spending "demands" of some of his cabinet colleagues are rubbished. His blunt, categorical response to Lee's quasi-Keynesian

¹⁶⁶ This mixing of tenses is a characteristic of the hesitant, sometimes garbled way McCreevy speaks

question (see chapter 2) is similarly telling “so you don’t think it’s necessary for you to give *economic stimuli* [the Keynesian discursive code] through this budget to keep things going?”, “I DO NOT”, he insists, seemingly affronted by the notion that he might conduct economic policy on such (failed) grounds. And there is a characteristic (see Frank 2000) melange of populist (affected identification with the “sensible” and “smart” Irish people) and anti-intellectual/anti-elite discourses (barbed representation of the views of politicians and journalists) to express a very cynical - and public choice inspired - anti-political rhetoric. “Ah, I happen to take the view that the, eh, the Irish people are () have shown themselves too smart for at least two decades, ah, to follow political parties who promote instantaneous solutions. *I think it’s only politicians and, say, eh, maybe() journalists who think that that’s the way you should do it*. I’ve always found people far more sensible than that, and, eh, but I think that () we will not be forgiven, ah, for putting us on, eh, a course that if we find out at the end of next year, well this is more prolonged than people anticipated”

Ruairi Quinn

Of all the contributions analysed in this chapter, Quinn probably offers most in the way of critical, oppositional discourse and emphasises social concerns, such as social welfare and regional development, peripheral, at best, to the economic analysis offered by others. Focusing on the (then) upcoming budget and, long term, on the 2002 election, most of Quinn’s critique is, quite predictably - given his field position as leader of the second largest opposition political party and the orientation of Duffy’s questions (see above) - directed at McCreevy and his governmental colleagues. He rejects the proposition that the Minister should “forgo all tax cuts” in the upcoming budget, and implicitly grounds his modalized stance in terms of a social equity discourse. “Over the last 4 years, Charlie McCreevy has managed to reduce, ah, income taxes by the *staggering* sum of £3 billion, and *yet we still have* [note the setting up of the antithesis] the *obscenity* of people, against that background of generosity - people on low wages, the minimum wage - paying income tax”. The paradoxes of McCreevy’s aversion to Keynesian policy solutions is observed. “He is a conservative and he has effectively said that he’s not going to try and give the economy any assistance in bad

times *And yet he gave it an extraordinary amount of stimulus in good times, which is kind of contradictory*”

Yet, when examined more closely, the outlines of Quinn’s ideological stance is largely congruous with an orthodox economic perspective. A discourse asserting the importance of sustaining competitiveness is given categorical emphasis and illustrated with a fashionable ‘new economy’ example “*now is the time*, as the slowdown in the economy occurs, to address issues that are part and parcel of *our capacity to be competitive* [note the nominalized collocation of collectivist and competition discourses] *Broadband*, for example, is not happening” McCreevy’s reluctance to consider freezing the pension fund is described as “madness”, but, interestingly, Quinn grounds his objection in the “local” modulated observation that “*at the present time* returns are very low” and “our liabilities in that area are quite some time away” (in other words, he doesn’t indicate any “global” ideological opposition to the idea of a publicly funded, stock market pension fund). The importance of developing infrastructure (see chapter 6) is given categorical emphasis “*the real pension fund for this country is the ability of the economy* [note the casual equivalence of “this country” and “the economy”] to make money, and the infrastructure *is a* key element of that ability” (this is not markedly different from McCreevy’s own discourse “I am conscious of () that this country needs a lot of infrastructure and development”) And while Quinn advocates tax cuts for the less well off (see above), there is no intimation of tax rises indeed, effectively colonized by the authority of neo-liberal discourses, he explicitly cites the fact that Labour policy calculations are based on current levels of taxation “what we showed was that if you maintain current levels of growth, of the order of 5%, you would have the capacity, *without raising your taxes*, at the same () at the current level of tax take”

8 10 3 Media Reflexivity

Interestingly, the personality driven exchanges which dominated, and helped structure, the discourse of the earlier programmes are not explicitly referred to during the course of the broadcast. Aside from Barry’s tacit foregrounding of the week’s discursive events

at the outset (see above), there is only one oblique allusion to the week's punditry and predictions. It is McCreevy's playful observation "Am, () it'd be () this time next year we'll see who's been correct. Someone's going to be correct about their prognosis [subdued chuckle] for 2002"

8.11 Neo-liberal assumptions and "the downturn"

The evidence of this chapter suggests that there is a plurality of discourse practices and genres underpinning the radio and television treatment of political economy issues. Debate is personalised, conflict is foregrounded, the discourse of others is dramatically reformulated, predictions are demanded and there is space allowed for competing perspectives. The evidence affirms Fairclough's claim that many contemporary broadcasters and journalists strive to project a (quasi-democratic) "order of discourse" in which "expert" and elite discourses are evaluated against a conversational, lifeworld stance (see Fairclough, 1998: 155). And while there are the outlines of a neo-liberal disposition in the rhetoric of Harney, McCreevy and others, there is little in the way of the *explicit*, and coherent, neo-liberal discourse of chapter 7.

Yet, as Fairclough suggests, the critical discourse analyst has "to decide how real or superficial apparent struggle is, [and] to decide who the real [ideological] protagonists and antagonists are" (Fairclough, 1998: 149). The signifiers of conflict (McLoughlin versus O'Connell etc.) may animate the discussion of "the downturn", and the discourse may assume a variety of hybrid forms, but the discussion remains firmly embedded in an orthodox "economic growth" paradigm (see chapter 1). In addition, the discussion points to the close symbiotic and interdiscursive relationship between the structural (or *scenic*) authority of the "growth" paradigm and the *tacit* authority of neo-liberal assumptions. This structural coherence is constituted, and reconstituted, in at least four ways.

(a) Shared framing - the broadcasters

Each programme frames its treatment of “the downturn” discussion in terms of the “growth” centred paradigm of O’Connell. The prospect of reduced economic growth is assumed to be a matter of news importance with direct implications for the welfare of the national collective (i.e. audiences). None of the programmes question the link between economic growth and societal welfare, and broadcasters are orientated towards soliciting growth predictions from their guests, positioning the stance of their guests with respect to other “media field” actors and, in the case of the political interviews, querying the policy implications of the new economic *scene*.

(b) Shared representation – the contributors

All of the contributors tacitly accede to the hierarchical authority of growth discourses. The signifiers of a neo-liberal ideological disposition are evident in various, sometimes subtle ways: in Hughes’ recommendation of supply-side policy responses, Fitz Gerald and Lee’s articulation of a discourse which asserts the importance of Irish competitiveness and labour market “flexibility”, the widespread internalisation of globalizing and corporate discourses, Harney’s citing of various neo-liberal tenets as indicators of a “healthy” economy, Power’s affirmation of growth based “performance” discourses, McLoughlin’s recognition of the “structural improvements” of the last “five years” and his staunch pro-market realism, McCreevy’s (public choice inspired) disparaging of the spending demands of his governmental colleagues and categorical rejection of Keynesian policy options, Quinn’s appropriation of a competition discourse and discursive equivalence of national and economic welfare. With respect to the specific Irish context, there are two particularly telling markers of an Irish neo-liberal disposition: (a) the discourse which *looks to America* (implicit homage in the case of Hughes, McLoughlin, Harney and which, in the case of *The Last Word*, is linked to a discourse which is critical of the mainland European economy and the ECB) and (b) the modernizing and historicizing discourses which set up a telling equivalence between a (buoyant) present and a (pitiful) past - a parallel invoked by both Browne and Fitz

Gerald and, with a particular political emphasis, by Harney and McCreevy (see chapter 9)

(c) The limits of conflict

The discussion points to conflict over competing predictions, conflict over attitudinal stances (optimistic versus pessimistic discourse types), personality conflicts (the cautious public sector “habitus” of O’Connell versus the brash private sector “habitus” of McLoughlin), policy conflicts, conflicts over media representation, conflicts about the validity of economic statistics and, in the case of Lee, the hint of a latent tension between journalistic and political imperatives

Yet neither the pessimists, or the optimists, should be mistaken for ideological antagonists and there is a clear absence of “global” (see Van Dijk, 1998) ideological contestation across programmes. For instance, the tenets of growth-centric discourses are unchallenged, the desirability of Ireland’s vulnerability to “outside shocks” is unquestioned, there are no (globalizing) discourses advocating the regulation of either the Irish or global economy (the discussion proceeds as if the global economy is an established, and incontrovertible, fact) and, aside from the “local” critique of Quinn, little critical reflection on the policy responses of the Irish state

(d) The confluence of identities

The discussion, over the course of the six programmes, is dominated by the authority of the financial and economic “expert” (see table 8.1). Of the nine (eight of whom are male) individuals who contribute to the six programmes (the double appearances of Lee and McLoughlin are not counted), eight of them are from the economic/financial “field” three are economists (two are from private institutions, one is from a state affiliated think tank), two are financial/economic journalists, one is an investment strategist, while both Government Ministers hold quasi-economic posts (McCreevy is the Minister for Finance and Harney is the Minister for Enterprise and Employment). In addition, the leader of the Labour Party Ruairi Quinn, is introduced as the “former

Finance Minister In that context, the dominance of an orthodox economic discourse is easily understood, as these individuals are invariably bound to project the worldview of the institutional “habitus” (see Bourdieu, 1991) to which they (in part) adhere What is more of a surprise, however, is the deference accorded this discourse by symbolically powerful “media field” actors Indeed, in the case of all six programmes, there seems to be little that is ideologically distinct about the anchors’ conjunctural domination (see Chouliarki and Fairclough, 1999 99) of the discussion, all of whom seem happy to defer to the fundamental “field” authority of their guests

Table 8 1 – The full list of contributors across programmes

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Professional Identity</i>
<i>Six-One News</i>	Austin Hughes	Economist with a private financial institution
<i>Tonight with Vincent Browne</i>	John Fitz Gerald	Economist with a state affiliated think-tank
	George Lee	Economics correspondent
<i>Morning Ireland</i>	Dan McLoughlin	Economist with a private financial institution
<i>News At One</i>	Mary Harney	Government Minister for Enterprise and Employment
<i>The Last Word</i>	Shane Ross	Financial Journalist
	Jim Power	Investment strategist with a private financial institution
<i>This Week</i>	Ruarí Quinn	Leader of the Labour Party and former Minister for Finance
	Charlie McCreevy	Current Minister for

		Finance
--	--	---------

8.12 Social and institutional imperatives

The discursive authority of an orthodox economic growth perspective is unsurprising, as the discussion takes its cue from the provocative comments of one of the most symbolically rich economic actors in the state. And given the broadcasting imperative for immediate temporal analysis, of an immediate temporal news event, it is understandable that media producers, and *competing* media producers (even internally within RTE), turn to economic pundits, and not sociologists, for a symbolically authoritative response. Yet the banality of these institutional imperatives belie their (invisible) ideological significance: that talk of economy, in an everyday current affairs sense, seems structurally compelled to defer to the realworld, and market realist (see Arnt Aune, 2001) posture of the economic “field”.

The crucial variable is, in some ways, time. This study is *not* suggesting that radio and television discourse about the economy is permanently insulated from critical discourses or dialogue with other social fields, indeed, one can imagine various broadcasting genres (documentaries, book reviews, features, interviews etc.) which could give voice to a richer mix of discourses. Nevertheless, even in the case of programmes like *Tonight with Vincent Browne* (which, in this listener’s experience, is inclined to give voice to a broader range of discourses) the temporal exigencies of the immediate news agenda seem to compel a *market realist* (see Arnt Aune, 2001) response to “official” policy anxieties.

The discursive contributors, too, are structurally compelled to respond on realist grounds. The evidence suggests that the specific “media capital” of being able to present one’s position “in uncomplicated, clear and striking terms” (see Bourdieu, 1998b: 4), are the basis of the economic pundit’s “symbolic capital”, the very reasons why these individuals – particularly those combative performers (like Dan McLoughlin)

from the economic sub-field of private finance (see Frank, 2001) - are invited on to programmes in the first place. The result is that contributors seem, in effect, to be field-bound to adhere to the logic of global capital, defer to US economic hegemony and, hence, assume a worldview which deflects critical attention from the role of the Irish state (unless, that is, the state threatens any *act* which undermines “our” ability to “compete” in a global domain). In addition, they are institutionally compelled to manage expectations (O’Connell’s prudence and McLoughlin’s confidence are but mirror images), project the worldview in which they professionally operate, and take cognisance of who has said what in other media outlets.

Finally, a footnote about the view of the public realm – particularly in light of RTE’s public service remit. The analysis of the “downturn” discussion evinces little in the way of an overt anti-statist rhetoric. Indeed, the fact that the news agenda is set by a *public* official, and enlivened by lifeworld, quasi-democratic discourses, could perhaps be read as implicit affirmation of the public realm. Yet this publicness has its limits, as the link between public/national welfare and economic growth is unquestioned and the lifeworld discourses are, ultimately, *mediated* by a broadcasting and pundit elite. What is clearly evident, however, is the marked attempt to present the economic news in clear, accessible terms. Reflecting on his own role as an economic journalist, Lee – the exemplar of lifeworld charm – describes the motivations behind his own reporting

in a public service broadcasting organisation like RTE where your listeners are everybody – the widest possible audience you can get – you can less afford to use specialist words. You’ve got to use a terminology that *everybody understands* [italics added]. And you’ve got to use a tone which will enable people to understand and grasp the importance and meaning of what you are trying to communicate. Sometimes you’ve got to convey a sense of urgency, not because you’ve got so little time, but to help portray an element of shock if that is what is required. Perhaps not everyone understands these constraints, but I do believe that economic and financial reporting *as a public service* does require a broadcast journalist to take some risks (ibid. 81-82).

This study appreciates these “constraints” It is more concerned, however, with the fundamental limits underpinning this conceptualisation of “public service” The evidence of this chapter suggests a clear ideological convergence between the political authority of the economic field and the imagination of mass audience (public) concerns across five RTE programmes (the differences with the privately owned *The Last Word* are essentially stylistic) In short, it is a view of public service broadcasting which *removes* ideology by acceding to the *dominant* ideology and – cognisant of the need for advertiser support (see Flynn, 2002) - seems more committed to informational clarity rather than critical reflection

8.13 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the discursive content of five radio current affairs programmes and one television news programme, all of which were broadcast over the course of five days in November 2001 Considered in terms of the research questions outlined at the start of the chapter, the evidence suggests that the programmes follow a number of discursive trajectories, but that, in their framing emphases, all them defer to the authority of the “economic growth” paradigm The influence of a distinct neo-liberal paradigm is more subtle, yet, as in the case of chapters 5 and 6, the evidence points to the “doxic” authority of various neo-liberal assumptions in the interdiscursive stances assumed by the different contributors In addition, the evidence suggests that media contributors are self-reflexive about the broader “media field” context in which they perform The next step is to theorise the influence of neo-liberal assumptions with respect to the entire spectrum of empirical analysis and the theoretical conception of neo-liberalism outlined in chapters 1 and 2

PART 4

THEORY & PRACTICE

Chapter 9 – The media and political authority of neo-liberal assumptions

9 1 Introduction

The empirical analysis of chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 confirms that neo-liberalism has a considerable influence on Irish media treatment of political economy issues. In addition, the evidence suggests that its media authority is inextricably linked to the media and political preoccupation with economic growth. In light of these findings, and the conceptualisation of neo-liberalism in chapters 1 and 2, this chapter offers theoretical conclusions on the question of neo-liberal influence. Based around the broad critical discourse analysis theoretical framework outlined in chapter 4, it is structured according to the following headers:

- (a) *The discourses of neo-liberalism a hexadic formulation* - This header argues for the recognition of two broad kinds of neo-liberal discourse(s) and outlines a hexadic representation of their ideological points of emphasis.
- (b) *Neo-liberal discourses and the Irish Media field* - This header considers the relationship between neo-liberal discourses and the structural rules and logic of the Irish media field.
- (c) *Neo-liberal assumptions and the “order of discourse”* - This header examines the place and influence of neo-liberal assumptions in the politically and socially structured “order of discourse”.

9 2 The discourses of neo-liberalism a hexadic formulation

The empirical evidence of chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 suggests that neo-liberalism, as a “loose term” (see Welsh, 1993) for understanding the shift in power to the market,

should not be spoken of in singular terms. There are indeed “different neo-liberalisms” (Phillips, 1998 xvii), which can be interdiscursively articulated through a variety of discursive styles (see chapter 7) and, presumably, can influence a similar mix of policy formulations (see chapter 6). In short, the wider evidence of this study points to the existence of two distinct kinds of neo-liberal template: (1) *transparent neo-liberalism* – which takes the form of explicit and ideologically self-conscious neo-liberal discourses and (2) *euphemized neo-liberalism* – which takes the form of pragmatic and self-consciously modern neo-liberal discourses.

Table 9.1 The discourses of neo-liberalism. a schematic and cognitive overview	
<i>Transparent neo-liberalism</i>	<i>Euphemized neo-liberalism</i>
Ideology	Commonsense
Representation	Belief
Consciousness	Practice
Anti-statist	Partnership
Pro-market	Pragmatic
Individual Freedom	Societal welfare
Evangelical	Progressive
Archaic	Modern

The schema of Table 9.1 can be regarded as two cognitive templates¹⁶⁷ for the creative articulation of neo-liberal discourses. They should not be thought of as mutually exclusive (the potential for various discourse hybrids exist) and the differences between them can be easily deconstructed. For instance, the editorial stance of *The Irish Times* in chapter 7 articulates a self-consciously pro-market stance yet is pragmatic and progressive in its rhetoric, likewise, the “third way” discourse of New Labour in Britain can be described as drawing on elements from both templates (see Fairclough, 2000). Nevertheless, the schema does, I suggest, offer a helpful way of conceptualising the different ideological manifestations of neo-liberal assumptions in political and media discourse.

¹⁶⁷ Both draw, in different ways, from the generic cognitive schemas outlined in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2

The differences, and congruities, between the two kinds of neo-liberal discourse(s) can be illustrated with respect to Burke's (1969a) hexad. Describing the "featuring of ... terms" in the pentad (hexad), Burke suggests that

...the different philosophic schools¹⁶⁸ are to be distinguished by the fact that each school features a different one of the five terms [in my case 6], in developing a vocabulary designed to allow this one term full expression ...with the other terms being comparatively slighted or being placed in the perspective of the featured term (Burke, 1969a: 127).

Neo-liberalism's "featured term" can be said to be *agency* (Burke calls *agency* the "philosophy of means" (ibid: 275); see chapter 2 dichotomy (table 2.1) of neo-liberal *means* versus socialist *ends*). Above all else, it is grounded in a commitment to the instrumental *agency* of the market and the corollary *agencies* of competition and liberalisation. Its dictates imply that policy *acts* will be welcomed (privatisation, "economic reform") if they bring about a shift in power to the *agency* of the market and a diminution in the power of structured "collectives" (see Bourdieu, 1998a: 96). Yet, based on this transparent/euphemized distinction, one can observe different points of emphasis in the two discursive and cognitive templates.

(a) *Transparent neo-liberalism*

Transparent neo-liberal discourse(s) is grounded in a categorical ideological commitment (*attitude*) to the *agency* of the market.¹⁶⁹ It is embodied in the confrontational anti-statist and anti-political discourses of Thatcher (see chapter 1), the belligerent neo-liberalism of *The Sunday Business Post* (see chapter 7) and the literate, neo-liberal populism of the *Sunday Independent* (see chapter 7). Transparent neo-

¹⁶⁸ Burke describes the five different philosophical schools, and their identification with particular pentadic elements, as follows: materialism (scene); idealism (agent); pragmatism (agency); purpose (mysticism) and realism (act) (see Burke, 1969a: 128).

¹⁶⁹ I do not wish to imply that transparent neo-liberal discourse is without a euphemistic element of its own (say, for example, a de-emphasising of the power (*agency*) of transnational corporations). As Bourdieu suggest, "all language is euphemistic" (Bourdieu, 1998c: 110).

liberalism has little interest in the idea of a distinct social or collective *purpose*, but does have a strong (quasi-collective) commitment to economic growth and further market expansion (or a buoyant market *scene*) Its fundamental philosophical *purpose* is individual freedom (*agent-purpose* ratio), which it wholeheartedly identifies with the *agency* of the market (*agency-agent* ratio) It assumes a generally jaundiced *attitude* towards the *agency* of the state, yet recognises the need for state commitment towards the infrastructural development of the market *scene* It proactively campaigns for the doctrinal programme of political economy outlined in chapter 1 and is knowingly mapped according to the polarised “contours of neo-liberal ideology” outlined in Table 2.1 (hence, it doubles as a critique of socialist-statist alternatives, note, for instance, *The Sunday Business Post*’s lampooning of a “socialist” dominated media in chapter 7) Theoretically, transparent neo-liberalism can be conceptualised in terms of a descriptive or neutral conception of ideology (see Thompson, 1990, and chapter 2) that is, it manifests itself as one of a number of competing, and self consciously ideological, representations (see Van Dijk, 1998a) of the social and political world¹⁷⁰

(b) *Euphemized neo-liberalism*

Euphemized neo-liberal discourse(s)¹⁷¹ functions primarily in terms of “doxa” that is, it “doesn’t work in terms of [ideological] consciousness, it works in terms of practices, mechanisms, and so forth” (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1994: 268) Its commitment to market *agency* is modulated and pragmatic (*attitude*), indeed, overt commitment to the *agency* of the market is interdiscursively camouflaged as a commitment to “economic reform” (chapter 5), “national development” (chapter 6), “modernisation” (chapter 7) and “economic growth” (chapter 8) Its philosophical commitment to individualism is less strident, and market *agency* is implicitly posited as the guarantor of individual opportunity (individual *agent*) and national welfare (the “we” collective) The *attitude*

¹⁷⁰ Transparent neo-liberalism could perhaps also be conceptualised in terms of a critical definition of ideology, as a polemical manifestation of a largely euphemized form of neo-liberal legitimation. Yet the validity and appropriateness of the ‘neutral’ tag, in my view, rests on the fact that it is the conceptualisation of neo-liberal ideology (and ideology itself) most commonly recognised and invoked, in *practice*, by political and media actors

to the *agency* of the state is much more benign, and the benefits of a “partnership” (super-*agency*) between state and market are emphasised (see below). It is “opposed to ...[any] explicit [ideological] contract” (Bourdieu, 1998c: 55), motivated by “the taboo of making things explicit” (ibid: 96) and strategically distances itself from the polarized and “ideological” rhetoric (see chapter 2) of transparent neo-liberal discourses. Its policy disposition is to desist from actively campaigning for the programme of neo-liberal political economy outlined in chapter 1, but, crucially, not to object to it once it is incorporated in “objective structures” (ibid: 13). In short, euphemized neo-liberal discourse(s) can be described as a series of “second-order [discursive] strategies” which work to soften and ameliorate “the first-order strategies” (Bourdieu, 1977: 43) which are the real basis of social action; in other words, market rule but not *named* as such.

Euphemized neo-liberalism’s functioning, and authority, needs to be understood in terms of the hegemonic formation (i.e. the commonsense practices) of the social world. It can appropriate a diverse range of ideological discourses and can, on occasion, even assume a critical and sceptical disposition towards the authority of the market itself (see the *Sunday Tribune*’s editorial stance in chapter 7). But the crux of its neo-liberalism - indeed the very justification of the neo-liberal tag - is its tacit assent, *in practice*, to the “TINA” (There is no alternative) thesis”.¹⁷² It can be understood as a structurally bound “relation of doxic submission” (Bourdieu, 1998c: 55) which, in the final analysis, accepts (by not opposing) neo-liberal authority as “external, unchangeable and unquestionable – the simple ‘fact of life’ which we must respond to” (Fairclough, 2001: 129). Theoretically, it needs to be understood in terms of a critical definition of ideology (see Thompson, 1990), as it is neither transparently dominant or transparently ideological. It is, instead, the ideology which (successfully) affects an anti-ideology posture. Its authority is its “common currency” (Bourdieu, 1998b: 49) and its power is

¹⁷¹ The crux of this definition has been anticipated by Bourdieu, who describes neo-liberalised globalisation as a discourse “largely made up of euphemisms” (Bourdieu, 1998a: 31). By euphemism, I mean a more audience conscious repackaging of an explicit ideological commitment.

¹⁷² Margaret’s Thatcher’s claim “There is no alternative” [Since known as TINA], has become something of a critical shorthand for neo-liberal hegemony (see Fairclough, 2001, 129).

its ability to present the “point of view of the dominant” (ibid 57) as a “universal point of view”(57)

The distinction between euphemized and transparent neo-liberalism needs to be clarified on several counts. Following Van Dijk’s work on ideology (1998b), I am arguing for the recognition of two cognitive templates which help give form, and shape, to the discursive/rhetorical appropriation of neo-liberal assumptions. They should not be thought of as producing rigid, discursive formations, but as two “loose” interdiscursive templates (just like the looseness of the term neo-liberalism itself – see chapter 1) from which a variety of hybrid discourses and styles can be formed (see at least five different kinds of neo-liberal *attitude* and discursive style in chapter 7, which can be conceptualised as creative appropriations of ideological emphases present in both templates¹⁷³). The basis of the distinction should be understood as a combined matter of (discursive) presentation, (cognitive) understanding and - although strictly outside the remit of this thesis - policy substance, as the cognitive schema outlined in Table 9.1 can also be regarded as axes of mainstream contemporary political debate and policy formation (see chapter 5). Hence, euphemized neo-liberalism can be described as a shift in the political “order of discourse” which marked the global trajectory of the 1990s and, above all else, helped facilitate the process of social democratic rapprochement with the market (see chapter 1).

This study wants to move beyond the conclusion that contemporary political, and media, elites are simply *all* neo-liberal. It suggests that there is an important distinction to be made between those social actors who are willingly “colonized” by the market (the transparent neo-liberals), and those who are pragmatically “colonized” (the euphemized neo-liberals), or field-bound (see below) to submit to the “*attitude demanded*” (Žižek, 1989, 83) by those doxic, everyday discourses asserting, and legitimising, the practical authority of the market.

¹⁷³ Broadly speaking, the neo-liberal populism of the Independent Group newspapers and the belligerent neo-liberalism of *The Sunday Business Post* can be understood as manifestations of a transparent neo-liberalism, while the closet neo-liberalism of *The Irish Times*, the reflexive neo-liberalism of the *Sunday Tribune* and the commonsense neo-liberalism of the *Irish Examiner* are grounded in more of a euphemized, less overtly ideological template.

9.3 Neo-liberal discourses and the Irish media field

Any understanding of the relationship between neo-liberal discourses and the “media field” (Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999) needs to first consider the fact that the global media industry itself has been dramatically restructured as a result of the neo-liberal turn. As Herman and McChesney recount:

Since the early 1990s there has been a dramatic restructuring of national media industries, along with the emergence of a genuinely global commercial media market. The newly developing global media system is dominated by three of four dozen large transnational corporations (TNCs), with fewer than ten mostly US-based media conglomerates towering over the global market. In addition to the centralisation of media power, the major feature of the global media order is its thoroughgoing commercialism, and an associated market decline in the relative importance of public broadcasting and the applicability of public service standards (Herman and McChesney, 1998: 1).

The general impact of these changes on Irish media practice have been summarised by Horgan: “The five year period [the late 1990s] saw a number of radical changes in prospect for media in Ireland, not only in broadcasting but also in print. In each sector, a combination of technological change, the pressures of globalisation and rationalisation, and the increasing involvement of non-national and multinational interests in every sector, was reshaping the environment and work practices as never before” (Horgan, 2001: 188). Media institutions have become more embedded in the global structural authority of the neo-liberal paradigm (note, for instance, the Independent group’s diverse range of market interests in chapter 7). In addition, journalists/broadcasters are now more likely to have their work accounted for, and measured, in terms of strict, commercial criteria (i.e. the dominant “field” obligation to woo readers, win audiences, attract advertisers). This, in itself, helps reaffirm neo-liberal hegemony, as journalists are forced to operate under work conditions which necessitate the production of quick and – constrained as they are by time - doxic copy. Media deference to neo-liberalism

cannot be simply explained in terms of economic determinism, however. It also needs to be understood as a convergence at the level of media content. And it needs to be considered in terms of the deeper structures of the “media field” which help facilitate the ascent, and ongoing reconstitution, of neo-liberal discourses.

9.3.1 *The (content) convergence of the media, political and economic fields*

Media practice needs to be understood in terms of the structural rules and logic of a distinct “media” or “journalistic field” (see Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999: 103). Above all else, the media field needs to be conceptualised as a “space of interaction” and “locus of intersection between several different fields” (ibid: 103). This gives it a quasi-democratic impulse, and the media’s increasing symbolic power helps contextualise the shift towards conversational discursive styles in media discourse which appraise the “expert” discourses of different social actors in terms of a (quasi-egalitarian) lifeworld stance (see Fairclough, 1995). Yet, while the distinctiveness of the media field as a social field is accepted, and the imperatives of a certain journalistic distance are assumed, the content based analysis of this study clearly points to a deep ideological convergence of the media, political and economic fields.

It manifests itself, in short, as a largely *euphemized* media deference to the authority of the neo-liberal paradigm. The agenda of “economic reform” of the Barcelona and Lisbon Summits (see chapter 5) is, first and foremost, an elite policy agenda, but by de-emphasising its news importance and de-legitimising the agency of those opposed to “reform”, the print media tacitly, and sometimes explicitly, frame the summit agenda as an uncontroversial (at least at the level of *formal* political opposition) and commonsense outcome of policy. The exception, in this respect, is the representation of the recalcitrance of France. Yet the fact that *its* position is characterised exclusively in terms of neo-liberal and rational choice doxa can, in itself, be looked on as a representational by-product of converging fields.

The print media coverage of the launch of the National Development Plan (see chapter 6) suggests a similar confluence. There is some critical reflection on the negative effects

of Celtic Tiger success, especially in the *Irish Times*, but the link between national well-being, the discourses of economic growth and the projected development of market-based infrastructure is largely unquestioned – particularly in the *Irish Independent*. Similarly, the neo-liberal (i.e. individualist) pedigree of the Special Savings Incentive Scheme (see chapter 6) is largely unchallenged, and the “story” is immediately routinized as an apolitical, personal finance story.

The symmetry of elite political, economic and media imperatives is best illustrated in the case of the cross-paper analysis of the Eircom privatisation (see chapter 7). All six broadsheets support the privatisation, indicate their enthusiasm for future privatisations and affirm the *need* for wider public participation in the stock market. Chapter 8 differs in that the content is not explicitly concerned with, either typical or atypical, neo-liberal issues. Yet the preoccupation with “growth” concerns is consistent across the six programmes, and there is very little said which could be construed as antithetical to a neo-liberal perspective.

Ideological convergence clearly doesn’t preclude criticism. The evidence suggests that there is the occasional appropriation of critical discourses which question the widespread deference to market values (see chapters 6 and 7). However, the overwhelming conclusion is that key institutional actors in the Irish media field have to a large degree been (euphemistically) “colonized” by the dominant imperatives of the economic and political field and, by extension, co-opted into what Bourdieu calls the “meta-field” of power” (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 101).

9.3.2 Neo-liberal discourses and the structural dynamics of the Irish media field

Although he has been criticised by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) for failing to conceive of a specific media field, Bourdieu has given an informal theoretical overview of contemporary media practice (see Bourdieu, 1998b). He concludes that “certain attributes typical of the journalistic vision” (ibid.: 2) produce a journalistic practice

which is “indifferent to structural analysis” and “oriented towards preserving established values” (74)

With reference to the empirical evidence of this study, one can identify various structural features and inclinations of the media field which anchor, and bolster, the power of neo-liberal discourses

(a) Structural analysis as structural deference

The structural analysis one finds in Irish media discourse is, by and large, analysis of a distinct economic kind and is firmly “embedded” (Polanyi, 1957: 57) in the values and logic of the “economic system” This leads one to conclude that the indifference to wider structural analysis (the structural analysis of, let’s say, a critical political economy or a critical sociology) tacitly facilitates the production, and reproduction, of neo-liberal discourses However, this structural bias needs to be understood in terms of the media dominance of *euphemized* neo-liberal discourses, indeed, one could say that the structures of the media field in a pluralist liberal democracy like Ireland prohibit the hegemonic ascent of *transparent* neo-liberal discourses, as such a scenario would be largely anathema to a journalistic culture which, at the level of explicit ideological representation, is professionally committed to seeking out both sides of a story Yet when neo-liberal assumptions assume a more euphemized ideological form (by being naturalized and interdiscursively fused with other discourses), or converge with a dominant national mood (see chapters 6 and 7), their hegemonic authority are complemented by the anti-structuralist and “anti-intellectual” (Bourdieu, 1998b: 47) disposition of the media field

(b) The effect of media competition

It is a well established fact of media research that journalists and broadcasters tend to monitor, and be influenced by, the activity of their media competitors (see Schudson (1996) This “permanent surveillance (which can turn into mutual espionage)”

(Bourdieu, 1998b 72) is a fundamental inclination of the journalistic habitus and structurally underpins the (intertextual) production of generic media agendas (see Dearing and Rogers, 1996) Hence, the editorial foregrounding of the Eircom issue in one newspaper helps explain its editorial salience in other papers, the fact that one newspaper group (the *Independent*) campaigns for the cause of the “small” shareholder exerts a structural effect on other newspapers (see chapter 7), while a hard-headed, and market realist (see Arnt Aune, 2001), discussion of the economic “downturn” on one radio programme (see chapter 8) is conceivably a factor in the reproduction of a similarly structured discourse on other programmes In short, the empirical evidence of this study finds little to contradict the view that “competition homogenises” and that the obvious political differences between newspapers and broadcasters “hide [the] profound similarities” (Bourdieu, 1998b 23)

(c) The professional obligation to report the world of power

There is one uncontroversial aspect of journalistic practice which helps fortify the authority of any dominant ideology Any normative consideration of journalistic practice would suggest that the media is structurally obliged to report the world of power, so the actions of power (its agents and agencies) inevitably end up being foregrounded, in some way, by the process of journalistic representation For instance, the journalistic field can't but be partly overwhelmed by the blitzkrieg style public relations launch of a National Development Plan (see chapter 6) This is not to belittle the idea of a media ‘watchdog’, or preclude the possibility of critique But it is to suggest that the taken for granted assumptions of the political and economic field will, inevitably, be partly (at least) replicated through the process of mediated (see Thompson, 1996) representation

(d) The logic and distribution of symbolic capital

Neo-liberal hegemony in the media cannot, of course, be isolated from the wider social and cultural “order of discourse” (see below) Yet the general demarcation of *the what can be said* from *the what cannot be said* does say something about the structural rules

and logic underpinning the media field distribution of “symbolic capital” (see Bourdieu, 1991). It suggests that media organisations, in their self-calculations, believe that there is little or no symbolic and linguistic capital to be gained from opposition to an economically correct (see Arnt Aune, 2001) neo-liberal agenda; and that “local” (Van Dijk, 1998) differentiation is the accepted basis of field contestation and “distinction” (see Bourdieu, 1991). These “local” differences can be seen as the products of distinct cultural or organisational “habitus”, which incline some media towards sceptical detachment (*The Irish Times* and *Sunday Tribune*) and others towards cheerleader enthusiasm (the Independent group) (consider, for instance, the forfeiture of symbolic and media capital which might be involved if a putatively left-liberal paper like *The Irish Times* started assuming a *rabidly* pro-market stance). The wish, and need, for difference is easily understood: media institutions exist in a distinct market context, so media actors (both individual and institutional) are naturally keen to express their own distinct field, and interdiscursive, identity (see chapter 7). Yet the evidence of this study suggests that they do so within “self-censored” (Bourdieu, 1991: 84), and officially censored (see chapter 5), limits, and that the distribution of symbolic capital is determined more by discursive and stylistic – as opposed to ideological - heterogeneity.

(e) *The disposition of the pundit*

The habitus of the economic pundit (much like the journalistic source) can be described as a set of dispositions to act according to the dictates of the media field. The evidence of this study suggests that the economic pundit (see chapter 8) is essentially a conservative force, whose primary ideological effect is to affirm the authority of neo-liberal assumptions; and thereby assume the doxic role envisioned for him (and it is usually a him) by Hayek’s prescribed view of the “second hand intellectual” (see chapter 1). The fundamental basis of the pundit’s symbolic capital is his (or her) articulation of “economically correct” discourses (see Arnt Aune, 2001) and their knowing deference towards the structural constraints of the economic field. He is expected “to command the discourses and genres of the media” (Fairclough, 1998: 150) and be effectively involved in the co-production of a media doxa with his broadcasting host (see the Dunphy and Ross exchange about the ECB, and the *Morning Ireland* clip,

in chapter 8) His primary disposition is to “tell it like it is”, indeed, one can conceive of a political economy analysis in which the pundit’s strident production of conviction - and, hence, production of good news drama and entertainment - is attributed a clear economic motive. If he is to “play the game” (Bourdieu, 1998b: 4), and be one of the “good guests” who plays the rules (ibid: 35), the pundit must “present [his] position [sic] in uncomplicated, clear and striking terms” (Bourdieu, 1998b: 4 (see the lifeworld and commonsense “media capital” of journalists Ross and Lee in chapter 8). And he must play the “predictions game” (ibid: 6) and comply with the media field’s penchant for the promotion of personalised conflict and confrontation over debate (see McLoughlin versus O’Connell in chapter 8).

As with Bourdieu’s description of political discourse, the discourse of the economic pundit can be described as being “doubly determined” (see Fairclough, 1998: 147). That is to say that it is rhetorically attuned to two distinct audiences “internally” determined by the pundit’s institutional standing in the economic field (I extend this to political actors with an economic ministry like Harney and McCreevy) and “externally” determined by his (or her) relationship to the media field itself, and, by extension, their imagined relationship with media audiences (which, in any case, are partly comprised of economic actors with a need for a mediatized sense of the market’s *mood* – see chapter 8).

(f) The need for source legitimacy

It is a well established fact of media research that media actors tend to seek comment from official and legitimising sources (see chapter 5 and 6). Some sources may be, ipso facto, “official” (government ministers for example), but source legitimacy is often more of a dynamic process - especially when it involves the accumulation of a specific, media competent form of cultural capital. This, in itself, consolidates the authority of an effective neo-liberal class in Irish media, as media organisations gravitate towards those commentators (be they pundits or sources) with an established “media capital” (see the appearance of Dan McLoughlin on both *Morning Ireland* and *The Last Word* in chapter 8). The result is that the discursive space itself becomes something of a

“preconstructed space” (Chouliarakı and Fairclough, 1999 99), determined by the symbolic power and authority of existing relations

(g) *The exigencies of media being*

In Scannell’s view, “dailiness” is the “particular ontological characteristic that most fully encompasses the specific nature and being of radio, television and the press” (Scannell, 1996 5) He describes it as “*the* [italics in original] unifying structure” of all media activities” and defines it as a “routinization of the production” so that “an everyday service is produced *every day* (without exception)” (ibid 149) Although Scannell’s phenomenological analysis of media renounces, in the specific instance, conventional ideological critique, one can suggest that a mediated dailiness, animated by the use of lifeworld discourses, serves to buttress the daily, current affairs authority of neo-liberal discourses, and works to inhibit *ways of being* which might resist banal, daily inculcation

The cumulative effect of these structural features is that the media field becomes a crucial instrument of symbolic power bolstering the “reality effect” (Bourdieu, 1998b 21) of neo-liberal discourses

9 4 Neo-liberal assumptions and the “order of discourse”

The hegemonic authority of neo-liberal assumptions in Irish media needs to be put in its proper social and historical context There is little that is spontaneous about neo-liberal hegemony, and its contemporary media authority can be seen as the ultimate outcome of the process of theoretical and ideological ascent which was chronicled in chapters 1 and 2 That is not to suggest that there is a transparent causal link between changes in Irish society and the activities of the Mt Pelerin group – as I’ve already suggested Irish society hasn’t, heretofore, been marked by the activity of neo-liberal think-tanks as in Britain and the US Yet, through the doxic mechanisms established by organisations

like the WTO, the IMF and, more regionally, by the EU (see chapters 5 and 7), the authority of the neo-liberal paradigm has clearly filtered down to a nation-state media level. In any case, the impact of the global convergence of the media industry itself is likely to be something of a determining factor (see Herman and McChesney, 1997)

The distinction between transparent and euphemized neo-liberal discourses is again central to any understanding of neo-liberal hegemony. This study is not suggesting that transparent neo-liberal discourses dominate the Irish “order of discourse” – in fact, transparent neo-liberalism is arguably a relatively minority phenomenon in an Irish political context, associated, by and large, with the smaller Government party, the Progressive Democrats (PDs). Indeed, one can surmise that an unbridled free market philosophy is as likely to be the subject of media disdain as homage – especially in an influential, and self-consciously left-liberal paper like *The Irish Times*. For instance, if one does a lexis-nexis¹⁷⁴ search for “free market” in the Irish Times for 2001, one comes across a number of high profile columnists assuming an unfavourable stance towards the “free market”¹⁷⁵. This explicit denunciation of market values is evident, too, in Denis Coughlan’s critical indictment of the National Development Plan in chapter 6.

In short, this study suggests we should not look towards transparent neo-liberal discourses to explain neo-liberalism’s hold on the Irish “order of discourse”. Its euphemized authority needs to be instead understood with reference to three paradigmatic features of the Irish political “order of discourse”: (a) social partnership discourse(s), (b) a shared reading of the past and (c) the pre-emption of critique.

(a) Social Partnership discourse(s)

It is generally accepted that the belligerent 1980s neo-liberalism of Thatcher never achieved political dominance in Ireland. This has led O Riain and O’Connell to

¹⁷⁴ See www.lexis-nexis.com

¹⁷⁵ “Free-market approach to childcare is a mistake” (Ruane, 2001), “The real irony is that for all the individuality and freedoms promised by the ‘free’ market, most people have more but are also more controlled than ever” (Holt, 2001), “That about sums up my attitude to Des O’Malley. I don’t much like his free-market ideology, and I don’t think he’s a political saint” (O’Toole, 2001)

conclude that “that the Irish case is ‘not a story of neo-liberal globalisation [as] the state has been central to each stage of the development, and under-development of the economy and of the welfare state’” (Kirby, 2002, 160) While accepting “that the Celtic Tiger is not a simple story of the withdrawal of the state and the imposition of neo-liberalism” (ibid 160), the claim that the Irish experience is a direct challenge to the authority of the neo-liberal paradigm has been disputed by Kirby He suggests that a more nuanced “account of the neoliberal state, its subordinate relationship to global market forces and its inegalitarian social impact, describes accurately the Ireland of the Celtic Tiger The main difference in the Irish case is the basis for legitimacy that has been fashioned through the agency of social partnership for this neoliberal reformation” (ibid 163)

The discourse of social partnership, the quasi-corporatist model of national bargaining (see chapter 1), can be described as the master trope of euphemized neo-liberal discourse, and has rightly been identified as one of the major policy innovations in an Irish context since the 1980s (see Kirby, 2002b 29)¹⁷⁶ It articulates itself as an interdiscursive marriage of economic and social discourses - which effectively work to insulate the rhetor from the charge that his or her stance is ideological¹⁷⁷ Its “‘feel-good’ appeal” (ibid 31) effectively “marks an emasculation of politics” (32), and it becomes the signifier of a benign, classless politics which seeks to deflect critical attention from the economic field’s increasing “colonization” of the social world

While there is little in the sample which explicitly addresses partnership issues, the authority of the partnership trope is evident throughout the empirical analysis of this study In particular, it is a core feature of the rhetoric of the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern who consistently collocates the interests of the economic and the social (see chapter 6) - indeed, the transnational conflation of social and economic discourses at the Lisbon summit is described by Ahern as a victory for the Irish “model” and the “principles and values that underpin our approach at home” (see chapter 5) It underpins, too, the

¹⁷⁶ Fairclough also identifies the “partnership” trope as a key feature of New Labour discourse in Britain (see Fairclough, 2000)

¹⁷⁷ This is not to deny that social partnership itself is something of an ideology, but not in the abrasive way we associate with transparent neo-liberalism

rhetoric of media actors themselves. For instance, the *Irish Independent* frames its response to the launch of the National Development Plan (NDP) in terms of a partnership narrative, and attributes “our coming of age” to a “strategic spirit of agreement” which it traces back to the origins of the “national partnership” process (see chapter 6). In addition, the implicit reconciliation of social and economic discourses underpins the *Irish Times*’ editorial response to the NDP. And the discourse of partnership can also be seen as animating the ubiquitous use of the first person pronoun, “we”, across political economy discourse, as the political and media culture is imbued with a disposition to talk about economy in quasi-collective - and hence classless - terms.

To critically appraise the discourse of social partnership is not to sneer at those who invoke it, in any case, the collocation of economic and social discourses is hardly unique to Ireland. But it is to point out that the widespread legitimacy of partnership discourses in the Irish political “order of discourse” is tailor-made for the ascent of euphemized neo-liberal discourses which work to deflect attention from the gradual transfer of national sovereignty to the global market.

(b) A shared reading of the past

Kirby, Gibbons and Cronin suggest that “debates on contemporary Ireland are informed by a powerful orthodoxy relating to a shared understanding of the Irish past” (Kirby et al, 2002: 6). This is, *ex fortiori*, true with respect to Ireland’s recent economic past, and the dramatic shift in economic fortunes since the late 1980s - particularly 1987 (generally recognised as the decisive date in the ‘turn around’ of the Irish economy - see MacSharry and White, 2001). The historicizing and modernizing discourses which set up an equivalence between a failed economic past and a prosperous economic present is a reoccurring narrative throughout this study. It liberally infuses the political rhetoric of Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy, who warns his audience that he won’t make the “foolish decisions” of the “1970s” or land “us” “back from where we came from” (see chapter 8). It litters the political rhetoric of his transparent neo-liberal ally Mary Harney, the Minister for Enterprise and Employment,

who reassures radio listeners that “the economic stability of Ireland is not in jeopardy as it was in the past” It underpins the analysis of the “downturn” on *Tonight with Vincent Browne*, as the presenter invokes the experience of the 1980s to deflate talk of an imminent economic crisis It feeds the pejorative characterisations of those who formerly opposed the privatisation of Telecom It animates the symbolism of the floatation itself And, with the launch of the NDP, the narrative is explicitly articulated by the Irish Independent’s political correspondent Chris Glennon

That such historical parallels are made is understandable – especially in a country which has seen a dramatic transformation in economic fortunes since the 1980s But the ideological effect of these historicizing and modernizing discourses is clear they work to affirm the authority of the post 1987 neo-liberal paradigm Little wonder, then, that these discourses continued to try and cow ideological and political opposition in the run up to the 2002 Election As Bertie Ahern put it

Their vision [that of the so-called alternative “rainbow” government of Fine Gael, Labour and the Greens] is back to the bad old days The bad old days called the 1980s Their formula is to raise taxes! Raise taxes, reduce revenue, deter investment and destroy jobs That Rainbow idea is not acceptable and would bring a dark cloud over the entire Irish economy (The Irish Times, March 11, 2002)

(c) *The pre-emption of critique*

The ascent of neo-liberal assumptions is not a “simple story” of transparent neo-liberal dominance Its hegemonic authority needs to be understood in terms of the ascent of euphemized neo-liberal discourses, whose hybrid make up does not preclude the possibility of simultaneous critique (see Bertie Ahern’s allusion to a “disjointed Ireland” and the *Irish Independent’s* editorial response to the NDP in chapter 6) These interdiscursive tensions become, in effect, a way of affirming the absence of a transparently neo-liberal stance, as rhetors “appropriate” the “discursive strands” (Jager, 2001 47) of various critical discourses to insulate themselves against the charge that

they have been “colonized” by ideology. The discourse of social partnership is one clear example of this discursive phenomenon, as is the conflation of market and democratic discourses which Frank (2001) describes as “market populism”. Of course, to point this out is simply to acknowledge a rhetorical management of contradictions which one can trace back to Aristotle and beyond. There is clearly nothing distinctly Irish about it either – one has only to consider the oxymoronic sloganeering of “compassionate conservatism”. Yet it does suggest a general cultural disposition towards a euphemized, self-consciously pragmatic mix of political discourses, which is exemplified by the fact that Fianna Fail can be self-imagined as social democrats and be accused, at the same time, of capitulating to a PD neo-liberal agenda (see Andrews, 2001, Hennessy, 2003). Illustrating the fact that this phenomenon transcends party politics, the recent conference address of Labour Party Leader, Pat Rabbitte, is a case in point. Although he foregrounds his speech with an implicit critique of the Government’s neo-liberal priorities (“I want to make it clear that Labour will defend the public realm, and that Labour values reject the sort of society reflected in the selfish prism of this PD/FF Government”), he nevertheless accedes to neo-liberal doxa, and underscores the point with reference to the aforementioned historical trope:

We *have to* [note the modality] adapt to the *new Ireland* [italics added] that we ourselves helped to create. That means, for example, accepting that modern citizens as taxpayers are often more conscious of themselves as consumers and customers than they are *preoccupied* [italics added, a cue to the “old Labour” obsessions] with ownership structures of any given enterprise (Rabbitte, 2003)

9.5 Structural constraints: the limits of agency

The evidence of this study suggests that the failures of media discourse are failures of political discourse. Yet to isolate the Irish context from a global political “order of discourse” would be a mistake, for, as I’ve already suggested, the Irish neo-liberal turn is part of a global *scenic* shift. Based on a structuralist view of political economy (see Hobson and Ramesh, 2002), the outcome leads to something of a discursive “lock in” (see chapter 1), as the political and linguistic actions of nation-state actors (be they

media or political) become increasingly determined by, and path-dependent on, global and transnational networks of power (see, for instance, the ongoing articulation of globalising discourse types in chapters 7 and 8) These are the fundamental structural and institutional constraints governing the mass media treatment of political economy issues, and it would be foolish to overlook the likely loss of symbolic capital that might be incurred for media and political actors who simply try to wish these constraints away Indeed, as I've already suggested, it could be that a market realist posture, and an implicit legitimisation of the barometers of neo-liberal "success", are the fundamental pre-requisites for becoming part of the *serious* political and media discussion in the first place

These structural constraints need to be understood as a cross-party political phenomenon Ideological convergence does not preclude difference, however, and political actors, just like media actors (see chapter 7), are *free* to assume a distinct neo-liberal attitude In this respect, third way (see chapter 1) and partnership discourses can be conceptualised as part of the "transformation" (see Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999) of an earlier and more transparently neo-liberal blueprint This shift can, perhaps, be interpreted benignly, as it does suggest public antipathy to a transparent neo-liberal agenda and even the political liabilities of a committed, and 'pure', neo-liberal platform (consider the post-Thatcher demise of the Conservative Party in Britain – see Gray, 1998a) Yet the power of these discourses is not that they are masks for (neo-liberal) action, but that they are "recontextualised" (see Chouharaki and Fairclough, 1999) as the ideologically de-neutered, consensual basis for [neo-liberal] action, or the acceptable grounds of a political and popular "identification" (see Burke, 1969) with the shift in power to the market

The dearth of ideological dissent needs to be understood in terms of the dynamics of the political field's own market context Above all else, it needs to be understood in terms of the capital dynamics of political power itself, and the symbolic capital of a *realist* disposition towards political power Some political actors do exist, and are elected, in an Irish context who are critically disposed towards neo-liberalism (the socialist deputy Joe Higgins is one obvious example) Yet *they* do not risk a loss of symbolic capital by

opposing neo-liberalism – in fact, one could say that their socialist disposition is the very basis of their symbolic capital in the first place. Contrast this situation with that of the Labour party, a political party with *realist* and *realistic* aspirations towards government office, which risks losing symbolic capital (amongst its own constituency) by becoming transparently neo-liberal, yet also needs to exhibit its practical disposition towards the assumption of power by winning the symbolic affirmation of economic field actors.

These tensions come back to the fact of political discourse being “doubly determined” (see above - Fairclough, 1998: 147) – that is, “internally” determined by the dynamics of the political field and “externally” determined by, amongst other things, politicians’ relationship with their electorate and, crucially, the mediation of that relationship through media (see Thompson, 1996). Hence, both the conversational, lifeworld discourses of Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy (see chapter 8) and the quasi-egalitarian discourse of Ahern (see chapters 5 and 6) need to be understood in terms of their political need for a specific “media capital” (McCreevy’s ideologically effective use of humour is particularly telling). It recalls another Bourdieu remark: “One of the effects of symbolic violence is the transfiguration of relations of domination and submission into affective relations, the transformation of power into charisma or into the charm suited to evoke affective enchantment” (Bourdieu, 1998c: 102). As is, perhaps, most visibly illustrated in the case of chapter 8, we live in what is, by extension, an era of *mediatized economy*, as both pundits and politicians alike (consider Harney’s *talking business* and *talking to business* in chapter 8) seek to manage, by mediating, the hopes and fears of market-based actors. The conclusion, therefore, is that the market sub-field itself has a “censorship effect” (see Bourdieu, 1991) on the “order of discourse” and, by extension, discourse about the economy in media.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ One has only to recall the fate of former German Finance Minister, Oskar Lafontaine, who had to resign from his post in 1999 because comments of his were perceived as being a ‘threat’ to market order (see Walsh 1999).

This chapter has presented a theoretical account of neo-liberal influence in Irish media, with reference to the empirical analysis of chapters 5 to 8 and the wider institutional, social and political context. The overriding conclusion confirms that the discourses of neo-liberalism have a hegemonic influence on media, and mediated political treatment of political economy issues. Neo-liberal hegemony should not be mistaken for homage, however, as it neither precludes the possibility of critique, media diversity or the articulation of different neo-liberalisms. Instead its strength is its euphemized “authority effect” which exists as a “great chain of Being” and “chain of authorities” (see Bourdieu, 1998b 55-56) across a whole range of social fields.

The core of this study is now complete. The research questions outlined in the introduction have been answered. This study has conceptualised the historical development of neo-liberalism in terms of political economy and ideology, it has presented an overview of analytical approaches suitable to the examination of neo-liberal influence in media (for further reflections on this issue see chapter 10), it has showed how neo-liberal assumptions underpin print media framing of political economy issues, it has showed how editorial stances with respect to privatisation are embedded in a neo-liberal paradigm, it has outlined the comparative news framing differences between *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent*, it has outlined the comparative differences between the editorial stances of six Irish broadsheets, it has showed how neo-liberal assumptions underpin radio and television discourse about economy, it has postulated the existence of two broad kinds of neo-liberal *discourses*, it has outlined the relationship between neo-liberalism and the political “order of discourse” and it has theoretically illuminated the relationship between the articulation of neo-liberal discourses, media institutional practices and socio-political processes. The final chapter offers some reflections on the question of media, research and critical practice.

Chapter 10 – Neo-liberalism and practice

10 1 Introduction

The main empirical and theoretical achievements of this study have been outlined in chapter 9. The outstanding conclusion is that neo-liberal assumptions have a hegemonic, and a largely tacit ideological influence on the way Irish media treat matters of political economy. In this final chapter, I assume something of a critical distance from the study and briefly consider the implications for media practice, future research and the critique of neo-liberalism.

10 2 The implications for media practice

The relationship between formal academic analysis of media and media practice is often marked by antagonism. Bourdieu (1998b) suggests media practitioners regard the scholarly habitus with disdain, while Windschuttle (2000) castigates academics for fostering a theoretically indulgent view of media practice which regards journalists and media producers¹⁷⁹ as something akin to functional automatons. This tension between theory and practice is, moreover, sometimes a hallmark of communication and media university departments themselves, and anyone approaching this study with a strong antipathy to “academic” analysis of media practice is unlikely to have their worldview dramatically altered by its empirical or theoretical findings.

Still, this study has tried to produce an empirical critique of relevance to journalists and media practitioners, and with possible pedagogical implications for the teaching of journalism and media studies. It suggests that journalists (ideally) need to be more aware of the representational effects of their work (especially in their use of sources) and that sub-editors need to be more attentive to the representational and framing effect of their headlines (see chapters 5 and 6). It also suggests that the professional tenets (see

Tuchman, 1972) of balance and impartiality alone should dictate that newspapers give *direct* voice to the critics of neo-liberalism, be more reflexive about the representational effect of violent imagery and desist from using lazy “anti-globalisation” nomenclature (chapter 5)

More generally, the evidence suggests that journalists and media producers need to allow, and encourage, more *daily* critical reflection on the media’s relationship to the “meta-field” of power. Irregular feature articles and documentaries are, of course, to be welcomed. Yet media producers need to critically reflect on the insulation of daily, and routinized, media practice from ideological reflexivity. This is especially important for a public service broadcaster like RTE (see chapter 8), which needs to reflect on the limits, and consider the possibilities, of its putatively ethical (i.e. its publicness) remit.

The evidence suggests that there needs to be more critical reflection on the relationship between national (Irish), regional (EU) and global (WTO etc.) networks of power. There also needs to be critical reflection about the shift in power to the market itself, as the journalistic habitus sometimes cultivates a view of power as the exclusive prerogative of political field actors (of course, it is not particularly keen to consider its own symbolic power either). Specifically, newspapers and broadcasters need to consider their de-emphasis of wider institutional developments (see chapter 5), question their tacit deference to the authority of growth imperatives (see chapter 8), distance themselves from market euphoria (see chapter 7) and reflect on the news penchant for personalised stories (see the foregrounding of the Ahern and Bruton immigration row in chapter 5) – especially if it works to deflect critical attention from a somewhat more obtuse institutional agenda.

One discernible impediment to the fostering of a more global perspective is the perceived problem of engaging an interested audience or readership. To be fair, no flippant solution suggests itself, as the low turnout for the Nice referendums in 2001 and 2002 attests, much of the Irish public seems indifferent to institutional

¹⁷⁹ I use the term in its broadest sense to mean all those individual and institutional agents involved in the production of media.

developments at an EU, let alone a global, level. In that context, it is perhaps understandable that newspapers seek to foreground the “local” news value of international/regional stories (see chapter 5). This instinct for the local is perhaps a universal news inclination. But perhaps it need not be framed as part of an implicit de-politicisation of the larger agenda, but used to enliven the contested political implications of transnational changes through the agency of local political and social actors.

Media producers and pundits need to be more self-reflexive about their use of the first person pro-noun (“we”). Again, its usage is understandable, as national media and newspapers are perhaps intuitively inclined to address the self-imagined ideal of a national collective. Yet, as the recent war in Iraq illustrates, the non-reflexive media use of the first person pro-noun can be a powerful ideological force and, one does not have to subscribe to a Marxian view of the world, to suggest it can play an important ideological role in the representation of political economy issues.

Media producers need to reflect more on the distinction between public and individual interests. These tensions are especially evident in the case of the Special Savings Initiative Scheme (SSIS - see chapter 6), as the structures of media practice (specialist personal finance sections etc.) play to a readership of archetypal middle class readers. The ideological effect is that the distinct *public* implications of the scheme are neutered and de-politicised at the outset, as equity arguments disappear in the face of mediatized popular enthusiasm. Newspapers, therefore, need to reflect on their editorial commitment to acknowledge equity discourses and ask how they might counter-balance, as opposed to animate, a general sense of public euphoria.

The reluctance of newspapers to assert a more critical disposition towards issues like the National Development Plan (NDP) and the SSIS can be strategically understood. They could, rightfully, claim that the critical failures are failures of politics, and that it is not their job to risk being perceived as the ones “having an agenda”. But this is to overlook the powerful role that media producers themselves have in the constitution, and reconstitution, of the “order of discourse”, which, in any case, arguably isn’t contested.

in the linear way (i.e. by a demarcated distinction between media, public and policy agendas) imagined by some agenda-setting analysis (see Dearing and Rogers, 1996). Above all else, it is fundamental to the public interest, and any normative self-image of the journalistic field, that media producers have the resources, and the steel, to be critically disposed towards the agents and agencies of power, or, at least, question the “authority effect” of their own enthusiasm for official policy agendas.

10.3 Contribution to the literature

This study sees itself as a significant addition to the critical and media literature, in the following respects:

- (a) It is an original study on the influence of neo-liberal assumptions across a wide range of (Irish) media texts.
- (b) It shows how a critical discourse analysis theoretical framework can be incorporated into a broader social scientific research project. In that respect, this study sees itself as a response to Fairclough’s call for the use of critical discourse analysis as a “theory or method which is in a dialogical relationship with other theories and methods” (see Fairclough, 2001: 121).
- (c) Following on the recent work of, for example, Goodwin and Spittle (2002) and Kwansah-Aidoo (2003), it suggests ways in which different methods of media analysis (comparative media analysis, framing analysis, agenda-setting analysis, source analysis and headline analysis) can be fruitfully synthesised with a critical, discourse based perspective.
- (d) It attests to the way in which a discourse based perspective can be applied to a broader, and more representative, sample of texts. In that sense, it can be seen as an empirical response to the charge of “perspectivalism” (Halloran, 1998: 30) which is sometimes made against those working within a qualitative framework.

- (e) It points to the merits of formulating a detailed conceptual account of the research problem (i.e. the conceptual overview of neo-liberalism outlined in chapters 1 and 2) prior to any empirical investigation.
- (f) Empirically, it suggests that there needs to be a recognition of two broad kinds of neo-liberal discourses.
- (g) It points to the merit of situating the question of neo-liberal influence in a context which is attuned to the media's general treatment of political economy issues; or, to put it in the phenomenological terms of Scannell (1998), tries to be sensitive to the everyday dynamics of media's "being".

Considered from a specific Irish perspective, this study can be described as an innovative contribution on several grounds:

- (a) It is the first comprehensive sociological account of ideology in Irish media since Devereux's work on the media coverage of poverty issues (Devereux, 1998) and the first comprehensive, content based account of neo-liberal influence in Irish media.
- (b) It is a significant addition to the critical sociological literature on Irish political economy (see Kirby, 2002; Kirby et al. 2002); most obviously in its foregrounding of the idea of neo-liberalism as discourse (or rhetoric) and its focus on the dynamics and nature of mediatized economy.
- (c) It offers a rich pool of empirical findings from a diverse range of Irish media content.
- (d) Its application of a critical discourse analysis theoretical framework, linked to the work of Bourdieu and Burke, is innovative in an Irish context.

10.4 The implications for future research

In terms of the research question about the analytical approaches best suited to the analysis of neo-liberal influence (see Introduction), this study affirms the value and suitability of a qualitative, discourse based approach. Indeed this is, *ex fortiori*, true, given this study's conclusions about the euphemized nature of neo-liberal influence.

This study affirms the value, and the flexibility, of a broad critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework and maintains that a more *internal* mode of textual analysis would have been antithetical to the sociological and critical disposition of this study. The great strength of CDA, as theory, is the fact that it is a formidable analytical response to what Bourdieu describes as the need to “turn linguistic analysis into an instrument of political critique and rhetoric into a science of symbolic powers” (Bourdieu, 1992: 213). This study affirms the value of interdisciplinary research, for what is a combination of critical discourse analysis, sociological theory and rhetorical theory. Additionally, chapters 5 and 6 point to the value of linking CDA, framing analysis and agenda-setting analysis in examining media treatment of news. In short, there is certainly scope and a need for further interdisciplinary research – or what Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) prefer to call transdisciplinary research - of this kind in the future.

In the course of this study, I came to the view that there is the theoretical potential for an ambitious amalgam of critical discourse analysis, Bourdieu’s sociological theory and phenomenological analysis. This hunch follows on the work of Scannell, who conceptualises media practice in terms of (phenomenological) “being” as opposed to (ideological) “consciousness” (Scannell, 1996, Scannell, 1999). Such a theoretical exercise could ask: what is the relationship between ideology and being? What role does ideology play in the daily habitus of being? What are the ideological implications of media’s being? Is it possible, through Bourdieu, to imagine a bridge between ideology’s “being in the head” and phenomenology’s “being in the world”?

The obvious empirical limitation of this study is that it is exclusively content based. There is clearly a need for empirical analysis of media treatment of political economy issues which links up the tiers of production (ethnographic analysis), content (discourse/content analysis) and audience (reception analysis). This could consider, *inter alia*, the link between production, content and audience discourses, and examine the constructivist role of the media, and mediated political discourse, in the inculcation of a wider political and cultural habitus. This research would, more than likely, have to be done on a collaborative basis. But there is certainly a need for it – particularly in an Irish context. And there is a need, too, for further research into the media authority of

neo-liberal discourses across a wider range of case studies and a wider, and more ambitious, time-frame

The specific research questions and methods of this study point to other research possibilities – partly to test and give greater empirical and representative weight to the findings of this study. There is, for instance, the scope for a much more ambitious and tightly focused analysis of sources and headlines over a much longer timeframe. There is the possibility for an in-depth (and part ethnographic) study of the role of the economic pundit, which could consider the relationship between the media's need for economic predictions and the willingness of economic pundits to furnish them. One way this could be approached would be to monitor the media activity of some high-profile economic pundits over a long term time period, and examine how they use, and are in turn used by, media fora, another approach might be to analyse a particular news or discussion programme's use of sources over a long term time period (say the *Six-One News*). There would be value, too, in a further analysis of discussion and opinion, and for additional investigation into the trajectory of political economy discourses in a broadcasting context. There is a need for quantitative research, linked to a critical discourse analysis framework, into the question of neo-liberal influence – especially, I would suggest, in light of this study's distinction between transparent and euphemized neo-liberal discourses. Other projects suggest themselves: a study of the role of media actors (newspapers in particular) in the agenda-setting of future privatisations, a broader – and possibly comparative historical analysis - of Irish media representation of the political economy agenda of successive European summits, and an ethnographic/discourse analysis of the role of grassroots public relations in the critical resistance to neo-liberalism (such a study could ask to what extent is the lazy “anti-globalisation” tag the result of grassroots public relations failures, gatekeeper exclusion or convenient categorisation?)

The ideological and rhetorical foundations of neo-liberalism itself needs to be further examined, as does its global propagation through think-tanks, public relation agencies, media and party political outlets. The rhetoric of Hayek, in particular, could make for a fascinating study and suggest new ways of deconstructing the authority of the neo-

liberal paradigm from within. And neo-liberal intellectuals' use of popular forms of media to disseminate their views could make for a fruitful study – indeed, it could even, as George (1997) suggest, ironically suggest a template for any counter-hegemonic project (see below).

This sociological analysis has attempted to give a discursive shape to the political and ideological authority of the neo-liberal paradigm in Irish media. It can partly be seen, therefore, as encroaching on the specialist territory of international political economy research. If scholars working in that field have anything to learn from this study, it is that they should give more attention to the idea of neo-liberalism as discourse or rhetoric and not neglect the role of media institutions, and media practice, in securing, and renewing, neo-liberal legitimacy. In addition, I echo Leander's (2001) suggestion that political economy scholars could give more attention to the work of Bourdieu, who offers one theoretical way out of the structuralist-agent-centric dichotomy (see Hobson and Ramesh, 2002) which has defined the discipline.

10.5 The implications for political discourse and the critique of neo-liberalism

Heretical discourse must not only help to sever the adherence to the world of common sense by publicly breaking with the ordinary order, *it must also produce a new common sense* [italics added] and integrate within it the previously tacit or repressed practices and experiences of an entire group, investing them with the legitimacy conferred by public expression and collective recognition (Bourdieu, 1991: 129).

This study has come to the conclusion that the failure to articulate a challenge to the hegemonic authority of neo-liberal discourses in Irish media is, at source, the outcome of a wider political failure. It should not be conceptualised, or parochialised, as a uniquely Irish failure, but as part of a global political capitulation to the values of the market; what Castells describes as the symptoms of a “political system voided of power” where “political institutions [become] bargaining agencies rather than sites of

power” (see Kirby, 2002b 31) After all the analysis, and all the theorising, the question remains how does one produce a critical political discourse which can offer a sustained challenge to the media and political authority of neo-liberal discourses?

We have recently seen the emergence, or reinvigoration, of a critique of neo-liberalism. Mistakenly characterised as the “anti-globalisation” movement (see chapter 5), this post-Seattle (see Borosage, 1999, McMichael, 2000) movement has resulted in a sharp (see Frank, 2001, Klein, 2000) critique of the neo-liberalised model of development and globalisation. The evidence of this study suggests that it has yet to make any real impact in an Irish media context - but that these critical discourses are sometimes articulated in Irish media is undoubted.¹⁸⁰ Still, the sheer scale of any critical challenge has, in my view, been correctly anticipated by Bourdieu (see above), who suggests it involves nothing less than the production of “a new common sense” (see above)

Bourdieu adds “that the only effective way of fighting against national and international technocracy is *by confronting it on its own preferred terrain*” [italics added] (Bourdieu, 1998a 27). In my view, however, there are aspects of both the popular and academic critique of neo-liberalism (perhaps even Bourdieu’s) which undermine this fight. In particular, there is the tendency of some critics to be consumed by their emotive contempt for neo-liberalism, and affect something of a haughty disdain for its “illusory” and “so-called” freedoms. This, I think, is a strategic mistake. It may give some comfort to the critic. It may even ingratiate him (or her) to a self consciously critical peer group. Yet, to my mind, this contemptuous posture plays to neo-liberalism’s strengths and simply confirms the caricatured view of the socialist intellectual imagined by neo-liberal ideologues (see chapter 2). Critique, therefore, needs to be more reflexive about its own implications and limits and its paradoxical affirmation of neo-liberal polarities. And it needs to ask itself can a new *common* sense be forged though the unsympathetic disparagement of the current one?

¹⁸⁰ For instance, *The Irish Times* of May 17th, 2003 had a full page review of four books offering a critical perspective on globalisation and RTE Radio One broadcast a globalisation series in 2002 (see Browne, 2002)

In that respect, the critique of neo-liberalism again finds an unlikely ally in Hayek. Though he has since renounced him, I agree with Gray's (1998b) assertion that Hayek's most outstanding intellectual legacy could prove to be his cogent critique of socialism. The polemical strength of books like *The Road to Serfdom* and *The Constitution of Liberty* lies in their considered immersion in socialist ideology – not their *a priori* lampooning of its philosophical appeal. And their ideological power lies in their mass audience accessibility, not their playing up to the partisan and the already converted. To defer to this view is not to endorse the critique itself. Yet it is to suggest that the success of Hayek's counter-ideological project does, I think, attest to the benefits of a fair-minded – or, crucially, what can be *strategically* observed as fair-minded – and popular critique of the *other* view.

The popularisation of critique is clearly a vital part of any counter-hegemonic project. Yet to know the critique isn't enough: one has to know what to do it! It is, therefore, to return to the problems and limits of practice and, specifically, to reinforce the need for a critical disposition which can effectively compete in a world of media polarities and hyperbole (there are, for instance, the particular structural difficulties of articulating any overdetermined critique on radio and television). For that, there is no easy prescription. Yet one option might be the development of a critique, and a new rhetoric, out of the cognitive map of neo-liberal ideological oppositions themselves (see chapter 2) – that is, the re-appropriation of a neo-liberal rhetoric turned inwards (for example, one could imagine the neo-liberal critique of the *collective* being transformed into a characterisation of the market as the collective oppressor of individual freedom, with the (unfree) individual re-imagined as the *means* of market *ends*).

These observations are partly formed by the author's experience of hearing a "critique" of neo-liberalism, which sometimes amounts to little more than a semiotic stew of all that's gone wrong with the world in the last 30 years. Indeed, sometimes the term itself becomes an obstacle to what Habermas describes as the need for "emancipatory" critique (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1991: 4), and instead encourages the critic to lose his or her way in a fog of consciousness and abstractions. This, in my view, is not the rhetorical or discursive grounds of a substantive critical challenge to neo-liberal

authority The limitations of what often passes for a critical disposition in an age of “populist right[ist]” hegemony have been sharply observed by Žižek

the populist Right *acts*, sets the pace, determines the problematic of the political struggle, and the liberal centre is reduced to a ‘reactive force’ it ultimately limits itself to *reacting* to the populist Right’s initiatives, either opposing them radically from an impotent Leftist posturing, or translating them into the acceptable liberal language (Žižek, 2002 152)

The firmest put-down of my analysis, from a radical perspective, would be to describe it as “reformist” Perhaps it is But to dismiss it on these grounds would, I think, be a mistake, as it is premised, above all else, on a realist acceptance of the political *fact* of neo-liberal hegemony (in any case, the interminability of the appropriation-colonisation dialectic renders any reformist-radical split increasingly unstable – in *practice*) The usurper of neo-liberal common sense will, in this author’s view, not arrive fully formed (direct from some consciousness template), and needs to be the outcome of a politicisation of what is now de-politicised, and the by-product of a collective “refusal” (see Hardt and Negri, 2001 204) to defer to the banal mechanisms of everyday life which are the *practical* basis of neo-liberal authority It means, in effect, a politicisation of practice itself – nowhere more urgently than in media

10 6 Conclusion

This chapter has offered critical reflections on the implications of this study’s findings for media, research and critical practice It suggests media practitioners need to be more attuned to the representational effect of their labour, and be more self-reflexive about their institutional relationship to the “meta-field” of power It points to several ways in which the concerns of this study could form the basis of future research And it argues for the development of a more nuanced critique of neo-liberalism, that can work within, yet nevertheless challenge, the structural constraints of contemporary media and political practice

Bibliography

- Adonis, Andrew, and Tim Hames (1994) "Introduction history, perspectives" and "Conclusion" in Andrew Adonis and Times Hames (Ed) *A Conservative Revolution? – The Thatcher- Reagan decade in perspective* , Manchester and New York Manchester University Press, pp 1-17 & 238-252
- Adorno, Theodar and Max Horkheimer (1995) "The culture industry enlightenment as mass deception" in Simon During (Ed) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London and New York Routledge
- Adorno, Theodor W (1997) "Culture Industry Reconsidered" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 533-542
- Akhaavan, Majid, Rya and Joyita Ramaprasad (2000) "Framing Bejmg Dominant Ideological Influences on the American Press Coverage of the Fourth UN Conference on Women and the NGO forum in *Gazette The International Journal for Communication Studies*, Vol 62, No 1, pp 45-60
- Alasuutari, Pertti (2002) "Three phases of reception studies" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- Allan, Stuart (1998) "News from Nowhere Televisual News Discourse and the Construction of Hegemony" in Allan Bell and Peter Garret (Ed) *Approaches to Media Discourse*, Great Britain, Blackwell Publishers
- Allor, Martin (1995) "Relocating the site of the audience" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Althaus, Scott L , Jill A Edy and Patricia F Phalen (2001) "Using Substitutes for Full-Text News Stories in Content Analysis Which Text is Best?" in *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol 45, Issue 3, pp 707-723
- Altheide, David L (1996) *Qualitative Media Analysis*, London and New Delhi, Sage

- Althusser, Louis (1994) "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" in Slavoj Žižek (Ed) *Mapping Ideology*, London and New York Verso
- Ang, Ien (1995) "Dallas and the ideology of mass culture" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Appel, Karl-Otto (1986) "Perspectives for a General Hermeneutic Theory" in Kurt Mueller (Ed) *The Hermeneutics Reader Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present, United Kingdom*, Basil Blackwell
- Archibugi, Daniele (2002) "Demos and Cosmopolis" in *New Left Review*, January-February, 2002
- Aristotle (1994) *Rhetoric*, in The Internet Classics Archive by Daniel C Stevenson, Web Atomic (C) 1994-2000
- Arnt-Aune, James (2001) *Selling the Free Market The Rhetoric of Economic Correctness*, New York, London The Guilford Press
- Arruda, Marcos (1996) "Neo-liberal Adjustment and Globalization A Southern Perspective" in *Trocaire Development Review*, pp 15-32
- Ashford, Nigel (1993) "The ideas of the New Right" in Grant Jordan and Nigel Ashford (Ed) *Public Policy and the Impact of the New Right*, London and New York Pinter Publishers, pp 19-46
- Barrett, Michele (1994) "Ideology, Politics, Hegemony From Gramsci to Laclau and Mouffe" in Slavoj Žižek (Ed) *Mapping Ideology*, London and New York Verso
- Barry Jones, R J (1988) "Political Economy contending perspectives on a changing world" in R J Barry Jones (Ed) *The Worlds of Political Economy*, London and New York Pinter Publishers
- Barry, Norman P (1984) "The 'Austrian' Perspective" in David K Whynes (Ed) *What is Political Economy Eight Perspectives*, Oxford and New York Basil Blackwell
- Barthes, Roland (2000) *Mythologies*, United Kingdom Vintage Press

- Barthes, Roland (2002) "Rhetoric of the image" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- Beaud, Michel and Gillies Dostaler (1997) *Economic Thought Since Keynes A History and Dictionary of Major Economists*, London and New York Routledge
- Beck, Ulrich (1999) "Beyond the Nation State" in *The New Statesman*, December 6th, 1999
- Beck, Ulrich and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim (1995) *The Normal Chaos of Love*, United Kingdom Polity Press
- Beck, Ulrich (1996) *The Reinvention of Politics Rethinking modernity in the Global Social Order*, Cambridge, Mass Polity Press
- Beichman, Arnold (2000) "The Hayek Century" in *The Washington Times*, February 11th, 2000
- Bell, Allen and Peter Garret (Ed) (1998) *Approaches to Media Discourse*, Great Britain Blackwell Publishers
- Berelson, Bernard (1999) "Content Analysis in Communication Research" in Paul Marris and Sue Thornham (Ed) *Media Studies A Reader*, Edinburgh Edinburgh University Press, pp 200-209
- Billig, Michael (1996) *Arguing and Thinking A Rhetorical Approach to Social Psychology*, Great Britain Cambridge University Press
- Billig, Michael (2000) "Towards a critique of the critical" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 11 (3), 291-292
- Billig, Michael and Emanuel A Schegloff (1999) "Critical Discourse Analysis and Conversation Analysis an exchange between Michael Billig and Emanuel A Schegloff" in *Discourse & Society*, Vol 10, No 4
- Blumler, Jay G (1995) "Mass communication research in Europe some origins and prospects" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Blumler, Jay G and Michael Gurevitch (1995) "Politicians and the press an essay on role relationships" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Borosage, Robert (1999) "The Battle of Seattle" in *The Nation*, December 6th, 1999

- Bourdieu, Pierre (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, United Kingdom Cambridge University Press
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge, Polity Press
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1992) "Commentary on the Commentaries" in *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol 21, Issue 2, pp 158-161
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1998a) *Acts of Resistance Against the New Myths of Our Time*, England Polity Press
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1998b) *On Television and Journalism*, London Pluto
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1998c) *Practical Reason On the Theory of Action*, Cambridge Polity Press
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Loic Wacquant (2000) "Commentary "NewLiberalSpeak Notes on the news planetary vulgate" in *Radical Philosophy*, 105
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Terry Eagleton (1994) "Doxa and Common Life An Interview" in Slavoj Žižek (Ed) *Mapping Ideology*, London and New York Verso
- Boyd-Barrett, Oliver (1995) "The political economy approach" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Boyd-Barrett, Oliver (1995) "Early theories in media research" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Boyd-Barrett, Oliver (1995) "The political economy approach" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Boyd-Barrett, Oliver and Chris Newbold (1995) "Editors' introduction approaching the media" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Buchanan, James M (1987) "The Constitution of Economic Policy" in *The American Economic Review*, Vol 77, Issue 3, pp 243-250
- Buchanan, James M (1991) "Economics in the Post-Socialist Century" in *The Economic Journal*, Vol 101, issue 404, 15-21
- Buchanan, James M (1989) "Post-Reagan Political Economy" in *Reaganomics and After*, Great Britain Institute of Economic Affairs, pp 1-15

- Budd, Alan (1989) "Reaganomics – A UK Perspective" in *Reaganomics and After*, Great Britain Institute of Economic Affairs, pp 89-109
- Burke, Kenneth (1969a) *A Grammar of Motives*, Berkley, Los Angeles, London University of California Press, original 1945
- Burke, Kenneth (1969b) *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Berkley, Los Angeles, London University of California Press, original 1950
- Burke, Kenneth, (1984) *Permanence and Change An Anatomy of Purpose*, Berkley, Los Angeles and London University of California Press, original 1935
- Caldwell, Bruce (2000) "Hayek, Right for the Wrong Reasons?", *Presidential Address, History of Economics Society*, July 2nd, 2000, www.hayekcenter.org/friedrichhayek/hayek.html
- Callinos, Alex "Social Theory Put to the Test of Politics Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens", *New Left Review*, 1/236, July–August 1999
- Callon (1998b) "An Essay On framing and Overflowing Economic Externalities Revisited By Sociology" in Michael Callon (Ed) *The Laws of the Market*, Oxford Blackwell
- Callon, Michael (1998a) "The Embeddedness of Economic Markets in Economics" in Michael Callon (Ed) *The Laws of the Market*, Oxford Blackwell
- Camargo Heck, Marina (1984 – reprinted) "The Ideological dimension of media messages" in Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (Ed) *Culture, Media, Language*, London Melbourne Sydney Auckland Johannesburg, Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies University of Birmingham
- Carter, Jr, Roy E (1958) "Newspaper 'Gatekeepers' and the Sources of News in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol 22, Issue 2, pp 133-144
- Cherwitz, Richard A and James W Hikins (1986) *Communication and knowledge an investigation in rhetorical epistemology*, Columbia, SC University of South Carolina Press
- Chiapello, Eve and Norman Fairclough (2002) "Understanding the new management ideology a transdisciplinary contribution from critical discourse analysis and new sociology of capitalism" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 13, No 2

- Chomsky, Daniel (1999) "The mechanisms of management control at the *New York Times*" in *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol 21, No 5, pp 579-599
- Chomsky, Noam (1992) *Deterring Democracy*, United Kingdom Vintage Press
- Chomsky, Noam (1989) *Necessary Illusions Thought Control in Democratic Societies*, London Pluto
- Chomsky, Noam (1998) *Profit Over People Neo-liberalism and Global Order*, New York Seven Stories Press
- Chouliaraki, Lille and Norman Fairclough (1999) *Discourse in Late Modernity Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*, Great Britain Edinburgh University Press
- Cockett, Richard (1995) *Thinking The Unthinkable Think-Tanks and The Economic Counter-revolution, 1931-1983*, Great Britain, Fontana Press
- Condit, Celeste M., Alex Ferguson, Rachell Kassel, Chitra Thadhani, Hollyf Catherine Gooding and Roxanne Parrott (2001) "An Exploratory Study of the Impact of News Headlines on Genetic Determinism" in *Science Communication*, Vol 22, No 4, pp 379-395
- Condit, Celeste Michelle (1995) "Kenneth Burke and Linguistic Reflexivity Reflections on the Scene of the Philosophy of Communication in the Twentieth Century" in Bernard L. Brock Ed, *Kenneth Burke and Contemporary European Thought Rhetoric in Transition*, Tuscaloosa and London The University of Alabama Press
- Connell, Robert (2001) "Masculinities, violence and peacemaking" in *Peace News*, Issue 243, June to August 2001, <http://www.peacenews.info/issues/2443>
- Corbett, Edward P J and Robert J Connors (1999) *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, New York and Oxford Oxford University Press, original 1965
- Corner, John (1996) "Reappraising Reception Aims, Concepts and Methods" in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (Ed) *Mass Media and Society*, London, New York, Sydney and Auckland Arnold
- Cox, Harvey (1999) "The Market as God Living in The New Dispensation" in *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 1999
- Curran James (1995) "The new revisionism in mass communication research a reappraisal" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader* London and New York Arnold

- Curran, James (1996) "Mass Media and Democracy Revisited" in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (Ed) *Mass Media and Society*, London, New York, Sydney and Auckland Arnold
- Curran, James, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott (1995) "The study of the media theoretical approaches" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Dahlgren, Peter (1997) "Cultural Studies as a Research Perspective Themes and Tensions" in Corner et al (Eds) *International Media Research A Critical Survey*
- Dahlgren, Peter (2002) "The public sphere as historical narrative" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- Dahrendorf, Ralf (1999) "Whatever Happened to Liberty" in *The New Statesman*, September 6th, 1999
- Davis, Aeron (2000) "Public relations, news production and changing patterns of source access in the British national media" in *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol 22, No 1, pp 39-60
- Dayan, Daniel and Elihu Katz (2002) "Defining media events" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- De Gortari, Carlos Salinas, and Roberto Mangabeira Unger (1999) "The Market Turn without Neo-liberalism", *Challenge*, January/February 1999, pp 15
- Deacon, David and Wendy Monk (2001) "Quangos and the 'Communications Dependent Society'" in *European Journal of Communication*, Vol 16, No 1, pp 25-49
- Dearing, James W and Everett M Rogers (1996) *Communication Concepts 6 Agenda Setting*, California, London and New Delhi Sage, pp 1-23 & 88-100
- Devereux, Eoin (1998) *Devils and angels television, ideology and the coverage of poverty*, Luton University of Luton Press

- Dilthey, Wilhelm (1986) "The Hermeneutics of the Human Sciences" in Kurt Mueller (Ed) *The Hermeneutics Reader Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, United Kingdom, Basil Blackwell
- During, Simon (1993) "Introduction" in Simon During (Ed) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London and New York Routledge
- Eagleton, Terry (1991) *Ideology An Introduction*, London and New York Verso
- Eagleton, Terry (1996) *The Function of Criticism From The Spectator to Post-Structuralism*, London and New York Verso
- Eilders, Chistine (2002) "Conflict and Consonance in Media opinion Political Positions of Five German Quality Newspapers" in *European Journal of Communication*, Vol 17, No 1
- Eldridge, John (2000) "The Contribution of the Glasgow Media Group to the Study of Television and Print Journalism" in *Journalism Studies*, Vol 1, Number 1, pp 113-127
- Entman, Robert M (2002) "Framing towards clarification of a fractured paradigm" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- Fairclough, Norman (1993) *Discourse and Social Change*, United Kingdom, Polity Press
- Fairclough, Norman (1995) *Media Discourse*, Great Britain Arnold
- Fairclough, Norman (1998) "Political Discourse in the Media An Analytical Framework" in Alan Bell and Peter Garret (Ed) *Approaches to Media Discourse*, United Kingdom, Blackwell Publishers
- Fairclough, Norman (2000) *New Labour, New Language*, Great Britain Routledge
- Fairclough, Norman (2001) "Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific research" in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds), 121-137 London, New Delhi Sage
- Fairclough, Norman (2002) "Language in New Capitalism" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 13, No 2
- Fairclough, Norman (2003) "'Political correctness' the politics of culture and language" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 14, No 1, pp 17-28
- Faisal Islam (2000) "Free trade gets a facelift" in *The Observer*, July 2, 2000

- Feasey, Richard and Tim Hames (1994) "Anglo American Think Tanks under Reagan and Thatcher" in Andrew Adonis and Tim Hames (Ed) *A Conservative Revolution? The Thatcher- Reagan decade in perspective*, Manchester and New York Manchester University Press, pp 215-237
- Flynn, Roddy (2002) "Broadcasting and the Celtic Tiger From Promise to Practice" in Peadar Kirby, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin (Ed) (2002) *Reinventing Ireland Culture, Society and the Global Economy*, London Pluto Press
- Foss, Sonja K, Karen A Foss and Robert Trapp (1991) *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, USA Waveland Press
- Fowler, Roger (1991) *Language in the News Discourse and Ideology in the Press*, London and New York, Routledge
- Frank, Thomas (2001) "Market's 'R' Us" in *The New Statesman*, January 8th, 2001
- Frank, Thomas (2001) *One Market Under God Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism and the End of Economic Democracy*, London Secker & Warburg
- Franklin, Bob (1997) *Newszak and News Media*, London and New York Arnold
- Friedman, Milton (1953) "Economic Advice and Political Limitations Rejoinder in *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol 35, Issue 3, pp 252
- Friedman, Milton (1962) *Capitalism and Freedom*, Chicago & London The University of Chicago Press
- Friedman, Milton (1968) "The Role of Monetary Policy" in *The American Economic Review*, Vol 58, Issue 1 pp 1-17
- Friedman, Milton (1995) "Best of Both Worlds", Interviewed by Brian Doherty, *Reason Magazine*, June 1995, http://www.reason.com/9506/FRIEDMAN_jun.html
- Friedman, Milton and Rose D Friedman (1980) *Free to Choose A Personnel Statement*, USA, Avon Books
- Friedrich, Carl J (1955) "The Political Thought of Neo-liberalism" in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol 19, Issue 2, pp 509-525

- Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1986) "The Historicity of Understanding" in Kurt Mueller (Ed) *The Hermeneutics Reader Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, United Kingdom, Basil Blackwell
- Galbraith, John Kenneth (1991) "Economics in the Century Ahead" in *The Economic Journal*, Vol 101, Issue 404, pp 41-46
- Galbraith, John Kenneth, (1996) *The Good Society, The Humane Agenda*, USA Sinclair and Stevenson Press
- Galtung, Johan and Mari Ruge (1981) "Structuring and selecting news" in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (Ed) *The manufacture of news Social problems, deviance and the mass media*, London and California Constable
- Gamble, Andrew (1999) "The Last Utopia" in *The New Left Review*, Issue 236, July/August 1999
- Gandy Jr, Oscar H (1997) "The Political Economy Approach A Critical Challenge" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 86-106
- Garham, Nicholas (1990) *Capitalism and Communication Global Culture and the Economics of Information*, London and New Delhi, Sage Publications, pp 20-55,
- Garnham, Nicholas (1995) "Contribution to a political economy of mass communication" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Garnham, Nicholas (1995) "The media and the public sphere" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Garnham, Nicholas and Raymond Williams (1990) "Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture An Introduction with Raymond Williams" in *Capitalism and Communication Global Culture and the Economics of Information*, London and New Delhi, Sage Publications, pp 70-88

- Gartman, David (1991) "Culture as Class Symbolisation or Mass Reification? A Critique of Bourdieu's Distinction" in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 97, Issue 2
- George, Susan (1997) "Winning The War of Ideas – Lessons from The Gramscian Right" in *Dissent Magazine*, Summer 1997, <http://www.tni.org/george/articles/dissent.htm>
- Gerbner, George (1995) "Towards 'cultural indicators' the analysis of mass mediated public message systems in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Gitlin, Todd (1995) "Media sociology the dominant paradigm" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Gledhill, Chris (2000) "The discourse function of collocation in research article introductions" in *English for Specific Purposes 19*, 115-135 (see www.elsevier.com)
- Golding Peter and Graham Murdock (1996) "Culture, Communications and Political Economy" in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (Ed) *Mass Media and Society*, London, New York, Sydney and Auckland Arnold
- Golding, Peter and Graham Murdock (1997) "Ideology and the Mass Media The Question of Determination" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 476-506
- Good, Leslie T (1997) "Power, Hegemony, and Communication Theory" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 507-521
- Goodwin, Ian and Steve Spittle (2002) "The European Union and the information society Discourse, power and policy" in *New Media and Society*, Vol 4, No 2, pp 225-249
- Gouldner, Alvin W (2002) "The communications revolution news, public, and ideology" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage

- Graham, Andrew (1997) "The UK 1979-1985 Myths and Realities of Conservative Capitalism" in Colin Crouch & Wolfgang Streeck (Ed) *Political Economy of Modern Capitalism Mapping Convergence and Diversity*, London Sage Publications
- Graham, Phil (2002) "Hypercapitalism language, new media and social perceptions of value" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 13, No 2
- Gray, John (1986) *Liberalism*, Great Britain, Open University Press
- Gray, John (1998a) *False Dawn The Delusions of Global Capitalism*, London, Granta Books
- Gray, John (1998b) *Hayek On Liberty*, London and New York Routledge
- Greider, William (2000) "Global Agenda" in *The Nation*, January 31, 2000
- Greider, William (2000) "Unfinished Business Clinton's Lost Presidency" in *The Nation* February 14, 2000
- Gunatratne, Shelton A (2002) "Freedom of the Press A World System Perspective" in *Gazette, The International Journal for Communication Studies*, Vol 64, No 4, pp 343-370
- Gunter, Barrie (2000) *Media Research Methods Measuring Audiences, Reactions and Impact*, London, California and New Delhi, Sage
- Habermas, Jurgen (1986) "Hermeneutics and the Social Sciences" in Kurt Mueller (Ed) *The Hermeneutics Reader Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, United Kingdom, Basil Blackwell
- Habermas, Jurgen (1999) "The Public Sphere" in Paul Marris and Sue Thornham (Ed) *Media Studies A Reader*, Edinburgh Edinburgh University Press, pp 92-98
- Hall, Alice (2000) "The Mass Media, Cultural Identity and Perceptions of National Character An Analysis of Frames in Us and Canadian Coverage of Audiovisual Materials in the GATT" in *Gazette The International Journal for Communication Studies*, Vol 62, Nos 3-4, pp 231-250
- Hall, Stuart (1981) "The determinations of news photographs" in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (Ed) *The manufacture of news*, London Constable, pp 226-243,

- Hall, Stuart (1984 – reprinted) “Encoding/decoding” in Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (Ed) *Culture, Media, Language*, London Melbourne Sydney Auckland Johannesburg, Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies University of Birmingham
- Hall, Stuart (1984 – reprinted) “Introduction to Media Studies at the Centre” in Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (Ed) *Culture, Media, Language*, London Melbourne Sydney Auckland Johannesburg, Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies University of Birmingham
- Hall, Stuart (1995) “Cultural studies two paradigms” in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Hall, Stuart (1995) “The rediscovery of ‘ideology’ return of the repressed in media studies in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Halliday, M A K (1978) *Language as social semiotic The social interpretation of language and meaning*, Great Britain Australia and USA Edward Arnold
- Halliday, M A K, (1994) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, United Kingdom Edward Arnold Press
- Hansen, Anders, Simon Cottle, Ralph Negrine and Chris Newbold (1998) *Mass Communication Research Methods*, Basingstoke Macmillan
- Hardt, Hanno (1995) “On ignoring history mass communication research and the critique of society” in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Hargreaves-Heap, Shaun and Martin Hollis (1984) “Bread and Circumstances The Need for Political Economy” in David K Whyne (Ed) *What is Political Economy Eight Perspectives*, Oxford and New York Basil Blackwell
- Harris, Roy (1990) *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein How to play games with words*, London and New York, Routledge
- Harvey, David (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford Blackwell Publishers
- Hayek, F A (1982) *Law, Legislation and Liberty* London Routledge

- Hayek, F A (1943) "The Facts of the Social Sciences" in *Ethics*, vol 54, issue 1, pp 1-13
- Hayek, F A (1944) *The Road To Serfdom*, London Routledge
- Hayek, F A (1960) *The Constitution of Liberty*, London and New York, Routledge
- Hayek, F A (1977) "The Road From Serfdom Foreseeing the Fall", interviewed by Thomas W Hazlett in *Reason Magazine*, May 1977
[http //www reason com/hayekint.html](http://www.reason.com/hayekint.html)
- Heidegger, Martin (1975) *Poetry, Language, Thought*, New York Harper and Row
- Heidegger, Martin (1986) "Phenomenology and Fundamental Ontology The Disclosure of Meaning" in Kurt Mueller (Ed) *The Hermeneutics Reader Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present, United Kingdom*, Basil Blackwell
- Heilbroner, Robert (1986) *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism*, New York and London W W Norton & Company
- Henderson, David (2000) "Anti Liberalism 2000", *Wincott Lecture*, Institute of Economic Affairs, [http //www iea org uk/wpapers/wincottintro.htm](http://www.iea.org.uk/wpapers/wincottintro.htm)
- Heritage, John and David Greatbatch (1986) "Generating Applause A Study of Rhetoric and Response at Party Political Conferences" in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 92, Issue 1, 110-157
- Herman, Edward S and Noam Chomsky (1994) *Manufacturing Consent The Political Economy of Mass Media*, Great Britain Vintage
- Herman, Edward S and Robert W McChesney (1997) *The Global Media The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism*, London and Washington, Cassell
- Higgs, Robert (2000) "The So-Called Third Way" in *The Independent Review A Journal of Political Economy*, Vol IV, No 4
- Hill, David B (1985) "Viewer Characteristics and Agenda Setting by Television News" in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol 49, Issue 3, pp 340-350
- Hindmoor, Andrew (1999) "Austrian Economics, Thatcherism and Barriers to Entry" in *New Political Economy*, Vol 4, No 2, 1999
- Hobsbawm, Eric, (1998) *On History*, United Kingdom Abacus Press

- Hobson, John M and M Ramesh (2002) "Globalisation Makes of States What States Make of It Between Agency and Structure in the State/Globalisation Debate in *New Political Economy*, Vol 17, No 1, pp 5-22
- Hobson, John M and M Ramesh (2002) "Globalisation Makes of States What States Make of It Between Agency and Structure in the State/Globalisation Debate" in *New Political Economy*, Vol 7, No 1
- Horgan, John 2001 *Irish Media A Critical History Since 1992* London and New York Routledge
- Husserl, Edmund (1986) "The Phenomenological Theory of Meaning and of Meaning Apprehension" in Kurt Mueller (Ed) *The Hermeneutics Reader Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present, United Kingdom*, Basil Blackwell
- Ingarden, Roman (1986) "On the Cognition of the Literary Work of Art" in Kurt Mueller (Ed) *The Hermeneutics Reader Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present, United Kingdom*, Basil Blackwell
- Jager, Siegfried 2001 "Discourse and knowledge Theoretical and methodological aspects of a critical discourse and dispositive analysis" In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds), 34-62 London, New Delhi Sage
- Jameson, Fredric (1994) "Postmodernism and the Market" in Slavoj Žižek (Ed) *Mapping Ideology*, London and New York Verso
- Janowitz, Morris (1968) "Harold D Lasswell's Contribution to Content Analysis" in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol 32, Issue 4, pp 646-653
- Jospin, Lionel (1999) "Only in Our Terms" in *The Guardian*, November 16th 1999
- Judis, John B (1999) "Germany dispatch Middle of Nowhere" in *The New Republic*, November 29, 1999
- Katz, Elihu and Paul F Lazarsfeld (1995) "Between media and mass/the part played by people/the two-step flow of communication" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Kelstedt, Paul M (2000) "Media Framing and the Dynamics of Racial Policy Preferences" in *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol 44, Issue 2, pp 245-260

- Kirby, Peadar (1996) "The Chilean Economic Miracle A Model for Latin America?" in *Trocaire Development Review*, pp 66-85
- Kirby, Peadar (2002a) *The Celtic Tiger in Distress Growth with Inequality in Ireland*, Great Britain Palgrave
- Kirby, Peadar (2002b) "Contested Pedigrees of the Celtic Tiger" in Peadar Kirby, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin (Ed) (2002) *Reinventing Ireland Culture, Society and the Global Economy*, London Pluto Press
- Kirby, Peadar (2002b) "The World Bank or Polanyi Markets, Poverty and Social Well-being in Latin America" in *New Political Economy*, Vol 7, No 2, pp 199-219
- Kirby, Peadar, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin (Ed) (2002) *Reinventing Ireland Culture, Society and the Global Economy*, London Pluto Press
- Klaehn, Jeffery (2002) "A Critical Review and Assessment of Herman Chomsky's 'Propaganda Model'" in *European Journal of Communication*, Vol 17, No 2, pp 147-182
- Klapper, Joseph T (1995) "The effects of mass communication" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Kracauer, Siegfried (1952) "The Challenge of Qualitative Content Analysis" in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol 16, Issue 4, pp 631-642
- Krugman, Paul (1998) "The Return of Demand-Side Economics", Honorary degree ceremony in Berlin, 4, December 1998, <http://www.wiwiss.fu-berlin.de/w3/w3collie/krugman/rede.html>
- Kwansah, Aidoo (2003) "Events That Matter Specific Incidents, Media Coverage, and Agenda-Setting in a Ghanaian Context" in *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol 28, pp 43-66
- Kwansah-Aidoo, Kawmena (2001) "The Appeal of Qualitative Methods to Traditional Agenda-Setting Research An Example from West Africa" in *Gazette The International Journal for Communication Studies*, Vol 63, No 6, pp 521-538
- Lacan, Jacques (1994), "The Mirror-phase as Formative of the Function of the I" in Slavoj Žižek (Ed) *Mapping Ideology*, London and New York Verso
- Lacher, Hannes (1999) "Embedded Liberalism, Disembedded Markets Reconceptualising the Pax Americana" in *New Political Economy*, Vol 4, No 3

- Lane Bruner, M (2002) "Taming 'wild capitalism'" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 13, No 2
- Langley, Paul and Mary Mellor (2002) "'Economy', Sustainability and Sites of Transformative Space" in *New Political Economy*, Vol 7, No 1, pp 49-65
- Lasswell, Harold D (1995) "The structure and function of communication in society" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Lawson, Mark (1999) "Designer drive" in *The Guardian*, January 9, 1999
- Leander, Anna (2001) "Pierre Bourdieu on Economics" in *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol 8, No 2
- Lee, George (2002) "Economic and financial journalism as a public service" in Damien Kiberd (Ed) *Media in Ireland Issues in Broadcasting, Ireland and USA*, Open Air
- Lee, JJ (1989) *Ireland (1912-1985), Politics and Society*, United Kingdom Cambridge University Press
- Lichtenberg, Judith (2002) "Foundations and limits of freedom of the press" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- Liebes, Tamar and Elihu Katz (1995) "Patterns of involvement in television fiction a comparative analysis" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Lissack, Michael R (1998) "Concept Sampling – A New Twist For Content Analysis" in *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol 1, No 4
- Livingstone, Sonia (1997) "The Work of Elihu Katz Conceptualising Media Effects in Context" in Corner et al (Eds) *International Media Research A Critical Survey* ???
- Lloyd, John (2000) "The Left discovers Adam Smith" in the *New Statesman*, June 12th 2000
- Lukes, Steven (1973) *Individualism*, Oxford Basil Blackwell
- Lyotard, Jean-Francois (1993) "Defining the postmodern" in Simon During (Ed) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London and New York Routledge

- Mac Sharry, Ray and Padraic White (2001) *The making of the Celtic tiger the inside story of Ireland's boom economy* Cork Mercier Press
- Marquand, David (1999) "A philosophy that would not die" in the *New Statesman*, February 26th 1999
- Marshall, James D (1995) "Foucault and Neo-Liberalism Biopower and Busno-power" in *Philosophy of Education*, 1995, http://www.ed.uuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/95_docs/marshall.html
- Martin P & Phelan S, 2002, "Representing Islam in the Wake of September 11", *Prometheus*, vol 20, No 3, Pages 263-269
- Martinez, Elizabeth and Arnaldo Garcia (1996) "What is 'Neo-liberalism' A Brief Definition for Activists", <http://www.corpwatch.org/trac/corner/glob/neolib.html>
- McChesney (1998) "Introduction" in Noam Chomsky *"Profit Over People Neo-liberalism and Global Order"*, New York Seven Stories Press, pp 6-13
- McChesney, Robert W (1997) "Off Limits An Inquiry Into the Lack of Debate over the Ownership, Structure and Control of the Mass Media in U S Political Life" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 107-125
- McChesney, Robert W (2000) "Commentary The political economy of communication and the future of the field" in *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol 22, No 1, pp 109-116
- McCloskey, Donald N (1994) *Knowledge and persuasion in economics*, Great Britain, Australia and USA, Cambridge University Press
- McCloskey, Donald N (1986) *The Rhetoric of Economics*, Brighton Harvester Press Publishing
- Mclemee, Scott (1999) "The Heirs of Ayn Rand Has Objectivism Gone Subjective?" in *Lingua Franca*, Vol 9, No 6 September 1999
- McManus, John H (2002) "Does serving the market conflict with serving the public" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- McMichael, Philip (2000) "Sleepless since Seattle What is the WTO about?" in *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol 7, No 3

- McQuail, Denis (1996) "Towards a Framework of Norms of Media Performance" in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (Ed) *Mass Media and Society*, London, New York, Sydney and Auckland Arnold
- McQuail, Denis (2002) "General Introduction" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- Meyer, Michael (2001) "Between theory, method, and politics positioning of the approaches to CDA" in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds), 34-62 London, New Delhi Sage
- Minford, Patrick (1989) "Reaganomics and Thatcherism Deficits, Currencies and Monetary Control" in *Reaganomics and After*, Great Britain Institute of Economic Affairs, pp 63-73
- Monk, Ray (1990) *Ludwig Wittgenstein The Duty of Genius*, United Kingdom, Vintage Press
- Montgomery, Martin (1999) "D & S Forum On ideology" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 10, No 3
- Mueller-Volmer, Kurt (1986) "Introduction Language, Mind and Artifact An Outline of Hermeneutic Theory Since the Enlightenment" in Kurt Mueller (Ed) *The Hermeneutics Reader Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, United Kingdom, Basil Blackwell
- Murdock, Graham (1997) "Blindspots About Western Marxism A Reply to Dallas Smythe" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 465-475
- Murdock, Graham (1997) "Transforming Media Structures Ownership, Policy and Regulation" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 308-323
- Murdock, Graham and Peter Golding (1997) "For a Political Economy of Mass Communications" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 3-32
- Nafissi, Mohammad R (2000) "The Paradox of Principles The Dialectics of Hayek's Liberalism" in *Economy and Society*, Vol 29, No 2

- Naim Moses (1999) "Fads and Fashion in Economic Reforms, Washington Consensus or Washington Confusion" in *Foreign Policy Magazine*, October 26, 1999, Working Draft of a Paper Prepared for the IMF Conferences on Second Generation Reforms, Washington, DC
- Namenwirth, J Zvi (1969) "Marks of Distinction An Analysis of British Mass and Prestige Newspaper Editorials" in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 74, Issue 3
- Nelson, Thomas E, Rosalee A Clawson and Zoe M Oxley (1997) "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance" in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol 81, Issue 3, pp 567-583
- Niskanen, William A (1988) *Reaganomics An Insider's Account of The Policies and The People*, New York and Oxford Oxford University Press
- Niskanen, William A (1989) "Reaganomics A Balanced Assessment" in *Reaganomics and After*, Great Britain Institute of Economic Affairs, 17-21
- Nye, Andrea (1998) *Philosophy of Language The Big Questions*, United Kingdom Blackwell Publishers
- O'Donohue, Miriam, (2000) "De Valera says directives impinge on our culture", *The Irish Times*, September 19, 2000
- Ormerod, Paul (1994) *The Death of Economics*, London Faber, 1994
- Peacock, Alan (1989) "Introduction Some Methodological Questions" in *Reaganomics and After*, Great Britain Institute of Economic Affairs, 17-21, pp xi-xix
- Peters Michael (1996) "The Closure of Critique Embedding The New Regime", 1996 University of Auckland Winter Lecture Series, August, 1996, <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/dissent/documents/Kelsey.html>
- Phillips, Lynne (1998) "Conclusion Anthropology in the Age of Neoliberalism" in Lynne Phillips (Ed) *The Third Wave of Modernization in Latin America Cultural Perspectives on Neoliberalism*, Delaware Scholarly Resources, pp 193-2000
- Phillips, Lynne (1998) "Introduction Neoliberalism in Latin America" in Lynne Phillips (Ed) *The Third Wave of Modernization in Latin America Cultural Perspectives on Neoliberalism*, Delaware Scholarly Resources, pp xi-xxiv
- Phillips, Adam (2000) *Promises, Promises Essays on Literature and Psychoanalysis*, London Faber and Faber

- Polanyi, Karl (1957) *The Great Transformation*, Boston Beacon Press, original 1945
- Postrel, Virginia (1998) *The Future and its Enemies The Growing Conflict Over Creativity Enterprise and Progress*, New York Touchstone (Simon & Schuster)
- Postrel, Virginia (1999) "After Socialism" in *Reason Magazine*, November 1999
- Potter, Garry (2000) "For Bourdieu, Against Alexander Reality and Reduction" in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, Vol 30, No 2
- Preoteasa, Isabela (2002) "Intellectuals and the public sphere in post-communist Romania a discourse analytical perspective" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 13, No 2
- Priest Susanna Hornig (1996) *Doing Media Research An Introduction*, California, London and New Delhi, Sage
- Radway, Janice (1993) "The institutional matrix of romance" in Simon During (Ed) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, Routledge,
- Raghavan, Chakravarthi (2000) "After Seattle, World Trade System Faces Uncertain Future" in *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol 7, No 3
- Rajagopalan, Kanavillil (1999) "D & S forum Discourse analysis and the need for being critical all the way through" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 10, No 3
- Reay, Diane (2000) "A useful extension of Bourdieu's conceptual framework? emotional capital as a way of understanding mothers' involvement in their children's education?" in *The Sociological Review*
- Reich, Robert, B (1999) "We Are All Third Wayers Now" in *The American Prospect* no 43, March-April 1999
- Reich, Simon (1998) Review of "The Myth of the Powerless State Governing the Economy in Global Era" by Linda Weiss, in *New Political Economy*, Vol 4, No 2, 1999, pp 305-310
- Riddell, Peter (1994) "Ideology in Practice" in Andrew Adonis and Tim Hames (Ed) *A Conservative Revolution? The Thatcher- Reagan decade in perspective*, Manchester and New York Manchester University Press, pp 19-41
- Rivers, William L, Bryce McIntyre and Alison Work (1988) *Writing Opinion Editorials*, United States Iowa State University Press

- Robbins, Lionel (1981) "Economics and Political Economy" in *The American Economic Review*, Paper and Proceedings of the Ninety-Third Annual Meeting of The American Economic Association, Vol 71 Issue 2
- Roberts, Paul Craig (1989) "Supply Side Economics An Assessment of The Theory and Results of American Experience in the 1980s" in *Reaganomics and After*, Great Britain Institute of Economic Affairs, pp 23-61
- Rountree, Clarke J (1998) "Coming to Terms with Kenneth's Burke's Pentad" in *American Communication Journal*, Vol 1, Issue 3, see www.acjournal.org
- Russell, Bertrand (1961) *History of Western Philosophy*, London Routledge, original 1946
- Ryan, Alan (2000) "New Labour Needs a Moral Compass" in *The New Statesman*, February 8th 2000
- Ryerson, James (2000) "The Outrageous Pragmatism of Judge Richard Posner" in *Lingua Franca*, Vol 10, No 4, May 2000
- Rystrom, Kenneth (1983) *The Why, Who and How of the Editorial Page*, United States and Canada Random House
- Said, Edward (2000) "Problems of neoliberalism" in *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 7-13 September 2000, Issue No 498
- Said, Edward (2001) "The Public Role of Writers and Intellectuals" in *The Nation*, Septemebr 17, 2001
- Said, Edward W (1991) *The World, the Text and the Critic*, Great Britain Vintage
- Said, Edward, W, (1981) *Covering Islam How the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world*, New York Pantheon Books
- Schlesinger, Philip (1987) *Putting 'reality' Together BBC News*, London and New York Methuen
- Schudson, Michael (1996) "The Sociology of News Production Revisited" in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (Ed) *Mass Media and Society*, London, New York, Sydney and Auckland Arnold
- Scott, Allen J (1999) "Commentary The Cultural economy geography and the creative field" in *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol 21, No 6, pp 807-817
- Sen, Amartya K (1999) *Development as Freedom*, Oxford Oxford University Press

- Shaughnessy, Terry (1994) "Economic Policy" in Andrew Adonis and Tim Hames (Ed) *A Conservative Revolution? The Thatcher- Reagan decade in perspective*, Manchester and New York Manchester University Press, pp 89-113
- Smythe, Dallas (1997) "Communications Blindspot of Western Marxism" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 438-464
- Smythe, Dallas W (1954) "Reality as Presented by Television" in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol 18, Issue 2, pp 143-156
- Southwell (1987) *Kenneth Burke and Martin Heidegger With a Note Against Deconstructionism*, USA University of Florida Press
- Staunton, Dems(1999) "Schroder takes Control of Party and Government", *The Irish Times*, March 13 1999
- Stelzer, Irwin (1989) "Reaganomics, Thatcheromics and the Future" in *Reaganomics and After*, Great Britain Institute of Economic Affairs, pp 79-87
- Stemler, Steve (2001) "An overview of content analysis" in *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation*, Vol 7, No 17 Available online at www.ericae.net/pare
- Stiglitz, Joseph (2002) "Crony Capitalism American-style" in *Project Syndicate*, February 2002, www.project-syndicate.org
- Stiglitz, Joseph E (1998) "More Instruments and Broader Goals Moving toward the Post-Washington Consensus", *WIDER Annual Lectures 2*, Helsinki UNI/WIDER
- Strange, Susan (1997) "The Future of Global Capitalism, Or, Will Divergence Persist Forever" in Colin Crouch & Wolfgang Streeck (Ed) *Political Economy of Modern Capitalism Mapping Convergence and Diversity*, London Sage Publications
- Symon, Gillian (2000) "Everyday rhetoric Argument and persuasion in everyday life" in *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol 9, No 4, 477-488
- Tannen, Deborah (1991) *You Just Don't Understand, Women and Men in Conversation*, New York Ballantme Books

- Tannen, Deborah (1993) "What's in a Frame? Surface Evidence for Underlying Expectations" In *Framing in Discourse*, Deborah Tannen (Ed) New York, Oxford Oxford University Press
- The Irish Times* (2002) "Looking back with pride and forward with hope", March 11, 2002
- The Irish Times* (2003) "Rabbitte spells out his vision of a Fair Society", May 12, 2003
- Thompson, John (1995) *The Media and Modernity*, Cambridge Polity Press
- Tomlinson, John (2002) "The discourse of cultural imperialism" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- Tuchman, Gaye (1972) "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity" in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 77, Issue 4, pp 660-679
- Tuchman, Gaye (1978) *Making News A Study in the Construction of Reality*, New York and London The Free Press
- Tuchman, Gaye (1995) "The symbolic annihilation of women by the mass media" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Tunstall, Jeremy (1995) "Specialist correspondents goals, careers, roles" in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (Ed) *Approaches to Media A Reader*, London and New York Arnold
- Turner, Graeme (2000) "'Media Wars' Journalism, cultural and media studies in Australia" in *Journalism*, Vol 1(3) 353-365
- Turnstall, Jeremy (1997) "Media Imperialism" in Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (Ed) *The Political Economy of the Media Volume 1*, UK and US, Elgar, pp 560-587
- Van Dijk Teun, (1998) *Ideology A Multidisciplinary Approach*, Sage
- Van Dijk, Teun (1998b) "Opinions and Ideologies in the Press" in Allan Bell and Peter Garret (Ed) *Approaches to Media Discourse*, Great Britain, Blackwell Publishers

- Van Dijk, Teun (1999) "Critical Discourse Analysis and Conversation Analysis" in *Discourse & Society*, Vol 10, No 4
- Van Dijk, Teun (1999) "D and S Forum On ideology a rejoinder" in *Discourse and Society*, Vol 10, No 3
- Van Dijk, Teun (2001) "Multidisciplinary CDA a plea for diversity" *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds), 95-120 London, New Delhi: Sage
- Walsh, Dick (1999) "Why the press and pundits gloated Oskar's fall", *The Irish Times*, March 20, 1999,
- Weaver, Richard, M, (1984) *Ideas Have Consequences* , Chicago University of Chicago Press
- Werder, Olaf (2002) "Debating the Euro Media Agenda-Setting in a Cross-National Environment" in *Gazette, The International Journal for Communication Studies*, Vol 64, No 3, June 2002
- White, Robert and Dallas Hanson (2000) "Rationality and Rhetoric in the Corporate World The Corporate Annual Report as an Aristotelian Genre" in *Prometheus*, Vol 18, No 3, pp 303-317
- Williams Paul and Taylor Ian (2000) "Neo-Liberalism and the Political Economy of the 'New' South Africa" in *New Political Economy*, Vol 5, No 1
- Williams, Raymond (1993) "Advertising the magic system" in Simon During (Ed) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, Routledge
- Williamson, John (1993) "Democracy and the 'Washington Consensus'" in *World Development*, Vol 21, No 8, pp 1329-1336
- Williamson, John (1999) "What Should the Bank Think about the Washington Consensus?", *Institute of International Economics*, prepared as a background to the World Bank's Development Report 2000, www.ue.com/testimony/bankwc.htm
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1967) *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, Blackwell
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1999) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London and New York Routledge

- Wodak, Ruth (2001) "What CDA is about – a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments" in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds), 34-62 London, New Delhi Sage
- Wodak, Ruth 2001 "The discourse-historical approach" In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds), 63-94 London, New Delhi Sage
- Wright Mills, C (2002) "The mass society" in Denis McQuail (Ed) *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, London, California and New Delhi Sage
- Wu, Frank H (1999) "The Market Is the Measure", Review of "Quest for Cosmic Justice" by Thomas Sowell, *The Washington Post*, October 10, 1999
- Young, C (1999) "Hear Her Roar" in *Reason Magazine*, August/September 1999
- Žižek, Slavoj (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London, New York Verso
- Žižek, Slavoj (2002) *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, London, New York Verso

Appendices

**Appendix A - *The Irish Times* and the Lisbon summit:
sources and attributed sources**

Source	Stance	Key quote/attribution
1) Bertie Ahern	Favourable	"It is good to be able to offer the Irish experience as a model For that reason, I am pleased to see so much of the principles and values that underpin our approach at home reflected in today's conclusions"
2) David O'Sullivan	Favourable	"The conclusions are the most concrete I have seen out of any summit"
3) Romano Prodi	Favourable	"We must deliver our e-Europe vision by a clear date - a date every bit as visible as 1992 (the single market) or the date for the launch of the euro"
4) Antonio Guterres	Favourable	"Guterres, insisted 'the results of the Lisbon summit go well beyond our expectations' and represented 'a revolution' in the way we work"
5) Jamie Zabludovsky	Favourable	"What we are looking for is to generate more employment opportunities in Mexico This will be the crucial test for the accord [i.e. the Mexican-EU trade deal]"
6) Peter Brennan	Favourable	"The first time the business agenda has been fairly and squarely addressed by the EU"
7) Tony Blair	Favourable	"I believe this summit represents a sea change in EU economic thinking"
8) Lionel Jospin	Ambivalent	"It must happen"
9) Jose Maria Aznar	Favourable	"Fresh from a massive political victory, [he] urged his French counterpart not to be deflected from the path of reform, however difficult And he opposed the French attempt to set 3 per cent annual growth as a specific target, arguing that it should be seen instead as a desirable outcome of sound macroeconomic policies"
10) Goran Persson	Ambivalent	"Concerns were expressed by the Swedish Prime Minister, Mr Goran Persson, at the effect on small countries of megatakeovers"
11) Wim Kok	Favourable	"Mr Wim Kok, reminded colleagues that although there was much talk of the US lead in competitiveness, the EU was ahead in areas like education and infrastructure"
12) Pedro Solbes	Favourable	"The prospects of achieving real reform this time, he [Solbes] argues, are infinitely better precisely because of the platform created by that stabilisation and the growth now being seen throughout Europe"

Appendix B - <i>Irish Independent</i> and the Lisbon summit: sources and attributed sources		
Source	Stance	Key quote/attribution
1) Maria Rodriguez	Favourable	“Our proposition is to make Europe the most competitive economy in the world. If that’s possible, then we can overtake the US”
2) Unnamed Commission spokesman	Favourable	“We want to stimulate competition [in telecommunications] and drive down the cost to consumers”
3) Lionel Jospin	Ambivalent	“‘We cannot stand aside from modernity and the new economy,’ he conceded”
4) Antonio Guterres	Favourable	“We have a clear strategy and political commitment to turn the EU into the most competitive region in the world. It’s a win-win situation which balances social and economic priorities”
5) Tony Blair	Favourable	“[a] sea change in European economic thinking. It will open the door to the prospect of full employment in our countries. Twenty million jobs is a realistic figure”
6) Peter Brennan	Favourable	“This is one of the best summits ever. It has set out a very clear agenda which will be very relevant for Irish firm. Ireland is currently well ahead of the game, the trick now is to stay ahead, that’s the challenge”
7) Romano Prodi	Favourable	“At a press conference this week, he proclaimed that this would be one of the most positive summits ever, where there would be little disagreement between member states and a series of constructive policies approved”
8) Bertie Ahern	Favourable	“He welcomed the raft of new measures, which were proposed by Commission President Romano Prodi and are being finalised for approval later today by EU leaders”

Appendix C - <i>The Irish Times</i> and the Barcelona summit: sources and attributed sources		
Source	Stance	Key quote/attribution
1) Tony Blair	Favourable	"There is no doubt this is a change of gear for Europe and a very welcome change. There is no one really arguing about the direction. There may be some argument about the pace of movement"
2) Lionel Jospin	Ambivalent	"We agree to enter into a process of controlled and gradual liberalisation. We have succeeded in fending off those demands that we did not want to see adopted"
3) Anders Fogh Ramussen	Favourable	"There is a growing gap between the EU and the United States, both economic and technological. If there was a political will this could be a very important summit. There is a bit too much foot-dragging when it comes to the political will to see through reforms in Europe"
4) Bertie Ahern	Favourable	"The Taoiseach, Mr Ahern, expressed satisfaction at the summit's outcome and said that the EU was on track to fulfil its economic reform plan"

Appendix D - *Irish Independent* and the Barcelona summit: sources and attributed sources

Source	Stance	Key quote/attribution
1) Lionel Jospin	Ambivalent	"If there is agreement on a balanced set of priorities, France could accept the principle of opening up gas and electricity markets to business customers two years after the adoption of a directive".
2) EU analyst Tim Jones, from Medley Global Advisers.	Favourable	"Any shot in the arm for the zone is a shot in the arm for confidence in Ireland and the slow progress will hit recovery hopes".
3) Bertie Ahern	Favourable	"We all agree on the objectives, it's just that every leader places different emphasis in different areas".
4) EU's Economic Affairs Commissioner, Pedro Solbes	Favourable	"Refusing to concede failure, he said the 'tone of the summit was not bad and the success should be judged on the final details'".
5) Unidentified EU official	Favourable	"This [the new health card] will end the huge paperwork that occurs when people have to prove they are insured".
6) Finance Minister, Charlie McCreevy	Favourable	"They [Chirac and Jospin] spent the entire time carefully watching one another. They were going to huge efforts to ensure that they didn't agree to anything that could be exploited against them".
7) Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar	Favourable	"'a fundamental step' towards a more liberalised market".
8) Tony Blair	Favourable	"Tony Blair predicted that the Barcelona gathering would 'make or break' the reform agenda launched in Lisbon two years ago. But he was forced to concede that progress in the two-day summit had been 'limited but solid'".
9) Conservative Party Chairman David Davis	Favourable	"The summit had been a 'disaster' for the Prime Minister" [given the political identity of the speaker (see chapter 1), and his categorization of the (lethargic) summit as a "disaster" for Blair, one can safely assume that this comment bespeaks an implicit affirmation of the "reform" agenda].
10) Pat Cox	Favourable	"Mr Cox told the heads of state that he did not want rhetoric, but real substance to emerge from their reform plans".
11) Jack Straw, British Foreign	Favourable	"Mr Straw insisted that the UK's free-market agenda did not conflict with the focus on social

Secretary		justice of many of its European partners The increased prosperity released by free markets in energy and other commodities and greater flexibility of labour could be harnessed to provide the better social conditions which Europeans wanted to see, he said”
12) Unidentified tourist	Tangential	“I suddenly found myself trapped just as I was finishing my lunch, but it created a sort of war-time atmosphere and we just had another bottle of wine”

Appendix E – *The Irish Times* headlines: National Development Plan

General overview

- 1) *Plan will 'end imbalances which have disfigured Ireland'* – Ahern
Tim O'Brien, Regional Development Correspondent
- 2) *A national plan with something for everyone* A billion here, a billion there, quickly adds up to £ 36,500 for every taxpayer in the State, Sean Mac Carthaigh calculates
- 3) *Main points of Development Plan*
Unattributed
- 4) *EU contribution will be only 12% of total budget* The declining role of European Union Structural Funds is clearly evident in the plan. It is a case of increasingly funding big capital projects, as the Taoiseach put it, from 'our own resources', writes Kevin Rafter, Political Reporter
- 5) *Blueprint to transform lives of all our people* – Taoiseach
By Jane Suiter, Economics Correspondent
- 6) *Big spenders avoid tricky decisions* Analysis The Government has funk'd taking key long-term political decisions in its new national plan, writes Denis Coghlan
- 7) *New approach needed if plan is to succeed* The Government must show that it can speedily deliver the major infrastructural projects promised in the National Development Plan, writes Peter Brennan
- 8) *Plan makes no provision for any downturn, Bruton claims*
By Kevin Rafter, Political Reporter
- 9) *The National Plan*
Editorial comment
- 10) *Commitment impresses CIF*
Unattributed
- 11) *Small firms give words of caution*
Unattributed

Transport

- 12) *Roads and housing to benefit under 'historic' national plan*
By Mark Brennock and Jane Suiter – Front Page
- 13) *Provisions for public transport will lift the harassed commuter's heart*
Jas Kaminski
- 14) *Sun finally shines for public transport in Dublin* Analysis The penny has indeed dropped - and the pounds are now set to fall out of the sky for much-needed investment in public transport in Dublin, writes Frank McDonald, Environment Correspondent
- 15) *£ 4.7bn to be spent on national roads to cut journey times*
Tim O'Brien, Regional Development Correspondent
- 16) *Improvements to roads are welcomed*

- Chris Dooley, South East Correspondent
- 17) *Welcome for moves to upgrade the roads*
Barry Roche
- 18) *An Taisce critical on transport*
Unattributed
- 19) *Traffic chaos will persist chamber*
Unattributed
- 20) *Public transport is the big winner as £ 1,585m goes into roads, rail, buses.* The Government will be investing money on an unprecedented scale into the public transport system in Dublin with new rail projects, better rolling stock, many more buses, and more QBCs, writes Colm Keena
- 21) *A full strategy is not in place for urban transport investment in Dublin.* Every project in the National Development Plan should be rigorously evaluated to ensure value for money. Bad projects are bad projects, even if the Government has the funds to undertake them, write John FitzGerald and Edgar Morgenroth
- 22) *Everything depends on breaking logjams.* Analysis: to sustain the economic growth the plan is based on, traffic, housing and labour shortage problems must be dealt with, Jane Suiter, Economics Correspondent, writes

Regional Development

- 23) *Scepticism over the delivery of an impressive programme.* Analysis: On the face of it, regional development never had it so good. But analysis suggests that things are not so clear, writes Tim O'Brien
- 24) *'Much fairer share' for area welcomed*
Lorna Siggins
- 25) *Broad welcome for spending allocation*
Theresa Judge – North West Correspondent
- 26) *Minister outlines rural benefits*
Unattributed

Employment

- 27) *Employers and unions look forward to smoother progress in pay talks*
Padraig Yeates
- 28) *INOUE welcomes focus on jobless*
Unattributed
- 29) *£ 11bn will go towards improving skills of the workforce*
Padraig Yeates, Industry and Employment Correspondent
- 30) *Prospect of jobs growth welcomed*
Sean MacConnell, Midlands Correspondent

Social Exclusion

- 31) *Heavy emphasis on the deprived*
By Padraig O'Morain,
- 32) *£ 15bn for programmes to combat social exclusion*
By Padraig O'Morain, Social Affairs Correspondent

- 33) *£ 6 billion allocated to social housing*
By Pdraig O'Morain

Education

- 34) *Big investment earmarked for research*
Colm Keena
- 35) *Minister has megabucks in estimates, plan* Yesterday, the education slice of the big National Development Plan pie was announced. Last week, it was the estimates telling about massive spending to come. Yvonne Healy [AND] Anne Byrne report on the news and who is and is not celebrating

Miscellaneous

- 36) *£ 2bn boost to transform health service – Cowen*
Eamon Timmins
- 37) *Childcare allocation draws fire*
Unattributed
- 38) *IBEC queries ports investment*
Unattributed
- 39) *Walsh claims he has delivered on his promises*
Sean Macconnell, Agriculture Correspondent
- 40) *Allocation of £ 171 million for fisheries 'unprecedented'*
By Lorna Siggins, Marine Correspondent
- 41) *£ 80m from EU to fund separate scheme*
Kevin Rafter, Political Reporter

**Appendix F - *The Irish Times* and the NDP:
sources and attributed sources**

Source	Stance	Identity	Key quote/attribution
1) Taoiseach, Mr Ahern	Favourable	Govt	"Investment on a scale never seen before in our history"
2) Minister for Finance, Mr McCreevy	Favourable	Govt	"The plan is based on what the Minister for Finance, Mr McCreevy, called 'very realistic' economic assumptions"
3) Tanaiste, Ms Harney	Favourable	Govt	"Ms Harney said the Government had the 'imagination and determination' to turn words into reality"
4) Minister for the Environment and Local Government, Mr Dempsey	Favourable	Govt	"We have to recognise that there will continue to be a need for social and affordable housing irrespective of the level of overall housing output"
5) Community Platform	Ambivalent	NGO	"The expenditure on social housing, healthcare and human resources is badly needed to address the growing crisis faced by many excluded communities,' it said But it expressed disappointment at what it called 'the limited investment in equality signalled by the plan'"
6) The Forum of People with Disabilities	Unfavourable	NGO	"Contains no specific details as to what resources will be directed at concrete, inclusive measures for disabled people over the next six years"
7) The Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs, Mr Ahern	Favourable	Govt	"The Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs, Mr Ahern, said the funding for community development 'will further help unlock the potential of local community self-help initiatives to make major inroads in tackling poverty'"
8) Minister of State for Finance, Mr Martin Cullen	Favourable	Govt	"However the Minister of State for Finance, Mr Martin Cullen, said last night there was no question mark over the development of the N9 'It simply means that more evaluation has already been done on the other routes They are at a

			more advanced stage but there is now the same commitment to upgrade the Waterford-Dublin road”	
9)	Mr Frank O’Donoghue, chief executive of Waterford Chamber of Commerce	Favourable	Business	“‘The Waterford to Carlow stretch of that road hasn’t been upgraded since I was a boy,’ said Mr Frank O’Donoghue, chief executive of Waterford Chamber of Commerce”
10)	Western Development Commission (WDC)	Favourable	Reg Auth	“The plan will give the west of Ireland a ‘much fairer share’ of resources, according to the Western Development Commission (WDC)
11)	The Council for the West chairwoman, Ms Marian Harkin	Favourable	NGO	“The Council for the West chairwoman, Ms Marian Harkin, has also welcomed it as a ‘decided improvement’ on the plan for 1994-99”
12)	Mr Liam Scollan, chief executive of the WDC	Favourable	Reg Auth	“The investment in economic infrastructure, would ‘address the infrastructural deficit faced by the western counties to date’, Mr Scollan said ‘In particular, the accelerated road investment programme will improve access from the west to External markets for companies in the region”
13)	The Cork city manager, Mr Jack Higgins	Favourable	LA	“Certainly we would welcome the infrastructural improvements, particularly in terms of the proposed Cork-Dublin road, which would have major beneficial effects in reducing travel times from Cork to Dublin”
14)	Bus Eireann’s Cork area manager, Mr Joe Fitzgerald	Favourable	PS	“This commitment to investing in public transport is very welcome”
15)	The chairman of the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly, Mr Tony Ferguson	Favourable	RA	“The chairman of the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly, Mr Tony Ferguson, said he welcomed the fact that per capita spending in the region was significantly higher than in the south and east ‘This is the first time this has happened and it is a

			very welcome development,' he said. 'A lot of what we have been seeking is there, but there are still some things we have to fight for'.
16) North-west regional director of IBEC, Mr Brendan McGinty	Favourable	Business	"The north-west regional director of IBEC, Mr Brendan McGinty, described the plan as 'ambitious and comprehensive' and said the commitment to improve roads was particularly important to the region".
17) Vice-president of SIPTU, Mr Des Geraghty	Ambivalent	Union	"Mr Des Geraghty, said the investment was small, given the scope of the problem. 'This [childcare] is one of the crucial issues to emerge recently for the labour force', Mr Geraghty said.
18) An Taisce	Unfavourable	NGO	"It criticised the plan's attempts to alleviate 'the chronic transport crisis in Dublin and other urban centres', citing the lack of 'evidence of any seismic shift to public transport'".
19) CIF director general Mr Liam Kelleher	Favourable	Business	"The proposed investment in roads, public transport, water and sewage treatment to facilitate new development and social housing is ambitious and necessary, given the infrastructural deficit that now exists".
20) The transport council of IBEC	Favourable	Business	"The transport council of IBEC, the employers' body, has welcomed in particular the Government's commitment to spend £ 17.6 billion on economic infrastructure. It was disappointed, however, that the amount earmarked for ports/airports was 'only £ 60 million'".
21) SFA director Mr Pat Delaney	Favourable	Business	"The Small Firms' Association finds the plan 'imaginative and ambitious'. SFA director Mr Pat Delaney cautioned, however, that 'unless the forthcoming Planning Bill, Cabinet committee on infrastructure, local authorities and the regional assemblies show the

			necessary resolve, then the plan will not be deliverable”
22) The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed	Favourable	NGO	“The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed has welcomed the plan’s ‘focus on the needs of those who are long-term unemployed and those who have suffered social exclusion”
23) The Minister for Agriculture, Mr Walsh	Favourable	Govt	“I gave you a commitment that we would get matching funds from the Exchequer. We have more than fulfilled that promise,’ said Mr Walsh, who described yesterday as a good day for Ireland and Irish agriculture
24) Mr Pat Ridge, chairman of BIM	Favourable	PS	“Mr Pat Ridge, chairman of BIM, said that ‘the level of support for the fishing sector in the plan is unprecedented”
25) Fine Gael leader, Mr John Bruton	Ambivalent	Opp	“The Fine Gael leader said the Government’s plan contained no method of reducing traffic congestion and was ‘a plan for roads rather than public transport’ He said it was ‘a plan for those who can already afford housing rather than those who cannot. It is a plan for bricks and mortar, not for services and improving the quality of life’
26) The Labour Party spokesman on finance, Mr Derek McDowell	Ambivalent	Opp	“It has been at one level shrouded in secrecy, with neither the public, the social partners nor the Opposition given any real opportunity to input into it. On the other hand it has been selectively leaked to the media for a number of months now in an effort to generate coverage for the Government. Hopefully, in future we will have the maturity to debate important issues like this in the public domain”
27) Green Party TD Mr Trevor Sargent	Unfavourable	Opp	“Green Party TD Mr Trevor Sargent said the plan placed too heavy an emphasis on roadbuilding at the expense of a ‘coherent national public transport

			infrastructure”
28) IBEC director Mr Peter Brennan	Favourable	Business	“IBEC director Mr Peter Brennan described the figures in the plan as ‘awesome’, but said they represented a consensus between the social partners on what was needed to transform the economy He said the ‘highest priority should be attached to the timely delivery of projects on the ground”
29) The general secretary of the ICTU, Mr Peter Cassells	Ambivalent	Union	“Mr Cassells said there was need for ‘a wider definition of social infrastructure to include community, cultural, sporting and recreational facilities”
30) Mr James Stone, manager of the Midlands Regional Authority	Favourable	RA	“Mr James Stone, manager of the Midlands Regional Authority, said ‘the plan, in certain respects, far exceeded my expectations, and most of the ideas put forward from the regions have been taken aboard”
31) Midlands-based Mr Pat O’Rourke, deputy president of the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers’ Association	Favourable	Farming	“This should ensure that rural areas which lost out and have not benefited from the Celtic Tiger will be targeted for investment, job growth, and improved public services This should improve the well-being of all rural families, including farm families”
32) Chamber president Mr Hugh Governey	Ambivalent	Business	“Despite this expenditure, the Dublin Chamber of Commerce yesterday said that Dublin’s traffic problems will only be ‘partially alleviated”
33) Professor John FitzGerald of the Economic and Social Research Institute	Ambivalent	PS	“As Professor John Fitz Gerald of the Economic and Social Research Institute writes in today’s editions, we must remember that ‘a bad project is still a bad project”
34) Mary O’Rourke	Favourable	Govt	“According to Ms O’Rourke, the special Cabinet implementation committee will be meeting CIE next Tuesday to discuss exactly how it will use the money”
35) Mr Robert Molloy	Favourable	Govt	“The investment will meet the needs of over 90,000 households,

			according to the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Renewal, Mr Robert Molloy”
36) Labour Party spokesman on the Environment, Mr Eamon Gilmore	Ambivalent	Opp	“But the Labour Party spokesman on the Environment, Mr Eamon Gilmore, said the provisions [apropos “social housing”] in the plan were inadequate”
37) Minister for Health and Children, Mr Cowen,	Favourable	Govt	“The inclusion of health was political recognition that people who wanted better roads and transport also wanted improved social services, Mr Cowen said”
38) Mr Tom Byrne, the director of the South East Regional Authority	Favourable	RA	“Mr Tom Byrne, the director of the South East Regional Authority, said it was the first time the strategic importance of the road had been recognised in a national development plan”
39) A spokesperson for Cork County Council	Favourable	LA	“A spokesman for Cork County Council said the council had yet to see any specific proposals but it anticipated that funding would be available for about 30 miles of new roadway from Glanmire to Mitchelstown”
40) Dublin Chamber of Commerce	Favourable	Business	“Dublin’s traffic problems will be only partially alleviated through the planned expenditure of £ 1 6 billion, the Dublin Chamber of Commerce said last night”
41) Mr Noel Davern	Favourable	Govt	“Mr Noel Davern said the plan would express the commitments in the White Paper on Rural Development published in August”
42) The Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, Dr Woods	Favourable	Govt	“The Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, Dr Woods, said this investment would make a significant contribution to balanced regional development”
43) Michael Martin	Favourable	Govt	“There was nothing lacklustre about the announcements, however Minister Micheal Martin promised that megabucks will be invested in the sector”

Appendix G – Irish Independent headlines: National Development Plan

General

- 1) Cheque is in the post, now for delivery
Brendan Keenan
- 2) Coming of age as wealthy EU nation from a strategic spirit of agreement
Chris Glennon, Political Correspondent
- 3) Changed Utterly
Editorial
- 4) Good news for Ahern as life begins at 40 billion
Miriam Lord
- 5) £40bn plan to keep the good time rolling
Chris Glennon, Political Correspondent
- 6) Long list of projects but no vision Bruton
Gene McKenna
- 7) Spending on a scale we never dared dream of
Gene McKenna

Transport

- 8) £1.5bn to release capital from gridlock and ease commuter stress
Treacy Hogan
- 9) High speed inter-city trains will top 100mph
Treacy Hogan, Environmental Correspondent
- 10) Motorway speed-up
Unattributed
- 11) We're on the £4.7bn track to transform road network
Treacy Hogan, Environment Correspondent

Education

- 12) £5bn boost for education to target adults and literacy
John Walshe, Education editor
- 13) Funds a key to open up education to everyone
Stephen O'Brien
- 14) Third level to benefit from surge in RandD spending
Gerard Flynn

Regional Development

- 15) Jubilation over huge cash deal for rural Ireland
Mary O'Carroll
- 16) Spreading it around
Gene McKenna

- 17) Time to level out prosperity across the country says Taoiseach
Brian Dowling

Social Inclusion

- 18) £6bn social boost to aid some 90,000 households
Treacy Hogan, Environment Correspondent
- 19) Trickling down to the poorest of the poor
Unattributed

Employment

- 20) £4m a day to get jobless back into the workforce
Gerald Flynn
- 21) Jobs and houses will prove the litmus test
Unattributed

Health

- 22) Health overhaul aims to free hospital beds
Eilish O'Regan
- 23) Hospital problems
Unattributed

Miscellaneous

- 24) £938m to boost growth and development in natural resources
Mary O'Carroll
- 25) Environment the 'key priority'
Mary O'Carroll
- 26) Farming bodies are happy as headage "hot potato" dealt with
Mairead McGuinness
- 27) Public sector funding 'will beat target'
Unattributed
- 28) Housing a key area
Unattributed

**Appendix H - Irish Independent and the NDP:
Sources and attributed sources**

Source	Stance	Identity	Key quote/attribution
1) Education Minister Michael Martin	Favourable	Govt	"I believe that this ambitious plan provides an excellent foundation for delivering a high-quality and inclusive education system over the coming years".
2) Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, Dr Michael Woods	Favourable	Govt	"The plan includes unprecedented funding programmes and will support overall investment well in excess of £1.2bn in development of these sectors, which are vital for rural and coastal communities and will ensure that the benefits of economic prosperity reach all regions".
3) Minister of State Hugh Byrne	Favourable	Govt	"The Minister of State Hugh Byrne dubbed the plan 'an investment in our most peripheral areas the very heartbeat of our marine and natural resources' which would deliver on the needs of the sector into the new millennium, he said".
4) Tanaiste Mary Harney	Favourable	Govt	"Now it is only lack of imagination" that will hold us back".
5) Agriculture Minister Joe Walsh	Favourable	Govt	"The 50pc increase in funding for agriculture and rural development is described as 'very substantial' by Agriculture Minister Joe Walsh".
6) The Taoiseach	Favourable	Govt	"Given the pace of change in the world, this plan recognises that we won't achieve all of our aims by simply doing things the way we have always done them".
7) Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy	Favourable	Govt	"Minister Charlie McCreevy expects the private sector will 'at minimum' invest £1.9bn in building roads and bridges".
8) Health Minister Brian Cowen	Favourable	Govt	"This will reduce considerably the need for people in peripheral areas to travel long distances for treatment and follow up".
9) Fine Gael	Unfavourable	Opp	"It is a plan for bricks and mortar not

leader John Bruton			for services and improving the quality of life”
10) Unnamed Department of justice source	Favourable	CS	“Pound for pound, this plan represents great value for money and finally nails the lie that young people are being put into prison after a first offence”
11) IBEC Research group head, Dick Kavanagh	Favourable	Business	“With a total commitment of £130.5m a year by the government it is now up to companies to make sure that industry delivers on this exciting plan”
12) IBEC strategy director, Peter Brennan	Favourable	Business	“Overall IBEC described the National Development Plan as being of a scale which ‘is awesome but realistic given the enormity of Ireland’s infrastructure deficit’ Its strategy director, Peter Brennan said that planning for the major projects would start immediately and be completed by the end of 2000”
13) Environment Minister Noel Dempsey	Favourable	Govt	“The minister said we could look forward to ‘real improvements in our national road network”
14) NRA chief executive Michael Tobin	Favourable	PS	“NRA chief executive Michael Tobin said they were ‘cock a hoop’ at the funding as it gave them confidence to proceed with their £5bn programme with the hope of bridging the shortfall in a mid-term review”
15) Public Enterprise Minister Mary O’Rourke	Favourable	Govt	“Describing the massive funding as a watershed Public Enterprise Minister Mary O’Rourke said the £2.2bn allocation for public transport would provide a one third increase in peak hour commuter seats in greater Dublin alone”
16) Housing Minister Bobby Molloy	Favourable	Govt	“Some 90,000 households will benefit from the plan, Housing Minister Bobby Molloy pledged yesterday”
17) Tanaiste	Favourable	Govt	“Ms Harney confirmed that half of all the proposed new jobs arising from the arrival of multinationals or American companies will be sent to the BMW zone”
18) IFA and ICMSA	Favourable	Farming	“Both the IFA and ICMSA welcomed the thrust of the overall plan”

19) WDC Chief Executive Liam Scollan	Favourable	RA	“Their joy was compounded by the fact that on top of the good news the Government had included all 10 of the Western Development Commission’s recommendations submitted last April for inclusion in the National Plan, said WDC Chief Executive Liam Scollan last night”
20) Labour Finance spokesman Derek McDowell	Ambivalent	Opp	“Labour Finance spokesman Derek McDowell said the plan would introduce unprecedented levels of public investment but there was little evidence of imaginative thinking to source alternative finance”
21) Government press secretary Joe Lennon	Favourable	CS	“But this being Bertie’e perfect day, the little hiccup was almost immediately corrected by Government press secretary Joe Lennon, who hastened to calm the farming community that by labelling border, midlands and western areas as the ‘BMW Region’ this didn’t mean they were all getting a free car

**Appendix I - *The Irish Times* and the SSIS:
sources and attributed sources**

Source	Stance	Key quote/attribution
1) Tanaiste Mary Harney	Favourable	"The savings plan will give a great boost to people's ability to save, by returning taxpayers' money to them and by giving equal benefit to those on modest and fixed incomes".
2) Mr Jim Mitchell, Fine Gael Spokesperson on Finance	Unfavourable	"At first glance, the savings provisions proposed seems to be riddled with difficulties and has the potential to be a bureaucratic nightmare and provides plenty of opportunities for creative accounting and money switching'. With the proposed scheme being primarily operated by banks, it is likely that they will be the biggest winners, he said".
3) Derek McDowell, Labour Spokesperson on Finance	Ambivalent	"The proposals in the Finance Bill fall short of what is required,' he said. 'Effectively, the provisions in the Bill allow big companies to pay large salaries at a reduced rate to a small number of well-paid workers'".
4) Trevor Sargent, Green Part Spokesperson on Finance	Unfavourable	"Charlie McCreevy's savings scheme, without measures to ensure social equity, do little more than 'rub salt in the wound' to those who are marginalised by the Celtic Tiger".
5) Unidentified Irish Life and Permanent Spokesperson	Favourable	"We believe The Government's proposals will provide a welcome incentive to potential savers... we are already commencing work on developing appropriate products to suit the new regime".
6) John McDonnell of SIPTU	Favourable	"...SIPTU's general secretary Mr John McDonnell says the Finance Bill "more than compensates for unexpectedly high inflation in 2000"
7) IMPACT National Secretary, Paddy Keating	Unfavourable	"He described the Finance Bill - published on Thursday - as 'a lost opportunity to improve future financial provision for those who need it most... people on benefits or in low paid jobs would not have the money to take advantage of this scheme'".
8) Rosin	Favourable	"Ms Callender welcomed the savings initiative

	Callinder SIPTU equality officer		but she said SIPTU was 'very concerned this may have a negative effect on the growth of pension schemes - unless early government action is taken to prevent it'"
9)	Mr Brendan Burgess of the consumer personal finance website askaboutmoney.com	Favourable	"People do foolish things when they're focusing solely on tax relief Consumers need to be very careful not to commit to an inferior product for five years"
10)	Grant Barrans, of Hibernian	Favourable	"On the equity-based investments side, Hibernian said it was looking into designing an investment product specially for it According to Mr Grant Barrans, it would set a standard for extremely good value 'because low charges are essential over a five-year term This is not a category for front-loaded charges but for level charges spread over the term'"
11)	Eddie Hobb, CAI's Finance Spokesman	Favourable	"For others who are less comfortable with stock market risk, the key will be the best deposit rate available"
12)	Consumer Association of Ireland	Favourable	"The Consumers Association of Ireland said the scheme had the potential to be 'the best savings plan on the planet' but warned that consumers needed to be vigilant to avoid high charging products that would drag back performance"
13)	Brian Walsh, Chief Executive of The Institute of Chartered Accountants	Favourable	"The Institute of Chartered Accountants described the scheme as 'a radical proposal' If it is successful it will take a lot of heat out of the economy, according to chief executive Mr Brian Walsh"
14)	Charlie McCreevy	Favourable	"The Minister was enthusiastic about the impact of his new savings scheme, which he said would take demand out of the economy as well as providing an incentive for people to provide for a rainy day"
15)	Martin Nolan of the Irish Association of Investment Managers	Favourable	"Welcoming the new savings scheme, Mr Martin Nolan of the Irish Association of Investment Managers said institutions would be offering a range of cost effective savings products to the public over the next few months"
16)	Irish Bankers'	Favourable	"The Irish Bankers' Federation said there would

Federation		be many questions about the scheme' precise operation"
17) AIB and Bank of Ireland	Favourable	"Both banks say they are examining the Scheme closely to determine what they can offer customers"
18) Ulster Bank	Favourable	"An Ulster Bank spokesman said the bank would have an attractive product which would be amended to fit this category as soon as the details of the scheme were ironed out"
19) Northern Rock	Favourable	"A spokesman said it would need to look at the scheme in closer detail"
20) Irish League of Credit Unions	Favourable	"A spokesman for the Irish League of Credit Unions said it would need to examine how the scheme would fit in with the other proposals before the organisation"
21) ESRI	Tangential	"The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) warned last night that this move [abolition of plans for a new capital gains tax] could push up land prices this year"

**Appendix J - *Irish Independent* and the SSIS:
sources and attributed sources**

Source	Stance	Key quote/attribution
Mr McCreevy	Favourable	“Mr McCreevy said lots of ideas and suggestions had been made to the Department but the scheme now proposed was ‘a brainchild of my own’”
SIPTU national equality secretary Rosheen Callender	Favourable	“While we welcome this new incentive to set aside money for a rainy day, as the minister puts it, SIPTU is very concerned that this may have a negative effect on the growth of personal pension schemes”
EBS (Ted McGovern)	Favourable	“The mortgage lender, which yesterday reported moderately better 2000 profits, welcomed this incentive at a time when the country’s personal savings ratio was heading for an all-time low”
Sheena Doggett A and I Goodbody solicitors	Favourable	“Employee share option schemes are now the most powerful and most tax-efficient tool available to employers in the battle to recruit and retrain key staff”
The Irish Software Association	Favourable	“The Irish Software Association last night Expressed ‘delight’ at proposals in the Finance Bill which will allow workers pay 20pc tax on share gains, instead of income tax at 42pc”