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THE   STATE AND CULTURAL POLICY IN IRELAND:

THE CASE OF THE IRISH AUDIOVISUAL SECTOR.

A Thesis submitted to Dublin City University in candidacy for

the degree of Master of Arts.

Celia Keenaghan   30 August 1991

DECLARATION:

I, Celia Keenaghan, being a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts as awarded by Dublin City University, declare that while registered for the above degree I have not been registered for an award at another University.

Secondly, that none of the material contained in this thesis has been used in any other submission for any other award. Further, that the contents of this thesis are the sole work of the author except where an acknowledgement has been made for assistance received.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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"We have left the really important elements of our identity in the hands of elites and experts, and they have returned them to us as doctrines externally imposed"

(Tovey, Hannan & Abramson, 1989:21)

ABSTRACT:

This thesis examines the relationship between the Irish state and the Irish audiovisual sector in an attempt to examine where the future of Irish cultural policy lies. Chapter one examines the nation as an "imagined community" and the importance of the media in that imagining. It establishes how important the media were to developing the cultural basis of the Irish nation-state. It indicates that with increasing internationalism and consumerism, the importance of the cultural field is becoming more unclear and how a redefinition of the public sphere is occurring in increasingly consumerist terms.

Chapter two presents a history of broadcasting and film in Ireland, paying particular attention to concepts of nation-state, consumer-citizen and the changing definitions of public service. Chapter three extends this into the present day and shows how policy in the area of film and television is more and more being based on commercial rather than cultural criteria.

Chapter four examines changes in the audiovisual sector at a European level and explores the effects of these developments on the Irish media and subsequently Irish culture. Based on interviews with Irish film makers, it presents their views on aspects of Irish culture and on the audiovisual sector itself. The final chapter presents a

summary of findings and explores further, the need for more research and debate in the area of cultural policy in Ireland.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to explore an aspect of cultural policy in Ireland. The key focus will be the state's relationship with the audiovisual sector in the Republic of Ireland. The nature of this relationship reflects change in a much broader context. It can be seen at one level as the outcome of a specific set of circumstances having to do with Ireland's specific history, its culture, politics and related social spheres. It must also be examined as part of new social developments on a global scale, particularly a redefinition of the public sphere in terms of the consumer, rather than in terms of culture. The main argument of this thesis is that global processes are at work in the Irish audiovisual sector which are mediated by specific cultural, economic and political imperatives.

Background to the research

This research stemmed from an interest in exploring what it means to be Irish at a time when policy makers are focusing on a Europe without frontiers, on rolling back the frontiers of the state, on developing cultural plurality and fostering the expression of minority and regional cultures within Europe. Ireland, although relatively homogenous in make-up, contains many diverse groups of individuals who possess different values, lifestyles and beliefs. I began to question how they could have a shared identity and how it could be expressed without homogenizing individual

identities within it. Similarly, if a national identity did exist, how could it survive in a European community where integration and elimination of barriers are desired aims.

I found myself caught in a contradiction between a strong sense of Irish culture, yet a rejection of any national culture which suppressed subcultures within the nation. It began to emerge that the national identity was somehow removed from cultural identity. The rhetoric and symbols of early twentieth century Ireland, invoked to motivate support for and give form to an independent state have little bearing on today's reality. The images put forward from the time of the Literary Revival of a homogenous Irish nation and Irish culture deriving from an urban base but drawing on traditional rural imagery, not only belie today's reality but belied the reality of Irish life at the turn of the century. It became apparent that in order to understand and explore Irish culture and identity today, it would be necessary to establish where and how this division between Irish "national" identity and Irish "cultural" identity emerged.

A key to examining this question was found to be the media. It will be argued below that the nation is, in Benedict Anderson's phrase, an "imagined community". Just because it is imagined does not mean that it is not important. What is important is what gave rise to its imagining. It will further be contended below that the media

have been central to the imagining of a community, and playing such a role, have been fundamental to the legitimation and creation of power structures in society. A pivotal relationship between cultural/national identity, the media, and the power structure of Irish society is discernible in the formation of cultural identity.

Relating this to contemporary Ireland, I became interested in the audiovisual medium one of the most significant ways of reflecting/creating or sustaining Irish identity at home and abroad. It also seemed pertinent in light of debates about Ireland's future in a "Europe without frontiers". Developments in distribution technologies increased the potential of transfrontier broadcasting, co-productions etc. Also, when this study was being embarked upon, the Government had just passed a Broadcasting Bill which has given rise to much debate and discussion on public service broadcasting in Ireland.

The audiovisual media are central to an exploration of contemporary Irish culture. As one of the most popular cultural forms today, their pertinence to the task in hand was evident. The fact that new information technologies were breaking down technological barriers to transnational broadcasting meant that film and television were having an increasingly important role to play in opening Ireland to other cultures. Also, since public service broadcasting is answerable to the state and film makers have been looking to

the state for support, this proved an extremely important topic in examining the relationship between the power structure and the media.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS - METHODOLOGY

As established above, the area of research identified was the state and Irish culture. The relationship between the media - a mode of expression of Irish culture - and the state - a power structure which needed the media to help imagine the community which legitimated the existence of the state - was chosen as a key to exploring this area. The research focused then on the relationship between the state and the media as an aspect of Irish cultural policy. In examining this relationship it was hoped to gain some insight into the future of Irish culture and the support given to its expression and sustenance by the state.

While the main concern of the research is the Irish state and the Irish audiovisual sector, external as well as internal factors are examined. Specific cultural, economic and political imperatives are central to understanding the Irish audiovisual sector's relationship to the state, however, the global processes which are also at work in this sector are equally important. It was decided than both influences must be taken into account in order that an adequate explanation of events in the audiovisual sector be given.

Much work has been carried out on Irish broadcasting and film (see chapter 2), on culture and identity (see chapter 1), and on the effects on Irish society of international social and political changes in the world economy. What this research seeks to achieve is an explanation of the relationship between the state and the audiovisual sector not just in national terms but also as effected by global/international developments. If an aspect of Irish cultural policy is to be examined it must be examined in the context of internal and external influences, not just one or the other.

The research was conducted through thematic analysis, using some key concepts: nation - state; citizenship - consumerism; public service - private market. These concepts are central to examining the relationship between the state and the audiovisual sector in Ireland. At the heart of this issue is the relationship between the audiovisual media and the individual. The ability of the media to express the culture of a group of people (and in the case of Public Service Broadcasting, the group of people being those belonging to the Irish nation), testifies to the significance of the medium in the lives of that group. In the case of the nation, citizenship rights are tied up with the audiovisual media. The relationship will be explored later in this thesis. As one commentator puts it:

> Full and effective citizenship requires access to
> the range of information, insights, arguments and

> explanations that enable people to make sense of the changes affecting their lives and to evaluate the range of actions open to them both as individuals and as members of a political community. Without these resources, they are
>
> excluded from effective participation.
> (Murdock, in Tomlinson 1990:78).

Murdock goes on to argue that we must arrive at an alternative definition of Public Service Broadcasting which is capable of defending and extending the cultural resources required for citizenship and that we should base our case around concepts of diversity and accessibility.

This thesis will be exploring how concepts such as accessibility and diversity are being affected by current trends in Irish broadcasting. Recent legislation in broadcasting and film in Ireland treat it more as an economic activity than a cultural one. While both culture and economics have a role to play, the argument that privatisation and transnationalization increase pluralism and therefore diversity of programming, disguises the fact that the economics of transnational television and film operate to marginalize certain kinds of programmes and promote a more marketable, and often bland, package.

Economic pluralism is being confused with diversity. Instead of the public interest being served by changes in broadcasting, the private interest is the major beneficiary. While the technology is there to increasingly benefit the public interest it is proving more economically beneficial to

private concerns to use the audio-visual media to further
their own ends. This is where, I shall argue, the state has a
role - to ensure that public service broadcasting is there to
meet the interests of the public ie. in this case the members
of the nation. Also it will be argued that it is the role of
the state to ensure that other important mediums of cultural
expression such as film are given state support while
remaining free from state control.

Data collection

The process of data collection decided upon was a
combination of documentary analysis and surveying -
documentary analysis being the main method with surveying
used against the background of what the documentary analysis
revealed.

Documentary Analysis

A wealth of information was found on the historical
development of both Irish identity and on the audio-visual
media. This was found in books, journals, newspaper articles,
annual reports and government publications (including
relevant Acts and Bills, Government Reports, Dail Debates and
speeches). The information derived from these various sources
was seen to provide a well informed context within which to
examine the current situation. This historical information
was necessary in order to explain the different concepts on
which the thematic analysis is based.

Information was needed on current developments in the Irish audiovisual media including the state's current involvement with this sector. Related to this, was information on European developments in the audiovisual arena. This information was available again in books, journals, newspaper articles, annual reports and government publications, but also in conference material, secondary interview material and up to date documents received on request from relevant organisations.

Surveying

Following from this, it was decided to conduct a more indepth exploration into the State's involvement with the audio-visual sector and the repercussions of this for Irish identity. As a shift away from the public sphere towards the private was evident in recent trends in the audio-visual sector, it was decided to examine an aspect of the private sector of the audiovisual industry. The approach taken was to investigate the rapidly expanding independent filmmaking sector which is not constrained by Public Service requirements and therefore less impeded by Public Service constraints in its expression of Irish identity. The independent sector was chosen as it contains within it the different currents within citizenship itself - from commercial to cultural. In order to choose a sample of independent film makers in Ireland the following sources were consulted:

* membership and mailing lists from Film Base - a group which provides a resource facility of equipment, information, training and skills for low budget film makers in Ireland - and Film Makers Ireland - a representative body for Irish producers and directors operating to forward the cultural and industrial environment of film in Ireland.

* Filmscan 1989 - the ACTT Film, television and video directory for Ireland.

* Stevens, M. 1988 <u>Directory of Irish and Irish-related films</u>

From this a list of twenty-one film makers was drawn up (see appendix IV) along a continuum with seven divisions ranging from small one-person operations, which were interested in productions of a primarily cultural nature, to larger international operations with bases in Ireland whose motivation was more commercial. As this was a more qualitative than quantitative exercise, those selected were not slotted into definitive categories but placed along the continuum. When this was done, the list was shown to Film Base personnel to ensure that a fair appraisal had been made and that the selection was valid.

Those selected were contacted firstly by post explaining what the research entailed and what would be required from the respondent. They were then contacted by phone to arrange an interview. Of the twenty one contacted, twelve agreed to be interviewed (two selected to have one of their colleagues interviewed). One supplied information

through their Public Relations Officer who revealed that the company would not have much to say on Irish identity. This was the largest company contacted - an Irish base of an American animation company. It was decided that this was an adequate sample since it had representatives from most parts of the sector. With the number down to twelve, the divisions along the continuum were brought down to five.

As the sample selected was quite small and individual opinions were being sought it was decided that the survey method of individual interview was the best approach to take. To further enhance the quality of information and gain best results from interpretation a concise interview schedule was put together based on themes and concepts already identified. Documentary analysis provided the bulk of factual information so the emphasis on the interview schedule was on finding out respondents opinions and attitudes (although factual information gained during the interview was also used). Individual interviews and telephone interviews were also carried out with other representatives from the industry - from RTE, the Department of the Taoiseach, CTT, the IDA and the IFCB, information was also supplied by post from some of these sources. The questions were divided up into seven categories of topics dealt with in the research (see Appendix D). They were designed with the intention of explaining the key concepts and themes identified from documentary analysis.

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Analysis and interpretation

A framework within which the data was to be structured started with the division of the interview schedule into definite areas. From the documentary analysis, it was projected that these would cover the main patterns and themes to be analysed. While bearing this in mind throughout the actual interview, scope was given to the respondent to bring in topics which s/he deemed relevant. This was to ensure that the interview was not constrained to the detriment of the information received. It was decided to tape-record the interviews as notes taken at an interview in general are not sufficiently comprehensive and tend to distract the interviewers attention away from guiding the discussion effectively and from being sensitive to the influence of the context and setting on the interview.

Complete transcripts of the interviews were produced with minimum editing and as soon as possible after the interview took place so that additional notes could be made and full analysis carried out. In general the data were interpreted in the context of the themes which the documentary analysis had revealed and by analysing it under headings and topics which emerged common to all interviews. These remained within the ambit of the topics identified when the interview schedule was being designed and therefore full analysis and interpretation was enriched by relying on the back-up of information received as a result of the

documentary analysis carried out.

Presentation of findings

Information derived from documentary analysis and surveying was presented in the following fashion:

Chapter one examines the nation as an imagined community and the importance of the media in that imagining. It focuses specifically on how the Irish nation was imagined prior to and around the time of the establishment of the Irish state. It establishes how important the cultural field was to the establishment of the Irish nation-state and how once this cultural basis was established, the state largely British wrought, followed a separate path. It also explores how communities are being imagined today. It indicates that with increasing internationalism and consumerism, the importance of the cultural field is becoming more unclear and a redefinition of the public sphere is occurring in increasingly consumerist terms. This of course has important implications for the audiovisual sector - part of the cultural field which plays a central role in the imagining of a community.

Chapter two outlines the development of broadcasting and film in Ireland since the foundation of the state, concentrating on the state's involvement in this area. It focuses on how commercial and cultural goals were reconciled as, on the one hand broadcasting had to answer the cultural goals of the nation, but also the commercial requirements of

the state. Following from this, chapter three examines the current situation of the audiovisual sector in Ireland. Having illustrated how tension between nation and state have affected the development of this sector in the past and how this tension, combined with increased integration into an international economy has led to a reconstitution of the "public sphere" in market terms, this chapter explains how current developments in the audiovisual sector must be understood against this background. It suggests how the move of broadcasting and film further away from the public service ideal, also represents a move away from any expression of indigenous culture through the audiovisual medium.

Chapter four focuses on changes in the audiovisual sector at a European level noting how such developments are characterised by an increasing role for consumption reflected in such things as greater emphasis on "choice" and "pluralism". It outlines European initiatives which are geared towards aiding minority cultures, and examines their specific relevance to Ireland in this context. Establishing that, in general, commercial imperatives are having increasing influence which has serious implications for the public interest and for Irish culture and identity, this chapter explores the views of Irish independent film-makers - one group who, if given the necessary support, have the potential to ensure a balance between the cultural and commercial aspects of film and television. Chapter five

presents a summary of the findings of the research. Because important developments were still occurring when this research was being concluded, an update of events to June 1991 is included here. Drawing on the preceding chapter, this chapter explores the need for state support of the Irish audiovisual sector as one of the most significant contemporary modes of cultual expression. It also examines the need for more debate and research in the area of cultural policy in Ireland especially in relation to the audiovisual media.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MEDIA, THE NATION-STATE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will examine the nation as in Benedict Anderson's term, an "imagined community" and the importance of the media in that imagining. In such a discussion the importance of culture as a site of struggle overriding political and economic concerns in the greater interest of the nation must also be explored. The main focus of this chapter is on how the Irish nation was imagined prior to and around the time of the establishment of the Irish state. In later chapters I will be examining the growing division that has emerged between nation and state which was rooted in this period, and the repercussions this has had for the audio-visual media in Ireland.

On the one hand, cultural activity was used to override political and economic concerns in the "national interest"; on the other hand, the newly established state in early twentieth century Ireland had to deal with the practical, political realities of running a country. Yet the ideology of cultural nationalism created in pre-independence Ireland, while it may have had an idealist orientation, was important in the legitimation of the state, and, as such, had to be maintained. In this sense, the two paths of nation and state both converged and diverged, creating anomalies in many areas of Irish life which are still with us today.

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As the consequences of this divide are particularly apparent in the audiovisual sector in Ireland, this will be looked into in the following chapters which examine the relationship between the state and broadcasting and the state and film. Also important in such a discussion is the whole question of the national interest, its historical emergence and its current significance in the light of globalising trends in the modern world economy. The idea of the national interest being aligned with the public interest is also significant as current trends of deregulation not only have consequences for the national interest, but also for recent tendencies to recast the public interest in terms of a new consumerist public sphere. Whether the audio-visual medium is a cultural or a commercial medium is becoming an increasingly contentious issue and has important implications for the public interest and identity.

What this chapter aims to establish, therefore, is how important the cultural field, particularly the print media, was to the establishment of the Irish nation-state. However, having secured a cultural base for the nation, the state, largely British wrought, followed a separate path. This has had important consequences for broadcasting which on the one hand, was and is, expected to answer the particular Public Service ideals of the Irish nation, and on the other, expected to answer the commercial requirements of the state (see O hUanachain, 1980:33-69).

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With increasing internationalism and consumerism, the importance of the cultural field is becoming more unclear and a redefinition of the public sphere is occuring in increasingly consumerist terms. As the historical development of capitalist economies has always had profound implications for culture, identities and ways of life, the globalisation of economic activity is now associated with further cultural transformation. With the globalisation of culture, the link between culture and territory is greatly strained. It becomes all the more difficult therefore, for individuals to reimagine the community to which the belong.

It will be shown in later chapters that developments in the audio-visual sector in Ireland on the one hand are bound up with Ireland's specific history, its culture, politics and related social spheres. However it is also crucial to note that what is happening in Ireland is quite indicative of change in a much broader context ie., the emergence of new social divisions on a global scale, particularly between the public and the private shpere and the move from treating individuals as citizens to individuals as consumers.

Let us start then by examining the importance of the media, firstly in the legitimation and indeed creation of power structures and secondly in the imagining of a particular community - the Irish nation.

1.2. POWER STRUCTURES AND THE MEDIA

Curran (1982) has examined the impact of media on the power structures of society. He argues that even in pre-industrial societies a variety of signifying forms - buildings, pictures, songs...rituals of all kinds were deployed to express ideas to vast audiences:

> the rituals of religious worship meant that the papal curia exercised more centralised control over the symbolic content mediated through public worship in the central middle ages than even the controllers of highly concentrated and monopolistic press of contemporary Europe.
>
> [Curran, 1982:8].

Curran focuses on the effect of new media in bringing into being new power groups whose authority and prestige have derived from their ability to manipulate the communications networks under their control. The mass media today Curran argues, have now assumed the role of the Church, of interpreting and making sense of the world to the mass public in a secular age, amplifying systems of representation that legitimize the social system. What is valuable about Curran's argument is that it establishes the importance of the media in maintaining power but also the threat which it poses to those already in power because of this very quality.

Benedict Anderson has also acknowledged the importance of the media in the development of a nation. He defines the nation as "an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". He asserts that the very possibility of imagining a nation only arose historically when, and where, three fundamental cultural

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conceptions, all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on people's minds. These conceptions were

(i) the idea that a particular script language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth;
(ii) the belief that society was naturally organised around and under high centres - monarch's who were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation. Human loyalties were necessarily hierarchical and centripetal because the ruler, like the sacred script, was a node of access to being and inherent in it;
(iii) the belief in the conception of temporality - that cosmology and history are indistinguishable, that the origin of the world and the individual are inseparable...

[Anderson, 1985:40]

These certainties, which gave meaning to everyday life, changed under the impact of economic change and communication development. Anderson identifies the primacy of capitalism as a key reason for the emergence of the nation-state around the sixteenth century. The media were in Anderson's opinion central to the development of national identity. In his study on the origins and spread of nationalism, he portrays how print-capitalism made it possible for people to think about themselves in profoundly new ways.

The initial market for print material was literate Europe, "a wide but thin stratum of Latin readers" [ibid:42]. Soon the elite Latin market was saturated and printers began to look to the as yet untapped vernacular market. Protestantism also exploited the expanding vernacular market for its own needs and soon large new reading markets were created.

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According to Anderson (ibid), a half fortuitous, but explosive interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communication (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its most basic form set the stage for the modern nation. The large variety of spoken languages which existed in pre-print Europe were capable of being assembled by capitalism into "mechanically reproduced print-languages, capable of dissemination through the market". The readers of these assembled print-languages were connected through print and formed the embryo of the nationally imagined community. Print capitalism gave a new fixity to language which ensured that by the seventeenth century languages in Europe had assumed their modern forms.

One of the main strengths of Anderson's argument is that it acknowledges the fact that nations are "imagined" communities but does not therefore discount the fact that they exist; rather, he locates their strength and effect in how they are imagined and through what gave rise to their imagining.

1.2.1   The Press and Nationalism in Ireland

An example of the important role of the media in the imagining of a community is the nationalist press at the turn of the century in Ireland. At this time the advanced nationalist press publicized the cause of Irish-Ireland and

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politicized it. Crusading journalists promoted a romanticized version of Irish history and culture, in an effort to win what some have called a form of psychological Home Rule (Glandon, 1985:vii). They moved the nationalist struggle into the cultural arena, challenging the constitutional nationalists who had failed to win political Home Rule for Ireland at Westminister.

Virginia Glandon (1985), has written on Arthur Griffith and the advanced nationalist press in Ireland between 1900-1922, illustrating how the press was used as a tool in the mobilisation of public support for particular goals. While publicizing nationalist activities, Griffith recognized the need for a loose confederation through which nationalists and the many clubs and societies which were forming in Ireland, could speak and act with a greater degree of unity. In his paper The United Irishman, in early 1900, he proposed a "National Organization" and urged Irish nationalists to subordinate all personal differences to one goal: Irish independence (ibid:14). By the end of 1900 such a group was realized in the Cumman na nGaedhael. This group pledged its members to

> advance the cause of Ireland's national independence through dissemination of information on Ireland's resources, by supporting Irish industries, by cultivating Gaelic culture, by providing physical education and training for Ireland's youth, by developing an Irish foreign policy, and by working for nationalization of public boards.
> [ibid].

At this time, the Irish Literary Revival was well

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under way. As Fintan O'Toole (1985:111), has remarked, while it drew on rural images and ideology of the peasant and the countryside, it was created in a metropolitan context for a metropolitan audience. It helped create and sustain an image of rural Ireland as an ideal "which fed into the emergent political culture of Irish nationalism". The images created of "real, true Ireland of nature and landscape and sturdy peasantry" was according to O'Toole "an artificial literary creation, largely made in Dublin, for Dubliners". By retaining such an image he argues

> it has been possible to modernise the countryside, to turn it into a profitable base for American multi-national industry and EEC capitalist farming, while still believing that the heart of the nation remains pure.
>
> [ibid:115].

The myth of rural civilization worked better in an urban rather than a rural context where the more idyllic nature of rural life was easily accepted in contrast to the "foreign" nature of urban life. This was particularly true among the middle-class and the intellectuals from where the new independent state was to come. From the begining of the twentieth century the Irish urban working-class tried to organise itself into an independent political force in the face of poverty and unemployment. It was blocked not only by the forces of repression of the English occupation, but also by certain dominant strata of Irish nationalists and patriots promoting their vision of Ireland as a capitalist economy albeit recast in terms of rural ideology.

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Calls by urban intellectuals to buy goods manufactured in Ireland which were generally more expensive than imported goods also excluded the poorer categories of people from the national struggle. It is ironic then, that the very group who Irish nationalists were identifying as being closest to what it is to be Irish, and using in symbolism for the furtherance of their goals, were themselves excluded from and in many ways hurt by the ideals of this Irish nationalist movement. "Urban" was essentially recognised as a move from "true" traditional Irish society to the modern secular society of Britain. The irony is that many of those who were imposing their imagined community were doing so from an urban political base and had no conception of the harsh realities of Irish rural life, so in a paradoxical sense they were fulfilling their own profession of the "foreign" nature of the urban.

Given the importance of the imagery of the rural and traditional in Irish nationalism, a major problem facing nationalists was how to cope with modernity without losing all the important images which were so central to their ideology. The role of the media in achieving this should not be underestimated. The contribution of the press to the development of a nationalist consciousness combined with the development of a Catholic popular press is central to understanding the threat which the media in general hold for those in power. As pointed out earlier drawing on the work of Curran (1982), the media have been important in attaining and

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maintaining power. Because the media possess this strength, they are also a threat to the power structures because, as Curran has illustrated, the development of new media has contributed to the creation of new power groups. Hence power groups are caught in the double bind of recognising the power of the media and the importance of harnessing and manipulating that power while at the same time there is always the fear that the media may be used against them.

After the 1916 Rising, Griffith's newspaper, Nationality, did much to promote harmony among Irish nationalists, particularly after the formal reorganization of Sinn Fein in October 1917. After Griffith's imprisonment in 1918, three militant nationalists - Michael Collins, Cathal Brugha and Richard Mulcahy - assumed more prominent positions leading to the re-arming of the volunteers, later to be known as the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), and the reconstitution of the Volunteer newspaper, an tOglach. Distributed secretly it encouraged the growth of these military units. While Nationality encouraged and reported on the growth of Sinn Fein's local political units.

> Each paper in its own way helped prepare its readers for the momentous times which lay ahead, when Sinn Fein members of Parliament established Dail Eireann and the Volunteers backed the new constituent assembly by force of arms.
> (Glandon, 1985:174)

This demonstrates the growing importance of print journalism as a site for struggle. By addressing, defining and indeed creating a particular community, the press asserted both its

use to other power groups and the threat it posed to such power groups who needed a definable community to legitimate power. The aims of Cumman na nGaedhael of achieving an Irish-Ireland was essentially what Griffith had been calling for in the pages of The United Irishman :

> ...by publicizing the views and activities of the advanced nationalists, the journal accelerated the separatist movement and drew it together, gave it a voice and served as its "secretary and organizer".
> [Glandon, 1985:15].

Griffith's views on the issues of the day and the programme of the Sinn Fein movement between April 1906 and December 1914 are recorded in Sinn Fein, the newspaper, which succeeded The United Irishman. The British suppressed Sinn Fein (the weekly press) and all other nationalist journals, as subversive in 1914. The Sinn Fein daily had ceased publication in 1910. Glandon argues that this combined with increasing divisions within the ranks of Sinn Fein, and the Irish Party's third bid for Home Rule, diminished Griffith's influence among Irish nationalists, gave a new dynamism to the physical force movement in Ireland. According to Glandon, Griffith's power lay "in his pen and in his newspapers, and in the response which they elicited".

Again, the press had an important role in this increase in support for the physical force movement. The Irish Freedom, official organ of the IRB from 1911 until its suppression in 1914, increased the strength of its appeals for the Irish to arm and to take advantage of England's difficulties. Another militant journal, the Irish Volunteer,

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began circulating as the official organ of the Irish Volunteers on 7 February 1914 until one week before the Easter Rising. This journal established the base for a later press, including An tOglach, "one of the most influential Irish physical force presses", which began circulating on 31 August 1918 and continued after the birth of the Free State.

The Easter Rising caused shifts in editorial policies within the Irish press. Initially, the press reacted sharply against the 1916 rebels. Press and public attitudes towards the rebels gradually changed when the government executed 15 of their leaders and interned thousands of Irish people in jail. The role of the Catholic press in this was significant. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church was active at the level of popular culture, making a concerted effort to build up a Catholic popular literature to act as an antidote to the perceived secularism of the age. Catholic popular magazines and newspapers were produced and nationalist priests wrote for the lay press as well. The last decades of the century saw concerted efforts to produce "popular magazines and newspapers of a specifically Irish Catholic character to compete with English and non-Catholic publications" (Garvin, 1987:63). The Irish Messenger of the Sacred Heart, the Irish Catholic, and the Irish Rosary all commenced publication between 1885 and 1900.

In the first issue of the Irish Rosary, the editor rhetorically asks

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> how many are kept out of the Church simply because
> they see her only through the distorted medium of
> the old, lying, Protestant traditions?
> [Irish Rosary 1(1897:4), in ibid:63].

The Catholic Church was active in popular culture, establishing its power in society at a wider level often drawing on such anti-Protestant and also anti-British imagery. The Catholic press was very significant in establishing Ireland's identity as clearly anti-English often writing articles condemning the activities of the English in Ireland in the past. For example, Fr. Peter O'Leary, in 1901, in an article in the Irish Rosary on the monastery of St. Feichin, wrote that the foundation would still be doing its good work were it not for the "murderous robbers that came to us over here from England three hundred years ago" (Irish Rosary, 5(1901), in ibid:63).

The Catholic Bulletin, made the sharpest shift in editorial policy after 1916. Before 1916, this journal had always expressed a constitutional position. After the Rising, however, the government's policy in Ireland pushed the editor, J.J. O'Kelly, into the separatist camp.

> Indeed, the Catholic Bulletin's constant criticism
> of the government and the Irish Party, and its high
> praise for the rebels cannot be discounted as a
> major factor in changing the Irish public's
> position on the Rising and the men(sic) who made
> it. People gradually began to take pride in what
> these men(sic) had done, and to speak out
> forcefully against government reprisals.
> (Glandon, 1985:157).

The Catholic Bulletin, according to Brown, though established in 1911 chiefly "to warn the Catholic faithful of

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the dangers of immoral literature" ... "quickly became
dedicated to waging cultural and psychological war against
the malign influence of Protestant Anglo-Irish" (Brown,
1981:63). He goes on to say that the Catholic Bulletin

> suggests that a good deal of Irish-Ireland
> enthusiasm was generated less by idealistic
> cultural imperatives than by a desire to advance
> Catholic power and social policy in the country
> through the defeat of Protestant Ireland and the
> Anglicized culture associated with it in
> ideological warfare.
>
> (ibid.:71).

As Martin notes a remarkable aspect of the Easter
Rising was that "it was the first Irish Rising since the
seventeenth century in which the leaders were all Catholic".
What he suggests was most surprising about the Catholic
Church's response to the Rising was that there was "no
official condemnation of the Rising by the Catholic
hierarchy" (Martin, 1967:112-113). One reason he offers for
this reaction, or lack of it, was that the Catholic hierarchy
were completely taken by surprise on Easter Monday.

> Had the bishops been able to foresee the rebellion
> they might well have condemned the preparations for
> it as they did in the case of a similar Fenian
> movement in the 1860s.
>
> (ibid.:113).

1.2.2   Catholicism and national identity.

Catholicism itself has historically played an important
role in defining Irish identity both as a part of nationalism
and as a force in itself. The development of its power is
important here in light of its influence later on aspects of
Irish society, the prime one being the 1937 Constitution, but

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also in areas such as Censorship. Emmet Larkin (1972) suggests that the Devotional revolution in nineteenth century Ireland and its general and particular causes are crucial to understanding the development of Irish nationalism and the cultural importance of Irish Catholicism in that development. He argues that the Devotional Revolution was a response to a loss of language and cultural identity in the nineteenth century, that is to say the Irish, in search of stability in a time of rapid social change, attached themselves to the Church because they feared they were being effectively Anglicized.

After the famine a "culture of poverty" was broken up in Ireland by emigration and the new circumstances created by that breakup allowed for the emergence of other values. During this period Irish people were brought into line with a more orthodox Catholicism. This transformation may partly be explained by the growth in the discipline and bureaucratic orgainisation of the Catholic Church in early nineteenth century Ireland. Inglis (1987:116), submits that this growth can be linked to a "general explosion of discourse and communication in Irish society which was made possible by the physical development of the infrastructure of communications, eg. printing, road, postal service, etc."

> The growth in the popular press, for example, was associated with an increase in the actual reporting of the activities of the Catholic Church. This together with the fact that much of the reporting was of a favourable nature, did much to give the Church a legitimate position especially among the literate Protestant community.
>
> [ibid:116].

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According to Inglis it was not that the Church organisation and discipline were new. What was new was "the extent to which bishops began to communicate with each other and reform their dioceses".

> this growth in manners, discipline and civility was
> spread westwards being instilled into the homes and
> bodies of most Irish Catholics through the
> organizations and buildings supervised by priests
> and religious.
>
> [ibid:117].

This was in part made possible by the emergence of a new rural class - medium sized and large, Catholic tenant farmers. It was from this group, according to Inglis, that most early nineteenth century Irish Catholic priests came. The priest assumed a privileged and respected place in the community and the institution of the Church continued to extend and grow both in structure and its influence.

Summarizing the rise of Catholic influence in modern Ireland, Inglis (1987) outlines the main reasons which have been put forward to explain why Irish people became so strongly attached to the Church. The first is that which I have already outlined ie. that it was a response to a loss of language and cultural identity in the nineteenth century. Miller (1975), has argued that before the Famine, labourers and cottiers, who formed the majority of the population were oriented towards magical practices. This follows on from Larkin's explanation. With the virtual elimination of these classes during the Famine, magical

practices declined rapidly and were replaced by institutional Church practices favoured by the higher social order of Catholics. This reasoning has been developed by Connolly (1982), who links it to a change in the class structure of the population, which brought in a "new and respectable society" in which the Church's discipline was from the start more readily acceptable.

Inglis also outlines the thesis of E. Hynes (1978 in Inglis, 1987), who suggests that the growth in institutional adherence was part of an overall growth in discipline involving the sacrifice of short-term goals for long-term planning. This moral discipline was a pre-requisite for the modernisation of Irish society. Inglis puts forward what he calls a Marxist type explanation which argues that the growth of the institutional Catholic Church and an adherence to its practices were part of an ideological apparatus of the English state, fostered in order to contain the growing antagonisms which had resulted from divisions that arose with the new mode of agricultural production. Such an explanation argues that popular, essentially class, grievances were sublimated in mass devotionalism, and that repressed sexuality, necessary in the new mode of production and stem-family system, found a socially acceptable form of emotional relief in Catholic revival (Inglis, 1987: 3-4).

Inglis incorporates much of the reasoning behind these different types of explanations into his study wherein he sees the Catholic Church not as a voluntary body to which

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people subscribe on the basis of shared values, beliefs and practices but as a large bureaucratic organisation which is primarily interested in maintaining its power and influence in society. Just as the Catholic Church helped lay the basis for the implementation of the Irish State, its values were incorporated in the Irish constitution as it also had carved out an important niche for itself in the imagining of the Irish nation.

One reason, suggested by Garvin (1987:67) for the ideological fusion of Catholicism and Irish identity was the interdependence of priests and patriots who politically needed each other for support. Differences between lay separatists and clergy tended to be derived from this political competition with each other. Separatism, on the one hand, threatened the comfortable arrangements that the Church and the British government had worked out over the years. However, separatism had much popular support and so the Church incorporated it into the popular culture it was creating which was significantly anti-British and also anti-Protestant. Similarly, a total rejection of Catholicism on the part of the Irish separatists may have jeopardised their power as the Church had a strong hold over the majority of the population. The Church and the separatists came together to create the concept of an Irish nation separate and distinct from Britain. This appears contradictory to the argument that the institutional Catholic Church was part of an ideological apparatus of the English state. However, just

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as mass devotionalism sublimated class differences so too did the concept of the unified nation to which the Church was contributing. Had the Catholic Church come out against the 1916 Rising its nationalist stance may have been threatened and therefore its chance of maintaining and increasing upon its power in the new Irish state would have been put in jeopardy. The execution of the leaders of the Rising, notes Garvin (1987:48), "meant that the British lost whatever political legitimacy they had ever had in Catholic Ireland".

1.3 NATION - STATE DISTINCTION

1.3.1 The cultural basis of the nation

After independence, the state and the nation began to follow two separate paths. The cultural basis of the nation had been well laid but the state was new and had to come to terms with the practical reality of running a country. In doing this it followed British state models (Mc Donagh, 1968; Lloyd, 1987; Chubb, 1989). The cultural identity of the nation, however, was definite in its distinctiveness from a British identity. This section examines the cultural basis of the nation against the centralised nature of the state.

Smith (1979), writing on nationalism in the twentieth century asks how the "national" ideal remained so strong in so many diverse settings and over a long period of time. He finds part of the answer in the distinction between "the 'nation' as a 'natural' unit in history and the 'nation' as a

historically specific and political goal or ideal". The
nation as a "natural" unit - the ethnic nation - is,
according to Smith

> essentially an ancient historical and cultural
> entity, often religious in its origins, and always
> closely tied up with the rhythms of nature. ...
> Origins and descent on the one hand, and a close
> link with soil and territory on the other define
> the oldest and most basic forms of human
> association.
>
> (Smith, 1979:168).

In the other sense of nation which he describes as "the sole
basis for politics and government", nationalism becomes "an
ideology itself, a revival to other political ideologists,
yet distinguishable by its firm base in the "natural" mass
emotion that accompanies ethnic association". In this second
sense, he argues, nations are not just "repositories of
everything sacred and "natural"". Rather, he suggests, "they
become now vehicles of self-sacrifice, instruments of social
mobilisation and arenas for revolution (ibid.:169). According
to Smith nationalism politicises the nation. It turns culture
into the bases and criterion of politics and provides the
chief political framework for social development. Smith
(1979, Chapter 7), outlines how this occurs through what he
calls the bureaucratic cycle. Initially, nationalism aims to
secure autonomy and authenticity for the cultural entity that
it has singled out on historical grounds. International
recognition of the homeland as a territorial unit, according
to Smith must also be secured.

Smith suggests that once international recognition of
the homeland as a territorial unit is secured, the

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nationalists then embark upon the tasks of "nation building".
This, in turn, curbs the liberating impulse of nationalism
and full loyalty is given to the State to ensure its
efficiency and ability to modernise and develop the country's
resources. The nation is now identified with the state with
its established routine and authority. National loyalty
threatens to turn into an acceptance of "bureaucratic diktat"
and soon the state recreates social needs and unfulfilled
longings for a true identity and home. Eventually its back to
stage one of the cycle and so with every turn in the
bureaucratic cycle, nationalism's hold extends and grows.

Also addressing the effect of nationalism on nation-
building (this time cultural nationalism and the Irish
nation), Hutchinson (1987), argues that cultural nationalism
has played a formative part in defining the character of the
modern Irish nation-state. He sees cultural nationalism as a
recurring force within political communities of the
contemporary world that derives from its mediation of a
persistant conflict between "traditional" and "modern"
identities engendered by the competitive pressures of the
inter-state system (Hutchinson, 1987:305).

Hutchinson identifies two factors which are often cited
as being of great significance in enabling political elites
to muster the people for the task of nation-building after
independence. The first is the presence of powerful ethnic
memories in the projected national community. The second is

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the existence of a self-actualising myth developed in the course of a successful war of liberation against alien rule. This identifies the nation in the popular mind with specific nationalist ideals and leaders and provides an enemy who acts as a negative reference point. It also furnishes a set of common experiences - of triumph and suffering - that, when invoked by cultural nationalists may release collective energies after independence in support of the nation-building programme. Irish cultural nationalists, according to Hutchinson could count on both.

Hutchinson argues that the aim of cultural nationalism is, not the integration of community and state but rather the relocation of the moral centre of the nation in historic community rather than legal-rational state. He asserts that even though communitarian politics must lose out immediately after independence to pragmatic state-building, cultural nationalism often returns as a dynamic force, inspiring a renewed commitment to traditional values. This is a key consideration given the Irish state's later demands on public service broadcasting to reflect traditional values. It brings into question the whole idea of the use of culture as an area to legitimate and aid the development of the political and the economic. It is also relevant in the consideration of definitions of public and private interest.

Hutchinson suggests that to understand the later role of Irish cultural nationalism as a polity-shaping movement in the 1930s, we must turn once again to the idea of an

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alternating cycle between communitarian and legal-rational modes of socio-political organization. This is in line with Smith's bureaucratic cycle mentioned above.

The whole idea of the importance of the cultural basis to a nation has been taken up by David Lloyd (1987), who discusses how the Young Ireland movement of the 1840s "inaugurated a cultural tradition that conceives the responsibility of literature and of other forms to be the production and mediation of a sense of national identity". He submits that the cultural field, accordingly, became a primary site of struggle both before and after independence in Ireland. Lloyd states that between the early and the mid nineteenth century

> the Enlightment universalism of Wolfe Tone's politics, largely inspired by the French Revolution, gave way to a Romantic Nationalism that was at least in part driven by the need to overcome the discrepency between Tone's Enlightenment ideals and the Gaelic Catholic sentiment that motivated the revolt in 1798.
>
> Forging the spiritual unity of the nation as a prelude to the struggle for independence became the goal of Young Ireland...
>
> [Lloyd, 1987:1].

Young Ireland was a movement of relatively small intelligentsia in a country marked by a singularly uneven pattern of economic development and undergoing a process of modernization imposed by an imperial state. As Lloyd points out, marginalization was doubled by a rural economy and the loci of government and economic power, driving this displaced and largely urban intellegentsia to seek an alternative

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political centre.

It was in this context then, as Lloyd asserts, that the theory of the spiritual nation transcending actual and social economic difference and offering a ground for unity that would integrate disparate interests into a coherent political force, gains its crucial importance for the first time in Ireland.

> Culturally and politically, the concern of Young Ireland is precisely to articulate the "otherness" of Ireland around its own centre, both geographically and politically, and in relation to the myth of a unified and coherent cultural past. This recentering of Irish politics is conceived as the necessary precondition to the reversal of the economic marginaliazation brought about by the Union.
>
> In consequence, priority is given to the attainment of a cultural unity of the people in a domain specifically intended to transcend actual political and economic divisions.
>
> [ibid:60]

There is a sense then in which this "unified national subject" duplicated and even played into the hands of, the coherent national identity of the imperial power. As will be illustrated further below, it was the strength of this nation-state which led to the integration of Ireland into the world economy.

1.3.2 The new Irish State

The practical reality of state-building was much more problematic than that of nation-building. By 1923, the purist wing of the original separatist movement was defeated and its pragmatic wing ensconsed in power over most

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of Ireland as the government of the new Free State. The new and inexperienced government had to fight a civil war, demobilize its army, deal with serious economic recession and govern a country with less than totally a civic culture. As Joseph Lee (1988:109) points out, the new state did not have to confront the most daunting task facing most new states of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries ie. the challenge of creating a nation and fostering a sense of nationality. In the short term partition greatly simplified the situation facing the state builders. Reconciling Irish Nationalists and Unionists would have required the building of a "new nation", the new state would have to undertake genuine nation-building.

While the nation was distinctive in its cultural difference from Britain, the new state bore the impress of the British heritage in its bureaucratic, judicial, and educational systems, and its economic and its foreign policies. Lloyd has traced this pattern of dependence on British models back into the nineteenth century, arguing that while the integration of Ireland into the British market economy led to the depression and retardation of the Irish economy, its integration into the imperial political system necessitated the most developed and centralised bureaucratic system in the British Isles.

According to Lloyd , the avowed object of the Act of Union was to integrate Ireland politically with the empire as

a whole.

> But the anomalous condition of Ireland within Great
> Britain always evident in its poverty, Catholicism,
> different social structures, and so forth, led the
> administration in Dublin to measures of internal
> integration that involved a pattern of deliberate
> state interference which long preceded any
> comparable developments in other parts of the
> British Isles.
>
> [Lloyd,1987:56]

In line with this, Mc Donagh (1968) identifies the Act of
Union as the most important single factor in shaping Ireland
as a nation in the modern world "the effects of which
governed Irish politics and even many aspects of Irish social
and economic life long after the achievement of
independence". The Act of Union transferred political
responsibility for Ireland to Westminister, and as Mc Donagh
points out even in 1800, there were significant differences
between London and Dublin as to what this responsibility
implied. By 1815, he argues, the difference was even more
noticable. A new type of public servant was emerging and
administration was gradually being divorced from politics.
The notion that the state should stand outside and above the
contending groups and parties was taking shape. (ibid:7).

As the nineteenth century progressed Irish systems of
government, politics and law superficially resembled their
English counterparts. Mc Donagh illustrates how the very
different contexts forced the apparently similar apparatus to
work in totally different ways. He identifes two fundamental
differences between Irish and English situations:

1. Irish ruling class were much too few and scattered

to govern individually or in twos or threes after the English fashion.

2. Ireland was much too poor for so small a unit as the parish to be administratively self-sufficient. (Mc Donagh 1968:23).

> When the "age of reform" began to alter the structure and spirit of English government, the same changes could not be carried out in Ireland without destroying the entire basis of the Ascendancy, and imperiling the British domination.
> [ibid]

Consequently Irish Protestants acquiesced in centralisation. In contrast to the British, Irish government was remarkable for the extent to which centralization, uniformity, inspection and professionalism - particularly in the areas of order, welfare, planning and education - spread throughout the system before 1850. So the whole Irish public service ethos in these areas may be traced back to this unsuccessful imposition of British models on Ireland, resulting in British models which when adapted to an Irish context were peculiar to Ireland itself at that time ie. high levels of centralisation, advanced sytems of education, welfare, order and planning etc.

However, as Mc Donagh remarks, the fidelity of Ireland to British models of government after independence, is surprising when one considers its anti-colonial stance

> Both the forms and activity of central government were practically unchanged, and still more extraordinary, the British parliamentary and party systems were substantially repeated.

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But as Mc Donagh affirms

> ...Ireland had been conditioned for so long to
> British political practices and presuppositions
> (which indeed, the Irish themselves had done so
> much to shape) that a totally new type of party
> structure would have been difficult to envisage.
> [ibid:95].

After independence, the concern for efficient government enabled the bureaucracy to circumvent original nationalist aims, as "state-building" took priority over "nation-building". Upward mobility rather than a redistribution of wealth dominated the minds of the revolutionaries, who thought in terms of establishing the rule of a new Catholic middle- and skilled- working class (Garvin, 1987:136).

The contradiction between the somewhat superior values of Irish separatist nationalism and Irish Catholic puritanism and communalism on the one hand, and the realities of the Irish democratic state with its English style liberal and individualistic implicit values on the other gave rise to many problems and began a divide between nation and state which was increasingly widened as time went by and the contradictions became more complex.

As Chubb (1989) remarks, Bunreacht na hEireann retained most of what evolved in the practice of the previous years. The emergent system of government which "suited a strong Prime Minister bent on reform and supported by a loyal majority party that looked to their charismatic, messianic leader for initiative and direction", can according to Chubb, "justly be described as "British"; ". He continues:

> to be more precise, it should be labelled as the
> early twentieth century Westminister model. As it
> happened, British practice at this time tended to
> emphasize the role and position of the cabinet at
> the expense of parliament, and it was this model
> which the founders of the State adopted from the
> begining, that received de Valera's imprimatur.
> (Chubb, in Farrell, 1989:94-5)

As stated above, this contradiction between the specifically non-British character of the Irish nation and the British character of the state is central to understanding the Irish state's relationship with the audio-visual sector. However, before going on to examine this relationship in detail, let us first examine another contradiction which has a bearing on the audio-visual sector in Ireland, ie. the cultural and informational aspects of the media commodities versus their commercial aspects.

At the outset of this thesis some key concepts in the thematic analysis of this research were identified. So far we have encountered concepts of nation and state, of public service and of citizenship. This next section is going to deal with concepts of consumerism, private market and again public service and citizenship. This is vital if one is to understand not only the internal dynamics but also the external dynamics at work in the Irish audiovisual media and their relationship with the state.

1.4 CULTURAL AND INFORMATIONAL ASPECTS OF MEDIA COMMODITIES:

1.4.1 How cultural commodities differ from others.

Richard Collins et al (1988), have identified broadcasting as a specific system of production within the sphere of social production and the cultural industries, and with specific and unusual characteristics as an economic activity. These "unusual characteristics" include extensive regulation over structure, ownership, finance, content, behaviour and performance; and the basic mode of competitiion in other industries, i.e. by price, is virtually non-existant. Non-price competition is prevalent throughout the cultural industries, but according to Garnham, is especially powerful in broadcasting for two reasons:

> because there is no direct price relationship between production and either size or intensity of audience demand; and because the unit costs of consumption are so low that, even without the technology for Pay Television, it is difficult, if not impossible, to create effective price discrimination between individual programmes

(Collins et al, 1988:15)

This necessarily has a significant impact on the end product.

1.4.1.1 Distribution

Garnham (1983) has argued that under Capitalist market conditions diversity of provision is limited, control is in the hands of a few and what choice there is is distributed unequally. He has looked in detail at the structural dynamics of the cultural sphere within the capitalist mode of production and concluded that the particular qualities which distinguish the broadcasting commodity from other goods

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include:

a) costs of production tend to be high relative to cost of reproduction and distribution. Therefore economies of scale bring very high returns and audience maximisation is all important (since the marginal profit from each additional consumer is high relative to marginal cost).

b) demand is highly elastic - it is important to be able to offer a repertoire to spread risks. This can only happen if there is a high and sustained level of investment in a whole production programme. The small independent producer loses out here. This leaves us with a cultural industry characterised by a high level of oligopilistic control (national and international) and by a high level of horizontal integration, ie. development of conglomerates with an important market share across a wide range of different media.

Control over access to an audience is required if economies of scope are to be realized. This is why Collins et al (1988) argue that it is control over distribution that is crucial both in print, publishing, film, records and broadcasting. Broadcasting, they suggest, represents "technically and thus organizationally, the ultimate development of that logic, symbolized by and realized in control over access to the transmitter". Once this control is established relations to production can range from contracting-out and buying-in, from production houses to centralized large-scale in-house production. Therefore, they

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argue, "the notion that independent producers can make any product for the distributor is not feasible from the perspective of the distributor. In fact, independents are producing "to order" and their "independence" refers to their ownership status rather than their product. (ibid:12)

Askoy and Robins (1990) argue that this is also the situation in Hollywood film industry. There has been a significant organisational transformations where "the studios have come to develop a system of working collaboratively with independent producers" (ibid:4). However, the power of the majors has not been eroded and

> if one focuses on the political economy of Hollywood, one is more likely to be impressed by the consolidation of power than by ideas about industrial divides.
>
> (Askoy and Robins, 1990:13)

As with broadcasting there is a high level of risk attached to the film product. There is no necessary relation between what a film costs and what it might earn. Askoy and Robins argue that "what made Hollywood the dominant paradigm of the film business lies with the ability of Hollywood studios in geting their films to a worldwide audience" . They assert that "in extending markets, building audiences and in distributing the products Hollywood excelled" (ibid:19). It is precisely because they control distribution that "major film companies can afford to produce expensive movies as a competitive product differentiation strategy, or they can subcontract producers in cheaper locations to furnish them with cheaper films" (ibid:21).

1.4.1.2 <u>Values vs ownership and control</u>.

According to Garnham (1986), the incompatibility
between the commercial and political functions of the media
is not just a question of ownership and control, important as
such questions are. It is more a question of the value system
and set of social relations within which commerical media
must operate and which they serve to reinforce. For it is
these that are inimical to the very process of democratic
politics.

Garnham argues (1986:46), that there is a fundamental
contradiction between the economic and the political levels
of these value systems, and the social relations which those
value systems require and support. Within the political
realm, Garnham locates the individual as citizen exercising
public rights of debate within a communally agreed structure
of rules towards communally defined ends. The value system
here is social and the legitimate end of social action is the
public good. Within the economic realm, Garnham identifies
the individual as producer/consumer exercising private rights
through purchasing power on the market in pursuit of private
interests. Actions are co-ordinated by the invisible hand of
the market.

This contradiction Garnham argues, produces two
clashing concepts of human freedom. One defined in economic
terms as "the freedom to pursue private interests without
political constraint". The other defined in political terms

advocating "political intervention in the workings of the market in order to liberate the majority from its constraint". Both assume that the contradiction is resolvable by suppressing either the political or the economic, and both equate politics with state power. The field of mass media, he suggests, is a key focus for examining this contradiction because they operate simultaneously across the two realms. Thus, he would argue " a television channel is at one and the same time "a commericial operation and a political institution" (ibid:47).

Garnham insists that value systems and social relations matter more than ownership and control. He is thereby presenting a contradiction in political economic media theory which asserts the dependence of ideology on the economic base. Political economy, particularly in its Marxist variant, asserts that ownership and control determine a society's value systems and social relations. In the case of Public Service Broadcasting it may be argued that ownership and control are as important as value systems and that one influences the other, for the owners and controllers are the state, and the main creator of value systems is the state indirectly through eg. broadcasting and more directly in other areas.

Cultural commodities then differ from others in their relation to value systems. Therefore the question of the value system and set of social relations within which media

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must operate and which they serve to reinforce is as important as the question of ownership and control. In the case of Public Service Broadcasting, ownership and control has rested with the state as has, to a large extent, the determination of the value system.

Public Service Broadcasting has heretofore been equated with national broadcasting - public interest being synonymous with the national interest. As increasingly the citizen is appealed to as a private individual rather than as a member of a public, within a privatized sphere rather than within that of public life, a shift from public to private and away from national importance within society as a whole may be identified and may be examined in the context of the media. However, as Smith (in Boyce et al 1978:170) argues, "the newspaper has acquired a public role within the private sector". It requires the legitimation of "the Fourth Estate", of acting as "watchdog" for the public in order to protect it "against the type of assailant who claims that no knowledge can be certain, still less comprehensive". A space therefore does exist where the private sphere can take on "public interest" functions.

This shift from private to public sphere may be elaborated by an argument derived from Philip Elliot (1986), ie. that a shift in location of power from the nation-state is graphically illustrated by current developments in the mass media (he discusses this in particular in relation to the implications of this shift for the intellectuals who are

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about to be robbed of those public forums in which they could engage in their "culture of critical discourse"). He also argues that what we are witnessing today is a shift away from involving people in society as political citizens of nation-states towards involving them as consumption units in a corporate world. The consequence of this for culture is a continuation of the erosion of the Public Sphere. In the ensuing society, individuals participate as members of the market which actually provides for consumption rather than participation. In examining this shift from public to private interest, from citizen to consumer, from national to global, let us look at where the idea of public interest emerged from and where it is going.

1.4.2 The Public Sphere

Definitions of "Public interest" have mainly emerged from the liberal economic theory of John Locke (1632-1704) and Jeremy Bentham (1748-1932) who saw property as the natural right of the autonomous individual; and John Stuart Mill (1806-73) and Thomas Paine (1737-1809) who were more concerned with the aggregated benefit within society than with the natural rights of the individual. According to Locke, individuals are free and equal because reason makes them capable of rationality. Membership of a political community (citizenship) bestows upon the individual both responsibilities and rights, duties and powers, constraints and liberties.

This view introduced one of the most central tenets of European liberalism, ie. the state exists to safeguard the rights and liberties of citizens who are ultimately the best judges of their own interests; and that accordingly the state must be restricted in scope and constrained in practice in order to ensure the maximum possible freedom of every citizen. Regulatory systems which followed the Industrial Revolution were embedded in contemportary thinking about national development. The "public" clearly lived within national borders (cf how in Ireland, especially after independence, nation building programme was undertaken in the "public interest"). This acting in the "public/national interest" has been criticised as being a screen behind which elites hide (Mattelart et al 1984). Effectively they use the term "public interest" to legitimate actions which on an individual level would not be acceptable eg. censorship.

As Smith (1989) argues, in this era of deregulation there has been a reinstatement of liberal economic theory. The revival of market forces and the interplay of individual motivation is viewed as a surer path to collective benefit. Public interest, he maintains, can be seen as an attempt to reassert the dimension of the collective within that culture of individualism. Broadcasting may be taken as a case in point. From the outset, the idea of broadcasting as a "natural monopoly" was commonplace, because of spectrum scarcity which in general limited broadcasting to within national frontiers and sometimes the immediate surrounding

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areas. This reason no longer holds. Since the advent of satellite and cable the very idea of national broadcasting has begun to crumble and with it the idea that a nation can be the ultimate definer of its culture. The demise in the importance of the national boundaries in relation to spectrum regulation has meant that the importance and significance of Public Service broadcasting is also under pressure. This does not hold completely true for Ireland where the nation-state is still strong but where however, the public service ideal is under further attack. This contradiction will be examined in later chapters.

Another reason contributing to the move away form the Public Service ideal is the optimism which the early media presented regarding its ability to provide unity between personal freedom and social responsibility. Television especially was seen as an aid to the whole process of historical evolution.

> Overseen by the state, public service broadcasters offered a mass standardised service produced on a produciton line in vertically integrated institutions. Broadcasting was seen as something to be rationally planned and directed downwards to improve the populace.
>
> [Mulgan, 1989:34]

As Smith (1989) points out, these thoughts have survived through to today but within a social context in which the terms by which public and private interests define their role within the economy are altered. This is even more problematic in Ireland where, as shown above, the public service ideal was a British ideal adapted to suit an Irish context. In

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relation to broadcasting in Ireland the total Public Service idea was not accepted, since the national station was required to be financially feasible as well as serving the "public interest" (see chapter two).

The immersion of the media in market forces while continuing to be controlled by the state follows the trail of much economic activity which has fallen within public discourse of consumerism and private interest. This scenario is one of the many changes taking place in today's society and needs to be examined within the context of more widespread changes all of which show a decrease in the significance of the national and of the public sphere. Central to an analysis of such changes is the current debate on post-Fordism.

1.5 POST-FORDISM

While Fordist and pre-Fordist methods of accumulation are prevalent in many places, post-Fordism, as Hall has pointed out

> is at the leading edge of change, increasingly setting the tone of society and providing the dominant rhythm of cultural change.
> [Hall, 1989:12].

The industrial era of Fordism began in the early 1900s culminating in the introduction of the $5 eight hour day in 1914. The Fordist labour process was based broadly on five principles

1. Division of labour - jobs were increasingly split into

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specialised tasks;

2. Deskilling of the labour force;

3. Skilled labour was mechanised;

4. Decision making rested solely with management;

5. Mass production system - moving production lines and specialised production.

These principles were the result of a combination of the ideas developed from the work of Adam Smith in the 18th century, and Babbage, Marx, Ure and Taylor in the 19th. (Kaplinski, 1986).

The matching pattern of wider social relations in the evolving Fordist labour process was one in which mass production and international specialisation came to the fore. Government policies became designed to stablilise production and consumption to maintain a predictable structure which would facilitate mass production. Fordism therefore depended upon the nation-state taking a very special role within the overall system of social regulation. Consequently the legitimation of the power of the State depended on the ability to spread the benefits of Fordism overall through redistributive policies or legal actions. This was of great importance as it was becoming more apparent as the industrial era of Fordism went on that Fordism engendered much inequality. As Harvey notes, "race, gender and ethnicity often determined who had access to privileged employment and who did not". He goes on to point out that

> Denied access to privileged work in mass
> production, large segments of the workforce were

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equally denied access to the much-touted joys of
mass consumption. This was a sure formula for
discontent.
(Harvey, 1985)

Not alone was there citizen criticism of the inequity
engendered by the Fordist regime and the quality of service
provided by highly bureaucratic state administration (which
resulted from the state trying to answer the shortcomings of
Fordism). Consumer criticism was also launched at the
blandness of quality and goods. The labour process itself
showed specific problems such as lack of caring on the part
of the worker, and quality suffered, because the process was
inflexible and supply driven, the costs of storage became
substantial.

Despite these threads of opposition, the Fordist regime
managed to hold firm at least until the early 1970s. Material
living standards rose for the mass of the population in the
advanced capitalist countries, and a relatively stable
environment for corporate profits prevailed. The sharp
recession of 1973 shattered that framework and a process of
rapid transition in the regime of accumulation began
attempting to remedy some of the pitfalls of Fordism. Within
the labour process there was a recognition that alternatives
to the post-Fordist system was necessary. One such
alternative is the Japanese Just-in-time labour process. Its
central features are that production is demand driven, there
is flexibility in product and process and the work is multi-
skilled and multi-task oriented. Production is just in time,

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faults are identified on the spot rather than at the end of production lines, a measure of responsibility and quality control is given back to the detailed worker and the worker is increasingly involved in technical improvements.

This alternative is often seen to offer a much more human working environment but as Kaplinski (1986:28) remarks:

> The new labour process possesses a dual nature with respect to its "human process". At the most narrow level it often leads to an increase in the quality of working life; but this may be associated with a reduction in worker autonomy and a reduced role for the democratic worker institutions which have been forged over a century of struggle in the Fordist paradigm.

Outside of the labour process, alternatives in the regime of accumulation present an increase in oligarchic control and an increasingly global economy, while at the same time developing a myriad of new skills often compared to pre-industrial craftworkers and artisans.

Robins has emphasised the importance of the "local" within post-Fordist society asserting that the artisnal modes of labour organisation ranging from individual craft production (writing a book) to the small group (independent film producers) remain common and important within the cultural sphere. However as has been shown earlier and will be further explicated below, the importance of the "local", must be recognised within the context of the simultaneous rise in the significance of the global. At the heart of historical developments in systems of accumulation and social regulation Robins argues "is a process of radical spatial

restructuring and reconfiguration", its analysis, he claims "demands a social theory that is informed by the geographical imagination".

Robins presents "one of the most suggestive and productive ways of looking at the present period of upheaval" as being "that of the Regulation School of political economists with their analyses of the decline of the social system of Fordism". The basic argument of the Regulation School pioneered by Aglietta (1979) and advanced by Lipietz (1986), Boyer (1986) and others is presented by Harvey as follows:

> In order for a regime of accumulation to function it is necessary to bring the behaviours of all kinds of individuals - captialists, workers, state employees, financiers, and all manner of other political-economic agents - into some kind of configuration that will keep the regime of accumulation functioning.
>
> (Harvey, 1989:121).

They argue that a particular system of accumulation can exist because "its schema of reproduction is coherent". Therefore there must be "a materialization of the regime of accumulation taking the form of norms, habits, laws, regulating networks and so on that ensure the unity of the process, ie. the appropriate consistency of individual behaviours with the schema of reproduction. This body of interiorized rules and social processes is called the mode of regulation" (Lipietz 1986:19, in Harvey 1989:122). This is analogous to Garnham's argument outlined earlier, that it is the value systems and social relations within which the media operate that is important, more so than ownership and

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control.

As Harvey (ibid:123) remarks the virtue of "regulation school" thinking is that it insists we look at the total package of relations and arrangements that contribute to the stabilization of output growth and aggregate distribution of income and consumption in a particular historical period and place. What the regulation school have suggested is that Fordism as a historically specific coherence of accumulation and regulation has now reached its limits. Insofar as the resources of Fordism/Keynesianism have become exhausted, the future of capitalist development demands a fundamental and innovative restructuring of accumulation and regulation.

So what follows Fordism?

1.5.1. Localization and Globalization

As David Harvey (1985) sees it, the new spatial order following Fordism is a consequence of two contrary dynamics - mobility and fixity. The ability of both capital and labour power to move from place to place depends upon the creation of fixed, secure, and largely immobile social and physical infrastructure. The ability to overcome space is predicated on the production of space (in Robins 1989a:148). Harvey shows that capital has always sought to overcome spatial barriers and to improve the "continuity of flow". It remains the case that spatial constraints always exist and persist insofar as "capital and labour must be brought together at a

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particular point in space for production to proceed" (ibid).
Corporate integration is occurring at two levels. Vertically
- concentrating more power in the hands of the few - at a
global level. But also horizontally, increasing the
significance of the local and it is at the local level that
new economic and social dynamics are being worked out. Many
commentators have identified the importance of local
development but ignore the context within which it occurs.
This will be discussed in later chapters in relation to the
so-called de-regulation and privatisation of the audiovisual
sector in a "Europe without Frontiers".

While disintegration and localization are important,
Robins identifies integration and globalization as the
dominant and embracing forces (Robins 1989a:152). What Robins
argues is emerging (and what I shall discuss further in
Chapter 4) is a certain displacement of national frameworks
in favour of perspectives and agendas appropriate to both
supra-national and sub-national dynamics. The implications of
this for national identities is very significant. The
simultaneous rise of globalism and localism mean that the
significance of the nation-state has become ever more
problematic and questionable.

Castels (1983:4 in ibid) argues that space of power is
being transformed into flows, but space of meaning is being
reduced to micro-territories of new tribal communities. He
envisages a new "space of collective alienation", one in

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which there is a "deconnection between people and spatial form", where "the outer experience is cut off from the inner experience". To avoid this we need new conditions and requirements for genuinely reimagined communities. As Raymond Williams argues (in Towards 2000), postmodern culture must be elaborated out of differential and plural identities, rather than collapsing into some false cohesion and unity (this is particularly significant for the whole European-identity debate which will be dealt with in chapter 4). While the development of local communities etc is important it must be recognised as a complement to the system of integration and not an alternative to it.

Robins (ibid) argues that the answer lies in improving the way large-scale systems work, and this means learning how to use the mass media and the new Information Technologies to create "a new forum for public discourse". He argues that public discourse, grounded in a spatial framework, could be elaborated in a local public sphere. However because local cultures can only be constituted now as manifestations of global culture, Robins argues that a critical regional or local culture must necessarily be in dialogue with global culture (1989a:161). Having outlined earlier how public interest became synonomous with national interest, and how the public sphere is now under attack as the national is giving way to local and global systems, it is important that the public sphere is redefined to encompass the global and the local so that the public interest is served and not lost

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to consumer interest which tends to be replacing it.

Hall has remarked how proponents of Thatcherism have latched on to these changes and are exploiting them to their own advantage

> It is not a question of whether or not Thatcher knows what post-Fordism is. They just know that the era of the big monolith is passing, a lot of new ideas are coming from smaller-scale, more flexible forms of production.
>
> The increasing diversity of modern societies does reinforce the breakdown of monolithic social identities. ... Individualism and choice and the market proliferating choice - all of these themes were wonderfully constructed to catch these elements.
>
> [Hall 1989:89]

It will be shown later (chapters 3 and 4), how these themes are infiltrating audio-visual debates in Ireland and in Europe and that while smaller-scale, more flexible forms of production are on the increase, they are being encouraged to be more commercially than culturally driven.

As Robins (1989b:21) points out globalisation in the economic sphere is about the exploitation of markets on a world scale. This is not a new development and what we are seeing is no more than the greater realisation of long historical trends towards the global concentration of industrial and financial capital. MNCs, according to Robins, "remain the key shapers and shakers of the international economy, and it is the ever-more extensive and intensive integration of their activities that is the primary dynamic of the globalisation process". Current corporate philosophy suggests a universalising idea of consumer sovereignty which,

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as Robins explains, suggests that as people gain access to global information, so they develop global needs and demand global commodities, thereby becoming "global citizens".

As the historical development of capitalist economies has always had profound implication for culture, identities and ways of life, the globalisation of economic activity is now associated with further cultural transformation. Global cultural industries are driven, Robins argues, by the very same globalising logic that is reshaping the economy as a whole. As pointed out above, with the globalisation of culture the link between culture and territory is more disrupted. It becomes all the more difficult, therefore, for individuals to reimagine the community to which they belong. This cultural transformation has an important role to play in the survival of economic activity. As with the development of nation-state discussed earlier (cf Lloyd 1987) culture is all important for the development of what Gramsci called hegemony. Presently it is the development of local and global cultures which is central to the stability of capitalism. So while the development of local and regional cultures and identities should not be devalued and have great merits, this development must be carefully examined within the broader context of globalism.

Hall has outlined the main body of changes occuring in today's society, and they provide the framework through which to examine current developments in the audio-visual sector in

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light of globalising and localising trends. They are:

1. "A shift to new Information Technologies": - In the audio-visual industries the development of New Information Technologies narrow control of distribution, so even if there are considerable developments at local level in production etc. ultimate control is maintained at the level of the global.

2. "A shift towards a more flexible specialised and decentralised form of labour process and work organisation, and as a consequence, a decline of the old manufacturing base (and the regions and cultures associated with it)." (eg. the use of ENG in RTE news/regional output).

3. "The hiving-off or a contracting out of functions hitherto provided "in-house" on a corporate basis". (eg. Channel 4, and the move in RTE to contracting out more functions to the private sector (see chapter three for a more detailed discussion)).

4. "A leading role for consumption, reflected in such things as greater emphasis on choice and product differentiation" (eg. the Dept of An Taoiseach's reduction of Irish film-making to purely market terms, and also the government's arguments in favour of a third television station (see chapter 3).

5. "A decline in the proportion of skilled, male, manual working-class and the corresponding rise of the service and which-collar classes." (SKC Report on the growth of middle management in RTE).

6. "More flexi-time and part-time working coupled with the

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feminisation and ethnicisation of the workforce".

7. "There is an economy dominated by the multinationals with their new international division of labour and the greater freedom from nation-state control."

8. "The globalisation of new financial markets"

9. The emergence of new patterns of social divisions - especially those between "public" and "private" sectors. (eg. the example of broadcasting in Ireland being moved from the public to private sphere, and the private sector being called on subsequently to undertake public service functions such as news and current affairs quotas. Also the film sector a private sector in a public sphere?

The above framework will be drawn on throughout the rest of this thesis to explain current developments in the audio-visual sector in Ireland and the consequences for identity. However, in Ireland, as will be seen from later chapters, these developments are mediated by specific cultural, economic and political imperatives. It is in this context that the earlier discussion on the development of the nation-state and the distinction in Ireland between nation and state acquires significance ie. the cultural basis of the nation providing a barrier to easy acceptance of the largely English wrought state. Today, this cultural basis is in a position to provide a barrier to further integration of Ireland into a global process, or else to be eroded to an extent that even centuries of British rule could not achieve.

The definition of the public sphere in national terms means that the demise of the importance of the national has significant consequences for that sphere. According to Curran, the attack by the right, and the possibility that broadcasting could be remodelled along free-market lines of capitalist press in Britain, has resulted in

> a headlong revalorisation of public service broadcasting in which earlier perceptions of British television as an agency of the dominant order are now heavily qualified by radical researcheres.
>
> (Curran, 1990:157)

Curran goes as far as to argue that public service broadcasting is more open to popular opposition movements than the more "closed" organizations of the popular press.

So is there any way in which this public sphere can be redefined? The special place of the audio-visual industries as a cultural industry in the economic, social and cultural transformations taking place today is central to addressing these issues.

1.6. REVIEW

The aim of this chapter has been to establish two interrelated backgrounds against which the audio-visual sector in Ireland may be examined. One is the national, the other the global. It has been established that communications systems are central to the creation and stability of power structures be they national or global. The media are central to the imagining of a community as it is through the media that a group of people may be addressed specifically as

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members of that group. It is this function of the media which is important to those trying to create or legitimate their position of power.

It was illustrated how the press performed this function at the turn of the century in Ireland. Central to the legitimation of the idea of an independent Ireland was the cultural field, as it was here that political and economic problems could be transcended in the "common interest". Within the nation, the power structure of the Catholic Church also relied on the media for their legitimation and clearly illustrated the double-bind which most power groups find themselves - recoginising the significanct role of the media in maintaining their power but also the threat which the media posed. If the media could assist in the maintenance of power it could also assist in undermining it.

By the time Ireland gained "independence", the cultural basis of the nation had been well established finding its definition in the "urban" area but being defined as as particularly "rural". It was also being defined as traditional and Catholic, its main concern was to define itself as culturally distinct from Britain.

The state on the other hand was practically a replica of British government in Ireland. The integration of Ireland into the British market economy in the early nineteenth century led to the depression of the Irish economy but

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paradoxically to "the most developed and centralized bureaucratic system in the British Isles" (Lloyd, 1987:56). It is significant that it was the strength of this nation state which led to the integration of Ireland into the global economic system - something which is now being attributed to the breakdown of the nation-state. The history of state intervention in the Irish economy meant that when it came to the internationalisation of the Irish economy, the state carried it out under the auspices of the "national interest".

Having such deep roots and being so rigidly established, it is not surprising therefore that the new "Free State" should have followed the British model of government. However, this presented a major contradiction in Irish life which was to affect many areas of Irish society in the future. While Ireland had a nation that was determined to be "un-British", it had a state which was largely a British creation. This proved perhaps most problematic in the cultural field and in particular for the audio-visual sector in Ireland with the dual requirements of answering to the "cultural" demands of the nation and the "commercial" demands of the state. This contradiction is even more pronounced in light of developments in the global economy which historically have had significant influence on the cultural arena.

What we are witnessing today at a global level is a shift away from involving people in society as political

citizens of nation-states, towards "involving them as consumption units in a corporate world" (Elliot, 1986). There is an increase in oligarchic control in an increasingly global economy and the consequence of this for culture in the continuing erosion of the public sphere which in general has been confined to national boundaries. At the same time there is a development of local cultures and an increase in artisnal modes of labour organisation. Presently it is the simultaneous development of local and global "cultures" which is central to the stability of capitalism. As Castells (1983) argues, "space of power" is maintained at a global level with "space of meaning" at a more local level. This disconnection has serious repercussions for identity. Within the audio-visual sector in Ireland significant developments in local production may be ascertained. However, control over distribution is increasingly globalised. This contributes to the Governments view of film-making as being a commercial operation open to market forces (see chapter 3).

The cultural and informational aspects of media commodities distinguish them from other commodities. The fact that costs of production are high relative to costs of reproduction, and that distribution and demand is highly elastic, means that it is important to be able to offer a repetoire to spread risks. Both these aspects make the cultural commodity more open to oligarchic control. In the interests of the cultural aspect of the media, then, a case may be made for state intervention in this area. This is

ironic given that in the past the state has been associated with reinforcing monolithic social identities. However, just as Fordism depended upon the nation-state taking a very special role within the overall system of social regulation so does post-Fordism albeit at a different level. This reliance creates a space for the State to strengthen the cultural base of the country in order to avoid the forces that accompany post-Fordism. But perhaps the commercial aspects of the media mean that it be left open to market forces? Does the audio-visual medium in Ireland have a role to play in the expression of an Irish identity or is this expression important? These are some of the issues I shall be raising in the following chapters. The relationship between the state and the audio-visual sector in Ireland will be examined form the foundation of the State to the present day, in light of both the specific national history, economy, politics etc. and also global and international developments which have an effect on this relationship.

CHAPTER TWO

A HISTORY OF FILM AND BROADCASTING IN IRELAND:
THE CULTURAL VS THE COMMERCIAL?

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will chart the development of film and broadcasting in Ireland, concentrating on the social, political and economic factors affecting this development. As established above, the media are central to the imagining of a nation. As the nation and state continued to follow two distinct though related paths the role of the media in Irish society became more complex. This chapter explores how the audiovisual sector in Ireland reconciled cultural with commercial goals, and the role of the state in this process. The first section deals with the development of Wireless Broadcasting in Ireland and the debates surrounding its formation, establishing the relationship between public service broadcasting and national identity and examining the problems facing public service broadcasting in Ireland from the outset.

The second section explores the development of film making in Ireland. Although not a "public service", due to a lack of financial support given by government to indigenous film making, film was under government control through censorship. Film came to be treated more as a commercial than a cultural industry. The last section deals with the problems the government had in reconciling ideals of public service

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broadcasting and television's prospective role in relation to Irish identity, with the commercial imperatives of broadcasting as an industry. These problems had already faced radio, but in a different social and economic climate. In the 1960s Ireland was opening itself more to foreign influences both in social and economic life. So while on the one hand television was recognised as an important part of a nation taking its place in a larger world of nations, the financial considerations were also influenced by the modernising mood which prevailed at this time.

The aim of this chapter, then, is to trace the relationship between the media and the state in order to understand how current developments in the Irish audiovisual field have emerged. It will be noted that broadcasting in Ireland was never an ideal public service, as it always had to answer to commercial imperatives. At the outset, cultural imperatives were significant in government policy but as the years went on the commercial imperatives of broadcasting assumed greater importance. Following from chapter one it will be illustrated how tension between the Nation and the State have affected the development of the audiovisual sector. The external and the internal causes of economic and cultural change in Ireland will be examined, and the reconstitution of "the public sphere" in market terms will be highlighted. These three strands, which have implications for the experience of radio, film and television, are central to understanding their development.

2.2. WIRELESS BROADCASTING -THE FORMATIVE YEARS

Debate on broadcasting in Ireland started in the early
1920s at a time when foreign radio stations were being picked
up in Ireland and the demand for radio was becoming apparent.
In December 1923 a special Dail Committee was appointed to
investigate Wireless broadcasting. In making the case for
having an Irish broadcasting station the then Postmaster-
General J.J. Walsh argued that the nation was starting out on
a new political, social, and cultural life and consequently

> any kind of Irish station is better than no
> Irish station at all.
> [quoted in Gorham 1967:13]

As Gorham [ibid], points out this consideration has continued
to dominate subsequent thinking on broadcasting in Ireland.
It is also reflective of the nationalist ideology that
pervaded the thinking of the new Irish state.

2.2.1. Tension between the Nation and the State

Heated debates surrounded the Committee's report
as regards the need for a radio station at all and when this
was ratified, the discussion centred on ownership and
control. The committee presented their report to the Dail on
29 March 1924. The report expressed a definite belief in the
power of broadcasting to educate the public and it viewed its
entertainment role with some contempt. It recommended State
operation:

> Convinced that these advantages from the
> installation of a Broadcasting station would
> accrue to the Ministries of Agriculture, of

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> Fisheries, of Industry and Commerce, and above all
> of Education ... Expenditure of State funds on
> the installation and working of a central station
> would be well justified.
> [Dail Debates, 29-3-1924, col.2611]

As shown in the previous chapter the tradition of state involvement in national endeavours was a legacy from British government in Ireland. This argument put forward in favour of state involvement was not purely a cultural argument but one which pointed to the financial benefits to the state of a state run radio service.

Alternatively it suggested that the station be run by a private company in which the State would have a controlling interest but stressed that Broadcasting should not be handed over to "enterprise wholly private". From the outset the Postmaster-General, J.J. Walsh in his White Paper of November 1923, made clear that in his opinion a broadcasting station alone would not be a commercial success, but that there were reasonably good prospects for broadcasting as one of the activities of an electrical manufacturing and marketing company, specifically the Irish Broadcasting Company. This however was rejected by the Committee and a lot of ill feeling was generated thereof (1).

Ensuing debates were mainly concerned with whether the station should be privately or publicly run. Representative of the arguments for public ownership and control was that of Deputy Patrick Hogan of Fine Gael, who could find very good reason for putting under the control of some national body, such as a State Department:

> the entire control of everything that appertains
> to the revival of Irish culture, and everything
> that is proper and distinctive in the life of the
> nation.
> [Dail Debates, 3-4-1924, col.2864]

Here we see broadcasting being ascribed a place in the "revival" of Irish culture - a culture as outlined above, defined from an urban base, but drawing on romantic rural imagery, bearing little relation to the practical operation of the State. Yet this vision was necessary if the state was to be legitimated. This was acknowledged by the Radio Association of Ireland, established in July 1923, who felt it should be a national priority and asserted that

> broadcasting may, indeed, mould the nation's
> thoughts and aspirations to an extent now wholly
> unappreciated. With State control of broadcasting
> that great national spirit which has been the
> forerunner of all national prosperity in every
> country of the world will have ample opportunity of
> development...
> [quoted in Cathcart, in Farrell 1984:41].

It was eventually decided that broadcasting in Ireland was to be run by the State as a public service to the citizens, financed by proceeds of licence fees and advertisements. The Committee on broadcasting legitimated the inclusion of advertising into the station on the grounds that the interests of the newspapers as an advertising medium should not be protected from competition (Gorham, 1967:14). Public Service Broadcasting is usually defined in accordance with the Reithian notion of Public Service Broadcasting which promoted a high quality service designed to inform, educate and entertain and funded solely by licence fees. The original

British Public Service model took upon itself the job of educating the masses, guarding the public interest, and defining what that interest was. This was legitimised by the concepts of authority and control which were central to Reith's notion of the BBC. If high standards were to be maintained, control must lie with the few.

The next two years saw the laying of the foundations of the new Irish station with, it is worth noting, the constant help and advice of the British Post Office and the BBC. Acceptance of British help on a nation building project seems contradictory to the aspirations and ideals of the nationalists who had fought for the Irish Free State. According to Gorham, (1967:19), the Irish Post Office had always maintained friendly relations with its parent organisation - it had inherited its system from the British Post Office in which nearly all its higher officials had served including J.J. Walsh, Minister for Post and Telegraphs and P.S. O'Hegarty, Secretary of Post and Telegraphs. When a station director was being sought, the Civil Service Commission selection Board, chaired by O'Hegarty, included the Managing Director of the BBC, J.C.W (later Lord) Reith and the first Musical Director of the BBC Mr. Percy Pitt. The BBC "was the exemplar of a monopolistic broadcasting system such as Ireland was to have" (Gorham, 1967:19) so it was not unusual for Ireland to take its lead form the British model.

However this lends more weight to the argument that

the Irish State was largely English wrought and influenced while the nation was supposedly attempting to break away from such influences. A strong sense of the nation was considered necessary to keep the traditional ideals of a rural, Catholic, Gaelic culture, to distinguish it from its former colonial master. As against this, the reliance of Irish Public Service Broadcasting upon a British inspired concept of Public service meant it was caught between the contradictory goals of nation and state. There was of course an important difference between the two Public Service operations at the BBC and 2RN: the BBC was totally dependent on licence fee for revenue, whereas 2RN looked also to the advertising sector. The inclusion of the commercial objective in what was still conceived as the public sphere led to many complications in the subsequent life of the station.

2.2.2. External vs Internal Dynamics of Policy and Change

2RN was officially opened on January 1 1926 by Dr. Douglas Hyde. He opened his address in English stressing that a nation is made from within, that " it is made, first of all by its language, if it has one; by its music, songs, games and customs". As reported by the Irish Times (02-01-1926:7) "Speaking then in Irish, Dr. Hyde expressed his interest in the broadcasting service as a means for the dissemination of Irish culture". The Irish Independent (02-01-1926) gave the full text of the address in Irish. Both

reports focused on the reception of the new station throughout the country. The Irish Times pointed out that ""Wireless" is a powerful instrument of culture", and it expressed the hope "that it will be used to the very best advantage of the Irish Free State". It recommended that

> the objective of our "wireless" directors should be
> to furnish programmes, which while distinctively
> Irish, will escape the reproach of parochialism and
> to interpret the artistic genius of the nation, not
> only for its own citizens but to the whole world.
> (Irish Times, 02-01-1926:6)

In his speech, Dr. Hyde stressed the importance of the launch of this new era in which "our nation will take its place amongst the other nations in the world". Addressing his audience in Gaelic he referred to the inauguration of broadcasting in Ireland as

> a sign to the world that times have changed when
> we can take our own place amongst other nations and
> use the wireless in our own language
> [translation in Clarke, 1986:44].

Here broadcasting was not only recognised as an important tool in establishing a sense of identity at home but also establishing Irish national identity abroad.

The first director of the station was Seamus Clandillon, a Health Insurance inspector from Galway who was well known as an Irish singer and organiser of Feiseanna and concerts. This choice would indicate that while the aim of the station was to educate, it was recognised that to be commercially viable its entertainment role was equally important and hence the choice of one who was accustomed to dealing in the entertainment business (with the added

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advantage of being well established in the promotion of Irish "cultural" activities).

Clandillon was faced with the task of running a broadcasting station which because of its truncated public service nature had limited finances and unlimited cultural requirements. It could be argued that the Public Service ideal in an Irish broadcasting context was equated with cultural nationalism. This gave rise to the illusion that the media were simply giving the nation back its own birthright, promoting cultural values which the population at large could readily identify with.

> If native culture was truly organic and "of the people" there was no reason why it should not be commercially viable. The nation could look after itself : it was the state which was in urgent need of additional revenue and popular support.
> [Gibbons, in Bartlett et al 1988 :225]

Gorham (1967:90), illustrates how clearly evident this was in the earliest days of broadcasting. Import duties on radios had been added to 2RN's source of revenue and it soon became the greatest financier. However in an action that was to set a precedent, the Department of Finance in 1933 directed that in future the revenue from import duties would accrue to the central exchequer. This increased the pressure to derive revenue from advertising. This constant pressure on the commercial side of the station made the compatability of public service broadcasting with cultural nationalism more problematic.

As advertising was not proving to be a sufficient

source of revenue, the idea of international commercial broadcasting in the form of sponsored programmes was gaining support. The opening of the new high power station Radio Athlone was to increase the viability of international commercial broadcasting for Radio Eireann. De Valera at the opening ceremony saw greater different uses of the power station, stating that it would

> enable the world to hear the voice of one of the oldest, and in many respects, one of the greatest of the nations. Ireland has much to seek from the rest of the world, and much to give back in return.
> (De Valera, quoted in Moynihan, 1980:232)

In line with this idealistic nationalist notion of broadcasting, financial considerations seemed to give way to immediate national prestige. International commercial broadcasting was criticised for being "un-national", and in April 1934 the government decided to get rid of this "less than creditable form" of advertising.

> The present policy is to accept only advertisements relating to Saorstat products and enterprises. This involves a reduction in revenue, but there are obvious objections on the grounds of national policy to the broadcasting of non-Saorstat advertisements from State stations.
> (Gerald Boland, Dail Eireann, 15-05-1935, Col.1016)

Other important developments took place in the media at this time. The new Irish Press launched on September 5th 1931 was committed to supporting Fianna Fail's policy of developing home industries to give Ireland a wider and more equitable manufacturing base. This, and the promotion of the purchase of Irish goods, was a constant editorial theme of the early years of the paper, and was given practical effect

by various competitions and promotions eg. competitions for advertising slogans for Irish industries. For British manufacturers who had control of the Irish markets, the successful pursuit of de Valera's policy would mean the end of that system. Consequently British manufacturers declined to advertise in the Irish Press and this situation prevailed for many years. [Walsh; O'Byrnes; 1981].

British manufacturers were not going to advertise in Fianna Fail's paper The Irish Press whose cultural ideal was defined as "... an Ireland aware of its own greatness, sure of itself, conscious of the spiritual forces which have formed it into a distinct people having its own language and customs and a traditionally Christian philosophy of life". [Irish Press, 1931 in Irish Press, 1981]. It is not surprising, therefore, that they were denied access to the perhaps more influential medium of radio. It is in this context that the decision to ban international commerical broadcasting (outlined above) must be considered. From the end of 1937 the broadcasting service came to be known as Radio Eireann. In accordance with De Valera's national plan of independence and self-sufficiency, a scheme of "national advertising" was brought into operation on October 10 1939. Advertising was to be restricted to Irish products and services, and all commercials were to be spoken by the Radio Eireann announcers. However no move was made to supplant the revenue lost by this action.

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It is important to consider here the extent to which the media - radio and the press - were not simply reflecting but were, in fact, creating Irish culture. Marcus de Burca has noted the importance of the Irish Press in this respect, regarding the GAA:

> An older generation of sports journalists in The Irish Press used to proudly claim that it was their paper that really put the GAA on the road to success in the Pre-World War II years. Before the paper's foundation, so the argument ran, the GAA was denied its fair share of the sports pages of all Irish papers.
>
> [de Burca, 1981:xii].

He also pointed to the dominance of Fianna Fail in political life in the 1930s as favourable to the expansion of the GAA, as this party had been "unequivocal in its support for all forms of Irish culture". Moreover, as this party drew much of its support from rural areas, "there was an overlap between it and the GAA". De Burca (1980), has also attributed a significant part of the success of the GAA as a "national" organisation to the new radio station. He comments in particular on the significant role of one Radio Eireann commentator, Micheal O'Hehir, who he states

> has become an almost essential part of the annual Gaelic championship season, bringing the major games not only into remote rural homes in every corner of this island but also half-way around the globe to emigrant Irish communities.
>
> [De Burca, 1980:206]

Gibbons also points out the importance of Radio Eireann to the development of "traditional" Irish music

> the cultivation of a nationwide audience for traditional music did much to "flatten out" variations in regional styles, and there is even a sense in which broadcasting may have "invented" a key element in the traditional canon ... the ceili

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band ... which was actually devised by Seamus Clandillon...

(Gibbons, in Bartlett et al, 1988:224)

The importance of this is that Radio Eireann demonstrated its ability, on limited funds, to contribute significantly to at least two areas which have become an accepted aspect of Irish culture. This quality was curbed at an early stage due to the fact that the government seemed to believe that the station could survive on licence fees and a limited revenue from Irish advertisers. While broadcasting was being treated as a commercial industry it was expected to produce cultural dividends. The value of the broadcasting service as a 'national' institution reflecting and creating indiginous talents and creativity and the cost to the station of providing this service was never fully recognised by those who controlled the resources. However, the 1940s did see some recognition of the importance of broadcasting.

2.2.3. <u>Radio and the Public Sphere</u>

By 1940 the economy was running into crisis. De Valera's plans of self-sufficiency were not working. The war imposed economy cuts on all branches of the national service and Radio Eireann was one of the hardest hit. However, the war ended in May 1945, and in November 1945 Paddy Little, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, announced that the Government hoped to have a high power shortwave radio station of the most modern type in operation in 1947. During the War de Valera had recognised that a breakdown of information to the public, or worse still, control of the sources of

information by the invader, was one of the chief dangers that a government in this situation had to guard against. Failed attempts to establish direct communications with the US by shortwave radio from Athlone meant that for the war years the Irish Government was dependent upon Britain for its sole means of communications by speech with America. "It was this wartime experience that made the Fianna Fail Government launch the more ambitious scheme for shortwave broadcasting...". (Gorham, 1967:124).

The shortwave project was pursued by the Fianna Fail government but the new 1948 administration announced that "for reasons of the economy" it had decided to abandon the short wave project. Though the short wave project didn't ever materialise, the work put into its planning resulted in a significant increase in Radio Eireann's resources and in the recognition of the importance of radio as an agent in mobilizing public opinion. De Valera used radio to reply to an attack made by Churchill on Ireland's policy of neutrality during the war "in which he rejoiced thousands in Ireland with his dignified response" (Gorham, 1967:53). Preceeding his reply, De Valera thanked members of various services and voluntary bodies who had helped in the national effort pointing out that certain restrictions such as rationing would have to continue. In the course of his opening remarks in Irish, appealing to the national spirit, he declared that he had been confident that Irish speakers and others who shared their special attachment to Gaelic

traditions, would be foremost among those who would form a protecting shield for Ireland (Moynihan, 1980:470-477).

I have attempted here to outline how Irish broadcasting developed in the first half of this century. The main points to be drawn from this are that broadcasting in Ireland was established in the early days of the new state and was an integral part of the whole nation-building process. It was given the task of promoting Irish identity as a newly established "nation". Broadcasting was expected to do this with minimal financial assistance and one could say maximum cultural restrictions, calling into question again the compatability of public service broadcasting and cultural nationalism. While within this narrow space a great deal of progress was made in the area of broadcasting, the promotion of the Irish language (one of the stations stated aims) was not achieved and the Irish language programmes that were produced did not prove popular with the majority of the audience.

Radio Eireann's mandate from Government on Irish language programmes of that time was not realistically geared towards the advancement of the Irish language and consequently programmes in the main were merely beneficial to those already fluent in Irish. In 1943 Paddy Little said in the Dail that the guiding principle in Radio Eireann's broadcasts in Irish was that Radio Eireann should proceed as if Irish were the vernacular of the whole country, except

that simple Irish could be broadcast in the children's
programmes. This indicates the unrealistic attitude of
government to the revival of the Irish language. Despite this
the station did run series for learners of Irish - admitting,
in effect, that it was not the vernacular - but given the
policy of the Minister no realistic effort could be made to
bring Irish back as the spoken language of the nation. In his
speech at the opening of 2RN, Dr. Hyde stated that "the young
should know that Eire is standing on her own two feet; the
Irish language being one and her culture, music and Irish
sport being the other" (translation in Clarke, 1986:44).
Radio broadcasting may have contributed to the creation of
Irish cultural identity through sport and music but this did
not extend to every area of Irish culture.

2.3. THE EARLY FILM INDUSTRY IN IRELAND

It is clear that governments' involvement in radio was
mostly regulatory and restrictive. This is even more the case
with film. Most films exhibited in Ireland in the early years
were almost exclusively foreign produced and it was not until
the 1910s that the most active period of home production in
the silent period began. It was historical films (indigenous
and foreign produced) which were to prove of particular
importance towards advancing nationalist consciousness.

2.3.1. Tension between the Nation and the State

The main themes of films produced at this time

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significantly included questions of nationality and nationhood, the British presence and life on the land. In line with nationalism itself, the films seemed to be oriented away from issues of the complex social and economic structure on the land towards a more radical nationalist anti-Englishness. However they did move away from stereotyped "Irishness" and portrayed a more "realistic image" of Irish life. This "realistic image" was not always accepted. One of the first instances of film censorship was in relation to Walter Mac Namara's Ireland a Nation which "By basing itself on the 1798 and 1803 Rebellions ... cast doubt on constitutional nationalism." (Rockett et al, 1987:12) (2). By 1916 there were approximately 150 cinemas and halls showing films in Ireland. Dublin Castle became somewhat suspicious of the cinemas as they were possible meeting places for Sinn Fein suspects. In 1917 the Dublin Corporation employed two women to investigate the programmes of cinemas, theatres and music halls and the need for a national film censorship (Mc Ilroy 1989:19) was acknowledged. By 1920 the major film distributors had offices in Dublin. It was becoming more and more apparent that a government film policy was needed to help business concerns plan ahead.

It is characteristic of the relationship between the Irish film industry and the Irish State that the Censorship of Films Act 1923 was one of the first pieces of legislation to be passed by the Free State parliament. It was followed by the Censorship of Publications Act in 1929. The new state

promoted "values" of self-sufficiency and independent
identity and censorship was supposedly a tool to protect the
newly established Irish nation-state from attacks on its
identity. The predominance of British and American films
distributed in Ireland appeared to some as dangerous
subversive forces getting in the way of building a national
consciousness. These Acts were rigorously enforced up to the
1960s by a Censorship Board which was vigilantly supervised
by Catholic lay organisations such as the Knights of
Columbanus (Inglis, 1987:91). On many occassions, the Knights
dominated the actual membership of the Board and, as a secret
organisation, were also a covert factor in much of the early
social legislation of the Irish State.

> As regards cinema, the Knights issued their own
> Films Rating List, they won from the Film Renters
> Association a guarantee that cinemas would close
> during the final days of Holy Week, they agitated
> for and secured radio transmission of Sunday mass
> for invalids and the daily ringing of the Angelus.
> [Bolster, 1979:53].

By the late 1950s, the Knights of Columbanus were in
virtual control of the Censorship Board. It was not until the
1940s that objections to what was called the Board's
"excessive severity" began to mount. Under pressure from
among others, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties
(established in 1948), the Minister for Justice of the second
Inter-Party government, Mr. James Everett, in December 1956,
appointed two more liberal members to vacancies on the Board.
They were Mr. A.F. Comyn, a Co. Cork solicitor, and Mr. R.R.
Figgis, a company director and, according to Adams

(1968:222), "a man of wide literary interests". This led to the resignation of three of the more conservative members (Professor Piggot, Mr. O' Flynn and Professor O'Reilly) and in October 1957, Judge J.C. Conroy (chairperson), Ms Emma Bodkin, A.C.A., a practising accountant, and Mr. F.T. O'Reilly, a retired civil servant were appointed in their place. According to Adams, none of the new members had particularly radical views on censorship, though they viewed their task somewhat differently to their predecessors. They saw it " as one of making it difficult for the average person to read books which were pornographic and no literary merit" rather than "protecting the minds of Irish men and women from the evil influnces of materialism emanating from post-Christian England and America" (ibid:122).

One of the examples which Matterlart (1984) gives in which representations of identity serve as a screen to reality is the exclusive recourse to simple protectionist measures. This is represented in the censorship of films which attempted to portray an alternative view of Irish reality. Unlike broadcasting, Irish cinema was not a public service so the only way that content could be controlled at a national level was through censorship.

As Murphy suggests, there was little doubt that the two moral communities - Irish Ireland and the Catholic Church - from their different, yet closely related standpoints "were anxious to see legal provisions in a self-governing Ireland for the protection of the national virtues" (Murphy, in

Farrell, 1984:51). He argues that

> nothing can be said, then or now, in extenuation of
> the attempt to silence the nation's own voices
> simply because the state did not like the sound of
> them. That was the great abomination of the age of
> Irish censorship. That was the very antithesis of
> communications. Culture is communications.
>
> [ibid:63].

The whole censorship and protectionist paranoia of this time, while on the one hand a result of the particular internal social, economic and cultural climate of Ireland can also be seen as an attempt to control the pace of external dictation. Paradoxically, as will be shown below, this control established by the state was central to international economic, penetration.

2.3.2. External vs Internal Dynamics of Policy and Change

Given the film activity of the pre Free State period, it is surprising that an indigenous film industry was not fostered either by the state or private capital. However, World War I had given American productions a head start over European productions and cut resources available to the latter even after the War. Therefore any Irish produced films were compared (and not favourably) with more advanced American productions.

Film-makers of the 1930s (in large part due to financial considerations) avoided controversy and any critical exploration of contemporary Ireland. Instead of examining contemporary social issues, more general political and national issues took hold as film subjects. Irish

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audiences were becoming accustomed to American and British imports and Lennox Robinson noted in August 1930 at the Peacock Theatre (at the introduction of what was later to become the Irish Film Society), that cinema had unfortunately got into the hands of the capitalists and that its potential as an art form was being undermined by the imperative to make massive amounts of money [Mc Ilroy 1989:30]. This was reinforced by the representative claim of one cinema manager quoted in The Irish Monthly as saying: "It is not our business to stimulate thought. People come to us for relaxation" [quoted in ibid]. However, notwithstanding this orientation towards leisure, films, especially in the late 1940s came to be used more regularly in information campaigns and election campaigns.

2.3.3. Film and the Public Sphere

The Government eventually became more involved in the Irish cinema industry. In 1937 an inter-departmental committee was set up to investigate film in Ireland, and in 1939, the Department of Industry and Commerce began discussions with representatives from the film trade regarding the foundation of an Irish film industry. In 1943, the Irish Film Institute was formed. Its aims and objectives were broad : "to direct and encourage the use of the motion picture in the national and cultural interests of the people". Ireland, however, was already in the throes of "the Emergency" and any plans to establish a native film industry

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were postponed. Legislation regarding film was as usual concerned with censorship and the Emergency Powers Order enabled films to be outlawed which could offend "friendly powers" or "be prejudiced to the national interest".

Throughout the Emergency, the cinema industry continued to grow though mainly through foreign productions. Little was done to promote indigenous film production. Images of Ireland portrayed in these mainly American produced films were usually sentimental and idyllic (eg. The Quiet Man 1952). The main Irish produce of this time was the popular Gael Linn news reels. In 1946, the government did sponser a film to commerate the one hundreth anniversary of the death of Thomas Davis, entitled A Nation Once Again. This film was commissioned by De Valera's government to encourage recognition for the importance of nationalism. Noel Browne, Minister for Health during the 1948-51 coalition government's period of office initiated the use of drama-documentaries in information campaigns. Those of the Department of Health focused on tuberculosis, diptheria and hygiene (Rockett et al, 1988:80).

In 1950 the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Liam Cosgrove, reported to the Dail (Dail Debates, 30 November 1950) that the IDA had been instructed to explore the feasibility of establishing a film industry in Ireland. Sean Mac Bride Minister for External Affairs set up a Cultural Relations Committee within his Department which engaged in film projects. One of the most potentially successful of

these projects was Liam O'Leary's <u>Portrait of Dublin</u> 1952. However with the change of government in 1951, and the return of Fianna Fail to power, this film was refused release by Frank Aiken who replaced Sean Mac Bride as Minister for External Affairs. Also O'Leary's report for the Cultural Relations Committee on the setting up of a viable film industry in Ireland was never implemented. It has been suggested that O'Leary's lack of opportunity to further his career as director stemmed from his Socialist leanings, and in particular, his film "Our Country" made in 1948 - a campaign film for the political party Clann na Poblactha. The film was popular among the public but not among mainstream politicians especially Fianna Fail who at this time were under serious electoral threat and felt even more threatened by the film. Fianna Fail suggested links between Clann na Poblachta and the IRA in an effort to defuse the films impact (see Rockett et al 1987:76-79).

Film was also used to promote the new modernising mood of the late '40s and '50s - <u>The Promise of Barty O'Brien</u> 1951 (a forty-nine minute drama documentary by Sean O'Faolain), was funded by the Marshall Aid programme's Economic Co-Operation Administration [ECA]. The film positively locates the ECA in the Irish modernising process through its advocacy of the electricty grid to rural Ireland (see Rockett et al 1987:82).

The fifties saw some recognition of the importance of

film to Irish national identity. The Irish Film Industry Committee was established by Lord Killanin, John Ford and Brian Desmond Hurst. They sought to promote an active Irish film industry. An influential article "An Irish Film Industry?" written by Hilton Edwards in The Bell in January 1953, argued for the link between nationalism and film production. Edwards argues that film making is "not only a potential art" but it is also "the greatest propaganda machine in the world" as well as being "one of the greatest money spinners". He goes on to say

> If it be asked how can a country like Ireland compete with the vast machinery of Hollywood or of the English studios, I would answer that I am gambling upon the existence in Ireland of some quality peculiarly and authentically national that could give Irish pictures an individuality; a uniqueness which other countries could not question.
>
> (Edwards, 1953:460)

He stresses that he is not arguing here for "stage Irishry" but for "this truer quality" to which he "is not going to presume to put a name" (ibid). His article recognised the need for a constant flow of financial backing to achieve this end. Edwards suggests that what he calls "the spirit of the gombeen" is standing in the way of such backing:

> When courage of a physical nature was required in Ireland there was apparently plenty of it. Now, if this country is to take its place with other countries in one of the great artistic and commercial ventures of modern times, some kind of commercial courage is necessary.
>
> (ibid:463)

Certainly, the nationalist movement's insular view of popular culture in Ireland, a view dominant in such organisations as the GAA, contributed to the lack of interest in the funding

of Irish film making.

Irish produced films continued to be made though with limited help from government and without much recognition by government as being of benefit to the 'nation'. However hopes were raised with the opening of Ardmore film studios in 1958. Funded by a grant from the IDA and a debenture loan from the ICC, its opening was heralded as a 'moment of national importance' by the then Minister for Industry and Commerce, Sean Lemass. Hopes were quickly dampened when it was established that the new Studios were to be of little value to Irish film producers. Despite Irish investment amounting to IR 1/4m in Ardmore, no steps were taken to ensure that this investment would serve Irish interests. As usual the main problem facing the film industry was financing. Another spark of hope appeared in 1960 with the establishment of the Irish Film Financing Corporation as a subsidiary of the ICC. However the spark soon dimmed when it was realised that the IFFC backed only those films which had secured pre-sales and distribution guarantees. Irish film producers could not provide this guarantee and so no Irish film company received assistance from this, their own film finance corporation. Not only did Irish film producers not have the chance to use the Studios for their productions, but also most of the Ardmore crews were "imported". No provision had been made to train Irish film technicians to work in the studios. For these reasons and others, Ardmore "was quite irrelevant to the development of Irish film making"

(Marcus 1967:7, in Mc Ilroy, 1989).

While film (like broadcasting) had great potential for advancing national identity, the fear that it could threaten the state (which was already founded on a safe set of "national values") was greater than any wish to use film for the benefit of the nation. As established in the previous chapter (p.8), images created of Ireland which drew on rural ideology were not only important in maintaining public support for the nation-state, but also made it possible to turn the country into a profitable base for American international industry. The State's dealings with film concentrated mainly on facilitating foreign film makers to make films in or about Ireland which would promote idealistic images of Ireland "the nation" and not disrupt the status quo. The coalition government had in the 1948-51 period of office initiated the use of film in information campaigns but, as has been pointed out, "With the advent of television the production of government-sponsored information films correspondingly declined" (Rockett, et al 1988:84). The exception to this was tourist and industrial promotion films for foreign distribution. So it can be seen that whatever public service qualities film may have shown was curtailed at an early stage and its importance to tourism and industry was all that was relevant to government.

The Ardmore venture was typical of the Export-led-growth policy of the time. The Irish State was active in

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encouraging foreign companies to use Irish resources rather than encouraging the development of an indigenous Irish film industry. This exemplifies how the internationalisation of the Irish economy relied on the state for its progression. Again it was a part of the tension between the external and the internal causes of change in mid-century Ireland. The pendulum had swung from protecting Ireland from foreign influences to welcoming with open arms those self same influences. At the same time the indigenous industries - cinema, radio and later television, were strictly controlled as change from within seemed to be more feared than change from without. This also illustrates the changing role of the Irish State in relation to the "public sphere" and how this role was increasingly being defined in market terms. As will be illustrated below this proved to be the case also, if not more so with television.

It is clear, then, that the State's (public sphere elsewhere) role has been to integrate the Irish economy into the wider global system. It favours letting market forces run more efficiently in Ireland, but as Eoin O' Malley points out, the paradox is that this still requires State intervention in the economy. He argues that "the assumptions about the effects of free markets and attitudes to State intervention prevailing in advanced economies may be quite unsuited to weaker less-developed economies such as Ireland" (1986:480). He suggests that there "is simply a strong pragmatic and non-ideological case for active and selective

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state intervention in a relatively late-developing economy" (ibid:485). Quite simply "few Irish private firms or entrepreneurs have the resources required to undertake major new investments in large projects which have to be subsidized for years" (ibid:483). As noted in chapter one (p.27), state intervention had become a part of Irish political and economic life in the nineteenth century.

The State admits this need for intervention (in the form of CTT, the IDA etc. - see chapter 3), in the development of indigenous industry. However, as will become clear below, it refuses to extend this to the mass media. While CTT and the IDA are encouraged to support the film industry, no comprehensive policy exists, and the policies of these organisations are not suited to the development of small indigenous film production companies. This contradiction is again rooted in the tension between the Nation and the State which becomes more complex as time goes by. As the State became more involved in the internationalisation of the economy, the media were still expected to answer to the goals of the nation. The increasing division between Nation and State compounded the problem of the construction of the public sphere. As indicated above, the State's attention was gradually turning to television.

2.4. TELEVISION- THE EARLY DAYS

Debate about television started mid-century at a time when Ireland was emerging from a post-independence period of De Valera's protectionist policies, and entering into the more global era of modernisation and the changes that brought with it. Lemass's version of self-sufficiency differed greatly from De Valera's. For De Valera, self-sufficiency meant Ireland should be protected from competition. For Lemass self-sufficiency could only come from the ability to engage in a competitive market. In the case of film, external and internal causes of economic and cultural change were having an important impact on the progression of the Irish audio-visual sector.

2.4.1. External vs Internal Dynamics of Policy and Change

The expansion of the Irish economy is generally seen as starting around the time of the Whittaker report of the late 1950s. Denis O'Hearn argues that the real watershed in Irish economic history came before the publication of TK Whittaker's report, begining with the severe crisis of 1956/57 (the decline in GNP and agricultural production, the decline in population, and rising unemployment). The forces, coalitions and policies of a new expansionary regime were in formation long before 1958.

> By 1945 proposals for the transition from Import-substituting industrialisation (ISI) to export led industrialisation (ELI) were emerging, laying the basis for a power-struggle between a conservative coalition who opposed expansionary development - primarily the Department of Finance, the Central Bank and the Revenue Commissioners... [and] the expansionist coalition - from the Departments of

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Industry and Commerce and External Affairs and
later the Industrial Development Authority.
[O'Hearn, 1986:2].

However, O'Hearn argues it was the crisis that cleared away
the old regime, allowing a new "development regime" to take
its place.

Now the new regime was faced with the necessity of
legitimation. This involved the dual process of popularising
a developmental ideology which identified the new regime with
popular goals such as "modernity", a "high standard of
living" and "growth"; and a capacity to incorporate excluded
classes classes (the working-class, domestic capital, part of
the bureaucracy) into the new system. (ibid:8). The new
regime had to find an alternative to protectionism for, as
Lee and O'Tuathaigh (1982:160) pointed out, "many of the
businessmen (sic) who flourished behind the protectionist
wall of the 1930s had become devout supporters of the party.
How could Lemass pull the rug from under their feet?". His
chance came with the conditions created by the crisis of
1956/7. Coming to power in 1959, the Lemass compromise was
to import efficiency through offering incentives to foreign
firms to bring their managerial talent, their know-how and
their marketing connections to Ireland. The incentives would
be for export only, not for production for the home market.
The protected sector would therefore gain a breathing space
to try to put its house in order (ibid).

At an ideological level, the acceptance of "free trade"

as the ideology of Irish development began with the regime's identification of "protectionism" with "inefficiency". "Economic stagnation was identified as an internally created problem that was tied organically to protectionism by economic relationships that were widely recognised in "modern" economics". (O'Hearn, 1986:8). Once more, goals of nation and state were conflicting. Because of the strength of opinion (created by the state) relating to the importance of local capital in the development of the nation, "the regime had little choice but to embrace free trade as its own programme, rather than as something partly imposed by external forces". (ibid:9). As O' Malley (1986) points out, "an essential point in the argument for free markets, [is] that they promote general efficiency, to the benefit of society, by fostering survival of the fittest. "However, "if there is a substantial residue of unemployment in the world economy, then the weaker countries must suffer most from the unfettered operation of market forces". Therefore state intervention is necessary. (O'Malley, 1986:480).

O'Hearn argues that even as the expansionist coalition finally predominated over recessionary forces, it was losing control to foreign capital. The regime, he asserts, masked the lack of national control over the new development process by encouraging a popular myth of control through planning, and the ideological identification of "free-trade" with "efficiency" and "modernity". This, more than concrete results was the significance of TK Whittaker's Economic

Devolopment and the subsequent economic developments. The
ultimate concern of the free trade ideology was that, in
order to take its place in a modern Europe, and a modern
world economy, Irish industry would have to be competitive.
O'Hearn illustrates how the transition from ISI to ELI was
"intimately tied to developments in the world economy"

> ... international pressures - connected to the
> development of a new international division of
> labour in manufacturing - together with a complex
> internal Irish class struggle, spawned a new
> development regime that is quite unique. ... in its
> high reliance on foreign capital, in its reliance
> on private enterprise to the exclusion of state
> investment in industry, and its unswerving
> adherence to the "free trade" principles of
> unfettered inward and outward movement of capital
> and profits.
>
> (O'Hearn, 1986:14-15)

However, as pointed out earlier, state intervention was
central to the internationalisation of the Irish economy. The
fact that O'Hearn does not categorically state that the new
development regime was solely a result of international
pressures suggests that international pressures alone cannot
be accepted fully as the dominant force of change. National
specifics were also significant in the economic, social and
cultural changes which were occurring at this time. These
changes in the economic life of Ireland were also felt in
Irish social life. The social base of rural, Catholic and
Gaelic definitions of Irish identity (already imposed from an
urban base) was gradually being eroded and replaced by the
more characteristic forms of cultural expression accompanying
the consumerist, bourgeois mentality of industrial life.

2.4.2. Tension between the Nation and the State

As with radio and film, television was caught between the separate though interlinked paths of Nation and State. Television in the eyes of the traditionalists was perceived as a threat to the stability and security of Irish heritage and cultures. The Fianna Fail government at this time seemed to be more concerned with the financial considerations of television and it set up a Committee in 1953 (3) to investigate the implications (financial, technical and programming) of an Irish television service. The Committee recommended a service public owned and managed. Debates surrounding this concerned the actual need for a station. (see Dail Debates, April 1958). Many arguments were put forward urging restraint - suggesting that Ireland was neither culturally nor economically ready for television.

The fact that television was already available and transmitting British channels (the Report of the 1958 Television Commission (1959:p.10), estimated that in May 1958 there were about 20,000 television sets in use in the Republic availing of the overspill British signals) would seem to have determined the actual acceptance of an Irish station - a case of (as with radio) any kind of Irish station being better than no station at all. The main problem was financing but the more nationalist thinking still pervaded ie. Ireland's own television station would contribute to the establishment of Irish identity at home and abroad. However, the reconciliation of such cultural

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imperatives with more pressing commercial ones was to prove problematic.

The General Election of 1957 brought Fianna Fail back into power and the new Minister for Post and Telegraphs was Neil Blaney. On November 6 he made an announcement on behalf of the Government to the effect that Ireland was to have a television service which must be "largely commerical in character, depending on its revenue from advertisers (Gorham, 1967:275). The government, Mr. Blaney announced, were prepared to consider proposals from private interests, who would provide and operate studios, transmitters etc. in return for a chance to operate commercial programmes for a term of years. This thinking, however, gave little attention to the cultural consequences of such an action.

In March 1958 the Minister appointed a television Commission under the chairpersonship of Justice G.D. Murnaghan which was to report on the advisability of a television service and the type of service that would best suit the country's needs. The problems faced by television broadcasting resulting from the inconsistent goals of the Nation and the State were recognised in discussion on the proposed nature of the service. In April 1958 Mr. Kevin Boland, acting on behalf of the Minister for Post and Telegraphs, acknowledged the problem facing government of "trying to reconcile the financial and commercial interests with the public interest requirements", hoping that the Committee would propose an arrangement which would

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> safeguard our national dignity and culture in our
> television service, while giving to the commerical
> interests their rightful opportunity of a
> reasonable return for any money that they may
> invest in a television project.
>   [Dail Eireann, 17-04-1958, col.321].

The Commission reported that

> if the necessary capital was available television
> should, if possible, be provided on the basis of a
> public service. A television service on ... (this
> basis) ... is, however, not possible within the
> terms of reference of the Commission.

The terms of reference of the Commission as outlined in the

warrant of appointment included

> that no charge shall fall on the Exchequer, either
> on capital or on current account, and that
> effective control of television programmes must be
> exercisable by an Irish public authority to be
> established as a television authority.

What the Commission's report deemed possible was a

television service which would be set up as a profit-making

enterprise, under a governing authority exercising on behalf

of the state the duty to maintain and direct it. The

programming was to become the responsibility of the selected

proposer, financed mainly by revenue from advertisements. The

selected proposer was to be represented on the authority.

These were its main recommendations. It also stressed the

importance of home produced programming as a protection

against the invasion of foreign cultures.

However, on 8 August 1959, Michael Hilliard, the new

Fianna Fail Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, reversed all

earlier decisions in relation to television and announced

that it was intended to set up a semi-state board to run both

radio and television without any commercial promoters being involved. The Minister's reason for this decision was that "the Government had to consider whether the grant of a monopoly in television for a lengthy period to any private group was now justified, having regard to the prospect of operating a Public Service on a self-supporting basis". (Gorham 1967:295). This again recognised the problems facing broadcasting due to its dual-function of public service answerable to the Nation but also a business answerable to the State. Remarks in the Dail debates on this issue, such as that of one Fianna Fail Dail deputy, must also have had a significant impact on the Minister's decision:

> ...When a service of that kind has to be operated on a commercial basis the Government has not the same degree of control with regard to the direction of policy as they would have in a service that was operated entirely as a State service and financed by the state.
> [Mr. Molony, Dail Eireann, 17-04-58, col.353]

As Doolan et al [1969:13] suggest,

> The Government's plan was designed to have the best of both worlds - profitability and public utility.

The equivocation leading up to this decision was representative of the main problem facing Irish broadcasting from its inception right through to the present day ie. the financial viability of a service which, under the sway of market forces could not fulfill appropriatly its public service obligations.

In September 1959 an advisory committee was set up under the Chairpersonship of Eamonn Andrews to steer

financial, technical and programming affairs until a
Broadcasting Bill be drafted and the new Authority chosen and
established. Land was acquired at Montrose and plans for
studio blocks began. The Broadcasting Authority Bill was
eventually published on January 1 1960 and introduced to the
Senate on January 20. It was simultaneously debated in both
chambers of the Oireachtas. Much controversy and debate
surrounded the passing of the Bill mainly in the areas of
selecting members for the Authority and enabling the
Authority to sell advertising time, Ministerial control over
broadcast matter, the sections concerning the national aims
and promotion of the Irish language. Throughout the
discussion and debate on television broadcasting the anomaly
of the dual requirements of the service - to answer the goals
of the "nation", and to be financially feasible, surfaced.
They were perhaps most forcible identified by Mr. Mc
Gilligan, who remarked that while the requirement that the
Authority bear in mind the national aim of restoring the
Irish language and of providing for the national culture, was
very laudible

> ...put it before the advertiser and he [sic] is
> going to ask how much of our 30 hours per week will
> be devoted to the restoring of the Irish language.
> You will then see what demand for space you will
> get when the advertiser sees that a considerable
> amount of our time is to be devoted to Irish or to
> promoting the restoration of the language.
> [Dail Eireann, 24-02-1960, col.804]

Mr. O.J. Flanagan wondered if the Government had sought to
answer one question ie. "whether in present economic
circumstances expenditure on a television service is

necessary?" He argued that problems of unemployment, emigration and increased cost of living etc. "fade into pale insignificance compared with the necessity to provide the rich with a television service" (ibid, cols. 809-810).

Also in these debates there came into question definitions of Irish culture, and how it would be interpreted by the Authority. Mr. Flanagan, interpreting this term to incorporate Irish games and pastimes referred to Fianna Fail's role in the definition of Irish culture. He suggested that the Fianna Fail party got into office "by supporting Irish games and pastimes". He submitted that "rugby, soccer, tennis and the good old game of cricket are as good Irish pastimes as ever Gaelic football or hurling was". He expressed his worry that Gaelic games would be given more airtime at the expense of the fans and taxpayers who follow the other sports he mentioned. (ibid, cols.822-823). Given what was established above in relation to the role of the Irish Press and Radio Eireann in the creation of the GAA as a national organisation, Mr. Flanagan's worries would appear to have been well founded. However, the Bill was passed into law on April 6 1960 and the Authority members named one month later.

The 1960 Act transferred powers in relation to broadcasting from the Minister for Post and Telegraphs to the Authority of Radio Eireann (later to become Radio Telefis Eireann). The general duty of the Authority was stated and certain obligations and restrictions in respect of

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programming were prescribed. It was to bear in mind aims of restoring the Irish language and preserving and developing the national culture. The Act gave the Authority a great measure of autonomy but the actual extent of that autonomy was never clearly outlined. The Minister still reserved considerable powers including control over the appointment of members of the Authority and the right to issue directives over broadcast matters. The State was also in control over the issuing of licences, the setting of times of broadcasting and the setting of amounts of advertising.

The two most contradictory sections of the Act (from which many of Irish Broadcasting's major problems stem) are Section 17 requiring that broadcasting preserve and develop the national culture, and Section 24 requiring that Broadcasting stations be economically self sufficient. This was a lot to ask of a newly established broadcasting industry, especially when it could be seen that this type of model was not proving satisfactory with radio broadcasting.

Despite the virtual impossibility of the task set before it Irish television was inaugurated on December 31 1960 after years of debate and controversy over structure, finance, and its particular role in Irish society. It was to be a Public Service Broadcasting station financed by licence fees and advertising and its role in Irish society was on the one hand "imparting knowledge" and "building up the character of the whole people inducing sturdiness and vigour and

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confidence" [the more 'optimistic' side of de Valera's prophecy re-television from his speech given at the launching of the television station]. On the other hand, television fitted in with Lemass's plans for the country as he stressed that there were standards, aims and values that transcended national frontiers and were universal in application.

The aims of the Irish television station represented the quandry which mid-century Ireland found itself - as a "nation" wanting to maintain (or even create) its "distinctive" identity, and as a part of the newly industrialising world - wanting to be successful in it.

2.4.3. Television and the Public Sphere

In the Annual Report of RTE 1961, the Authority declared that its programming policy was to produce programmes with "a distinctively Irish quality". They were, however, all too well aware of the difficulty in financing such programmes. An inordinate demand existed for home produced programmes but the station could not sufficiently fulfill this demand due to "the expansion in staff, equipment, and facilities that this would have entailed" (Annual Report 1962). The pressures of these demands combined with accusations regarding quality of output and its contribution to, and shaping of, Irish identity resulted in 1962 in the resignation of Michael Barry, Controller of Programmes, Ernie Byrne, Executive Producer and the retirement of Edward Roth as Director General [for a more

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detailed account of the controversy surrounding these episodes, see Doolan etal 1969:25-30].

Seemingly unaware of any of these tensions the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs Michael Hilliard, speaking in the Dail in November 1963 (quoted in Doolan et al, 1969:46) referred to Government concern that programmes were not representing Irish culture fully. Hilliard went on to say that it was with considerable misgivings that the Government had granted the Authority its present "independence". The Government, he said, might have to "reconsider" its terms of reference. He was concerned with the quality of the service and "the need that it be distinguished from any other station" (ibid).

This type of attitude was characteristic of the Government in relation to television. As outlined above, the difficulty of reconciling the cultural with commercial imperatives in broadcasting was recognised before the inauguration of the station, yet demands were still made on the station to answer to both. In 1965 the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Mr Brennan, in addressing the new Authority, stated that "on the cultural side" he was not looking for "crash Irish programming...but would prefer to see television brought to the stage at which it was processed with a distinctive Irish tone and character". In a key admission of the problem and the Governments responsibility, the Minister went on to state that this type of service, "could have been given if the Government had decided that there need be no

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commercials on television". He qualified this, however, by stating that advertisements were necessary for good reasons. The Authority's task would now be to fuse two objectives - "independence in money matters, and culture" - It may, therefore, be concluded that the problems of Irish broadcasting were compounded if not grounded by the fact that while the state was following one path - free trade ideology, internationalisation of the economy - the nation was following another, requiring broadcasting to cater for the cultural imperatives of the nation. Similarly internal dynamics of the Irish nation were penetrated by the external dynamics of internationalism. As with the case of radio and film, this was especially apparant in the case of Public Service television.

This "fusion" was proving to be increasingly difficult to attain. The 'autonomy' of the Authority was perhaps best defined by Sean Lemass's much quoted statement in the Dail in 1966 rejecting the view that RTE, as an instrument of public policy, should be independent of government supervision:

> It has the duty, while maintaining impartiality between political parties ... to sustain public respect for the institutions of government ...
> (quoted in Fisher, 1978:32).

The Authority did retort that

> the preservation of the status quo is not necessarily always in the public interest, neither is the public interest necessarily always in complete harmony with every action or lack of action by government.
> [quoted in Fisher, 1978:33]

Exactly who was determining the "public interest" was clearly

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demonstrated when RTE teams were (one of the few) invited to cover events in North Vietnam. The government felt that it was not "in the best interests of the nation" to cover it and so Ireland missed out on an invaluable experience for Irish broadcasting. The impossibility of the fusion of "independence in money matters" and "culture" is possibly best demonstrated by the cancellation of the consumer affairs programme Home Truths which succumbed to the pressures of commercial advertisers at the cost of RTE's public service obligations. The programme challenged the ideology of those private interests who were financing the station and the repercussions speak for themselves. Even at this early stage in Irish television's history, the nature of "Public Service Broadcasting" was under question. It demonstrates the power of the commercial requirements and how the citizen was being addressed more and more in terms of consumer rather than in terms of Irish culture.

These blatant interferences in programming gave rise to controversy within RTE creating tension between programme makers and management. Organisational changes appeared to be creating more restrictions than improvements. Management guidelines on 'Staff and Politics' were seen by staff as

> an attempt to control their outside political
> activities, overriding their good sense as adult
> citizens, to say nothing of their constitutional
> rights.
> [Sheehan 1987 :141].

This internal unrest did not go unnoticed by the press and

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attained maximum publicity in the book <u>Sit Down and be</u> <u>Counted</u> (Doolan et al, 1969). The authors had resigned from RTE after trying and to change the structures from within. In their book they record their struggles for independence within RTE and detail the institutonal and commercial pressures which programme makers were subject to. They demonstrated that the problems of structure and organisation were reflective of similar problems of the nation at large.

Criticisms of the station were constantly being raised, not only in the Dail but in other sectors of the public. Irish Actors' Equity complained of the underemployment of Irish actors, the range of Irish-made material and the poor resources available to them. The Catholic Church complained about the declining moral standards of society initiated by television. Early in 1962 the ninth annual summer school of the Social Study Conference had as its theme "the Challenge of Television". Two hundred and fifty people from various backgrounds, divided roughly on a 60:40 basis between viewers and non-viewers spent the week considering this subject. They worked in groups focusing on areas such as Community Development, Education, Religion, Politics and Health Education. As reported, the trend of group discussions indicated that there was an urgent demand that television authorities

> recognise that they carry a grave and heavy responsibility because of the potency of television as an instrument for good or evil, for elevaing or debasing tastes, for upholding or degrading moral standards of conduct;
>
> (Meehan, 1962:110)

The working group on religion felt that some form of censorship would be necessary and that "it would be foolhardy not to afford our people some external means of safeguarding their moral standards" (ibid:101).

In 1964 250 students marched in Dublin from the Mansion house to RTE in protest at the poor standard of programmes and handed a letter expressing their grievances to the Director General Kevin Mc Court. Complaints were also launched about the lack of Irish language and Irish music programming, about the amount of British commercials and even about the "attitudes towards Catholic missionary activities in African countries'. An actual programme on RTE Right to Reply, voiced these criticisms and more (though in limited fashion). The overall pattern to the criticisms in the course of the programme, was that RTE was too Dublin oriented, neglected rural viewers and paid too little attention to traditional Irish values. This type of demand had been created, as illustrated above, by the nation-building that took place at the turn of the century in Ireland. As stated above also the state was now following a different path so in attempting to answer to both state and nation the task of the station was becoming more complex. Reflecting on the value of the series on the occassion of its final programme, presenter John Bowman said that it highlighted the problem of finding out what it was to be Irish in a time of change (Sheehan 1987 :136/7). The fact that television inspired so much debate on so many different

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issues illustrates the niche that it was carving out for itself in Irish society.

As Luke Gibbons has noted one of the most striking features of Irish television is that "it was home-produced programmes, not imported products, which posed the greatest challenge to traditional cultural values".

> In the case of television, deference to religious authority, the conservative sexual morality of the post-Famine era, the bias against urban life and many other conventional pieties, came under scrutiny from programmes such as The Late Late Show (1962 -)..., The Riordans (1965-1977)... etc.
> (Gibbons in Bartlett et al, 1988:228-9)

This is an important consideration in the later treatment of RTE by government especially in relation to home-produced programmes, both in-house and independently produced. The cultural homogeneity which the state sought to create and maintain was more threatened from domestic than from imported material. Therefore when the Government required that the Authority bear in mind the aims of preserving and developing the national culture, just what is being preserved and developed is questionable - is it "indigenous Irish culture", or is it a force for maintaining the hegemony of the State? Television played a major role in relaying the new wave of industrialism which was occuring globally. It brought directly to the people issues and debates with which they were not familiar. As Sheehan puts it :

> Itself a product of industrial and technological progress, its very presence brought even the most remote rural dwelling into a whole web of implication in the forms of perception and rhythms of response embodied in the culture. On one level,

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> the overt opening of Ireland to other cultures,
> providing constant points of comparison and
> contrast to its own culture, was bound to have a
> powerfully revitalising effect. On another, a sort
> of subliminal seduction into the whole pace and
> texture of its dense and discontinuous flood of
> stimuli, has most likely had even more far-reaching
> consequences, though much more difficult to assess
> or even express.
>
> [Sheehan, 1987:85]

2.4.3.1. Reconstituting the public sphere in market terms

The changes which took hold of Irish society in the sixties continued right into the seventies:

> The new Irish reality was ambiguous, transitional,
> increasingly urban or suburban; disturbingly at
> variance with the cultural aspirations of the
> revolutionaries who had given birth to the State.
> [Brown 1981 :314].

Lemass was working for economic renewal, still in the name of nationalism, though the tools were significantly different from those used in original nation building activities. In this changing society where traditionalists were protesting at the speed of change and "liberals" at the slowness, the new Irish television station was still working at establishing its place in Irish society. The outbreak of 'the troubles' in Northern Ireland created new problems for RTE in the area of 'objectivity and impartiality'. In the early seventies the Government put pressure on RTE not to broadcast interviews with people from illegal organisations because visibility would encourage violence. RTE responded that one must show everything if reporting is to be balanced. On 1 October 1972 Gerry Collins Minister for Post and Telegraphs added a directive to Section 31 of the 1960 Broadcasting Authority Act instructing RTE

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> to refrain from broadcasting any matter that
> could be calculated to promote the aims and
> activities of any organisation which engages in,
> encourages or advocates the attainment of any
> particular objective by any violent means

In November 1972 RTE broadcast a summary by Kevin O'Kelly of an interview with an IRA spokesperson, (allegedly its Chief of Staff, Sean Mac Stiofan) as a general survey of reaction to an important development in the political situation in Northern Ireland. As a consequence, the Government dismissed the entire RTE Authority and appointed another in its place. The force of Section 31 was later strengthened by more specific provisions prohibiting interviews with spokespersons of proscribed organisations. This heightened the already well established feelings of animosity which existed between broadcasters and politicians. It was not only the coverage of Northern Ireland that presented problems. This animosity was rooted in incidents surrounding other current affairs programmes. In 1968 7 Days broadcast a programme on the Taoiseach, Mr. Lynch's, proposal to introduce changes in the system of proportional representation. This programme suggested the possible outcome of a general election under a number of revised electoral methods and was alleged to have damaged Fianna Fail's proposals which was put before the people in a referendum on 16 October 1968. The referendum was defeated.

Another 7 Days programme transmitted on 11 November 1969 also caused problems. In the programme it was alleged

that illegal moneylending was widespread in certain areas of Dublin. Two days after the programme was screened, the Irish Press reported that the programme was "regarded by many as one of the finest ever screened in the "Seven Days" series (Irish Press, 13-11-1969:1). Later that month, however, the Minister for Justice, Michael O'Morain, claimed in the Dail that the programme grossly exaggerated the facts, and that participants had been paid and given alcohol in order to say certain things. According to John Healy of the Irish Times "the attack ... was unprecedented in my experience of the house" (20-11-1969:1). In the course of the discussion in the Dail Mr. Flor Crowley (FF) suggested that people in Telefis Eireann should "declare whether they were Leftists, Maoists, Trotskyites or Communists". RTE issued a statement denying the allegations made by the Minister. The Minister received much criticism as a result of his allegations. Dr. D. Thornley (Lab) suggested that the Minister's dislike of that sort of programme derived much less from high moral tone than from the fact that programmes of this kind were not congenial to the Government party (Irish Press, 20-11-1969:1). It was argued that the Minister was ignoring the real problem which the programme highlighted and Mr Pattison (Lab) said that the Minister's outburst over the "Seven Days" programme must make it questionable whether he was the man most suitable as Minister for Justice (Irish Times, 26-11-1969). Despite the fact that the RTE Authority met the Minister (on November 28) at his request and ensured him that they had reviewed the programme and still held that it was authentic, the

Taoiseach, Mr. Lynch, gave full support to the Ministers claims and said in the Dail (on November 30) that the characters and scenes portrayed were ficticious" (Irish Press, 1-12-1969:3). On December 2, the Taoiseach announced his decision to set up a judicial enquiry into the authenticity of the programme. The 7 Days team failed before a judicial enquiry to justify, on strict legal terms, its allegations as to the extent of the incidence involved. (Mac Conghail, in Farrell, 1984:129).

These incidents highlight the volatile nature of the relationship between the state and RTE. At one level the station was asked to answer goals of public service. Yet when it chose to do so in the form of programmes which highlighted social problems and questioned social issues, it was reprimanded by the Government. The animosity which this created between the station and the state has added to the problems of the audiovisual sector in Ireland and as will be seen later, has had a significant bearing on subsequent developments.

The 1970s saw RTE's increasing concern at the continuing insecurity of its overall financial position. According to the 1970 Annual Report, 1970 was one of the most difficult years in RTE history. Its financial situation necessitated the curtailment of its home-produced output. RTE then was having problems in financing, in programming and with control. In June 1971 the Government had set up a

Broadcasting Review Committee to review the progress of the radio and television services since 1960, and to obtain recommendations for further development. The final report of the Committee (1974) stressed the cultural importance of broadcasting and recommended that 'the system should provide a service that is essentially Irish in content and character'. It recommended that broadcasting should continue to be a public service 'but the public control functions should be separated from the operations of the broadcasting service'. It also urged that licence fees should meet a higher proportion of RTE costs and that current and capital financing should be planned on a three year basis. Earlier (February 1973), in an Interim Report, the Review Committee strongly recommended a second RTE broadcast channel which would carry a selection of BBC, ITV and other foreign programmes as well as some home-produced programming.

2.4.3.2. From Citizen to Consumer

For some time now, pressure had been increasing, especially in single-channel areas, for more choice in broadcasting. However, in March 1973, the government changed and Conor Cruise O'Brien became the new Minister for Posts and Telegraphs. He was in favour of establishing a second channel but preferred the idea of rebroadcasting BBC Northern Ireland. In June 1975 RTE published an official booklet promoting the establishment of a second RTE channel. Entitled The Second Channel : A statement on television development in Ireland and the question of national choice, it argued that

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> on a two-channel Irish service the best selection
> of programmes from BBC1, BBC2, the different ITV
> channels and other sources would be carried. This
> service would, in effect be a concertinaed version
> of the British services supplemented by other
> bought in material and containing a range of new
> home-produced programmes of a significang kind
> .... In RTE's view the criteria of satisfying
> public demand for as wide a choice as possible and
> of complying with the statutory national
> broadcasting obligations can best be met not by re-
> broadcasting a single external channel but by
> establishing a second national television channel..

This argument met with much public acclaim. The Minister accepted its strength and in July 1975 proposed that a national survey be held to determine the public preference on the matter of a second channel. The survey was conducted with the help of the RTE Authority. The report of the survey published in October 1975, showed a clear preference for RTE2 over BBC1 in both the single-channel and multi-channel areas, the overall percentages being 62% for RTE2 and 35% for BBC1. On October 28 the Minister announced in the Dail that he would recommend to the Government that the second television network should be used for a second RTE channel.

The whole issue of a second channel evoked considerable debate in the Dail especially in the area of cultural and national identity. The Minister clearly stated that the result of the survey (due to RTE's argument put forward in favour of a second RTE channel) could not be interpreted "as any kind of victory for cultural protectionism or rejection of multi-channel viewing". It was rather, a statement by the public that they wanted greater choice in their viewing. The crux of this current discussion on broadcasting, according to

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the Minister, has been "the relationship between our individual preferences as viewers and efforts to formulate a collective national view of what broadcasting ought to be doing".

He recognised that the term "national" has been used in discussing broadcasting, to refer to the whole island of Ireland and all its population. At the same time RTE tended to represent mainly the mainstream views of the Republic of Ireland, while television services in Northern Ireland concentrated mainly on activities within the North Eastern "six counties". Cruise O'Brien called on Broadcasting to take account of the pluralist character of the Irish "nation" arguing that multi-channel television is a desirable development if it recognises that pluralism and acknowledges its importance to the national culture.

During the Dail Debates on the situation in Northern Ireland, in the previous year, the opposition leader Jack Lynch, had also referred to the possibility of using broadcasting to explore this area of cultural pluralism: I suggest that ... the feasibility of a television and radio service which would be neither exclusively British nor, for want of a better term, Southern Irish, be examined.

> I suggest further that a body be established to examine the possibility of the three "Irish" channels, BBC Northern Ireland, UTV and RTE coming together to form a unified channel, instead of RTE 2.
> (Dail Debates, 26-06-1974: col.1595)

The Minister while not necessarily agreeing with the coming

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together of the three chanels reinforced this position stating that

> In Ireland our political traditions, our
> Constitution, the very name of our twenty-six
> county State demand that we should explore the
> relationship between the unitary political state
> and the island, containing as it does, a plurality
> of cultural outlooks, political systems, creeds and
> allegiances.

(ibid)

For a government so concerned that the national broadcasting service be responsive to the cultural needs of the nation it seems ironic that it should endorse the rebroadcasting of a foreign station through a national network. This is even more the case at a time when the same Minister had just refined Section 31 specifying groups who were prohibited from the airwaves. This obviously did not in the Minister's opinion add to the "major psychological stumbling block in the Northern Ireland image of the Republic....(as a)...closed and censored society" (an image which he even refers to as being outdated), [Dail Debates vol. 285, col. 402]. Nor did the fact that the BBC did not prohibit these same groups seem to present any problem.

This again indicates the problems of reconciling the goals of nation and state. This was in fact recognised by Conor Cruise O'Brien. He stated that not only is the gap between North and South relevant here but also the "very ancient problem of the distinction between the nation and the state" (Cruise O'Brien, ibid). This statement indicates that the division between nation and state was significant and relevant to broadcasting, but perhaps more importantly, that

it was in the minds of the legislators at this time. Gibbons [Bartlett et al 1988:231] refers to this action of reinforcing Section 31 while proposing the re-broadcasting of BBC as clearly illustrative of the widening gap between the state and the nation. While on the one hand the goals of the "nation" are being pursued through broadcasting, the State is paradoxically implementing legislation (Section 31) which reinforces the divide by adding to the image of the Republic as "a closed and censored society" and restricts broadcasting of the situation in Northern Ireland to the Republic by the "national" broadcasting channels.

It was planned that RTE2 should come into operation in 1977 but due to financial restrictions was not launched until 1978. This financial position as I stated earlier necessitated the curtailment of its home produced programme output. This meant an increased reliance on imported material. One group which emerged during the seventies who were concerned with this increasing shift to imported programmes was Citizens For Better Broadcasting - a group of academics, trade-unionists, clergy, and others, all concerned about the future of Irish broadcasting. They published a series of papers entitled "Aspects of RTE Television Broadcasting" which recommended a significant increase in Irish language and regional programming and an overall increase in home programming, and urged that those programmes which were imported be selected from the widest possible sources. They also proposed that Public Service Broadcasting

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be financially supported in the same way as Health and Education services.

In part as a response to all this public debate on broadcasting and 'to provide greater autonomy and freedom for the broadcasting service within clearly defined statutory restraints while improving public control in certain areas' the Broadcasting Authority (Ammendement) Bill was introduced and passed into law in 1976. It recommended that the RTE Authority

> - be responsive to the interests and concerns of the whole community -peace, culture and especially the Irish language;
>
> - uphold the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution, especially those relating to rightful liberty of expression;
>
> - have regard to the need of the formation of public awareness and understanding of values and traditions of countries other than the State especially EEC members.

This Act could be seen as compounding the problems of RTE - while putting more emphasis on the public service nature of RTE, it did not pay sufficient attention to the financial aspects of such broadcasting.

It becomes apparent that debates on broadcasting in Ireland in the sixties and more so in the seventies took place in terms of consumer choice. The second channel was introduced despite the financial difficulties of the first, in the name of a more pluralist service, but at the risk of two lesser quality services. Pluralism in this instance, it seems, was equated with consumer choice. While this may be

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seen as a result of the influence of external dynamics of policy and change, and is in line with free trade ideology, it must also be recognised as resulting from particular internal factors, cultural, economic and political factors, peculiar to the Irish nation.

2.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Public Service Broadcasting emerged at the beginning of the new Irish State. The State was asserting its identity, and particularly its distinctiveness form British identity, after a somewhat turbulent period in Irish history. Wireless broadcasting represented something modern, to be treated with caution. While on the one hand it was seen to be important to national life, it also held the threat of enabling foreign influences to infiltrate Irish society. Hence radio was given the task of sustaining Irish identity and any developments which were seen to impede this illdefined task were promptly curbed. Film was also seen as a threatening medium as its role in pre-independence Ireland in developing a national consciousness established its importance in mobilising public opinion. As it was not a public service, the government had no economic control over this mobilisation and so could not use it for its own interests (except the information and educational films of the 1950s). Therefore censorship was employed as the mode by which film could be regulated.

The Irish Public Service station 2RN while significantly modelled on the BBC charter differed in one

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major respect. Financial support for the Irish station came not totally from licence fees but from advertising as well. This had major implications for the running of the station, for while on the one hand it was a Public service station promoting ideals of the nation, on the other it was a commercial venture expected to make returns to the state. These two roles did not lie easily side by side. As the idea of Ireland as a nation was well defined at the founding of the State it was not the main concern of the Government. The Government felt much less secure with the institution of the State, and so concentrated their efforts on state-building, leaving the nation as a self-sustaining entity. Consequently notions of Public Service, now linked to the ideals of the nation, were expected to happen naturally with no need for interference.

Many changes (such as the introduction of international commercial broadcasting) could have created more finance to support the stations Public Service functions, yet any such initiatives were curbed without any financial reimbursement from the Government. The station was not allowed to operate as a purely commercial venture, nor was it allowed operate as a purely Public Service venture, however, it was expected to operate and be successful as both. Just as film and radio broadcasting entered Irish society at a time of change, so too did television. Debate about television started at a time when Ireland was emerging from the protectionist era of De Valera to the more global era of modernisation promoted by

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Lemass. Lemass supported a self-sufficient Ireland as much as
De Valera did but on different terms. Lemass was in favour of
Ireland entering the modernising world, engaging in
competition and thereby attaining self-sufficiency.

De Valera on the other hand favoured protectionism as
means to attaining self-sufficiency. By the 1950s it was
evident that De Valera's policies were not working. None of
his ideals from full employment to revival of the Irish
language had been attained. The crisis of 1956/57 gave Lemass
the chance to do it his way. However he had to be careful not
to interfere with the benefits Fianna Fail supporters were
deriving from De Valera's protectionist policies, so he opted
for export led growth offering incentives to foreign firms to
come to Ireland. The terms by which the public sphere was
being defined was changing. The state's role (Public sphere
elsewhere) increasingly became to integrate Ireland into the
world economy. Television was entering the scene as something
undistinguishably modern but also something which was to
operate at a national level. It was caught between the
traditional ideals of the nation and the more modern ideals
of the State. Eventually RTE was established under a
Broadcasting Act (1960) clearly modelled on the charter of
BBC and the early years witnessed the development of a range
of independently structured, home-produced probing and
outspoken programmes. However, within a few years the
Government began to question the "independence" it had given
the station and unrest was generated also within the

organisation.

The 1970s saw more blatant interference of government into the affairs of RTE and a tightening of censorship laws. Also a second station RTE 2 was launched in 1978 despite the fact that RTE1 was experiencing financial difficulties, but instead of boosting one Public Service station, resources were spread over the two supposedly in the name of a more plural service but at the risk of two lesser quality services. Debate about the second television channel took place in terms of consumer choice. Pluralism gradually came to be equated with consumer choice. Television played a very important role in examining what it was to be Irish at this time of change however efforts to do this were constantly being restricted by Government reinforcing the well established feelings of animosity which existed between broadcasters and politicians.

In 1969 Raymond Williams at a broadcasting seminar in Dublin pointed out the main problem of running a television service in a small country as being "to maintain a national identity, without at the same time becoming a backwater" (quoted by John Bowman in RTE Guide, May 1969). This was indeed the main problem facing Irish broadcasting. However the fear of becoming a backwater seemed to override the need to maintain a national identity, and new plans of modernisation and pluralism in relation to broadcasting changed the position of the viewer from citizen to consumer. While on the one hand the government acknowledged the plural

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nature of the island, this acknowledgement only seemed apparent in economic terms and legislation specifically in relation to Public Service Broadcasting (a medium which could develop the plural nature of society) became more and more restrictive.

It may be argued therefore that while the State was developing in one direction ie. along modern, plural and commercial lines, the nation remained stagnant at the ideals of the De Valera administration. The Public Service nature of television was aligned with the outdated goals of the nation while the commercial imperatives were dictated by the State which eventually sought to transform public service ideals in its own commercial image. Operating against this background, and effected both by the nation and the state, broadcasting in Ireland was bound to have problems and these problems always derive from trying to reconcile commercial with cultural imperatives.

In this chapter I have explored the development of radio, film and television in Ireland. I have tried to establish their role in the nation-building process of the Irish state. In doing this I have touched on certain issues - the problems of the public sphere, the question of greater choice, and broadcasting's role in the emergent notion of pluralism as a political concept with relevance to Ireland. I will develop these ideas and their implications for the audiovisual sector in contemporary Ireland in the

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next chapter. As I stated at the outset, the purpose of this chapter was to establish the relationship between the audio-visual media sector and the Irish nation-state as a background against which to discuss the present situation of Irish film and television. This was attempted through establishing how the cultural field - an important site for attaining and legitimating power - is increasingly being commodified. In the early twentieth century, the images created by Irish nationalists of rural, traditional, Catholic Ireland, were reinforced by the state to legitimate its power and consequently had a bearing on the treatment by the state of film, radio and to a lesser extent television.

As the century proceeded, the reinforcement of these ideals proved contradictory to the goals of the state which was caught up in international economic developments. As the "culture" created at the turn of the century became more outdated, and contemporary culture was denied expression through eg. the audiovisual medium, the cultural field became neglected. Consequently, developments at a global and international economic level are having more negative effects on Irish identity. To argue for the right to express one's cultural identity is not to argue for the right to maintain a homogenous "national" identity. Since the foundation of the state, these two concepts along with the "public interest" have been put forward as synonymous so if one disappears the others are under threat. What is left then is to become caught up in a broader international/global consumerist

culture in which the public sphere, cultural expression have little role to play and in which the individual - citizen/consumer - has little power.

Post-Fordist developments such as increased localization and diversity, accompanied by greater globalisation and "sameness", and changing boundaries between the private and the public sphere are pointing to a changing role for broadcasting and film in society. At a global level, this represents a further shift from a public service or cultural role. However, as will be established in later chapters, the role of the media in creating/representing particular cultures is not totally undermined at either a local or a global level. The similarity between this and past events in relation to the media is that once again the media are being called on to create and reinforce a "culture" which is not necessarily in the "public interest". It is crucial that notions of public service in Ireland be re-defined to be based more on cultural than commercial imperatives. If this does not happen, the cultural base of the country will be undermined and consequently assimilation into an increasingly consumerist market-oriented global "culture" will occur to the detriment of Irish culture and identity.

With the concept of "public interest" becoming more difficult to define, so too is the concept of culture. Yet again the threat posed by the media to the power structure is apparant in the power structures attempt to control and

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regulate the media. The following chapters will develop these points illustrating their effects on the Irish audiovisual sector and on Irish identity in general.

Footnotes

(1) This was in large part due to the revelation of previous allegedly dubious dealings between Mr. Andrew Belton, spokesperson of the Irish Broadcasting Company and Deputy Darell Figgis, a member of the Committee and on whose motion the Committee had been set up. Mr. Figgis resigned form the Committee on January 25 1924 and it was decided that the Irish Broadcasting Company "was not a suitable concern to be entrusted with the State concession" (for further details see Gorham, 1967:8-16).

(2) On submission to the Press Censor in 1916, six scenes and their titles were instructed to be removed but later at the direct request of British authorities the film was banned as it was alleged to have caused "seditious and disloyal conduct among the audience".

(3) Leon O'Broin, Secretary of Post and Telegraphs; Maurice Gorham, Director - who had been Head of BBC television a few years earlier -; and T.J. Monaghan, recently retired Engineer in Chief of Post and Telegraphs.

CHAPTER THREE:

BROADCASTING AND FILM - PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SPHERE?

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to examine the current situation of the audiovisual sector in Ireland. It will be established that in both the mediums of film and television is occurring a further removal from the public sphere into the private. It has been argued in the previous chapter, that film-making has always been treated, by the state, more as a commercial than a cultural endeavour. Similarly, while broadcasting was defined as a public service, it always had to answer to commercial imperatives and as time went by, as the nation and state followed two separate paths, the commercial requirements imposed on public service broadcasting by the state became more significant than the cultural imperatives imposed by the nation.

In this chapter it will become apparent that the move of broadcasting and film even further away from the public service ideal, also represents a move away from any expression of indigenous culture through the audiovisual medium. The erosion of the public sphere has significant repercussions for the cultural sphere as in the past both spheres have been aligned with the "national". The state is increasingly being caught up in international and global economies and consequently international and global consumerist "culture". This chapter serves to illustrate how

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the widening gap between nation and state makes the task of the audiovisual sector more complex. An integral element of this discussion is the role of the State in relation to television and film in Ireland.

3.2. BROADCASTING: THE MOVE TO THE PRIVATE SPHERE.

Recent changes in the broadcasting climate in Ireland demonstrate a shift away from treating the individual as a citizen to treating the individual as consumer. This is a result of broadcasting being brought out of the public sphere and into the private. This section examines the way in which broadcasting in Ireland is being treated more as a commercial industry than as a cultural one and concentrates especially on the use of the independent production sector in this erosion of the public service base of broadcasting. This is significant for both public service broadcasting and the independent production sector as it inhibits the expression of indigenous culture through both.

3.2.1 SKC Review of RTE

In May 1985 Stokes, Kennedy, Crowley, a consultant body was commissioned by the Minister for Communications to carry out a review of the structure and operation of RTE. The Report identified the main problems facing RTE as :

* Revenue is "squeezed" by expenditure and understandable price constraints, together with market limitations.

* The Broadcasting surplus is insufficient to generate the funds required for the adequate maintenance and replacement of plant, the

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introduction of new technology and the development of services and facilities.

* Home produced programming is severely constrained by the revenue/expenditure squeeze.

* Advertising revenue preservation and enhancement is, to a large extent, dependent on home produced programmes.

* RTE cannot adequately fulfill its national role without substantial increase in home programming and cannot meet its statutory financial obligations in its present situation.

* The organisation has large-scale ambitions to extend and develop its facilities and services. These ambitions cannot be even considered without major change in the financial circumstances.

* The overall effect of the main problems is now resulting in the Authority's greatest ever peak cash deficit of the order of IR 11m, which will worsen, unless the problems are faced and some unpalatable decisions taken.

[SKC 1985:12]

RTE took on board many of the SKC recommendations to solve these problems including changes in management structures and a decrease in staff. However one of the most relevant recommendations for this study was for RTE

to operate and use the resources so that adequate funds are available for increasing home-produced programmes both within RTE and by independents.

[ibid:6]

SKC pointed out the following advantages of a thriving independent programme making sector to Ireland:

* To offer some alternative employment opportunities for professional television staff in Ireland.

* To provide a more varied range of programming.

* To produce programmes more economically. In the UK, it is claimed that Channel Four's use of independents probably provides the best value programming. Recently the BBC announced that it proposed to make more use of independents in the

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future.

> * To create additional employment in a business
> sector with significant growth potential. Even
> though the speed and the nature of the growth of
> cable and satellite systems are unclear, there is
> little doubt that significant developments in
> television broadcasting will occur both on a
> national and international basis, resulting in a
> significant increase in the demand for television
> programmes.
>
> (ibid: 40).

The general thrust of the SKC Report was to move RTE out from the public sphere and into the private market. Four of the nine-person SKC team conducting the investigation were British consultants who had been involved in Peat Marwick's (international partner of SKC) similar investigation of the BBC earlier in the same year (Bell and Meehan 1988:80). It is not surprising therefore that many of the recommendations in the Irish report are similar to the free-market remedies suggested for the BBC.

It is not surprising then, as O'Malley (1988) points out, that the independent system pioneered by Channel 4 resembles the contracting out of services so favoured by the British government in health and local government. He argues that as small independent companies depend on the commissioning organisations for work, continuity of employment is undermined. O'Malley quotes one NUJ member (who had worked for an independent production company) describing Channel 4 as "the Trojan horse of deregulation". (O'Malley 1988:40). Government promotion of increased commissioning by broadcasters of independently produced material while seemingly beneficial to the independent sector, could be seen

as a device to break up the duopoly of the BBC and ITV.

3.2.2. RTE and the independent sector

Prior to and around the time of the Report RTE had four or five regular providers of programmes from the independent sector. They were individuals and groups such as Eamon de Buitleir, Gerrit van Geldran, Radharc, David Shaw Smith Productions and Aiden Hickey's Grafliks. Consequent on the SKC report it was decided that RTE would put more money into the development of the independent sector. Both this decision and the laying off of staff from RTE (also resultant of SKC proposals) generated a growth in the independent sector.

3.2.2.1. Commissions

RTE has slowly been increasing its commissions from the independent sector.

> We have been building up over the past three or four years starting from approx. IR 0.5m, increasing to in excess of IR 3m in the current year. This would be for commissioning up to 150 hours of television output
>
> [Kelly, 1990]

However its policy on commissioning programmes from independents remains unclear and ambiguous. Liam Miller of RTE speaking at a CTT conference "Market Opportunities and Challenges in a Deregulated Satellite Era", indicated that RTE was to allocate IR 2.5m of its 1989 programme budget to Irish independents for 140 hours of programme (Moles 1989:42). By comparison the BBC estimates for the financial year 1988/89 was 200 hours at a cost of over IR 10m (ibid).

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RTE has been reluctant to introduce "total costing"
which the independents argue would allow them to compete
fairly for particular types of programming. Lobbying through
FMI for total costing resulted (in 1989) in the two
organisations negotiating acceptable Terms of Trade. The
agreement sets out a definitive policy on the commissioning
procedure, budgets and cashflow, production costs, production
fees, copyright, distribution and transmission. In the past
commissioning from the independent sector seems to have
occurred in an ad hoc sort of way

> The way it has happened in the past is that the
> ideas have more or less been submitted by the
> independents, we've reacted towards those ideas and
> we've taken a selection of them...
> [Kelly 1990]

Following the Terms of Trade, the whole commissioning
structure was set to change. Tendering for submissions within
specific categories was to be introduced.

> The plan this year was to have a commissioning
> period - May/June (but that has had to be deferred
> because of the legislation, etc.). We would then
> consider all the various options, all the various
> ideas that have been submitted with a view to
> commissioning a certain number of hours for a
> certain amount of money.
>
> From here on in I think we will be commissioning
> more in terms of what we want ourselves (eg. if we
> want a quiz show for 7 O'Clock on a Friday night),
> looking for ideas and opting for the most suitable.
> [ibid]

Smaller and less well established film makers are at a
disadvantage here as RTE is more likely to commission from
those with whom it has a built up relationship (see
Appendix A). While this is understandable it is not
necessarily in the best interests of the independent sector.

As Kelly mentioned, any planned developments in relation to the independent sector on the part of RTE are now very much disrupted. The reason for this is the impact of the Broadcasting Bill 1990, which represents a further shifting of RTE from the public sphere into the private. This shift began with the 1987 Sound Broadcasting Bill.

3.2.3. 1987 and 1990 Broadcasting Legislation

The 1987 Sound Broadcasting Bill announced the provision of an alternative distribution service - MMDS (Microwave Multipoint Distribution Service) - which would be used to distribute a new service as well as bringing multi-channel viewing to rural areas not serviced by cable. The new service was to be a third national television service - TV3. The franchise for the third television channel was put out in 1988 by the Independent Radio and Television Commission and awarded to a consortium centred on the Windmill Lane complex in 1989. The original launch for TV3 was to be April. Problems with MMDS and the threatened failure of national independent radio were among the difficulties being confronted by the promoters of TV3. However, current legislation involving significant cash aid from Government to the private sector (specifically the national independent radio station Century Radio), via the IRTC, and the changes in advertising revenue distribution will create an easier path for the third channel.

The 1990 Broadcasting Bill which was passed on July 11

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1990 against much opposition (see Dail Debates 11/12 July
1990), does not allow RTE to derive from advertising,
sponsorship or other forms of commercial promotion revenue in
excess of the licence fee in any one year. The Minister for
Communication Ray Burke's explanation for this is as follows

> Given the importance of broadcasting in informing
> the public, the public should be provided with
> alternative sources of Irish generated broadcast
> news and current affairs.
>
> There is no question but that RTE's dual
> funding precludes the possibility of fair
> competition. The fact that almost 50% of RTE's
> income comes from, in effect, a State subvention,
> enables it to meet its public service obligations.
>
> But it goes further. It enables RTE to
> compete on the advertising market at a level of
> charges below that which would be necessitated by
> the level of service it provides and thereby
> artificially dominate the advertising market. To
> deal with this I have opted for this approach of
> minimising the distorting effect which RTE has on
> the advertising market...... While this constitutes
> interference in the market it is an interference
> aimed at reducing a distortion there.
>
> [Burke, 1990]

What this in fact amounts to is increased control of
RTE by government. By determining the licence fee, they are
now also determining the advertising income. The 1960
Broadcasting Authority Act introduced in the more liberal
tradition of Erskine Childers, while having many limitations
(see Chapter 2), laid the basis for Public Service
Broadcasting in Irish television and enabled the relative
autonomy of RTE to grow. Burke's legislation is more in line
with the more market-oriented elements of the Lemass
administration. As stated earlier Lemass strongly rejected
the view that RTE should be independent of government

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supervision (see Chp.2:24). Burke, like Lemass, seems to want

to ensure that the public should not be influenced by agents

which may be in a position to threaten governmental control.

By increasing competition, and further diminishing what

autonomy RTE may have had, this legislation dilutes the

influences shaping public opinion. Therefore more

deregulation may mean less state funding but more state

control.

Worker's Party spokesperson Pat Mc Cartan proposed

amendment no. 11 to the Bill. The proposed amendment

stated the following

> 1. Upon the passing of this Act, and subject to the
> provisions of subsection (2), television
> broadcasters shall ensure that no less than 25% of
> the home produced programmes shall be commissioned
> from Irish based independent programme makers.
>
> 2. The requirements of this section shall apply to
> the Authority within three years of the enactment
> of this Act, and to any other television station
> established under the terms of the Radio and
> Television Act, 1988 on the commencement of
> broadcasting.
>
> 3. For the purposes of this section an independent
> programme maker shall be an individual or company
> operating outside of and financially independent of
> the contracting broadcaster.

According to deputy Mc Cartan, this amendment will

> result in a substantial cutback in the resources
> and finances of the authority but we all have to
> resign ourselves at this stage to the fact that the
> Minister intends to do that one way or another.
> [Dail Eireann Debates 11-12 July 1990]

By adopting his proposed amendment, Deputy Mc Cartan argued,

resources that would be lost by RTE could be taken up in the

home market. As he pointed out, capping of advertising is

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pushing revenue out of the country, and as TV 3 is not yet in operation, UTV would be the main beneficiary. Advertising revenue lost at this stage may be hard to win back. In paragraph 3 he is addressing what he suggests may emerge from the establishment of TV3. Windmill Lane, who are substantial proprietors of Century Radio and in time TV3, have bought Ardmore Studios in Bray. It is likely, therefore, that they will commission the majority if not all of their "home-produced" material from their subsidiary company based at Ardmore. Deputy Mc Cartan is trying to secure a place for the wider independent production sector in this market.

Mr. Burke did not agree to the imposition of the 25% quota referred to in Mc Cartan's amendment which Irish film-makers under the auspices of Campaign 25 had been calling for. While on the one hand, he allows a third channel to broadcast, which he says will benefit greatly the independent production sector, on the other hand he will not impose a quota on any station or provide incentives to broadcasters to commission from the independent sector. As regards Mr. Burke's amendment no.33, he states

> The effect of the amendment will be to place RTE in
> the same situation as the proposed independent
> channel by requiring it to carry a "reasonable
> proportion" of programme material produced by the
> independent sector. I have consciously avoided
> putting a percentage figure on the amount of such
> material to be carried because it is an area where
> some flexibility is needed. I have, however, set a
> minimum threshold to the effect that the amount
> should as far as practicable not be less than
> carried by RTE in 1989.

He goes on to argue that he has sought

> a reasonable compromise between the demands of the
> independent production sector whose desire for a
> 25% quota I fully appreciate - and what I believe
> is a reasonable and practical demand to place on
> RTE.
>
> <div align="right">(ibid)</div>

As Michael Higgins pointed out in introducing amendment no.33

in conjunction with the capping of advertising on RTE

> The Minister is saying RTE with significantly less
> income and revenue must sustain their commitments
> all over the place at their 1988-89 level.
> Translated into real terms he is really saying
> that they are to keep their contracts with the
> independents alive at the 1988-89 level. Of course,
> what is unsaid is that the jobs that will have to
> go will be RTE staff jobs.
>
> <div align="right">(ibid)</div>

This again fits into Hall's characterisation of the cutting

edge of change in a post-Fordist economy specifically the

contracting out of functions hitherto provided on an in-house

basis.

As Deputy Higgins notes, enforced commissioning from

the private sector on less income, means RTE will have less

finance available for in-house functions and so this is

likely to lead to job lay-offs and cuts within the station.

So in effect the Public Service is to be undermined in order

to maintain and develop the private sphere. On this

reckoning, the likelihood is that programmes commissioned

from the independent sector by RTE will be of the cheap quiz

show variety. Mike Kelly Administration Manager in the

Television Programme division in RTE states that in his view

(overall policy being decided by the Director General)

> We cannot maintain the same level of commissioning
> that we have been involved with over the past few

> years with a shortfall of IR 12m in income. One
> cannot sustain that type of a loss without change
> in the organisation, without change in regard
> to its policies etc. etc., and one of the areas to
> be hit inevitably will be the independent sector.
> One can only do as much as one can afford to do.
> (Kelly, 1990).

Given government legislation which requires that RTE maintain its level of commissioning from the independent sector and given the position taken here by Mr. Kelly, one can only assume that the quality of programming is going to suffer and independents will mainly be contracted for in-house, low cost productions leading to a further commercialization of the whole process.

This is in fact the direction of RTE's response to the legislation ie. 200 job cuts, a reduction of IR 3m in capital expenditure (through cuts in music and drama projects), and the abolition of both the RTE Chorus and the Chamber Choir (Foster, 1990). The erosion of the public service base in Irish broadcasting far from offering greater access and more choice of programming is limiting programme choice and decreasing programme quality. RTE now intends to spend less on material from independent producers as part of their "damage limitation exercise". The annual budget for Irish independent productions has been trimmed by over 15% from IR 3.7m to IR 3.1m. This compares with a reduction in RTE staff costs and a cut of 5% in expenditure across the board. (ibid).

This legislation merely increases tension between RTE

and the independent sector. This tension had been temporarily

alleviated by the Terms of Trade agreed upon between RTE and

FMI represented a step forward in their relationship, as it

was acknowledged that:

> The interests of broadcasting in Ireland, including
> those of RTE, are enhanced by the development of a
> secure and stable independent production sector in
> Ireland.   In   the context of the   growth   in
> commissions from independent producers in recent
> years, it is deemed appropriate that formal terms
> of   trade   be drawn up between RTE and   the
> independent production sector to the extent that
> the achievement of a stable and secure independent
> production sector will depend on the commissioning
> by RTE of producitons under Terms of Trade outlined
> in this document. It will also be dependent on the
> willingness of independent producers to support
> RTE's efforts to achieve this by the exercise of
> the rights granted by these terms.
>
> (RTE/FMI, 1989).

Recent broadcasting legislation dilutes any political power

which either may have which would pose a threat to the

consensus required for governmental survival.

3.2.4. A Third national television station

An autonomous independent sector can only sucessfully

live and expand alongside an autonomous Public Service

Broadcaster. Commercial television is not going to give as

much   scope   to   independent   producers   and   financial

considerations are going to be all pervasive in productions.

Behind the screen of aiding the independent sector the public

sector is being undermined.

Reactions among the independent sector to TV3 are

varied with most people adopting a wait and see

attitude. There is a fear that while TV3 will almost

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certainly provide more employment among the independent
production sector this employment may be of the "quiz show"
variety. TV3 buying Ardmore increases the likelihood of TV3
producing the same problems for independents as RTE ie.
problems of costing.

> The famous levelling of the playing pitch is
> levelling down so that no one can afford to make
> more than at $20 000 an hour. If you're looking for
> more from TV3 - goodbye.
>
> (Mac Bride 1990)

And obviously because Windmill Lane are the main owners of
TV3, a great deal of TV3's output will be commissioned from
Windmill. Also it is not definite that there is sufficient
advertising revenue in the country to support three
television stations, though the Minister's latest Bill has
attempted to address this issue. However as one independent
producer put it:

> If the Minister is going to wreck RTE in his
> supposed desire to level the pitch you will end up
> with three fifth rate television services in this
> country instead of two reasonably good ones with a
> lower percentage of the audience. Implications of
> that for Irish identity, no matter how you define
> it, are disastrous.
>
> (Marcus, 1990)

While most independents are adopting a "wait and see"
attitude to TV3 - hopeful that it will benefit them but
learning from experience not to be relying on it, one
independent producer is much clearer of his views on TV3.

> TV3 is a joke - a figment of the Hieronymous Bosch
> imagination of Raymond Burke and Charlie Haughey.
> It is based purely on fear and hatred of RTE and
> the objectivity and balance that RTE has tried to
> show.
>
> (Bob Quinn, 1990)

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Quinn quotes An Taoiseach, Charlie Haughey emerging from RTE after a Today Tonight programme, and turning to one of his Ministers who had just had a grilling on the programme and saying "never mind we'll have our own fucking television station soon". According to Quinn, TV3 is a result of that thinking:

> TV3 is purely an invention to get at RTE and to make money for the people who subscribe to political parties. ... They should have a television station in every village in this country and the technology is there, but then you wouldn't make any money out of it. This (television) is not an educational medium, this is not to educate, inform and entertain people. This is a way of making money for private individuals - that's the thinking behind it and its sordid and its second hand, its from Thatcherism.
>
> (ibid)

It is interesting therefore that while on the one hand, the current broadcasting policies are perceived to be a domestic phenomenon, a result of a particular party being in power, and certain politician's individual ambitions, on the other hand, it fits in with the post-Fordism debate and Hall's characteristics of patterns of change ie. specifically the emergence of new patterns of social divisions especially those between "public" and "private" sectors. Also significant here is the use of concepts such as market proliferating choice and individualism, both of which exploit the increasing diversity of modern societies and the smaller scale, more flexible forms of production which are emerging.

From the SKC report (and indeed before eg. introduction of RTE2) through to the 1987 and 1990 broadcasting

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legislation, government's involvement in broadcasting has been in terms of broadcasting as an industry. The public service elements of broadcasting are being undermined in the name of pluralism and greater choice. However true pluralism and greater choice are going to be difficult to achieve on the restricted budgets available to broadcasting stations, and increasing competition in what is already a small market.

With RTE's commitment to the independent film production sector being undermined and restricted from developing, the role of other semi-state bodies becomes more significant. However, as with broadcasting, it will be contended here that this role is mainly in the treatment of commercial and industrial aspects of film. There is very little dealing with film in the cultural field. Let us look then at the state's relationship with film-making in Ireland.

3.3. THE DEPARTMENT OF AN TAOISEACH AND FILM:
PRIVATE SECTOR IN A PUBLIC SPHERE?

The Government Department with responsibility for film in Ireland is the Department of the Taoiseach. This department is "concerned with the carrying out by the Taoiseach of his functions under the Constitution and under statute" (IPA, 1989). Under the Arts Act 1951 and 1973, the Taoiseach has statutory responsibilities relating to the Arts. The Arts and Culture Division of the Department is the division dealing with film. As has been illustrated in the

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previous chapter the state's experience with filmmaking over the years has not been very successful, ie. the poor performance of the subsidiary company to ICC, Irish Film Finance, Ardmore Studios.

3.3.1 Bord Scannan na hEireann: The Irish Film Board

The 1960s saw an increase in the output of the Irish film sector with more commissions from the state, from private enterprise and from the newly established RTE. Against all odds film making was increasingly being recognised as a profession and after considerable lobbying by Irish film makers, the Film Industry Committee was set up by Government in 1968 to investigate Irish film production. The commitee was broadly based with John Huston as chairperson, film makers Louis Marcus, Patrick Carey and Tom Hayes among its members. Also on the committee were Lord Killanin, Louis Heelan of the ICC, W. Eades manager of Ardmore Studios, independent exhibitor Michael Collins and also representatives of Ranks an ABC Irish subsidiaries. [Rockett et al 198 :114]. The Committee published its report in 1968 which led to the publication in 1970 of the Film Industry Bill.

The Bill contained many positive provisions including the establishment of a seven member National Film Board empowered to give grants and loans to Irish film makers and to market the films made. An unstable political atmosphere in Ireland at this time due to the arms crisis and a change of Minister, resulted in a shelving of the proposals. Intensive

lobbying by advertising agencies against Clause 30 of the Bill (which would have prevented RTE giving preferential rates to television commercials unless they were Irish made) was also a pressure which led to the Bill being shelved and subsequently abandoned.

A significant development came in 1972 with the formation of the Irish Filmworkers Association, made up mainly of middle and junior level technicians, but also some senior personnel. In 1974, they joined the no.7 branch of the ITGWU, which also looked after a section of RTE workers. Within the branch a film section was set up which decided to stop foreign companies making commercials for RTE. This provided a valuable training ground for film technicians who now got a chance to work at senior level on television commercials and consequently independent film companies began to emerge.

RTE in July 1973, on behalf of the government bought Ardmore Film Studios International, which were being sold at public auction by the Receiver, for a total of approximately IR 450 000. The governments rationale behind this move was that

> the establishment and maintenance of well-equipped
> film studios, operating on commercial lines, was an
> essential prerequisite for the development of a
> film industry in Ireland in that if the studios
> were to be closed permanently the emergence of an
> indigenous film industry producing feature films
> would become less likely.
> [Dail Debates, 15-10-1980, col.42].

This reinforces the idea that the government were concerned

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with the commercial basis of film, though a certain amount of

lip service was paid to the cultural side:

> In considering the need for an Irish film industry,
> account should be taken not only of the factors
> applicable to industrial development in general,
> such as creating employment and attracting foreign
> exchange, but also a number of major reasons,
> mainly non-economic, for having films made in
> Ireland: development of artistic and technological
> skills; promotion of tourism; promoting cultural
> values and public relations, and providing a potent
> means of presenting this country , its heritage and
> its people to the world and of keeping Irish people
> in touch with their distinctive environment.
> (O'Malley, Minister for Industry, Commerce and
> Tourism, ibid: col.41).

In the following years Irish commercials makers and

Irish film making sectors continued to expand and eventually

came together to lobby for the revival of the Bill

emphasising the failure of the National Film Studios of

Ireland to make any worthwhile contribution to indigenous

film making.

In 1977 the Minister for Industry and Commerce employed

London consultants to conduct an independent analysis of the

NFSI. Acting on their recommendations and on consultations

with representatives of the Irish film industry, the

government published two Bills on 25 November 1979. One was

to regularise the film studios as a semi-state company and

the other was the Irish Film Board Bill (Rockett 1987:116/7).

According to Hickey (1988:16),

> If anything convinced the unenthusiastic Government
> of the day of the need to set up a Film Board it
> was the proof given by the independent film makers
> in the late 1970s that story films could be made in

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Ireland with full local artistic and production control

After the publication of the Bill, a joint submission was made to Desmond O'Malley (then Fianna Fail Minister for Industry and Commerce) by the AIPI, the IFTG and the Film Section of the ITGWU. This submission - "The Yellow Book" - required that not less than 80% Film Board finances be spent on indigenous production and not more than 20% be spent on attracting incoming foreign feature films.

O'Malley rejected this as being contrary to Fianna Fail's economic policies but conceded that the Bill lacked recognition of any "Irish dimension" in the Board's activities - which was another criticism made by the "Yellow Book". On introducing the Bill to the Senate a phrase from the Broadcasting Authority Act 1960 was introduced:

Insofar as it considers appropriate, the Board shall have regard to the need for the expression of national culture through the medium of film making

Another amendment agreed to was to identify the need to establish a national film archive [Rockett et al 1987:118]. 1980 saw the enactment of the Irish Film Bill followed in August 1981 by the setting up of Bord Scannan na hEireann, the Irish Film Board established under the aegis of the then Minister for Industry, Commerce and Tourism John Kelly.

The objectives of BSE as outlined in the title of the 1980 Act were

to assist and encourage the development of a film industry in the State, to empower the Board to provide investments, grants, loans and guarantees

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> of loans for the making of films in the State, to
> define its other powers and functions and to
> provide for other connected matters.

The Board's policy was to provide up to 50% of the budget for a production. Hence all the productions approved by the Board for support had also to secure investment from other sources. In light of this the Board became involved in lobbying the government to introduce the fiscal legislation which would attract private investment into film production. As with the contradictions of Section 17 and Section 24 of the 1960 broadcasting Act (see Chapter 2:20), the contradiction is evident in this Act between "having regard to the need for the expression of national culture through film-making on the one hand and securing only 50% of the budget for a production (meaning 50% had to come from private sources), on the other. However, while lip service was paid to the role of film in Irish culture it was not as marked as with broadcasting and in general the commercial aspects of film held the most concern for government both in policy and in practice.

In 1982 BSE in conjunction with CTT financed a report on marketing strategies for Irish film in overseas markets. Following this the Board concentrated on creating an awareness abroad regarding the existence of Irish films but this of course was strictly limited by lack of resources. As Grace Carley, who was the Board's Management Executive, responsible for international promotion of the Board and its product put it

> It does get frustrating when there is so little
> money and so little prospect of any money coming
> up. A third of my time is spent answering for every
> penny we spend and we have to provide reports and
> so on, so we can get bogged down in the usual
> bureaucracy and administration.
>
> (Mc Ilroy, 1988:96).

The Board's first investment was of IR 100 000 in 1981 into Neil Jordan's film "Angel". The Board was heavily criticised for pumping too much into just one project. It was also criticised for using only half of its allocated budget. According to Rockett et al (1987:19), the personalized manner of the controversy surrounding the episode (mainly arising form the fact that the executive producer of "Angel" - John Boorman" - was also a member of the Board) obscured the more fundamental questions which the issue raised,

> especially the relationship between smaller scale
> indigenous productions over which Irish artistic
> control would be retained and larger budget co-
> productions or exclusively foreign-financed Irish-
> theme films

On 2 April 1982, BSE held a Public Hearing representing the first public consultation of the Board with the various sectors of the Irish film industry. The Proceedings were published by the Film Board and the diversity of opinion contained therein reflect the major task of the Film Board operating as a single body working with and on behalf of such a variety of interests. Most of the basic recommendations of the proceedings were agreed on the need for Film Board support in getting private and state investment, the importance of the establishment of a comprehensive film archive and the need of an adequate facilities house (the

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proceedings were somewhat dampened by the news the previous day that NFSI had been closed down). A critical reading of the proceedings suggests that the main division in opinion lay in the perception of film as a profit-making industry and film as "art"/"culture". Most speakers stood at various points between these two propositions.

An example of this is Dermot Doolan from Irish Actors Equity, reminding the Board that "a keynote ... in its consideration of what projects it supports, must be their commercial viability". Given the small size of the Irish audience this would involve always having export potential in mind. Con Power director of economic policy with the Confederation of Irish Industry commented on the importance of film in Irish marketing both on the home and the international markets. Tommy Mc Ardle of AIP was more in favour of generating a distinctively Irish product and then achieving access to, and in the process creating an Irish audience for an Irish product. He recommended that the Film Board must always have this in mind. Tiernan Mac Bride, then a member of BSE also supported this line of thinking suggesting the major criterion upon which support should be considered "is that Irish films should be made by Irish people".

Early in the proceedings Carolyn Swift member of BSE stated that in trying to outline its policy with regard to submissions, the Board had decided on the following criteria:

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- commercial viability;

- type of material and technical content;

- amount of employment to be created in Ireland - including where approriate the use of facilities of the National Film Studios;

- employment of people in creative grades;

- whether the project would be completed without Board support

- the possible theatrical exploitation of the finished product.

What the proceedings made clear was that any Body trying to provide any kind of unifying voice for the film industry in Ireland was facing a difficult and complex task rooted in the contradictory commercial and cultural aspects of film. Lack of action on the part of Government to provide any aid to the creation of a distinct Irish Film Industry has confounded the problems caused by the diversity within the film sector in Ireland.

Swift's appeal for solidarity among the various sectors of the film industry hits an ominous chord in light of later events:

> Certainly we should represent our own viewpoints
> and that is what we are here for, but we must
> remember the importance of sticking together,
> because on a nationwide basis, there are not many
> people in the film industry. If we do not speak to
> the government with one voice, the Film Board could
> go the way the Ardmore Studios have gone.
> [Swift in BSE 1982:96]

The Board continued supporting productions, lobbying

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government for action in relation to fiscal policy which would attract private investment in film and in the marketing of Irish film abroad.

The Board continued with its activities generating criticism from many but in the history of Irish film making providing the best formula so far for the development of that industry. The infiltration of foreign markets by Irish films has been a very gradual process and this was something the Board was trying to do. This function was important in both attracting foreign investment for native film production in the absence of adequate commercial returns to sustain a domestic production base. An important part of establishing an international identity for Irish film was actually establishing a distinct national identity for Irish film. Its insistence upon substantial Irish involvement in the productions that it did support, led executive personnel to believe that by 1987 the Board's role in attempting to establish a national film culture "was just about begining to make sense" (Michael Algar, quoted in Gough 1987:71).

Given the relative success of the Board in achieving its objectives while operating under very constricting circumstances, the decision by An Taoiseach Charles Haughey on June 25 1987 to abandon the Irish Film Board appears inexplicable.

> The Irish film industry has yet to achieve its full potential. To facilitate the development of the industry, the Government have brought forward

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section 35 of the Finance Act, 1987, to complement existing tax incentives, so that it will in future be possible for corporate investors as well as personal investors to secure taxation relief on significant investments by them in the Irish film industry. The Government have thus created for the first time a suitable framework for substantial investment by the private sector to help Irish film production become a genuine business activity and thereby facilitate a continuing process of production of a wide range of film projects.

The Government have decided that this ... should replace the support given by Bord Scannan na hEireann and that, accordingly, that body should be wound up from a current date.
(The Taoiseach, Dail Debates 25-06-87,col.3843).

Though discussion in the Dail of this move was limited it did receive criticism

...This is one State agency who have been enormously successful on a tiny budget and their abolition was a senseless move. It will do enormous damage to the prospects of establishing a genuine film industry.
[Tomas Mac Giolla, ibid:col.3908].

...This proposal is an act of philistinism, damaging to the film industry and it transcends even the excesses of mad Margaret in the neighbouring island, who set an alternative commercial entity in place before she decided that she would abolish the film board.
[Michael Higgins, ibid:col. 3938].

Mr. Dukes saw the move as

a blow the steady progress being made in recent years towards the establishment of an indigenous Irish film industry.
[Dail Debates 26-06-87].

The action has been described by McIlroy as "penny pinching and short sighted" (McIlroy 1989:65). The Government's justification of its actions was that the Board had a series of "bad debts" and that proposed new tax incentives would better facilitate film production.

Carley has argued that to penalise the Board for its "bad debts" was to misconstrue the whole nature of the film industry. The Board's brief from the outset was to develop the industry in Ireland and, as such, they opted to provide loans as opposed to grants, in the hope of generating more finance.

> Since the international ratio for films who make a profit to those who don't, is recognised as being about 1:10, while only one in seven developed scripts actually go into production, the expectations that IFB-assisted productions, made during the early infant stages of a developing indigenous film industry, should provide high commercial returns were unrealistic
> (Carley, quoted in Gough 1987:74)

Government action in relation to the Film Board was hard to understand especially as at no stage in the six year existance of BSE, did any relevant government department make any criticism of the Board's activities. "On the contrary", said Michael Algar, chief executive of the Board,

> In fact, the uninterest of the civil servants was one of the more remarkable aspects, and it was those uninterested civil servants who advised the Taoiseach to wind up the board.
> (quoted in the Sunday Tribune 05-07-87)

The Board in an effort to salvage the situation wrote to the Secretary of the Department of the Taoiseach outlining another approach which might be adopted which would particularly benefit funding for development.

> The basis of the Board's suggestion was that the Board should be asked to establish a partnership with the production companies involved in the Irish film industry in order to provide a pool of development money to be funded both by the private and public sectors. In relation to the public sector funding, the Board suggested that the Government might make a contribution to that fund.

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> The Board suggested further that Board Scannan na
> hEireann might then be reconstituted in its
> membership to take account both of the sources of
> funding from the private and public sectors, and of
> the necessarily more commercial criteria which the
> Board would have to adopt.
>
> (BSE 1987:3)

The Government's response to the proposal is contained in a

letter from the Secretary to the Department of the Taoiseach,

28th July and did not give much hope that the proposal might

have been adopted :-

> As regards development financing and, in
> particular, the provision of appropriate assistance
> to enable scripts to be developed to the commercial
> production stage, I would like to assure you that
> the importance of this aspect is appreciated and is
> being considered. We will examine, in this
> connection, the suggestion made by your Board that
> the industry itself might be able to contribute to
> this work.
>
> (quoted in BSE 1987:3)

One commentator at the time was proven right when he pointed

out that under a previous Fianna Fail administration in 1982,

the National Film Studios at Ardmore were liquidated

unexpectedly and without consultation, in a similar manner

to the abolition of BSE.

> The subsequent protests of the film industry were
> ignored by the government then. Is there any reason
> to believe they will bother listening this time...?
>
> (Dwyer, 1987).

A major campaign to have a single central state agency

set up to cater for the needs of the Irish film industry, in

the wake of the abolition of the Film Board, was launched in

October of 1987. A report calling for the agency to be

established and pointing out ways that it could be both

funded and used to generate finance was submitted by the

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group behind the campaign. The group, called The Action Committee for a Single State Agency, claimed that finance from the National lottery and levies on cinema admissions, video rentals and sales could remove the funding burden from the Exchequer. It also pointed out that the production of films could bring millions in revenue, from PAYE, PRSI, and VAT. The group warned that spreading responsibility for the industry over a number of Government bodies would lead to fragmentation and seriously affect overall results. These proposals are noteworthy in that they represented a degree of unanimity unusual in an industry more noted for internal disagreements in the past.

The main problems of film activity in Ireland stem from the constant pursuit among film-makers for a balance between the cultural and the commercial aspects of film. As I stated earlier, the reason given by government for the axing of the Irish Film Board was that it was a loss making operation (although individuals involved in the industry have stated how indirectly it was a profit making operation, and of benefit to the state).

The Film Board was wound down because of the IR 4m given out in loans over seven years, only IR 50 000, allegedly, had been paid back "which by any objective criteria is not a good return" (Buckley 1990). However, this IR 3.5m "bad debt" was spent in building a solid base for an Irish film industry which in time could build itself into a

commercially viable as well as culturally viable one. While many legitimate criticisms may be made of the Board, the action of the Taoiseach in ending the activities of the Board without any warning does appear harsh. This is especially the case when a quite different picture of the commercial viability of the Board is presented:

Between August 1981 and the Board's demise in 1987, it had facilitated the making of ten feature films and 35 short films. The Board invested 1.2m in the feature films, which in total cost 6.1m. In facilitating these feature productions, 3.3m was imported by way of foreign capital into the country, to be spent on Irish production. Of the total of 6.1m., 20% was immediately returned to the Exchequer by way of PAYE, PRSI, VAT etc., thereby immediately repaying the State's investment through the Board, and providing significant employment and spin-off benefits [BSE 1987]. As the Board pointed out, this compared more than favourably with the targets set by the IDA., a comparable body in terms of its development brief (BSE 1987).

The Board was involved in giving finance in the form of loans and grants to Irish film makers. It also was central to developing marketing strategies for Irish film in overseas markets and in creating an awareness of Irish film abroad. This work was vital to developing an indiginous film culture. However, the government did not see it this way and based on a purely monetary decision axed the Film Board and replaced it with tax concessions which the Board had lobbied

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government to introduce, but as a complement to the work of the Board, not as a replacement. What was ignored by this decision was important role played by the Board in enabling Irish people to express themselves through one of the most influential mediums of our time and consequently the promotion of Ireland's own world view and enabling Irish people to determine to some extent how Irish people are viewed. Whether or not the Film Board satisfactorily fulfilled this role is not the issue. The Board at least addressed these matters and when it was axed it was not replaced by any similar Board or Body who may have been able to do a better job. As Lelia Doolan expresses it, with the axing of the Film Board

> every philosophical argument, every argument for identity, every argument for a common good or a cultural identity was simply flung out the window on the grounds that economically it wasn't viable.
>   (Doolan, 1988)

3.3.2. Tax Incentives to Irish Film making

The Irish Film Board was suppposedly replaced by a tax incentive which the Board had actually helped devise as a complement to the work of the Board. This came in the form of Section 35 of the 1987 Finance Act. Section 35 provided 60% tax relief on investment of up to IR 100 000 per year over three years. This amount was seen as being too low to make it worthwhile for an investor to bother, given the legal and accounting costs involved. In response to representations made to the Department of Finance by some of the country's

larger film producers, Section 35 was ammended in 1989. The ceiling on investment was raised to IR 200 000 per year for three years or IR 600 000 for one year precluding the investor from using the scheme for the following two years. Section 35 has been little used by the film industry. While this may reflect the inadequacies of Section 35 it also reflects the wariness of investors to get involved in film production in Ireland. It has been pointed out that from the point of view of low-budget film-makers there is the difficulty that this type of scheme tends to concentrate resources in fewer and larger scale productions.

Previous tax based financing for film in Ireland came in 1984 when the Irish Film Industry got a somewhat unintended boost in the form of fiscal policy which proved quite successful in attracting private investment in film production. The relevant piece of legislation was Section 40 of the 1984 Finance Act which provided a tax loophole for limited partnerships which many production companies in the 1984/85 period utilized. Under Section 40 of the Act limited partners were given allowances on their personal tax liabilities against their investments. However, in 1985, the Minister for Finance Alan Dukes, closed the loophole stating that limited partnerships were being established purely for tax avoidance purposes.

> the tax "saved" by limited partners was out of all proportion to the costs to the Exchequer .....
> (and) must be considered as an abuse since the tax lost is, in effect, an unintended subsidy for film-

making, not a subsidy approved by Dail Eireann.
[Alan Dukes 1985, quoted in Gough 1987:61]

The film industry, however, argued that such partnerships were the main source of funding for Irish productions. John Baragwanath, then head of sales and co-operations in RTE, stated that the station or an individual producer, would usually put up between a quarter and a third of the cost of a film with a similar amount coming from a partner - either another television station or an individual investor. The capital allowances (the "unintended subsidy") would make up the difference.

> Support from the Exchequer represented a small but critical proportion of the funding of film without which these productions cannot proceed. A typical RTE film costing say IR 500 000 would be financed as follows:
>
> RTE resources 200 000
> Foreign Broadcasting Partner(s) 150 000
> Tax Funding 150 000
> (Baragwanath, 1985).

Not until 1987 was tax-based financing introduced and as I have pointed out it was introduced as a replacement and not a complement to the Film Board.

3.4. SEMI-STATE BODIES AND FILM

The Department of the Taoiseach also encourage a number of semi-state bodies to facilitate certain aspects of film-making (Buckley 1990).

3.4.1. The Arts Council

An Comhairle Ealaoin, The Arts Council, was established in 1951 by an Act of the Oireachtas but it was not until 1973 that the definition of the Arts was amended in legislation to

include the word cinema at the behest of the then senator, Mary Robinson. Since the abolition of the Film Board, the aid of the Arts Council has been crucial to the survival of Irish film-making. As well as supporting individual film makers through its annual film and video project awards, the Arts Council also supports film organizations - the Federation of Irish Film Societies (with a grant of approximately IR 38 000), the Irish Film Institute (approximately IR 50 000) and Film Base (approximately IR 30 000). It also gives support to the Cork Film Festival (approximately IR 25 000), the Dublin Film Festival (first grant in 1989 for 1990 of 20 000 to be repeated again in 1991) and the Galway Resource Centre [figures for June 1990-1991, from Keane 1990:5]. The Arts Council differs from the Irish Film Board in that there are no stipulations with the funding which the Arts Council provides through its Film and Video Project Awards, demanding a return on investment from the film maker. Also the Arts Council has been less concerned with the commercially oriented side of Irish film making.

At the 1982 Public Hearing of Board Scannan Eireann, Colm O'Brian then director of the Council put forward some of the factors the Council had experienced in the question of public funding of film. These were :

1. The nature and quality and content of the film to be made.

2. The audience potential and audience expectation in respect of any film made under the auspices of the State

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- this, he says, raises the question of whether an indigenous film industry should be based on a promotional view of the country, whether a particular aspect of the country's national life should be presented in the film in order to impress other countries.

3. The question of skilled resources to be employed in film activity. There must be planning in a long term context to ensure future generations of film makers do not have to experience the frustrations and obstacles past and present generations have had to endure.

4. The question of financial feasibility - whether by way of investment or in the form of a loan, grant or guarantee.

[Proceedings of the Public Hearing of BSE 1982]

According to O'Briain all four of these factors are integral to the work of any agency using public funds for the promotion of film activity.

Productions North and South of the border benefitted significantly from the Council's Film and Video Project Awards. The Awards are important as the initial injection of funds is so important in getting a project off the ground and in securing further investment. Although the emphasis is not upon completing projects, when an award is made (John Hunt quoted in Keane 1990), the Arts Council claims in both the 1984 and 1985 Annual Reports that the majority of the award winning scripts have gone into production. John Hunt

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estimates that 60% of award winning scripts are eventually completed. This is borne out by the figures for 1989. According to Paul Freaney, film officer with the Arts Council, of the five scripts awarded, three are complete and two are in the process of raising production finance (Keane 1990). The importance of initial investment was endorsed by Zimbabwean film director Olley Maruma, who, at the debate entitled Film + Funding = Democracy at the 1990 Galway Film Fleadh, pointed to the experience of Africa where the initial investment, no matter how small, played a decisive role in generating further finance and the ultimate success of the film. It came therefore as an unexpected blow to the Industry when in 1987 the Awards advertised as amounting to IR 50 000 in reality only amounted to 30 000. The explanation given was that the quality of scripts was low. No further information was given nor any guidelines as to how projects were assessed.

While on the one hand the Arts Council was being put in a position to become more involved in film (due to the demise of the Film Board), in reality it seemed to be

> severely abusing the very constituency which it desires to represent.
> [Gogan and Murphy 1988:3]

However in its 1988 Annual Report, the Arts Council was able to state that

> Although the Arts Council was able to allocate only IR 30 000 for the 1988 Film and Video Awards, a definite policy began to appear to the type of project which would be supported. Films of an experimental nature or those which in some way challenged and explored film-form were included

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> within the ambit of Arts Council funding. The Arts
> Council's belief was that these films, in spite of
> their lack of commercial viablility, are
> nevertheless important to the progress and
> development of an indigenous film industry, with an
> Irish vocabulary of image, based firmly on
> individual artistic expression.
>   [Arts Council 1989:22].

The Council then clearly expressed its interest in a

particular type of film and rejected any notion that it might

replace the Film Board. The Arts Council in chosing projects

for the Film and Video Projects Awards 1990 expressed a

direct interest

> in proposals of an experimental nature or with an
> emphasis on the concept of film as a visual art.
>   [Bursaries Scholarships Awards 1990]

Paul Freaney has stated that the Arts Council should be

concerned with excellence and quality in art and can envisage

the Arts Council becoming even more specific in its focus on

Film as Art - he is prepared to let somebody else look after

the industry [Keane 1990:6]. In most countries this attitude

would be perfectly acceptable ie. in countries which have

alternative sources of state financing in the form of a Film

Board/Commission. If the State is giving the Arts Council

such limited support for film that it can barely fulfill its

goal of supporting experimental film, how can it expect it to

support other areas of film activity in Ireland.

3.4.1.1. The Irish Film Centre

Currently the Arts Council, through the Irish Film

Centre Building Company Ltd., which it appointed in late

1989, and other bodies such as Irish Film Institute, are in

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the process of acquiring and refurbishing IFI and Film Base premises in Dublin for an Irish Film Centre. The Centre is to house a national film archive and two cinemas - one 280 seats mainly for arthouse films and one 110 seats for special interest films and for meetings, etc. It will also house a bar, and a restaurant. The Secretary of the Irish Film Centre Building Company (IFCB) is the finance officer of the Arts Council. Ideally it is to be a resource centre although its commercial viabliity is still in the balance. (Byrne, 1991). However, Laura Magaghy, Chief Executive of the IFCB, stresses that it is a non profit-making company limited by guarantee - "It's a facility not a commercial enterprise... It will always be dependent on subsidy". The IFCB has secured IR400 000 Lottery funding which was administered through the Arts Council and IR 625 000 from the EC Structural Fund which has to be matched by private sponsorship. The success and balance the Centre achieves between commercial viablity and cultural resource will be significant for the future of film making in Ireland.

3.4.2. The Industrial Development Authority (IDA)

The IDA has actually no brief on the film industry in Ireland but through its International Services Department it provides it with limited aid under their Media Recording Sector. Involvement is limited because they are constrained to helping companies which provide fulltime jobs and are involved in international trading. Most film makers in Ireland even if set up as a company provide little full-time

employment, employing freelance workers for the duration of specific projects. According to Rosemary Sexton of the International Services Department, only one feature film production company has benefitted from an IDA grant and that was one of the larger, better established companies Strongbow (now defunct). Eight video - TV companies have been grant aided, because they provided full employment and had managed to secure contracts from overseas through co-productions. Aid has also been provided in post-prodution to (again the larger companies) Windmill Lane and Annar. A small amount of help is also given in the film entertainment end (Windmill Lane was also mentioned here as one of the main beneficiaries).

The make-up of the film industry in Ireland (mainly small companies) means that most film-makers cannot benefit from IDA assistance and those who do are already well established and have broken into the international market. According to Paddy Buckley of the Department of the Taoiseach, the IDA's diffficulty is that a lot of film companies are ad hoc companies set up purely for one-off projects and they haven't got a portfolio of the continuous projects going through.

> The IDA doesn't see that it has a role with these sort of companies. Some private people are trying to create an investment trust which would ensure that there would be a continuous throughput of films. Hopefully the IDA would be able to help out in that particular context.
>
> (Buckley, 1990).

Like the tax incentive, the IDA aid to film is more beneficial to larger well established film companies than to

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smaller less secure companies. Of the twelve film makers interviewed only three benefitted from IDA support. The one who received the most was an animation studio. Animation, unlike live action film, is ongoing and self-sustaining in terms of employment. The second was also one of the larger companies. David Collins of Windmill Lane described this aid that they received as "nothing spectacular" - the assistance being for some of their employment content. The third smaller company which received IDA aid described it as "very minor" and issued in "an unthought-through way".

Aid such as that provided by the Arts Council and to a lesser extent, the IDA should complement a more comprehensive government policy on film. Unfortunately such policy does not exist. Perhaps of greater benefit to the independent production sector is Coras Trachtala.

3.4.3. Coras Trachtala (CTT)

CTT is the state organisation for the promotion and development of exports. It was established as a statutory corporation in 1959 under the Export Promotions Act, 1959. It is financed by a grant in aid (amounting to IR 20.8m in 1989) from the Department of the Taoiseach. CTT provides a variety of aids, services and other incentives for merchandise exporters and for exporters of certain services. The organisation's assistance is available to firms planning to enter the export market.

CTT has sixty television/video companies as clients, the

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vast majority of who are wholly Irish owned and who have survived to date on supplying RTE and Channel 4 with television programmes. Ten of these CTT would consider to be very professionally managed and capable of major export in the next few years. They have five feature film production companies as clients, the majority of who "pre-sell" their productions and have relatively little need for CTT input. CTT's policy in the indigenous film and television industry is to assist the independent production sector to increase its export sales. Specifically they facilitate this as follows:

a)   Monitoring the major internatonal markets on behalf
      of the CTT client companies, in respect of
      developments to do with broadcasting legislation
      etc, which would impact on them.

b)   Signalling new export market opportunities for the
      sector.

c)   Increasing awareness within the sector of the need
      for improved marketing skills in an ever increasing
      competitive environment internationally.

d)   Disseminating information on the EC funded
      "Euro Aim" initiatives and on the Media
      Programmes generally. [see chapter 4 for a
      discussion of these programmes].

e)   Supporting the marketing programmes of client
      companies on a consistent basis.

                                          (O'Brien, 1990).

     In the area of sales and marketing, CTT organised an Irish sales/marketing platform for the local industry at the MIP Film and Video Trade Fair in Cannes in April 1990. Four Irish production companies participated under the "Euro Aim" banner. A second Irish group participated at the larger MIPCOM exhibition which was held in October in Cannes, again

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under the aegis of Euro Aim. Twenty Irish production companies attended, as a follow-up to their initial participation at this trade fair in October 1988. CTT also organised a group visit of Irish independent production companies to the Festival of Trade Forum Seminar in 1989 Toronto for the first time. Nine companies with twelve delegates participated. A reception was held prior to a preview of "My Left Foot" where Irish companies met with Canadian industry contacts.

CTT has also been very involved in the dissemination of information in relation to the film industry. In May 1989 an industry seminar on "The Opportunities Provided by the Canadian Film/Video Co-Production Agreement" was organised in co-operation with Telefilm Canada's London office. Another industry seminar was held in June 1989 on "The Opportunities for Irish Film and Video Programme Procedures in the Deregulated UK Broadcast Media Market". CTT also co-ordinated, along with the Irish Film Institute, the Media 92's Programme's "Information Day" in Ireland in September 1989, at which representatives of the seven programmes currently being operated by Media 92, presented to the Irish industry how their organisation facilitates film production in the EC and how Irish companies can avail of support from their respective programmes.

CTT estimates that the film export market was worth IR 25m in 1989 and, according to O'Brien,

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> Growth of approximately 20% (IR 30m) is expected
> for 1990 given the co-ordinated marketing approach
> which CTT has initiated with the Industry and the
> opportunities for expansion which are presenting
> themselves to Irish production companies this year
> i.e. satellite TV. A minimum of 26% quota of
> independent production for British TV channels by
> 1992 (as required by the UK government in their
> recent White Paper on the broadcast industry).
>
> (ibid).

Of the twelve independent film makers interviewed three

mentioned CTT as a source of aid affirming that it is the

most thought through of Semi-state aid to film in Ireland.

But as Gilsenan remarks:

> In a way they're showing a lead in terms of State
> involvement in film. But its a bit like putting the
> cart before the horse. You can't go off to Cannes
> or Hollywood if you don't have the product".
>
> (ibid).

3.4.3.1. The Irish-Canadian film and video co-production agreement.

One seemingly encouraging initiative on the part of

Irish government was the Irish-Canadian co-production

agreement which was formally ratified on April 4 1988 and

signed a year later. Under this agreement co-productions take

on the status of national productions in the respective

countries and will therefore be able to avail of

incentives/grants if they comply with certain criteria. The

minority co-producer is expected to make "an effective

technical and creative contribution" and the extent of this

contribution in terms of performers and technicians will be

proportionate to their investment. Given that Canada has a

strong history of indigenous film making through its National

Film Board and more recently Telefilm Canada, the idea of co-

production with it is a good one on the surface. However, one

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clause which suggests some apprehension on the part of the Irish government is to be found in Annex 11 of the agreement. (According to Gogan and Sheehy (1989) such a clause is not included in any other Canadian co-production agreement - of which there are around twenty). The relevant paragraph reads:

> In response to the query raised by the Irish Department of the Prime Minister, the Embassy of Canada has the honour to confirm that it is the view of the Government of Canada that any benefits arising from the agreement are largely administrative and subject to the legislation and the regulation in force in Canada and Ireland, and that the Agreement does not in any way oblige either Governments to provide for the payment of grants.
>
> [quoted in FBN Apr/May 1989].

Yet again the commitment of the Irish Government to facilitate the growth of an indiginous film culture seems questionable.

Government's involvement in film currently rests with the Department of the Taoiseach encouraging a number of semi-state bodies to facilitate certain aspects of film-making. Most of the aid given to film is given in an ad hoc sort of way. Semi-state bodies such as the IDA, Nadcorp, CTT are "encouraged" to invest in film but have no definite brief with regard to film. Paddy Buckley of the Arts and Culture division of the Department of the Taoiseach states that

> You must attune yourself to market changes. You must try and gear yourself to what the market wants.

Following this he asks:

> So can you force Irish culture on people? That's the question.

No one is asking the government to force Irish culture on anyone, but is it not reasonable to ask the government to give Irish culture its due expression? The aid of the Arts Council, the IDA and CTT are beneficial to the film industry but it seems useless to encourage minority interest film, to help film makers export their film when the film industry in Ireland is not allowed grow as an Irish film industry firstly expressing contemporary Irish culture.

The Irish government is currently looking to European aid and the MEDIA 92 programme as where the future for Irish film-making lies. An examination of European moves in film and television and their consequences for Ireland is the basis of the next chapter.

THE IRISH AUDIOVISUAL SECTOR -

"ON THE ROAD TO GOD KNOWS WHERE"...

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As argued in the first chapter and illustrated in chapter three, while more flexible forms of production are on the increase they tend to be more commercially driven. Within Europe, one of the main effects of the changes in broadcasting is a greater demand for programming and a resultant growth in distribution facilities. Debates on "European identity" and a "European pool of production" call into question whether we are going to witness an elaboration of differential and plural identities or whether identity is to be based on some false sense of cohesion and unity.

The first section of this chapter is going to examine developments in the audio-visual sector at a European level noting how such developments have many characteristics of the post-Fordist society outlined earlier, with for example, an increasing role for consumption reflected in such things as greater emphasis on "choice" and "pluralism" and a new international division of labour. At the level of the "local" there is an emphasis on supporting minority cultures and favouring them in funding policies. However, as argued in chapter one, local development must be examined in the context within which it occurs. While such European initiatives are beneficial to smaller independent

productions, national specifics must also be taken into consideration, as must the more market-driven schemes such as EUREKA and the latest EC directive (see below). Kevin Robins has argued that it is necessary to learn how to use the mass media and new information technologies to create "a new forum for political discourse" which is grounded in a spatial framework and elaborated in a local public sphere. This argument seems to assume that the concept of the national is redundant and that local cultures are strong enough to resist globalisation.

The second section of this chapter then, presents the opinions of Irish film-makers on Irish culture and identity and on where it is going. It suggests that national specifics mediate the development of the local and the global. The audiovisual sector, being linked to the national and the global is central to examining Irish culture and identity. In this regard it is also central to the public interest and to the creation of a new public sphere. Film as purely business is developing in Ireland in a few large film-making organisations. The cultural side of film-making hangs in the balance. Whether or not this aspect of film-making deserves state support will be a central part of this discussion.

4.2. IRISH TELEVISION PROGRAMMING IN A EUROPEAN MARKET

Most research on international television flows has been related to a discussion of the media imperialism thesis which basically states that a few countries, in particular

the USA, dominate the flow of television programming and consequently impose their culture and ideologies on the receiving countries [see Schiller 1976, Hamelink, 1977]. Much debate has surrounded this basic standpoint and its many variants (see Matterlart et al 1984, Silj et al 1988, Tracey 1985, 1988). What is ultimately agreed upon is that there is an unequal balance in flow of programmes between US and Western Europe. One programme hour in ten broadcast in Europe comes from the US, while on US television only one programme hour in 100 was originally produced in Europe, and mostly in the UK. (Plog, 1990:7).

But as Kelly points out, the unequal structure of the internal Western European Market also needs to be recognised. Mary Kelly (1988) has presented a comprehensive examination of the source of these programmes and found that the overall pattern regarding the source of programmes is that in 1986, two-thirds of programmes on offer in Europe were home-produced. Of the remainder, 20% came from the US and 11% from other European countries. As Table 1 and Table 2 indicate the pattern of importation varies significantly according to whether the station is publicly or privately owned or whether it operates from a core or peripheral country.

Kelly has found that the internal European programme market is structured in terms of three main programming regions. The dominant centres of these three regions - France, Britain and Germany - import few programmes from

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Table 1: Source of programmes in core European countries[17] (% of total transmission time)[a]

	Home production	European imports			US imports
		Other core countries	Peripheral countries	Total European	
1. PUBLIC SERVICE CHANNELS					
France (TF1, A2, FR3) X̄ =	84	6	-	6	10
Germany (ARD, ZDF) X̄ =	85	5	-	5	11
UK (BBC) X̄ =	87	1	1	2	12
Italy (RAI) X̄ =	81	2	1	3	11
Total X̄ =	84		-	4	11
2. COMMERCIAL CHANNELS					
UK (ITV & Ch4) X̄ =	78[b]	-	1	1	18
Italy (3 Berlusconi) X̄ =	31	3	—	3	64
France (Canal Plus)	57	4	—	4	37
Total X̄ =	51	2	-	2	44
3. COMMERCIAL SATELLITE CHANNELS					
Germany (SAT1, RTL-Plus) X̄ =	57[c]	12	2	14	27
UK: Sky	53	1	3	4	26
Super	77	-	2	2	15
Total X̄ =	61	6	2	8	24
4. PUBLIC SERVICE SATELLITE CHANNELS					
Germany: 3-SAT	65	-	25	25	10
EINS-Plus	73	13	6	19	8
Total X̄ =	69	7	16	22	9

Notes: [a] If more than one channel of a particular type exists in a given country, the percentage for each channel has been summed and an average figure for these channels calculated. Some rows do not add up to 100 per cent because of a small percentage of imports from other countries, i.e. Canada, Australia, Japan, Brazil, etc., which have not been listed in the Table. [b] It might be noted that the percentage figures for ITV and Channel 4 separately are somewhat different, with ITV having 91 per cent home production, no imports from Europe and 6 per cent US imports. The comparable figures for Channel 4 are 65 per cent home production, 2 per cent European and 29 per cent US imports. [c] RTL-Plus: Programmes produced in Germany and in Luxembourg are added together and counted as 'home production'.

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Table 2: Source of programmes in peripheral European
countries[10] (% of total transmission time)[a]

	Home production	European Imports				US imports
		Own core country	Other core countries	Peripheral countries	Total European	
1 PUBLIC SERVICE CHANNELS	•					
French region						
Belgium (RTBF)	84	5	4	–	9	7
Switzerland (TSR)	58	11	7	1	19	20
French region X̄ =	71	8	6	1	14	14
German region						
Austria (ORF 1 and 2) X̄ =	61	13	8	–	20	16
Switzerland (DRS)	82	3	7	–	12	6
German region X̄ =	72	10	7	–	17	12
UK region						
Belgium (BRT)	81	6	–	–	6	10
Netherlands (N1,1 and 2) X̄ =	72	5	3	2	10	16
Ireland (RTE 1 and 2) X̄ =	98	22	2	1	24	33
(Scandinavia)						
Sweden (STV 1 and 2) X̄ =	75	5	11	–	15	7
Finland (YLE/ MTV 1 and 2) X̄ =	54	9	7	8	24	14
Norway (NRK)	70	9	–	3	12	12
Denmark (DR)	62	7	5	12	24	9
Scandinavia X̄ =	65	7	7	5	19	11
UK region X̄ =	65	9	5	3	17	15
Other						
Spain (TVE 1 and 2, TV3, ETB, TVG) X̄ =	71	3[b]	2	–	5	20
Public service in all peripheral countries X̄ =	66	8	4	2	14	16
2 COMMERCIAL CHANNELS						
Luxembourg (RTL)	34	15[c]	7	11[d]	31	31

Notes: [a] If more than one channel exists in a given country, the percentage for
each channel has been summed and an average percentage figure for these channels
has been calculated. Some rows do not add up to 100 per cent because of a small
percentage of imports from other countries, i.e. Canada, Australia, Japan, Brazil,
etc., which have not been listed in the Table. [b] UK. [c] France. [d] 11 per cent
from Belgium which provides its main audience base.

other European countries and even fewer from the eleven peripheral countries. On the other hand, the peripheral countries import on average 14% of their transmitted programmes from other European countries and over half of these are from the regional core. With an increased role for consumption and greater emphasis on choice, is the "choice" offered - the "product differentiation" - going to affect the "quality" or "cultural distinctiveness" of the product, and will the individual - citizen or consumer - benefit in the end?

Results of an international survey carried out by Jeanette Peasy of CIT Research, London, indicates that the volume of the Western European television market ie. programme production and purchasing costs will rise from an estimated $10.6m to $16m in the decade from 1988 to 1998 (Plog, 1990:6).

4.2.1. Co-productions

Co-productions within Europe are regarded as a key solution to providing programming to meet the incresased demand which the European production pool fails to supply. Co-productions mean that the costs and risks for the individual broadcaster can be reduced and broadcasters can benefit from shared experiences, expertise etc. As Plog observes, the limits of European co-production are to be found in "differing national programme traditions and viewer expectations; in cultural specifics, in language problems, in having to compromise and in the complexity and associated

time expenditure of such ventures" (ibid:7). The European Co-
production Association (ECA) was created in 1985 to establish
a transnational European television drama production
industry. Significantly its membership is dominated by the
core programming regions of Europe - Germany, Britain and
France. Austria and Switzerland were also among the original
members and the association was later joined by Spain.

The ECA set out to become one of the biggest suppliers
of non-national drama series for each of the member
television organizations. The ECA's objectives were "to
produce and broadcast together 104 hours of European
television drama series during the first three years, then 52
hours from the fourth year". By 1990, 170 programme hours
were produced or in production, and 65 hours had been
broadcast with 40 hours being prepared for 1991. According to
Guillaum Cheneviere, chairperson of the ECA Programme
Committee, the ECA "has greatly Europeanized the programming
of each of the television organizations participating in the
project" (Cheneviere, 1990:19). The use of co-productions as
a means of rectifying the imbalance of flows between Europe
and America threatens to merely replace "Americanization"
with "Europeanization" which may benefit the European core
but can be of little real use to the peripherary. What it can
offer peripheral countries is the chance to use their
creative talents in diverse settings. This however, is at the
risk of compromising cultural differences and
characteristics. The role of such programmes as MEDIA and

Eureka Audio-visual in counteracting such effects will be examined below.

The demand for programme production is increasing. How it is to be met will determine the future of the audiovisual production sector in Europe. Plog argues that expanding and promoting European co-productions

> will by no means automatically solve the one-way traffic problem between the US and Europe, unless we agree to make co-productions that deliberately aim to be successful on the American market. ... Only ... in this way will it also be possible to go on making nationally oriented programming having both linguistic and cultural identity.
>
> (Plog, 1990:7).

Whether this happens is dubious in light of increased competition between channels not just for advertising revenue but also for programmes. With increasing numbers of commercial channels coming on the air and increasing pressure on public service broadcasters, the possibility of making programming with "linguistic and cultural identity" appears less and less realistic. The 1989 EC Directive "Television Without Frontiers" suggests a further victory for commercial forces.

4.2.2. EC Directive on Broadcasting 1989

The draft directive was criticized by Sepstrup [1989:30] as "a vehicle for transforming the technical television possibilities into economic realities with two basic components:

> 1. to create the market scale which is necessary for economic profitability

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> 2. to pave the way for (further) commercialization of broadcasting which is another necessary condition for economic exploitation of the broadcast capacity created by Information Technology.
>
> (ibid).

It is certainly true that the EC interest in exploiting pan-European communications is driven mainly by commercial and industrial policy considerations. The 1984 Green Paper was geared largely to internationalizing the European television market and could be seen as part of the drive to the Single Market. In April 1986 the first draft of the directive was drawn up with two main foci

> 1. to strenghten the European production sector;
> 2. for material to be of European origin.
>
> (O'Morain, 1989).

The two main areas of contention in the directive have been that of advertising and quotas. According to the directive the amount of advertising can't exceed 15% transmission time which may be raised to 20% if it is eg. direct advertising for sale. This is no major change for Ireland where national legislation in the area takes a similar stand. Countries such as Germany where advertising time accounts for about 5% of broadcasting time were more affected.

The section on programme quotas [Chp.3 of the directive; Articles 4 and 5] gave rise to much more debate. Americans have reacted strongly to what they see as a largely protectionsist measure of the European market in the name of some putative "European culture". Article 4 of the directive suggests that the majority of programming in any country be

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of European origin (excluding news, sports events, games, advertisements and teletext services).

The principle objection to this Article was that it is an intrusion into the independence of broadcasters and their right to chose programming material and that the emphasis is on quantity and not quality. The main problem is that smaller countries such as Ireland will merely be moving their dependence from one dominant country to others - principally increasing its dependence on Britain as, in Ireland, there exists an antipathy to dubbed material (cf. Boland, 1989b), and as shown by Tables 1 and 2, Ireland imports a low amount of programming from other European countries. It is interesting to note that one of the main objections to this article came from the then Irish Minister of State at the Department of Industry and Commerce (now Minister for Communications), Mr. Seamus Breannan. Mr. Brennan said that this article would force Irish television broadcasters to buy in dubbed and subtitled programming, which is not popular among Irish viewers. He also argued that it would provide a barrier to important cultural links between Ireland and the US and Australia (Boland, 1989a).

Due to the amount of controversy generated by Article 4, it has been much modified and remains vague stipulating that a majority of programming should be of European origin "where practicable and by appropriate means". Unlike the rest of the directive, these articles 4 and 5 [5 requiring broadcasters to commission at least 10% of their material

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from independent producers] do not gain the status of law and
are merely advice to governments to form policies designed to
achieve EC objectives in the audiovisual field.

The idea of a single European identity which the
Directive appears to be promoting is often seen as
unrealistic. Europe as a cultural unity has only ever been an
idea and it is no more than an economic grouping of different
states. Its main reference point for an identity is against
some mythical image of America as portrayed on popular
television. Even if one does not accept the existance of a
single European identity, one would have to admit that the
balance of programmes in most EC countries remains in favour
of the US and other large EC countries. While commentators
such as Tracey (1985; 1988), Silj (1988), are right in
pointing out the selectivity of audience tastes and their
discriminatory abilities, the point must be made that as the
market for programmes increases, and with it competition
between broadcasters, it is increasingly difficult for Public
Service Broadcasters to maintain standards set when operating
in a monopoly situation. They now have to compete with
broadcasters who are operating according to a different set
of principles to them. Also, increased reliance on core
countries for programmes erodes the base of any indiginous
culture of programme making that may exist.

If interrelations between European countries were
properly regulated, then smaller countries such as Ireland

could benefit. Through EC aid Ireland could be given a better chance to export to other cultures and learn from them. Media 92 and Eureka Audiovisual have been introduced to provide opportunities for such benefits.

4.3. EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL INITIATIVES

4.3.1. MEDIA 92

The Media 92 initiative was an EC pilot programme running projects and pilot schemes in independent and film and television in Europe in the areas of distributon, training and finance as a fostering and development of indigenous cultures in a '"multi-national" media world. In response to the request December 1989 of the European Council in Strasbourg, the Commission submitted an Action Programme for 1991-95 for extending the pilot phase of MEDIA, to the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament on May 4th 1990. The main developments proposed by the Action Programme, which requested a budget of ECU 250m, may be summarised as follows:

1. A qualitative and quantitative development of activities under way.

2. A geographical expansion, mainly towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

3. The promotion of regions or countries with "limited audio-visual capacity or speaking a minority language".

4. The exploration of new audiovisual services.

5. Synergy with Eureka audiovisual.

The MEDIA programme effectively ended its pilot phase

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and began its action programe at the beginning of 1991. The Council of Ministers announced its decision on this programme and budget early in December 1990 on the basis of the report submitted to it by an ad hoc working group (comprising of representatives and experts from the various ministries concerned in the 12 Community countries) who were to provide a precise evaluation, including figures for the results of the MEDIA Programme to date. The EC Council of Ministers has voted a ECU 200m fund for the period 1991-1995, with the intention of building on the development of Europe's audiovisual industry, set in train by MEDIA over the past years. It is hoped to continue to keep the projects as flexible and free of bureaucracy as possible (FBN,1991:4).

Those in charge of the various MEDIA projects have drawn up a costs/results balance sheet for the initiatives undertaken to date (not all of which have borne all their fruit, since the takings for a film may mount up over several years). Apart from long-term income which can't easily be calculated, ie. from training activities and experience gained at operating in an international arena this balance sheet provides an interesting and informative account of the success of the MEDIA project in monetary terms. Basically a direct investment by MEDIA of nearly ECU 11m in its projects has to July 1990 generated activities in the European audio-visual sector with a value of more than ECU 300m. In other words a cost/result ration of 1 to 30 (see Appendix B).

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Below is a summary of the main programmes available under the MEDIA scheme:

1. - In the area of Distribution

EFDO - The European Film Distribution Office is an independent organisation founded by distributers and producers from EC member states. It has the responsibility of providing financial support for the distribution of 'low budget' films. One of the main aims of EFDO is to develop the means, in the sense of a cross border cultural exchange and with a view to as wide a dissemination as possible, to make films accessible to a broad European audience - the general public. It is also establishing links with the Canadian and US market, in an attempt to redress the flow of US film.

BABEL - Broadcasting across the Barriers of European Language. One of the main problems facing the free flow of television programmes within Europe is linguistic diversity. Babel grants financial support for dubbing and sub-titling to projects which have received a commitment to broadcast from a television station. Priority is given to

- projects involving the least widely used languages
- works of fiction, particularly those aimed at youth
- pilot programmes for television series
- research and experiments designed to improve dubbing and subtitling techniques.

EUROAIM - the European Organisation of Audio-visual Independent Marketeers was established in 1987 to "stimulate the development of projects and also to assist in the retention of cultural identities". It is now part of the Media project. Euroaim aims to "dynamize the quality image of

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independent European production at international markets and to promote the sale of quality European works by providing a permanent information centre with qualified personnel and modern technology".

EUROAIM provides a production mediabase which is a computerised catalogue providing access to information on more than 5000 programmes, from video clips to full-length fiction and news coverage including reports on current affairs and documentaries. The producers' mediabase completes the permanent productions inventory prepresented by the "productions" mediabase. This is chiefly designed to promote exchanges and contacts and to facilitate co-producers and distributors. Both mediabases may be consulted or added to free of charge.

EVE - Espace Video Europeen is an initiative of the Irish Film Institute and the Mediatheque de la Communaute Francaise de Belgique within the MEDIA programme. They have recently come up with a loan scheme to assist European films in getting on to the growing sell-through video market. Broadly similar to the loans operated for cinema by EFDO, the EVE scheme - which is open to any EC feature film which has had cinema distribution in the last ten years - will provide up to 40% of the cost of publication. This money is repayable in the event of the film making a profit. Proposals aimed at improving the distribution of European works on video, particularly between different countries of the Community will also be considered. Financial assistance is planned for

video editors who intend to set up joint ventures to edit European audio-visual programmes. EVE is also setting up a database which will contain information on distributors, editors and video networks in Europe.

2. - in the area of Production

- The Media Investment Club aims to bring together European firms of the industrial, commercial or financial type in order to promote the creation of audio-visual programmes 'which excel in innovation and creativity within the perspective of building the Single European market'.

- European SCRIPT Fund - Support for creative independent production talent. The framers of Media 92 and other associated programmes see film and video, especially in the fields of fiction and documentary as crucial areas for maintaining and enriching the diverse national identities of Europe. The Script fund provides 'financial support for the pre-production and script development of feature and television fiction. For a project to be eligible for aid the total grant money from Script and from national funds must not exceed 50% of the projected budget.

CARTOON - the European Association for Animation Film - it aims to promote the development of animation techniques and to improve the production capacity by creating a network among existing studios in Europe. It provides financial support for pre-production as well as specific production projects.

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3. - in the area of Training -

-EAVE - European Audio-Visual Entrepreneurs. Its function is
to enable young independent producers to master the financial
and commercial aspects of their production projects,
management strategies and legal questions related to the
audio-visual industry.

-the European Certificate for Cinema and Television
Literature - A series of university level courses in writing
scripts.

4. - New Sources of Finance for Media 92
- Media Venture [Ventures Capital Fund] - this fund will
contribute towards the financing of large budget films and
television series with a high commercial potential aimed at
the general public as well as towards their distribution, in
particular by providing capital for production and
distribution companies. The objective of the Fund will be to
invest in the form of co-productions or co-financing of
promising projects ie. films aimed at a wide audience, both
for cinema and for television as well as for production
companies.

- Euro Media Guarantee - This fund is intended to provide a
financial guarantee for banks and credit institutions [up to
70%] for loans granted to audio-visual producers. Encouraged
by the Media Programme (which financed the feasibility study)
this guarantee backing fund was finally set up around the
Eureka table, thanks to the support fo the Commission of the

European Communities, France and Spain. The fund will offer financial operators a share in the risks involved in the production of European works for television and the cinema guaranteeing the loans it grants to the production budget department, or by guaranteeing part of the investments. Eligible works are full-length films, TV series or made-for TV films which are of genuine European interest and which have been assured of being broadcast or distributed on several European markets.

The IVENS project:

A new scheme to aid the development of documentary has just been launched by Danish film-makers and hopes to work within the Media 92 project. The IVENS project will give emphasis to production and distribution aspects and is interested in developing four areas:-

1. Research: possibly to set up a scheme for documentary similar to the Script Fund for feature films.

2. Fundraising: aside from the hypothetical establishment of production funds, giving qualified advice to both sides, and the eventual bringing together of project holders and possible financiers.

3. Production and postproduction: helping with the learning of the skills of documentary direction and production.

4. Distribution: a yearly selection of the best sixty to eighty hours of documentary under an IVENS label, to be shown to prospective buyers and TV networks. (FBN, 1990:4). The project will be up and running on 1 July, subject to funding

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approval, due in April (Doolan and Gogan, 1990:5).

So far Ireland has benefitted from Media 92 mainly in the production area. The Script fund is of very real importance to Irish producers as, as Lelia Doolan its Irish representative asserts,

> it is the only fund in the Media 92 programme that gives the chance for that pump-priming which gets a Script off the table and into the furnace of production or, well, to within the furnace's flickering flames
>
> (Doolan 1989).

Since its formation in 1989 the Script Fund has received 97 applications from Ireland and given 14 loans, a ratio of 1:7, compared to, eg. the UK ratio of 1:21 (FBN no.19, Sept/Oct 1990). Grants have also been made to Irish projects from the Babel project involving subtitling and dubbing. These include two to Telegael and one to Cinegael. The main benefit of the Media 92 programme is that it caters for the needs of small/minority countries. Also candidates benefit from the network which has developed around the Fund, whereby projects are able to come into contact with other projects whose subjects may be of interest. Candidates who are not selected gain valuable experience during the project analysis procedure on their design, presentation and also on understanding the market. However the Media Programme has a small budget [1988 - 9m ECUs (IR 7), raised to 200m ECUs for the period 1991-1995] and so can be of limited help. Also many of its projects presume a national support system which unfortunately does not exist in Ireland.

4.3.2. Eureka Audiovisual

Another promising European initiative is a new Eureka programme launched in Paris in October around the same time as the EC directive was adopted. This new strategy for the audiovisual sector aims to redress the broadcasting imbalance in Europe against cheap imports from the US and elsewhere. According to Bernard Miyet, Chairperson of the Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators' Committee, the idea of launching Audiovisual Eureka, on the lines of what is being done in the technological field

> was prompted by a realization of the existence of structural weaknesses in the production and circulation of European programmes: insufficient capacity, especially in drama, Europe's marginal position on world markets, imbalance in exchanges, political mobilization still confined to a few isolated concerted actions.
>
> (Miyet, 1990:10).

Named after the European technology programme, the Eureka audio-visual initiative aims to streamline television production in Europe with more coproductions and a wider exchange of European broadcasts (see Appendix C). At its launch in Paris in 1989 much emphasis was placed on television as culture. EC President Jaques Delors told the conference that "we cannot be in favour only of market forces in the audiovisual sector". However the emphasis of most of the discussions in the conference was on television as an industry which should fight to be competitive. One of the Irish representatives at the conference, RTE's head of programming, Bob Collins, said he thought there was great potential for Ireland in the Eureka initiative, particularly

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in the 'liberation of funds'. David Kavanagh of the Irish Film Institute, also present at the conference has pointed to two major difficulties in seeing how Ireland can benefit:

1. Eureka is very much a French initiative. Its concerns are centred on the existing larger European industries, particularly their own and on the difficulties of their relationship with Hollywood. They have a notional commitment to peripheral countries, or countries with low levels of production, but this is regarded very much as a side issue.

2. Our own level of commitment (Kavanagh, 1989). As observed in earlier chapters the Department of the Taoiseach is currently looking to European initiatives as where the future of the Irish audio-visual sector lies. However the benefit of these initiatives to Ireland is severely limited by lack of government support.

Many feared Media 92 being swallowed up by Eureka but by all accounts it came out of the conference looking hardworking, efficient and relevant. The two main differences between Media 92 and Eureka are scope and budget. Media 92 is more or less limited to member countries of the EC while Eureka has twenty-six countries potentially involved. Media's budget for 1991-95 is 200m ECUs, while Eureka is talking in terms of billions of ECUs.

4.3.3. EURIMAGES

EURIMAGES is a co-production support fund set up in 1989 by the Council of Europe. It is run by a Board of

Management, to which every member State of the Fund appoints a representative. The Fund's resources mainly come from its member State's contributions. The amount of a contribution is left to the discretion of each member state but takes account of the official scale of contributions set by the Council of Europe. Its total budget for 1991 was 90MFF.

The Fund supports first and foremost the co-production of feature-length fiction films and creative documentaries but also the distribution of feature films and documentaries. The distribution support scheme was devised in co-operation with representatives of EFDO and designed to avoid overlap between the two support schemes. In order to qualify for Eurimages' support, a co-production must involve at least three independent producers from the Fund's member countries. Particular attention is paid to projects initiated by countries with a low audiovisual output and limited geographic or linguistic coverage.

Priority is given to co-production set-ups "which best reflect the pooling of the participating member states' artistic and technical resources (Council of Europe, 1991). Support is given in the form of conditionally repayable interest-free loans. Repayment is made according to the film's results. In its first two years of operation (1989-1990), EURIMAGES supported the co-production of 59 European films and 5 films originating from member States in 20 different European countries. EURIMAGES claims to be fulfilling its dual aim "of re-enforcing this sector of

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industry and promoting artistic creativity".

If Ireland is going to benefit to the full from any of these European initiatives, it is going to have to get its own house in order. As new stations and channels are on the increase across Europe so too is the demand for programming. At a national level we need to give support in finance and in kind to Irish programme makers. Co-productions are ideal when it comes to merging the talents and finances of different countries but the danger is that other countries may benefit from the use of Irish resources (talent) as they have done in the past at the cost of the development of an indigenous Irish production sector.

The general opinion of the Irish independent production sector on the European initiatives is that while they are helpful they are certainly not the total answer to the problems of this sector. Mark Kilroy is glad that there is a bias in favour of poorer countries but is constantly frustrated by the lack of matching money in Ireland (Kilroy, 1990). Louis Marcus (Marcus, 1990) sees European aid as a solid development of the people, the skills and the infrastructure of production but almost all film makers agree that, as Kevin Moriarty puts it

> Until we have government support, we can't really
> play the game because we don't have the entrance
> price.
>   (Moriarty, 1990).

Alan Gilsenan (1990), sees it as a situation which the

EC and the MEDIA programme are situated at the begining of the road giving a much needed boost, and CTT at the end of the road trying to export Irish film, "but there's a long road to be travelled in between and the Irish government have been very reticent in trying to support that road". Equally reticent however, Gilsenan argues, are Irish film makers, who having attained some support from the EC, tend to sit back and not follow up on it.

> Irish people are bad about going out, travelling abroad and developing on the initiatives that have been set in play by the EC.
>
> (ibid).

Some film makers see the benefits of the initiatives as highlighting Ireland's shortcomings in this area:

> Europe helps to embarass our government into doing things that they haven't got the courage to do on their own and I think it is possible that in the future the government might be blackmailed into giving us some sort of production support as part of an EC initiative.
>
> (Taylor Black, 1990).

What is obvious is that until the government at least match the aid provided to Ireland by the EC or provide an environment which is conducive to other Irish investment, the usefulness of that aid is severely limited. No business or individual should be expected to take part in the international market, representing the nation, without support at a national level. As was pointed out in the last chapter, governmental aid to the film sector through eg. CTT and the IDA, is of no real benefit to the development of an indigenous Irish production sector who may then be able to compete at an international level. The current trend seems to

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be that until one does well at an international level national support will not be forthcoming.

Having examined the context and structures within which the Irish audio-visual sector is operating, it becomes apparent that on the whole, commercial imperatives are having an increasing influence. This, as I outlined earlier, has serious implications for the public interest and also for Irish culture and identity. One group who are in a position to ensure a balance between the cultural and the commercial aspects of film and television are independent film makers. Most of those interviewed for this study saw their role in relation to the cultural aspects of film and television as important. The following section examines their opinions on Irish identity, the importance of Irishness in production, and their perceived role for the State in relation to both Irish identity and to film-making.

4.4. IRISH FILM MAKERS ON ASPECTS OF IRISH FILM MAKING

4.4.1 Irish Identity

In discussing Irish identity, of those film makers interviewed some saw it as having more of a direct relationship to their work than others. All expressed opinions which both in terms of what was not said as well as what was suggested their constant interaction with the concept. Representative of many views was that of director Mark Kilroy who sees

> cultural identity as that which rises up from
> individuals whereas national identity is that which
> is put on or ignored by the powers that be

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Likewise Bob Quinn sees national identity

> as something monolithic and exclusive... Its an
> artificial construct which is a very useful and
> necessary thing if you're fighting wars and trying
> to win World Cups...
>
> Cultural identity is a happy mongrel. It has
> deeper roots and it has a number of strains and
> tendrils attached to it. It is shifting and moving
> all the time and has infinitely more weight than
> the arbitrariness of national identity
>
> (Quinn, 1990).

Lelia Doolan believes

> that human beings are continually constructing
> themselves and constructing the world so in that
> sense cultural identity isn't a given or finished.
> Its not out there, its being made
>
> (Doolan, 1990).

The way we construct ourselves and construct the world
is impaired by many factors including the inability to
express that culture through one of the most powerful mediums
of communication. Louis Marcus sees the loss of the Irish
language as detrimental to the construction of a people's
world view and their view of themselves:

> the loss of Irish certainly impaired our view of
> the world and ourselves, impaired our ability to
> act, it made us accept totally, in the area of the
> mass media until very recently, the fact that we
> are the recipients of Anglo-American product in a
> way that European countries in the mainland have
> never accepted.
>
> ...the culture is there because the culture is the
> people. Somewhere or other its there but its being
> frustrated at every turn.
>
> (Marcus, 1990)

It has been argued that a basic task facing the Irish people
is that of reconstructing their national identity and that it
is the widespread use of ones own language that provides the

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most effective basis for any valid claims to membership of a distinctive peoplehood (Tovey et al 1989). One cannot however deny the resistance that would exist among large numbers of the population to a total revival of the Irish language when English has become such a part of contemporary Irish culture. The Irish language has merely become a symbol of what "Irish" means just like other symbols such as the shamrock, the harp etc. Except in Gaeltacht areas, it no longer acts as a tool with which, or a structure within which, a substantial group of people may make sense of their world.

Bob Quinn has expressed more concern about Gaeltacht areas where Irish is still the native tongue but where the English language is gaining increasing usage due to the lack of the audiovisual representations which would reinforce the validity of the language. He submits that what happened over one hundred years ago when Ireland dramatically changed from using the Irish language to using English (The Great Silence) is happening in microcosm in the Gaeltacht areas where its happening daily. It makes more sense therefore to support the areas which use the language on a daily basis than to force it on the rest of the country which have adapted the English language to their everyday life. Gaeltacht areas are not getting government support to reinforce the importance of the Irish language in these specific communities through the use of the audio-visual medium. The State through the government tends to approach the audiovisual medium with great trepidation. This is even more so on a more local community

level where expression of various subcultures may undermine the sustained power which the government has achieved over the unit of the nation.

Just as the language presents itself as a structure within which a people can express their culture while at the same time existing as an intrinsic part of that culture, so too is the audiovisual medium of crucial importance to the expression of a living culture and a tool for making sense of reality. Although governmental intervention has been of the variety that curbs this expression and reinforces romanticised representations of Irish life (and even facilitates the definition of Ireland's world view created by other cultures moreso than by its own) many Irish film makers today see film and television as central to the sustenance and expression of Irish identity.

Louis Marcus suggests that the way in which film and television are able to sustain an Irish identity

> is not to impose a central or bureaucratic
> programme on people but simply to make the means of
> expression available to the community - which means
> to those people in the community who have the flair
> and ability to do it and to allow it to happen
> (Marcus, 1990).

Kevin Moriarty sees film and television today as what the reading of books was some years ago. Film and television provide a way of viewing the world both one's own world and the external world.

> An audience identifies with one or two people in a
> story, or programme, that's how we understand\grasp
> these things. So in that way whatever they see or

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grasp either reinforces or undermines their sense
of identity

<div align="right">(Quinn, 90).</div>

Film and television are therefore critical to both expressing

Irish culture and re-presenting it to Irish people to enable

them to look at and criticise themselves instead of

concocting myths about Irish identity. As one commentator

remarked:

> We're a naive culture - and not in a good way. We
> have all sorts of ideas about ourselves, that we're
> racially tolerant - ask the travellers, that we're
> generous - ask the poor. As long as it doesn't
> impinge on ourselves we're great out there. I think
> its more important to look at ourselves
>
> <div align="right">(Mac Bride, 1990).</div>

But as Mark Kilroy has pointed out the image projected

> very often might not be an image which the national
> identity might agree with. People in the
> Taoiseach's office - the powers that be - would
> much prefer to see nice Bord Failte sort of films
> being made whereas a lot of films that came out
> from under Film Board tutelage took a critical view
> of ourselves
>
> <div align="right">(Kilroy, 1990).</div>

4.4.2. The State, Irish identity and Irish film-making

The media have been central to the establishment of

Irish identity as through the media the public could be

identified as a particular group with a common cause and a

sense of belonging could be established. Concrete

representations of that provide the State with a source of

images and forms to draw on when it needs to motivate popular

support. While many film-makers are more interested in

portraying images of Ireland primarily to Irish people, they

do recognise the value of promoting images of Ireland abroad.

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Arthur Lappin sees it as very important for film to promote images of Ireland abroad and not in the Bord Failte sort of sense of "pretty pictures of the West of Ireland":

> Its very important from a national point of view
> and from a political point of view. Its something
> which is quite subliminal... It is a vitally
> important argument but one which is very difficult
> to express in pounds, shillings and pence
> (Lappin, 1990).

This is in fact where the problem lies in attempting to get any kind of state support for film in Ireland. Due to the cost of film and the size of Irish audiences it is not commercially viable to produce Irish films for Irish audiences. Successive Irish governments, especially Fianna Fail administrations, appear to be convinced that commercial, imperatives in popular culture serve the national interest. One representative of the Department of the Taoiseach states

> Its an incredibly high risk business and the
> government policy at the minute is to help people
> who will risk their own money by giving them tax
> breaks and facilitate them by getting European
> money if they can. ...Its not fair to invest IR 10m
> of the tax payer's money into film when only IR 1m
> may be returned...
> (Buckley, 1990).

By presenting a commercial argument against the viability of the expression of Irish culture through film, the government are denying the importance of culture in the life of the nation. They are turning the nation into a commercial entity instead of a particular group of people sharing the same history and current activities with the right to express this as a cultural identity. When asked if an Irish interest film popular in Ireland but not abroad is worthy of state aid

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Paddy Buckley, Principle of the Arts and Culture division of
the Department of the Taoiseach, stresses:

> It boils down to should producers have faith in
> their own product or not and if they have faith in
> their own product then they should risk their own
> money. Surely if they really believe in it then
> they should be able to convince other people to
> risk their money and by and large the state is
> willing to cover their risks to some extent by
> giving them generous tax breaks.
>
> (ibid).

This kind of thinking is unrealistic, firstly, as most
film makers in Ireland are on low incomes and those producing
low budget films are not likely to benefit too much from tax
breaks. Secondly, because of the high risk nature of film and
the lack of a history of investment in film making in
Ireland, "convincing other people to risk their money" is
going to take more than having faith in one's product.
Neither does this line of thinking suggest any interest on
the government's part in the cultural value of film. The
danger here is that film-makers will become involved in
purely commercial ventures producing material which
reinforces stereotypes and is of little use to the cultural
health of the nation and consequently to the health of the
nation in any other area.

The risk exists that film makers will become so
involved in convincing government of the commercial viability
of their work that compromises may be made to the detriment
of the end product. The onus is on film makers to go out and
get funding. This could be achieved much more easily if there
was initial government support to increase the confidence of

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private investors in investing in film. This was discussed at a recent debate on "Film + Funding = Democracy" at the 1990 Galway Film Fleadh, where some film makers reiterated the need for a financial argument to convince government to support Irish films. The lack of government representation at the debate reflects the lack of interest among politicians to finding a solution to the problem.

Yet again the problem lies in balancing the cultural with the commercial. The cultural must be there if Irish films are going to retain any distinctiveness, yet in order to be made in the first place they are going to have to show themselves to be marketable. It is a vicious circle which tends to make one pessimistic about the future of Irish film making, especially when you have someone in Mr. Buckley's position saying

> You must attune yourself to market changes. You
> must try and gear yourself to what the market
> wants... We are a small country and we must be
> aware of the fact that what may be popular in
> Ireland may not go down well abroad. Tastes differ
> abroad. Its a matter of choice rather than being
> objectively good or bad or whatever.
>
> (ibid).

Most of the film makers I interviewed would not agree with this recognising the Irishness of a production as all-important.

4.4.3. Irishness

> Irishness is essential. The Irishness only exists
> with Irish input. Irishness in films is extremely
> important because of the strength of the medium, it
> can't be ignored (only at one's peril). By
> participating you stamp your Irishness on a film.

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(Algar, 1990).

This does not necessarily make the production insular or inaccessible. This has been the problem with interpretations of Irish culture to date. It is seen as inward looking and outdated. It exists on its own unrelated to other cultures. It is something which is often imposed rather than something alive and of the people. As independent film maker Arthur Lappin observes:

> Its important to reflect a certain Irishness, a certain way of doing things, a certain sense of humour, a sense of colour, a sense of taste, whatever it happens to be. But I think at the same time embracing the best of what has already been discovered about the making of films, the making of dance, the making of theatre in other cultures.
>
> (Lappin, 1990).

What is it then that makes a production Irish? What is the most important determinant? The following list was presented to a cross-section of Irish film makers to find out exactly what in their opinion was important. They were asked to rate in order of importance in determining the Irishness of a production:

* Origin of funding in Ireland,
* Irish artistic control - script/direction,
* Directed primarily at an Irish audience,
* Irish themes - subject matter,
* Located in Ireland,
* Irish personnel - actors,
* Provision of employment to Irish crews etc.
* Other...

Of the twelve film makers interviewed nine were convinced that Irish artistic control was the main determinant of the Irishness of a production with one respondant asserting they were all essential and the other two rating it second and third. The two who did rate it second and third rated number

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one that it be directed primarily at an Irish audience. Four other respondants selected this as number two. Most film makers were agreed that the origin of funding was only important when it determined changes in script or actors and that as long as artistic control stayed in Ireland, the production could be defined as Irish. Nobody rated this lower than number three except for one respondent who declared only artistic control was important and the others didn't matter. One other respondent preferred to use the term "control" of funding rather than "origin" of funding in Ireland, again reiterating the view that origin/control of funding is only important when it effects artistic control. This relates back to Garnham's point that value systems and social relations matter more than ownership. Here, it is clearly recognised by the film makers that it is not where the funding is coming from that is important but the wider system within which the film making is operating. While funding is one of the main problems facing Irish filmmakers, the wider system within which they have to operate presents a more important problem. When it is addressed, the problem of funding can then be tackled more constructively. Rated lowest were on the list of what determined the Irishness of a production were provision of employment to Irish crews, that it be located in Ireland and that it would feature Irish personnel (in that order).

In general responses bore no relation to size of operation, length of time in operation or type of production

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involved in. This indicates that despite the apparent internal disagreements among the independent production sector in Ireland, the general outlook of the sector is similar and the issues with which they are concerned are analagous. The limitations of this exercise are of course recognised. Firstly that only twelve of approximately 150 film makers throughout Ireland were inverviewed. Secondly, of those contacted it was the larger concerns which failed to respond. Thirdly the population interviewed were mainly male. However, care was taken to ensure that those chosen represented as wide a cross section as possible. They were all concerned with Irish identity and culture and represent that portion of the community which are capable of expressing Irish culture through the audiovisual medium. They therefore play a key role in the cultural redefinition of the public sphere. As I stated earlier, Irish culture is something which emerges from the group of people sharing past and present experiences resultant of their citizenship of the Irish nation. What makes a production Irish is on the one hand the involvement of Irish artists in its making and on the other its accessibility to an Irish audience.

4.4.4. The cultural vs. the commercial in Irish film making:

Most film-makers agree that film production should not answer primarily to either cultural or commercial imperatives. Representative of many opinions on this area is the opinion of Alan Gilsenan

> You can't separate the two. It's how they interact
> that is important.It's a balance that everybody who
> makes film is trying to achieve. Film is about
> making a dream a reality, so you're always coming
> up against the imagination and the hard nosed
> economic realities.
>
> (Gilsenan 1990).

If a production is to succeed it is going to have to be
commercially viable. Yet if it answers primarily to
commercial imperatives

> the logical conclusion of purely commercial film is
> pornographic film.
> I think some of the efforts at film-making in
> Ireland over the years have been fairly close to
> that - cultural prostitution at best.
>
> (ibid).

Bob Quinn also makes the analogy between purely commercially
driven productions and prostitution, although he regards
actual prostitution as a very noble trade and infinitely more
honest than the prostitution of the art of film:

> Normal prostitution, it's honest, you know what its
> about, no illusions, whereas if you make a film and
> pretend it's a cultural form but at the root its
> purely to make money and to make a name for
> yourself, then you are a prostitute, and you're
> defaming the name prostitute.
>
> (Quinn, 1990).

One film-maker who is more concerned with the cultural
than the commercial side of film-making is Donald Taylor
Black who aims his productions primarily at an Irish
audience. However, increasingly, his productions are being
funded by non-RTE sources, and although there is a pressure
there to make compromises - which he is not prepared to make
- he would prefer funding to come from RTE as he wants to
make his films for an Irish audience.

Louis Marcus identifies three aspects of the cultural -

commercial scale. Firstly he says there should be "art" film
and television made for minority audiences in the same way as
opera has a right to be made. The risk here is the danger of
self indulgence. Secondly, Marcus would assert, we have the
right to our own "rubbish". The third area he delineates is
where the cultural and commercial come together, where
quality work is produced that will appeal to all sections of
the audience eg. Strumpet City [RTE drama 1981]:

> So there are three ends of the market, the two
> extremes and the middle and they should all happen.
> The one in he middle will happen but it is harder
> to do, the cultural extreme will only happen if
> people like the Arts Council help it and the
> entertainment cannot happen in cinema here because
> we don't have enough human beings to sit in the
> seats.
>
> (Marcus, 1990).

Again referring to the precarious balance is Algar who says
it has to do with the light touch:

> having the commercial light enough on the cultural
> tiller, there enough that the commercial hand still
> has ultimate steering ability, but light enough
> that it is not forcing the cultural effort to go in
> a way in which it doesn't want to go.
>
> (Algar 1990).

Another problem in this regard facing film in Ireland
is that it is not recognised as an art form. Other arts like
theatre and literature, with a long and distinguished history
in Ireland, are more acceptable as an "art" form. Just as
with culture the living nature has been taken out of the term
"art" and so as Gilsenan expresses it

> in Ireland we have elevated theatre and literature
> onto the platform of high art because they are
> traditionally Irish arts and that is unhealthy
> because since they have become high art they have

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become stagnant.
(Gilsenan, 1990).

It is interesting that even when it comes to defining "art",
"commerce", "culture", different people interpret them
differently. This is surely no help to getting the overall
balance right within film activity in general. For example
Marcus seems to see film art as the specialist area for a
small audience and entertainment as that which appeals to the
masses, whereas Moriarty on the other hand says art is not
art unless it communicates to the masses.

At the other end of the scale we have the most
commercial aspects of the film sector. James Morris believes
that the investment for film in Ireland is there if the
"business" creates returns:

>   no one as yet has been good enough really to make
>   films that have created a return. But the day that
>   happens, the money will be available
>   (Morris, 1988).

Conor Mc Anally sees film activity purely as a business

>   The major difference, in terms of the art of film-
>   making or television, between it and all other art
>   forms is that it requires a great deal more money
>   and it requires a great deal more people. Self
>   expression cannot be the primary concern of a
>   business that requires this amount to be invested
>   into it where there is also an end user in mind.
>
>   So occassionally you get to do things that you
>   really want to do and to say things that you really
>   want to say but you can only do it if you've paid
>   you dues and part of the way you pay your dues is
>   by making programmes that people want to watch.
>
>   If people want to go off and be artistic and
>   self-expressive and all that, thats fine, they can
>   do it some place else. We're in the business of
>   communicating, we're not in the business of self-

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expression.

<div align="right">(Mc Anally, 1988).</div>

A difference of definition seems to be apparent here. Mc Anally seems to assume that self-expression is the type of minority interest "art" referred to by Marcus earlier. Whereas others have seen self-expression as of major importance not only benefitting the producer but also the audience.

So even within the industry there is difference of opinion as to what art is. Is it something which communicates to the masses or something which is removed form reality. Those who were interviewed in this study in the main saw film as art - not as something removed from reality but something which communicates to the community. It is worth noting that Mr. Mc Anally is involved in one of the larger Irish independent production companies which reinforces the point made earlier that to be commercially viable concessions have to be made which alter the type of programming produced. This is more of a threat to feature films than television as the Irish cinema going audience is simply not large enough to support an indiginous feature film industry. As Louis Marcus explains it

> We don't have enough heads in this country and that is why we didn't have an industry when the rest of the world developed one. The rest of the world began by making films that would pay their way in their own country. In England they had regional films that never saw their way south of Oxford up to the fifties.
>
> But according as the costs of film production rose and cinemas declined with the impact of television you reached the situation where very few countries

could afford to produce for the domestic audience
alone and therefore have to sell abroad also. That
is why the Irish film maker invariably making his
or her first film are told "you've to make your
first one without any experience and be an
international commercial success". No country is
able to do that so why should we be able to do it.
We may be good but geniuses I'm afraid we are not.
(Marcus, 1990).

The problem with this is in defining whether one is gearing

one's production to the mass audience (or parts of that

audience), or gearing one's product to the purely market-

oriented forces which the government seems intent on having

Irish film makers do. By denying the artistic nature of film

and concentrating solely on the commercial the government is

clearing itself of any responsibility to film making and

therefore to the expression of Irish culture.

Doolan recognises this continuous conflict between

film as art - film makers who do a job of work
which is necessary for the good of the country and
for the good of the society - and the governments
attitude to a) money from Hollywood films,
commerce, big bucks, big profits and b) their lack
of insight into the actual timespan needed to
create a real body of film makers within the
country.
(Doolan, 1990).

The government does not want to invest in film making for an

Irish audience as it will not produce immediate cash profit

and yet it is not prepared to help build up a film culture

within Ireland which would firstly be of benefit to Irish

people and secondly enable Irish film makers to enter the

international arena with a distinctively Irish product.

4.4.5. The State's role

It is clear from earlier chapters that the state sees its role in relation to culture expressed through the audiovisual medium in purely commercial terms. Most Irish film makers expressed the view that the state's role in relation to Irish culture should be in facilitating its expression by creating a support framework against which it will survive and grow. As Mark Kilroy affirms

> Unless money is provided to those that are going to examine and question notions such as an Irish identity it'll be left to foreigners to gloss over and go for the cliches.
>
> (Kilroy, 1990).

By virtue of its nature the audiovisual medium is going to use a certain amount of stereotypes to make what it is depicting more readily identifiable. Due to the lack of Irish feature films that reach public viewing the stereotypes of Irish people portrayed abroad and portrayed back to Irish people tend to remain negative and outdated. This does not present a fair representation of Irish people to other peoples or indeed to Irish people themselves. Alan Gilsenan claims that

> the Government doesn't really give a damn about cultural identity. There's not much money in cultural identity and the only cultural identity which the powers of the State - the Church, the Government - reinforce is a kind of regressive thing.
>
> The Church purports this vision of Ireland as an old Ireland where we don't have abortion and divorce and they hang on desperately to that cultural image.
>
> The IDA on the other hand purport the opposite - this sort of futuristic Ireland where everyone is

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> jumping around in business suits saying "we're the
> young Europeans". Then on the other hand Bord
> Failte is putting forward the "John Hinde postcard"
> image of colleens and donkeys and Eamon de Valera's
> dancing at the crossroads...
>
> (Gilsenan, 1990).

Hence, as Gilsenan remarks, the State is putting forward all

sorts of cultural myths perhaps because the cultural truth

may not make money.

By putting forward these cultural myths the State is

avoiding the need to support any mechanism which puts forward

alternative expressions of culture. Film makers in Ireland

are angry at this as it is they as artists who are denied the

right of expression through production and it is the public

who are denied the right of expressing and "seeing"

themselves through interaction with the product. Bob Quinn

expresses the anger felt by most film makers when he

describes his interpretation of the State's relationship to

independent film makers in Ireland. He perceives the film

maker as one who is lying on the ground and the State as

> somebody who is pissing over them... It (the State)
> is suspicious of ideas, it is suspicious of
> abstractions. It is certainly suspicious of
> principles and ethics. And because they see people
> involved in film tend to think and have an
> independent on things - tight control has to be
> maintained.
>
> (Quinn, 1990).

4.4.6. Film makers in action

One group which aims to promote an indigenous film

culture in Ireland is Film Base. Film Base was established in

1986 to provide a resource facility of equipment,

information, training and skills for the low budget film

sector in Ireland (FBN No.12 April/May 89). It is a non profit-making thirty-two county organisation and facility funded by membership fees and grants from the Arts Council, RTE and FAS. Film Base actively supports the establishment of a single State Agency for film and commits itself to campaigning (by itself and with other independent film makers or bodies) for an all-Ireland film agency to provide:

* a policy and structure for indigenous film;

* development funding;

* production finance;

* attractive terms for Irish investors;

* a promotion and distribution service.

Film Base is also involved in training of film makers and pursues a policy of maximum distribution of news and ideas.

Another body operating to forward the cultural and industrial environment of film in Ireland is Film Makers Ireland. An organisation set up in 1988, it is a representative body for Irish producers and directors. It exists to negotiate on behalf of Irish film makers with RTE, the Trade Unions and semi-State bodies such as the IDA. Its main achievements to date have been getting the government to include an amendment in the recent Broadcasting Bill obliging RTE to maintain the same level of commissions from the independent sector as it had previously reached. It has also negotiated terms of trade with RTE and agreements with the Unions.

Most film-makers are agreed on the need for some government support for film-making, be this a reinstatement of the Film Board or the setting up of some sort of co-ordinating body. Some, for example Algar and Marcus, argue for reinstating the Film Board, giving it greater funds and letting it continue where it left off. Doolan has voiced the positive aspects of the Film Board as being

> 1. It got film makers who wouldn't otherwise have had the chance, to get up and make films.
> 2. It let people abroad know that we were a film-making country and that we had things to say and it was recognised that these were worth saying internationally.
> 3. The number of jobs that were created through the grants that were given and then added to in the making of total budget, more than recouped the money that the Film Board had given out, in terms of tax back to the State, hoteliers that were paid for accomodation, transport etc. All of this was a tremendous return to the state. And in terms of exports, successes abroad, this was doing what the government is always saying it needs to do which is to give us a visibility abroad.
>
> (Doolan 1990).

Having said this Doolan believes it shouldn't be brought back exactly as it was. Quinn also argues along these lines, criticising the Board for not being radical enough, having illusions of grandeur and, while recognising that it did a lot of good work, claims that it could have done a lot more. It was, he says,

> administrative minds trying to create a dynamic in an area where imagination is at a premium and risk-taking is at a premium
>
> (Quinn, 1990).

Most film-makers pointed to the main area in need of governmental support as being the area of development finance. Even those at the more commercial end of the

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spectrum concede that the Board had an important role to play:

> The crucial thing the Film Board did was to provide
> development which is by and large money down the
> drain, but, without which it is very hard for
> people to live in that year it takes to get your
> project together before you go and start trying to
> raise money.
>
> <div align="right">(Morris, 1988).</div>

According to Doolan, the Government supporting people who want to find their voice, like the Film Board was attempting and begining to do, "is an absolutely essential element of any country's saying something about itself honestly, rather than having, in a colonial way, other nations saying something about it".

> Its a question of whether you're going to behave as
> a grown up or you're going to behave as an
> adolescent
>
> <div align="right">(Doolan, 1988).</div>

Unfortunately the Government does not see it like that. Commercial imperatives appear to be more important to the government than any commitment to the right of Irish people to express their culture through the audiovisual medium:

> We are a small country and we must be aware of the
> fact that what may be popular in Ireland may not go
> down well abroad. Tastes differ abroad. Its a
> matter of choice rather than being objectively good
> or objectively bad or whatever...
>
> <div align="right">(Buckley, 1990).</div>

This statement from a government representative is ironic, given that due to the lack of investment in, and support of, Irish film making, Irish viewers' "choice" is limited mainly to American and British productions. It appears that the

choice being referred to is consumer choice - the individual consuming a purely commercial marketable product instead of the individual benefitting from the expression of a collective culture through a popular medium of communications.

The Government however, as shown earlier, has seldom recognised such a role for film. The current Taoiseach, Charles Haughey's speeches from the 1950s to the 1980s are permeated with a romantic ideology of the rural, arguing that national morale is to be found in idealised notions of the land. The theme of his speeches is that our national morale should come from the past -the land - while our future should come from towns and cities. He is therefore holding on to past images to assert what constitutes 'nationality', thereby negating the idea of nationality.

> Ideally our people in the town should look back to
> the land with affection and sympathy while our
> farming community should look with pride and hope
> on what is being achieved in our towns and cities.

[Speech on Town and Country 21-11-1964 at Inaugural Meeting of the Dublin Institute of Catholic Sociological Debating Society, in Mansergh (1986:49).]

Yet again the "national" element of Irish life is being allotted to the past while the State is more concerned with "modernisation" and the present.

Again contradicting his past speeches on the importance of the land and the rural, in a speech on The New Tensions of Change, given at a Cairde Fail Function in Dublin on 10 December 1970, he announces that the time has come "to climb

out of the mud on to firm ground", commenting that

> we have the resources of spirit and intellect, what
> we need is a vision of the future and the will to
> make it a reality.

This Government's ethos has tended to be that the best produce comes from humble beginings. This, in relation to film, legitimates the Governments inaction in the area of film as a creative 'art' form which needs to flower and grow untouched. Yet, when government does give aid, it expects this 'art' to be a profit-making industry overnight - once again, the cultural-commercial balance proving to be a problem.

It is interesting that film, an important medium in the sustenance/creation of Irish identity is expected to grow unaided and promote that identity which the government expects to be self-sustaining. At the begining of this State, Ireland had definite reference points for identity - flag, language, religion...., these have been held on to as official reference points and nothing contemporary is there as a reference point. Irish people seem to be unable to relax with what it is to be Irish, partly because of the obsolesence of such reference points and partly because what it is to be Irish is not reinforced by visual images on the screen except those which other country's provide.

In theory Haughey does refer to these problems. In a speech promoting our entry into the EC he points out the negativity of living in the past and the benefit of recognising our culture among other cultures. However he does

not outline any practical measures to do this.

> Indeed I feel sure that membership of the community
> will make us all the more conscious of our national
> identity and appreciative of our distinct cultural
> values and will stimulate us to greater efforts to
> preserve them.
>
> (ibid).

What is striking here is that he is calling on an outside
force to define what it is to be Irish. It is the same with
film: it is being left to foreign film makers to represent
images of identity while Irish film-makers are being cut off
at every turn when they endeavour to do the same.

In line with this is the Department of the Taoiseach's
view of the future of film making in Ireland which it sees as
lying with the MEDIA programme - now coming out of its pilot
stage sucessfully and entering into an extended period of
operation. The government is now interested in the benefits it
can reap form the programme:

> if there are ECU200 going a'begging out there
> obviously its going to be spread over the twelve -
> presumably we'll get out just return
>
> (Buckley, 1990).

He does not refer to how the government can best facilitate
Irish film makers to make best use of MEDIA aid except to say

> I'm sure that when the hard cash is on the table
> that the IDA and CTT will look into it and see how
> they can best slot into it
>
> (ibid).

Donald Taylor Black has expressed the view that

> as usual in Ireland, as in many things including
> our social policy, gay rights for instance, Europe
> helps to embarass out government into doing things
> that they haven't got the courage to do on their
> own and I think its possible that in the future the
> Government might be blackmailed into giving us some

sort of production support as part of an EC
initiative

(Donald Taylor Black, 1990).

Buckley was, however, adamant that there would be no "state
handouts" to film in the immediate future. When asked if
there would even be some sort of coordinating body set up to
organise the piecemeal aid that is given, he replied

> I can see that being tightened up certainly with
> the MEDIA money coming on stream. ... But its a
> small country. We don't need a massive bureaucracy
> to do that. Literally appointing somebody as liason
> person who will make sure everyone else is
> circularised and kept informed and that there's a
> good information flow back and forth. That can
> happen, all they need is goodwill.
>
> (Buckley, 1990).

Unfortunately more than goodwill is needed to help Irish film
makers exercise their craft. Perhaps if the "liason person"
was given adequate resources to act as such it might be
successful. As Bob Quinn expresses it

> What I would like to see would be some lunatic like
> Lelia Doolan given IR 500 000 p.a. to create a film
> industry in this country. It needs somebody with a
> radical perspective like Lelia Doolan and with the
> organisational skill which she has and the hustling
> skill and the ability to see things.
>
> But they wouldn't of course dream of giving it to
> somebody like that. The safe person is not going to
> do anything. You have administrative minds trying
> to create a dynamic in an area where imagination is
> at a premium and risk taking is at a premium.
>
> (Quinn, 1990).

What follows from this is that the more administrative the
procedure becomes, the more burearcratised and the less
imaginative the products of the area. As was stated in
chapter one the nation is an imagined community. It is the
media which are important in its imagining. By curbing the
imagination of this sector the State is increasing its own

power over the imagining process and so staid symbols of national identity such as shamrock and ceili band remain, while nothing new can be created. Just as the loss of the Irish language impaired Ireland's world view, now control over another important medium of communication is being lost. The following chapter examines further state policy in relation to the audiovisual sector in light of what has emerged from this and previous chapters.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

The restructuring of the audio-visual sector in Ireland
in recent years can be seen at one level as the outcome of a
specific set of circumstances having to do with Ireland's,
specific history, its culture, politics and related social
spheres. However, it is also crucial to note that what is
happening in Ireland is indicative of change in a much
broader context, ie. the emergence of new social developments
on a global scale, particularly a shift away from the public
sphere towards the private in many areas of society.
Broadcasting policy exemplifies this shift from the public to
the private sphere and the consequent redefinition of the
public - the audience - in terms of consumers rather than
citizens.

What this thesis submits then is that global processes
are at work in the Irish audio-visual sector which are
mediated by specific cultural, economic and political
imperatives. Both these influences must be taken into account
if we are to give an adequate explanation of current
developments in the audio-visual sector. Let us look then at
the impact of these imperatives in the restructuring of the
Irish audio-visual sector.

In the early days of the Irish state, the concept of
the "national/ public" interest which was used to override

political and economic concerns tended to be defined in cultural terms. However, the newly established state had also to deal with the practical, political realities of running a country. The ideology of cultural nationalism created in pre-independence Ireland may have had an idealist orientation but as it was important in the legitimation of the State it therefore had to be maintained. In this sense, the two paths of nation and state both converged and diverged, creating anomalies in many areas of Irish life which are still with us today.

While the Irish nation was distinctive in its cultural difference from Britain, the new state bore the impress of the British heritage in its bureaucratic, judicial and educational systems, and in economic policies. The contradiction between the superior aspirations of Irish separatist nationalism, based on a Catholic agrarian communalism on the one hand, and the realities of the Irish democratic state with its English style liberal and individualistic ideology on the other, gave rise to many problems which intensified as time went by and the contradictions became more complex. These contradictions are central to understanding the relationship between the state and the audio-visual sector in Ireland.

5.1.1 The role of broadcasting in state formation.

Radio broadcasting in the early days of the Irish state, was expected to answer the particular public service

or cultural ideals of the Irish nation, while at the same time meeting the commercial market requirements of the state. This continued to be the case with the introduction of television. The legislative requirements that RTE both preserve and develop the national culture but also that it be economically self-sufficient represented the quandry which mid-century Ireland found itself - as a "nation" wanting to maintain (or even create) its "distinctive" identity, and as part of the newly industrialising world wanting to be commercially successful in it.

The 60s and 70s saw increased government intervention in broadcasting. In 1975, the Minister for Post and Telegraphs Conor Cruise O'Brien called on broadcasting to take account of the pluralist character of the Irish "nation", arguing that multi-channel television is a desirable development if it recognises that pluralism and acknowledges its importance to the national culture. The Minister suggested that the image held in Northern Ireland of the Republic as a closed and censored society was a major stumbling block in North South relations. He suggested that this image was no longer true. (Dail Debates vol. 285 col. 402). However at this time the Minister had just refined Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act, which specifically prohibited interviews with spokespersons of proscribed organisations. This action would appear to reinforce the image of the Republic as a "closed and censored society".

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A second station, RTE 2, was launched in 1978 despite the fact that RTE 1 was experiencing financial difficulties. Instead of boosting one public service station, revenues were spread over the two - supposedly in the name of a more plural service, but at the risk of two lesser quality services. Pluralism, it seems, was equated with consumer choice.

The Irish economy was increasingly tied to international developments. As O' Hearn points out, at an ideological level, the acceptance of "free trade" as the ideology of mid-century Irish development began with the identification of "protectionism" with "economic sovereignty". Thus public service broadcasting was caught between, on the one hand, the modernising goals of the state and, on the other, the cultural goals of the nation, a set of contradictions which resurfaced in the recent changes in the broadcasting climate in Ireland.

5.1.2 The independent sector:
The shift towards the private sphere.

In May 1985 Stokes, Kennedy & Crowley, a consultant body, was commissioned by the Minister for Communications to carry out a review of the structure and operation of RTE. The main thrust of the review was to move RTE out from the public sphere and into the private market. Consequent on the SKC report it was decided that RTE would put more money into the development of the independent sector. Both this decision and the laying off of staff from RTE (also resultant of SKC proposals) generated a growth in this sector.

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RTE has slowly been increasing its commissions from the independent sector though its commissioning policy remains unclear and ambiguous. Following an important Terms of Trade agreement between RTE and Film Makers Ireland in 1989, the whole commissioning structure was set to change. However, any planned developments in relation to the independent sector were very much disrupted by Mr. Burke's Broadcasting Bill of 1990 which represents a further shift of RTE from the public sphere into the private. The 1990 broadcasting legislation was preceded by the 1987 Broadcasting Act which announced the provision of an alternative distribution service - MMDS (Microwave, Multipoint, Distribution Service) - which would be used to distribute a new service - TV3 - as well as bringing multi-channel viewing to rural areas not serviced by cable. The 1990 Bill does not allow RTE to derive from advertising, sponsorship or other forms of commercial promotion revenue in excess of the licence fee in any one year.

What this Act in fact amounts to is increased control of RTE by the government. By determining the licence fee, they are now also determining the advertising income of RTE. Deregulation in this case may mean less state funding but it means more state control. By significantly curbing RTE's income the Minister set a minimum threshold on material commissined by RTE from the independents, to the effect that "the amount should as far as practicable not be less than carried by RTE in 1989". Enforced commissioning from the

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private sector on less income, means that RTE will have less finance available for in-house public service functions and is likely to commission cheaper quiz-show type material from the independent sector. Deregulation of Irish broadcasting far from offering greater access and more choice of programming, is limiting programme choice and decreasing programme quality.

5.1.3 Film production and policy

That the government's introduction of a third television service and its backing of commissioning from the independent sector is in the interests of independent film makers hardly seems credible when one looks at their relationship with and attitude to this sector. Government involvement in film making in Ireland currently rests with the Department of the Taoiseach encouraging a number of semi-state bodies to facilitate certain aspects of film-making. Most of the aid given is distributed in an ad hoc sort of way. On the one hand the Arts Council envisages itself becoming more specific in its focus on film as "art". At the commercial level, semi-state bodies such as the IDA, Nadcorp, CTT are "encouraged" to invest in film but have no definite brief with regard to film.

Since the abolition of the Film Board in 1987 no single central state agency exists to cater for the needs of the Irish film industry. The Irish Film Board was supposedly replaced by a tax incentive which the Board had actually

helped devise as a complement to the work of the Board. From
the point of view of low budget film-makers this type of
scheme tends to concentrate resources in fewer and larger
scale productions. Apart from the work of the Arts Council,
the government's interest is in film more as commerce than
culture. The Department of the Taoiseach's market based
attitude to film making highlights the problem the Government
has in accepting film as a medium of cultural expression.
From the film makers point of view, film making is about
cultural expression and not purely personal self-expression.
However, when culture is mentioned to Government personnel in
relation to film it seems to be interpreted as individual
self-expression, which is of little benefit to the nation.
Hence the need for a more comprehensive policy on culture in
Ireland particularly in relation to film.

5.1.4 <u>Modes of explanation.</u>

On the day-to-day political level, however, some
commentators take the view that recent legislation is part of
Fianna Fail's ill-feeling towards RTE and RTE's treatment of
the party. It has been suggested that the creation of a
source of broadcast news independent of RTE is what lies at
the back of recent legislation and the granting of permission
for the broadcast of a third national television station. It
is interesting that while on the one hand, the current
broadcasting policies are perceived to be a local, party
phenomenon, bound up in a particular political party and
their percieved resentment of the national broadcasting

station on the other hand these changes are reflective of vast changes at an international and global level.

Central to an analysis of such social change is the current debate on post-Fordism. While Fordist and pre-Fordist methods of accumulation are prevalent in many places post-Fordism, as Hall observes "is at the leading edge of change, increasingly setting the tone of society and providing the dominant rhythm of cultural change. (Hall, 1989:12). The importance of the "local" within post-Fordist society has been emphasised and the existence of artisnal modes of labour organisation ranging from individual craft production (writing a book) to the small group (independnt film makers) have been identified as common and important within the cultural sphere. Many commentators have identified the importance of such local development but ignore the context within which it occurs. It is clear that while disintegration and localization are important, integration and globalization are the dominant and embracing forces at work in today's society.

Hall has outlined several characteristics which constitute the main body of changes occuring in today's society and they provide the framework through which to examine current developments in the audio-visual sector in light of globalising and localising trends. They indicate that in the audiovisual industries in general, the development of New Information Technologies narrow control over distribution of the audio-visual product, so even if

there are important developments at local level in production etc., ultimate control is maintained at the level of the global. Also a pattern is emerging whereby functions hitherto provided "in-house" on a corporate basis" are now being contracted out to independent operators. Eg. the contracting out by RTE of work to the independent film-making sector.

Hall also suggests that a leading role for consumption is emerging and is reflected in such things as greater emphasis on choice and product differentiation. This is apparent in arguments in favour of a third Irish television station and in favour of state aid to independent radio broadcasting. It is also evident in the Dept of An Taoiseach's attitude to Irish film-making ie. that the demands of the market must be met.

Perhaps one of the most significant of these changes is the emergence of new patterns of social divisions - especially those between "public" and "private" sectors. Boundaries between public service broadcasting and independent broadcasting services are increasingly blurred as the Public service station is expected to be more competitive in the market and independent stations are expected to take on public service functions. eg. the imposition of news and current affairs quotas on independent radio stations.

Also under this category arises the question of whether film-making falls into the private or the public sphere. Does it have a public service function which deserves state

sponsorship and support? Its cultural importance puts it
within the public sphere but its commercial elements locate
it within the private sphere. According to this post-Fordist
model of change developments are occurring along local and
global lines to the detriment of the national. The
development of the public sphere within national boundaries
brings into question the consequences of the attack on the
national for this sphere. Is there any sense in which this
public sphere may be redefined?

Ireland does not slot perfectly into the post-Fordist
model of development as the power of the national - the
nation-state - is still substantial. In fact the nation-state
was necessary in the first place for the integration of
Ireland into the world economy. State intervention has deep
roots in Irish history and is still significant. Similarly
the importance of the national is still significant in the
Irish audio-visual sector. On national television, home-
produced programming still tops the tam ratings. Most film-
makers I interviewed emphasized the importance of television
and film in the expression of Irish culture and as a tool in
making sense of the Irish reality. This may be done by
creating an environment supportive to film-making and also
through making the means of expression available to the
community.

Certain European initiatives do exist which support and
promote the development of minority cultures within Europe.

However, as outlined earlier, disintegration and the development of the local must be considered in the context of increased globalisation and integration. As regards the audio-visual sector, while supporting production in more peripheral countries is important, distribution is where control lies and this area is becoming increasingly integrated and centralised. Also "European protectionism" which the EC Directive on Broadcasting 1990 was accused of promoting, may benefit the larger core countries of Europe, but it means the smaller peripheral countries are merely shifting dependency from one core to another. It is important then that a small country such as Ireland develop as strong a production base as possible if it is to benefit from European initiatives.

While many film-makers are more interested in portraying images of Ireland primarily to Irish people, they also recognise the value of promoting images of Ireland abroad. However, as film makers and government alike have pointed out this is an important argument but one which is difficult to express in financial terms. This is in fact where the problem lies in attempting to get any kind of state support for film in Ireland. Due to the cost of film and the size of Irish audiences it is not commercially viable to produce Irish film solely for Irish audiences. Successive Irish governments, especially Fianna Fail administrations, appear to be convinced that commercial imperatives in popular culture serve the national interest. Leaving film making to

market forces as an element of cultural policy is unrealistic, however. Firstly, most film makers in Ireland are on low incomes and those promoting low budget films are not likely to benefit too much from tax breaks. Secondly, the high risk nature of film and the lack of a history of investment in film making in Ireland, ensures that convincing private investors to risk their money is going to take more than having faith in one's product. Neither does this line of thinking suggest any interest on the part of government in the cultural value of film.

As with televison the problem in film making is getting the balance between the cultural and the commercial aspects of film. This is all the more difficult as film making is such a high risk business and requires such high investment. Another problem arises then in definition on film as art, film as culture and film as commerce. This is problematic both within the film sector and in that sector's relationship with the state. Those interviewed for this study in the main saw film as art - not as something removed from reality, but rather as something which communicates to the community. This is where the public service role of film lies. The strength of opinion among those film makers interviewed, on the importance of film and television in relation to Irish identity indicates some resistance to the Irish audio-visual sector's assimilation into post-Fordist society. Ironically the strength of the nation-state in Ireland further restricts the exploitation of local developments in Ireland such as

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independent film production, by the global.

As Garnham argues it is the value system and set of social relations within which the media must function and which they serve to reinforce, that is central to understanding the operation of the media in society. This was recognised by many of the film makers who, while asserting that one of the main problems facing film makers in Ireland was funding, generally acknowledged that the origin of funding was not important as long as it did not interfere with artistic control. What was deemed important was the political and economic system within which they had to operate. In fact, one could argue that the state acknowledged, in the early days of the Irish audiovisual sector, that control mattered much more than ownership. This is particularly apparent in the state's maintenance of control over the licence fee and in their censorship policies.

The value systems within the political and economic realm in Ireland are increasingly being based on commercial precepts. This is particularly the case in the experience of the public service. The case of the Irish audiovisual sector highlights the importance of redefining notions of public service in Ireland and of basing that definition more on cultural terms. A space exists wherein independent film makers and public service broadcasters may operate truly in the public interest - a public interest defined in cultural terms. This may only be attainded if they recieve state

support but not direct state control and using this resource, benefit from international developments but not be exploited by them.

5.2 THE CASE FOR STATE SUPPORT FOR THE AUDIO-VISUAL SECTOR

Having illustrated that state support for the audio-visual sector is necessary if that sector is to meet not only commercial but also cultural requirements, one has to ask if the cultural side of film and television is important. Paradoxically, the strongest argument in favour of the importance of film and television to national culture comes from the state.

The most recent government cultural policy document is the 1987 White Paper on Cultural Policy "Access and Opportunity" introduced by the then Taoiseach Garrett Fitzgerald (FG). This paper states that

> As an entity, culture can be considered as coming within the ambit of national policy. It relates to human resources of the nation and therefore is properly part of the responsibility of the Government set down in the Constitution to "promote the welfare of the people".
>
> (1987:13).

This document recognises the fact that economic development is enhanced by investment in cultural activities and it states that this can't be directly measured in monetary terms. Among the objectives which express the role of the Government in relation to culture is

> to recognise the position of Irish creative artists, in every medium, [my emphasis] as primary exponents of the culture of contemporary Ireland,

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> to acknowledge the economic vulnerability of
> artists and to create the necessary environment
> within which artists can work and earn a living
> (thereby fulfilling the social function of renewing
> values and increasing social awareness)...
>   (ibid:15).

As regards broadcasting, the National Broadcasting Service is recognised as "one of the two great networks of artistic and cultural content in the country" (the other being the public library system) ... "The governemnt is committed to protecting these two fundamental networks of cultural communications" (ibid:16). It is also stated that "communications policy and the role of broadcasting are of fundamental importance to any consideration of cultual policy" (ibid:49).

As regards film, the government "recognises the predominance of film today as a national cultural medium" and is committed to the development of an Irish film industry, "both as a form of cultural expression and as a form of promoting and expressing the cultural identity of Ireland abroad" (ibid:24). The importance of continuity and consistency in film production is affirmed. It is argued that it can only be achieved "if the emerging partnership between public and private sectors in relation to Irish film production" be carfully managed. In developing policy towards the Irish film industry, the government will seek, among other things "to establish an environment which will allow for a proper balance between the cultural and commercial roles in film production". Among the objectives defining the

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role and responsibilities of the Government in the area of government funding for culture and the arts are :

- creating a climate favourable to cultural development;
- developing the infrastructure to support the cultural life of the nation;
- enabling individuals to develop their creative potential;
- recognising the position of Irish artists and creating the necessary environment within which artists can work and earn a living (ibid:66).

The fulfillment of these objectives is however "dependent on the availability to the government of the necessary resources to finance it".

A recent study on The State of the Arts in Indepenent Ireland concludes that while it is obvious that the arts are now accepted generally by politicians and their electorate as having an essential place in government policy, there is no solid political commitment to the implementation of a comprehensive arts policy (Kennedy, 1990:225). Certainly recent statements by the Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, suggest a favourable attitude on the part of the state to the Arts in Ireland. In a speech at a banquet to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Aosdana (Nov.14, 1990), Mr Haughey affirmed his commitment to the importance of state funding for the arts, without which, he stressed, "commercial considerations alone seemed likely to govern the creation of works of art" (Department of the Taoiseach, 1990:7). Film, however, seems to elicit a different viewpoint.

In an interview with the Irish Times (Dec.31 1990), Mr. Haughey restated his view that tax concessions are the best

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way to assist the film industry. In this interview the
problem of defining film as art or industry emerges. On the
one hand, when asked if he would favour some direct state
funding to film production along the lines of France or
Britain, Mr. Haughey replies that in these countries "those
measures are taken for very base economic and commercial
considerations". He argues that "there's no artistic feeling
in a lot of that" and adds "I think they see this as an
industry to be developed like any other industry" (Department
of the Taoiseach, 1990:21-22). However, soon after this he
states

> It is a market place situation and films must
> succeed commercially. I don't think any of us want
> a whole lot of wonderfully artistic productions
> that no one wants to go and see. That's one of the
> dangers of state funding. But there might be a role
> for the Arts Council or something like that.
> (ibid:22)

The anomaly between Mr. Haughey's stated views on art and on
film; and the actual relationship between film and the State,
indicates that film is not considered as an Art form by the
state, at least not on a par with, say, literature or
theatre. However, as has been illustrated above, commitment
does exist - at least in theory - to the cultural importance
of film.

Thus outlined, the Government's commitment to arts and
culture in Ireland seems laudible and while film and
broadcasting do not seem to receive too much recognition as
art, their importance to Irish culture is definitely

confirmed. However, preceding chapters have illustrated how the practical reality of film and broadcasting in Ireland has been somewhat different to the promises of government policy documents and statements.

Undoubtedly much of the reason for this stems from the difficulties in reconciling commercial with cultural imperatives of both film and broadcasting. It has been outlined above how this affected the development of these mediums in Ireland and how it affected their relationship with the state. However, what also has become apparent in this study is how these problems are rooted in a deeper division between the nation and the state, and has been affected by the international social and economic developments. This explains why the daily realities of the audio-visual sector in Ireland does not match up with the ideal commitment of the State to arts and culture in Ireland.

Lip-service to cultural policy in the name of the nation has been unsuccessful in because it isn't consistent with the goals of the state. As has been illustrated in this study, the increasing division between nation and state has always resulted in problems for the audio-visual sector. It may be argued that broadcasting and film, because of their cultural characteristics are located in the public sphere. As the state has become increasingly separated from the nation, the terms by which this public sphere is defined have changed, moving further from a definition in terms of culture, to a more commercial/consumerist definition.

However, as has also been argued, the nation has always been important in the legitimation of the state and the state legitimises many of its actions by their being carried out "in the public interest". Consequently, the paths of nation and state while separate are constantly interlinked. This goes some way to explaining why lip-service is paid to the cultural importance of film and television, while in practice, commercial considerations play a more important role.

5.3 CURRENT CHANGES - JUNE 1991

On June 6 1991, a report on the economic impact of the 1990 Broadcasting Act was published. The report was carried out by DKM economic consultants who were commissioned by the Irish advertising industry. The Advertisers Association of Ireland claimed that RTE increased advertising costs by 55% in May in a bid to ensure that it takes in sufficient advertising revenue, and as a reaction to the demand for the smaller number of advertising slots available. The Association stated that it believed RTE would exceed the IR 48m "cap" put on it in the Broadcasting Act. The Irish Times - June 7 1991 - reported that some advertising executives maintained that RTE was gambling that the Act would be amended and the third channel never materialise, and that RTE would be allowed keep the excess revenue. The study did suggest that the plan to have a third television channel should be abandoned and that Network 2 and 2FM should be

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privatised. It suggested that if TV3 is to be a quality
station it would need some share of the licence fee in order
to survive. Again the blurred boundary between public and
private sphere is re-emerging in these discussions.

Following publication of the DKM Report, there was
widespread support in the Dail for changes in the
Government's Broadcasting Acts of 1988 and 1990. It was
reported (Irish Times June 10), that although no formal
proposals are before the Government, it is understood that
the Minister for Communications and Tourism, Mr. Brennan,
favours a change which would renew competition for
advertising. Later that week (June 13), the promoters of TV3
- Mr. Michael Morris, Mr. Paul Mc Guinness, Mr. Ozzie
Kilkenny and Mr. John Kelleher - met with the Independent
Radio and Television Commission. Previous to this the failure
of the promoters to meet the requirements of the IRTC - most
importantly that TV3 meet a nationwide audience - suggested
that the station would not be financially feasible. However,
the IRTC have apparently agreed to TV3's plan to launch its
service on a phased basis starting with homes in the Dublin
area, followed one year later by an additional 20% of homes
in Leinster and one year later to homes in Munster. While a
contract has not been signed TV3 is confident that it will
launch its service in November. The Minister has since (June
18) stated that he has no immediate plans to amend the
broadcasting legislation or to make any further changes in
the funding arrangements for RTE. It has been suggested that

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in the effort to "level the playing pitch" the Minister is turning his attentions to ways of dividing up the licence fee (Sunday Business Post, June 16 1991).

So the trend outlined earlier is continuing. The boundary between public and private sphere is becoming increasingly blurred. Financial considerations are becoming even more determining in changes in the audio-visual sector. While much lip-service is paid to cultural considerations it is commercial considerations which generate most immediate action. Two other quite recent incidents further explicate this shift in broadcasting policy from the public to the private sphere:

The first is the failure of RTE broadcasting unions to have their complaint against Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act accepted as admissable for consideration under the European Convention of Human Rights. The second was the sacking by Century Radio (the only private radio station with a national franchise) of three senior journalists and the subsequent claim by senior management that the station is a "music station", despite proposals in Century's license application to the IRTC that the station "would not be aimed at any one group in Irish society and would definitely not consist of non-stop pop" (Waters, 1991).

During the hearing on Section 31 in Strasbourg, the applicants claimed that the broadcasting ban violated the right to receive and impart information and the right to hold

free and fair elections. Broadcasters have said that Section
31 has serious side effects with journalists forced to act as
"self-censoring policemen(sic) on behalf of the government"
(Rose, 1991). However, the aim of Section 31 of protecting
the interests of national security and preventing disorder
and crime was deemed to be a legitimate one by the European
Commission on Human Rights. This claim that Section 31 forces
journalists and broadcasters to act as a medium of state
control is part of the role which the state has attempted to
establish for broadcasting in Irish life. Likewise the
disputes at Century Radio bring into question the state's
role in relation to broadcasting in both the private and the
public sphere. The imposition of 20% news and current affairs
quotas on private radio stations blurs the boundaries between
public service and private market. These two incidents are
not isolated incidents but are bound up with a specific set
of political, cultural and economic imperatives in Irish
society which mediate the influence of social developments on
a global scale.

5.4 THE FUTURE

The development of the audio-visual sector in Ireland
is bound up with national specifics and global developments.
Trends have thus emerged which have influenced cultural
policy-making in general and the actual experience of this
sector in particular. Recent developments must not be treated
as isolated incidents but must be recognised as part of
broader social trends. These trends may be identified as

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follows:

1. A division between nation and state, rooted in Ireland's history and becoming more complex as time goes by. The increasing profile of the state in Ireland has led to the breaking up of monolithic definitions of national culture, but with this is breaking up the public sphere.

2. The force of external factors on Ireland's social, political and economic development and the assimilation of Ireland into international capitalism which has been made possible by the strength of state intervention. This again diminishes the significance of the national and with it the significance of the public sphere.

3. The redefinition of the public sphere in consumerist terms, ie. the state is acting as a custodian of market forces in the sense of judging projects primarily by commercial viability. Paradoxically, the state's role in integrating the Irish economy into the wider global system is about letting market forces run more efficiently in Ireland. Yet this still requires state intervention. The state admits this need for intervention in the form of CTT, the IDA etc., but refuses to extend it to the mass media. So while the media are treated more as industry than art or culture, they do not receive the benefits of either.

The audio-visual sector needs to be treated as a cultural industry as distinct from other commercial industries. As has been pointed out, not only are ownership and control significant to the future of the Irish

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audiovisual sector, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the value systems and set of social relations within which the media operate. The role of the state then, in relation to the audiovisual media is central to determining its future in Ireland. If it is to survive as a cultural industry it needs state support and it needs to remain part of a public sphere which is defined in cultural terms. At one level the outlook is quite pessimistic. An analysis of state involvement in film and television over the past decades indicates that increasingly decisions are being based on commercial considerations. At a global level the public sphere is increasingly being defined in consumerist terms. This combined with tenuous relations between the government and the audio-visual sector in the past has meant a further shift of the audio-visual sector out of the public sphere and into the private.

The size of the Irish audience is not sufficient to sustain a national film industry. Therefore, it is essential that it succeeds in the international arena. Without state support and a secure national production base, the risk of compromise and answering the demands of the market rather than the public, increases. The introduction of a third national television service and the "capping" of RTE's advertising revenue makes it more difficult for the station to answer its public service goals and has made it more dependent on the government.

There have been some positive developments. Within the audio-visual production sector exists a strong sense of value on the importance of the medium in the creation and sustenance of Irish culture and identity. Ironically, the strength of state intervention in Ireland combined with this cultural resistance slows down the assimilation of Ireland into post-Fordist society. The negotiation of the Terms of Trade agreement between RTE and FMI was significant in that it represented a degree of agreement between RTE and the independent film makers which is essential if this sector is to survive as a cultural entity and not merely a commercial enterprise. Unfortunately, its significance was undermined by the 1990 Broadcasting Act which again served to increase the strain in relations between these two entities. The new Irish Film Centre is also a positive sign. However, the old problem of reconciling the cultural with the commercial reappears. Ideally it is to be a resource centre, however, the commercial viability still lies in the balance. Its success in achieving this elusive balance will be significant for the future of Irish film making.

Pressure is being put on the Government to review and amend the 1990 and the 1988 Broadcasting Acts as they have been seen to be unsatisfactory. Mr Mc Cartan (WP) has declared that non-national outlets are set to gain from the capping of RTE's advertising revenue and Labour spokesperson on communications, Mr. Toddy O'Sullivan claimed that the Broadcasting Act had prematurely aged and was flawed (Irish

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<u>Times</u> 19-06-91). While these proposals for review may be more commercially than culturally inspired, they must be viewed in a positive light as they highlight the mistake made by the government in implementing this act. However, this mistake will not be rectified until the cultural importance of the audiovisual medium is fully recognised, until its value to the country is accepted, not only in policy statements but in practice. From the outset, the problem of reconciling the cultural with the commercial elements of broadcasting and film has been a barrier to their development in Ireland. The deeper interrelated problems of nation and state, of public and private sphere and of internal and external causes of economic and cultural change have complicated the already complex path of this sector.

The public sphere must be redefined. It has usually been aligned with the nation and looked after by the state. However, as nation and state have followed distinct though related paths, the state has increasingly been defining this public sphere in consumerist terms. The time has come to redefine the public sphere in cultural terms. This is especially the case for the audiovisual sector. Film and television are among the most popular cultural forms today. Therefore they deserve state support to develop further along cultural lines and not merely become mediums for advertising. With distribution facilities improving rapidly Ireland is becoming more exposed to foreign cultures. Unless Ireland has a way of expressing, and is exposed to, its own

culture then it is limited in the use it can make of, and
what it can contribute to other cultures.

It is of vital importance that state support does not
mean state control. The Taoiseach, Mr. Haughey, has asserted
the need for a comprehensive arts policy with adequate
funding and the importance of the independence of the artist
from state control. Surely the main objective of art is to
communicate and where better to do this today than through
the audiovisual medium. However, as regards broadcasting,
deregulation has in fact meant more state control and this
has had a negative spin-off effect for the independent film
producers whose main source of commissions is RTE.

The aim of this research has been to explore an aspect
of Irish cultural policy. This it has done this through an
examination of the relationship between the state and the
Irish audiovisual sector from the outset to the present day.
It has been ascertained that global processes are at work in
this sector which are mediated by specific cultural, economic
and political imperatives. Both these dynamics influence
cultural policy in Ireland.

Proponents of a "Europe without Frontiers" argue that
"the question of what it means to be Irish ... cannot be
limited to the frontiers of our island". The affirmation of a
dynamic cultural identity invariably involves an exploratory
dialogue with other countries" (Kearney, 1988:21). Kearney
has argued that while the movement towards integration "is

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propelled by forces of economic cohesion and communications" the parallel movement towards decentralization "is being pioneered by advocates of the "social" policies of redistribution and regionalization". However, as has been argued throughout this thesis, decentralization and localization must be examined in the context within which it occurs. Economic developments cannot be separated. It has been illustrated how important the cultural sphere has been to the development of capitalism. With the cultural sphere increasingly being defined in commercial terms, the argument that redistribution and decentralization - which accompany economic integration - is positive, becomes inadequate. This is even more the case for Ireland. As a peripheral country it is not in as strong a position as core countries to benefit from economic or cultural integration.

If Ireland is to retain its cultural identity, to benefit from and contribute to other cultures and consequently to benefit from European integration, its cultural policy needs to be strengthened. As I have argued, the audiovisual sector is a key area to the sustenance and expression of Irish culture as it is one of the most important forms of popular culture today. If Ireland is denied the opportunity of expressing its culture through this medium - both directly and indirectly - , the effects will be felt in all areas of life - cultural, political and economic.

The anomaly arises that on the one hand, the state has been recognised as curbing cultural expression in Ireland

through the audiovisual media, and on the other hand, the state is being identified as central to securing the future of film and broadcasting in Ireland as media of cultural expression. The redefinition of the public sphere in cultural terms is central to reconciling this contradiction. Increasingly the public sphere is being based on commercial imperatives. This is contributing to further integration of Ireland into the world economy and subsequently into a global consumer culture. The key to preventing this from happening - so that Ireland can benefit from and contribute to global development and not be totally dictated to by them - is a redefinition of the public sphere in cultural terms.

If this is to happen, then much more debate and research on cultural policy in Ireland needs to take place. As pointed out earlier, the last cultural policy document in Ireland appeared in 1987, having been introduced by the co-alition government. Subsequently there has been little debate on cultural policy in Ireland and particularly a significant lack of interogation into film and cultural policy. Broadcasting and film are only one aspect of the public sphere which is being defined less and less in cultural terms. As stated above, if Ireland is to retain a public sphere and if government policy is to be carried out in the public interest, this shpere will have to be recast in cultural terms. It is essential then, that any such changes be based on a sound cultural policy.

INDEPENDENT PRODUCTIONS ON RTE   1987 - 1989

INDEPENDENT PRODUCTIONS

1987

		Hrs.
Nature Series	Gerrit van Gelderen	5
Religious Programmes	Radharc	7
Animation Series	Quin Films	4.5
Documentaries	David Shaw-Smith	1.5
Animation Series	Aidan Hickey	.5
Nature Programmes	Mills & Philips	1
Documentary	Scannain Chead Shnamha	1.5
Reefer	Ber Ber Productions	1.75
Lakeland Summer	Wildgoose Films	1
Nature Series	Eamon de Buitlear	2
Synod Series	Radharc	2
Oliver St.John Gogarty	Charlemont	1
Tug O War	Bridge TV	.75
Workers Lives	ISKRA	3
Fax Future	Greenapple Prods.	26
Cork Choral Festival	CoCo TV	1
Cusack on Cusack	Chorus Productions	2
Pet World	Anner Productions	3
The Entertainers	Louis Marcus	3
The Motor Show	Pro Media	3

1987

Feile Na Gael	Joe McCarthy	.5
Brigid's Peace Cross	Bridge TV	.75
Lapsed Catholics	Windmill lane	1
Budawanna	Cinegael	1
Sportsworld	Videoactive	10
Deco	Total Video	.5
Framed	Picture House	.5
Rapid Roulette	Greenapple Productions	13
Generationa	Porteo Marketing	4
MTUSA	Greenapple Productions	30
Down Here With A View To Above	CoCo TV	4
Documentary	Media Team	.5
Turning Points	Bridge TV	6.5
Flax With Flair	Bridge TV	.75
All Electric Movie Show	Windmill Lane	5
Mood is Food	Greenapple Productions	3
Conor Cruise O'Brien	ISKRA	1.25
Ustinov's People	Sheamus Smith	1
Granuaile	Windmill Lane	3.25
Quiz No.1	Frontier Films	10.5

		167.5

INDEPENDENT PRODUCTIONS

1988

		Hrs.
Nature Series	Gerrit van Gelderen	5
Religious Programmes	Radharc	7.5
Animation Series	Quin Films	4.5
Animation Series	Aidan Hickey	1
Nature Series	Mills & Philips	1
Rapid Roulette	Greenapple	13
Framed	Picture House	3
Irish in London	Cinegael	3
Nature Series	Eamon de Buitlear	2.5
Quiz No.1	Frontier Films	13
Worker's Lives	ISKRA	2
Down Here With a View to Above	CoCo TV	4
Pet World	Anner	2
The Entertainers	Louis Marcus	1.5
The Motor Show	Pro Media	3
Sportsworld	Videoactive	23
Deco	Total Video	1
Faces of Ulster	Flying Fox	3
No doubt about it	Bridge TV	3
Quentin's Magic Party	Bridge TV	3.25
Freeze Frame	Yellow Asylum	5
Sirius	CoCo TV	.75
Niall Toibin	Gandon	1
Song Contest Docum.	Picture House	1

Puirini	CoCo TV	3.5
An Baile s'Againne	Ashton	.5
Dubliner's Dublin	Strongbow	1
Lorraine Liddell	Emdee	.5
Sean MacBride Remembers	Roebuck	2
On Your Own	Windmill Lane	3
Island Hermitages	Prof. Herity	.75
Irish Schools Athletics Championships	Videoactive	.5
Murphy's Golden Movies	Emdee	7
Diflin	David Shaw-Smith	1
Thomas Moore	Anner	1
Documentary - And Roses Grow There Now	Gabbro Prod.	1
Touch TV	Greenapple	2
My Left Foot	Ferndale	1.5
W.B. Yeats	Sean O Mordha	1.5
Graveyard	Greenapple	1.75
Echoes	Working Title Ltd.	4
Act of Betrayal	Griffin Productions	4

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		Hrs.
Nature Series	Gerrit van Gelderen	3
Religious Series / C.A.	Radharc	7.5
Animation Series	Quin Films	4.5
Animation Series	Aidan Hickey	1
Rapid Roulette	Greenapple	13
Nature Series	Eamon de Buitlear	6.75
Down Here With a View to Above	CoCo TV	6
Pet World	Anner	5
The Motor Show	Pro Media	7
Sportsworld	Videoactive	17
Deco	Total Video	1
Guests of Another Nation	Byron Productions	.5
Freeze Frame	Bridgetown Productions	5
Corner of the Eye	Wildgoose	1
It's My life	Bridge TV	2
Perspectives	CoCo TV	6.5
For Better or Worse	Picture House	3
Old Heads	Jane Gogan	3
Art of Flowers	Gerry Daly	3
Inisfree	Strongbow	1
Puirini	CoCo TV	3.5
The Emergency	Scannain Chead Shnamha	1.5
Irish Artist in NY	Double Band Films	1

Helping Hands	Louis Marcus	3
Mo Sceal Fein	Gaelcom	3
Undercurrents	Title Films	.5
Women on Law	Big Window	2
Hard Shoulder	Jane Gogan	1.5
Tammy Wynette	Safinia	1
A Thousand to Now	Ken Warren	.75
Dust on the Bible	DBA	.5
Leading The Parade	Kitrope	.75
Community Games	Videoactive	.5
December Bride	Littlebird	1.5
9 Drops to Jerusalem	Rehab	1
7 Bands on the Up	Greenapple	7
Point to Point	Charlemont Films	1
Sign of the Times	Greenapple	6
Use Your Money	Gandon	3
Splice of Life	Looking Glass	.5
The Last Parade	ISKRA	1
Patrick Dunn's	Gabbro	1
No.1 Quiz	Frontier	13
Sports	Videoactive	.5
Flashback	Pro Media	6.5
Put Blood in the Music	Windmill	1

<u>1989</u>

Labour of Love	ISKRA	.5
Dublins	Anner	1.5
Check It Out	Windmill Lane	3
Dessert Mission	Fr. Liam o'Driscoll	1
Hot House Flowers	Windmill Lane	1
Chris de Burgh	Windmill Lane	1
Vikings	Windmill Lane	1
Whole World in His Hands	Frank Stapleton	1
		169.5

SOURCE: Mike   Kelly,   Administrative   Manager,   Television
Division, RTE.

Synoptic table of the main results of the pilot phase (from 1988 to july 1990)

European Film Distribution Office/EFDO

MEDIA outlay	ECUs	3,300,000	The results shown are the gross takings at cinema box offices
Results of operations in progress	ECUs	21,000,000	for films launched between the end of 1988 and June 1990
Anticipated Results	ECUs	50,000,000	with EFDO support.

European Organisation for an Independent Audiovisual Market/EURO-AIM

MEDIA outlay	ECUs	1,686,838	This is the amount of sales made at the 88-89 MIP-COM, 89-90
Results on five markets	ECUs	17,071,897	MIP and at the Screenings in Donostia 89 by independentproducers taking advantage of the promotional services of EURO-AIM.

Broadcasting Across the Barriers of European Language/BABEL

MEDIA outlay	ECUs	200,000	The anticipated results are calculated on 311 hours of programmes broadcasted or rebroadcasted with a cost of ECUs
Results of operations in progress	ECUs	1,316,800	
Anticipated results	ECUs	2,100,221	6,753 per hour. This price per hour is an average between the minimum costs of the programmes applied by the T.V. broadcasters of 23 European Countries and North America.

European SCRIPT Fund/Support for Creative Independent Production Talent

MEDIA outlay	ECUs	2,997,121	The figures refer to production budgets for projects already
Results of productions in progress	ECUs	26,930,950	completed or currently being completed and which obtained.
Results of planned productions	ECUs	70,094,852	developmental aid from SCRIPT.

MEDIA Investment Club

MEDIA outlay	ECUs	1,383,000	The amounts quoted are those of production budgets for programmes using new technologies, or the total cost of training
Results of productions and training in progress	ECUs	5,504,390	cycles supported by the Club.
Results of planned productions	ECUs	5,790,500	

European Association for Animated Film/CARTOON

MEDIA outlay	ECUs	1,000,000	The sum of ECUs 36,770,000 is the total budget for productions being completed thanks to developmental aid provided
Result of productions in progress	ECUs	36,770,000	by CARTOON. The sum of ECUs 55,000,000 is the turnover for a three-year period within those studios pools that are already operational. Given that the two sums partially overlap, the studios in these groupings may also profit from developmental aid.
Results of additional productions over 3 years within the framework of 3 studio groupings	ECUs	55,000,000	

European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs/EAVE

MEDIA outlay - first training cycle	ECUs	150,000	This, too, represents a production budget for films or programmes completed or in progress resulting from the first
Results of productions completed or in progress	ECUs	18,207,000	training seminars.

SOURCE: MEDIA 92 Newsletter No. 6, September 1990.

JOINT DECLARATION
ON AUDIOVISUAL EUREKA

THE MINISTERS OR REPRESENTATIVES OF 26 EUROPEAN STATES AS WELL AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, MEETING IN PARIS ON 2 OCTOBER 1989,

following the initiative of the President of the French Republic and the conclusions reached at the European Council at Rhodes in December 1988 by the Heads of State and Government of the member states of the European Community,

recalling the work already undertaken in the Council of Europe and its role in the cultural and audiovisual field,

aware of the importance of a coordinated and effective organization of the development of a coherent, dynamic, and open audiovisual market taking into account the cultural character and impact of the audiovisual sector,

convinced that the response to the cultural, technological, and industrial challenges arising from changes in communications techniques and the growing need for audiovisual programmes lies primarily in the mobilization of professionals and their dynamism,

desiring to bring about the strengthening and greater competitiveness of programme industries in Europe, while respecting the cultural identity and the interests of the creators,

affirming their common will to develop cooperation in the cultural and audiovisual field throughout Europe,

attentive to the views and proposals of the professionals in this sector on the occasion of the European Audiovisual Conference organized jointly by the French Government and the Commission of the European Communities,

concerned to give due attention to projects which can encourage the diffusion of the cultures and languages which constitute the richness of Europe,

attached to the principle of the free development and full flowering of creative capacities from all European countries,

wishing to pay particular attention to countries having a limited geographical or linguistic coverage in Europe and to preserve the pluralism of European cultures,

1 have agreed to take the necessary steps for the establishment of a series of measures entitled Audiovisual Eureka having the objectives of encouraging:

— the emergence of a more transparent and dynamic audiovisual market on a European scale;

— the launching of actions and concrete cooperation projects of interest for the future of the European audiovisual programme industry, including its technological aspects, with the objective of strengthening the capacity of European enterprises to create and produce and of promoting their competitiveness;

— the widest possible distribution of European programmes, the multiplication of exchanges within Europe and the increase of Europe's share of the world market;

— the development and the widest possible diffusion of production from countries having a limited geographic or linguistic coverage in Europe;

— the promotion of European technologies, particularly in the field of HDTV, for the production and transmission of films and audiovisual programmes.

2 intend, within the limits of their powers, to take appropriate measures and to implement coherent policies with a view to promoting appropriate general conditions and a legal environment favourable to the creation, production, coproduction and exchange of au-

diovisual programmes in Europe, these being the decisive factors for the success of Audiovisual Eureka.

3 propose to consult each other, and continue, within the competent institutions, the examination of the particular conditions for the development of a coherent and dynamic audiovisual market on a European scale, respecting their international commitments.

4 intend to examine the possibility of taking additional measures in support of Audiovisual Eureka.

5 recall that Audiovisual Eureka is aimed at all enterprises and bodies contributing to or participating in the process of conception, finance, production, distribution or transmission of European films and audiovisual programmes.

6 decide to establish an Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators' Committee, composed of the representatives of the Governments of the participating states and the Commission of the European Communities. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe is invited to designate a represer tative to participate in its work. The Committee will draw up its rules of procedure.

It will have the task of giving further examination to the content and the objectives of Audiovisual Eureka and of regularly evaluating its results.

Based on the individual coordinators' consultations with the professional circles, the Committee may develop recommendations designed to improve the market structures and ground rules of the audiovisual industry. To this end, the Committee will examine in particular the various suggestions put forward at the European Audiovisual Conference.

It will be responsible for proposing, whenever there is a need, the convening of ministerial meetings with a view to adopting new guidelines or measures designed to promote Audiovisual Eureka.

7 decide on the creation of a small and flexible Audiovisual Eureka secretariat, which will be able to benefit from the logistic support of the Commission of the European Communities. The Council of Europe is invited to examine what logistic support it could offer to this secretariat.

Under the responsibility of the Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators' Committee, the secretariat will have the tasks of:

— convening and preparing the meetings of the Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators' Committee;

— assisting interested enterprises and other bodies to establish, in liaison with the Coordinators, contacts with partners for Audiovisual Eureka projects of participating states.

8 agree to entrust the Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators with:

— circulating information relating to Audiovisual Eureka projects submitted to them;

— facilitating contacts between enterprises and other bodies of the participating countries;

— providing the Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators' Committee with all information relating to the description of projects and their conformity with Audiovisual Eureka objectives and criteria;

— encouraging the implementation of Audiovisual Eureka projects.

9 ask the Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators' Committee to examine questions relating to the institution, role, and organization of a European Audiovisual Observatory, as well as the modalities of its establishment and functioning, in cooperation with the professionals of this sector.

The tasks of this Observatory—which could utilize in the best way the existing resources of participating states and European institutions—could be to collect and process existing information and statistics as well as to define possible further needs. This data should be placed at the disposal of the professionals and the Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators' Committee so as to promote a better view of the market and greater transparency and to facilitate the implementation of Audiovisual Eureka projects.

The Council of Europe is invited to examine what measures could be taken to support the activities of this Observatory.

Paris, October 2, 1989

OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO AUDIOVISUAL EUREKA PROJECTS

The projects presented by enterprises and other interested bodies will have to meet objectives and criteria which will be defined at a later stage by the Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators' Committee.

The definition of these objectives and criteria should draw on the following principles:

— encouraging the exchange and the widest possible circulation of European works on cinema or television screens or through videocassettes, particularly by improving distribution mechanisms within Europe and surmounting the lingusitic barriers which separate European audiences;

— creating a framework favourable to the financing of the production and coproduction of original European works responding to the expectations of European audiences and being competitive on the international market;

— increasing contacts between professionals and ensuring the clarity and proper distribution of information in the artistic, legal, and economic fields;

— adapting forms of training for audiovisual occupations to the new needs of the programme industry, while encouraging the development of creativity and cultural and linguistic identities;

— strengthening the competitiveness of European enterprises in the sector, including small and medium enterprises, on the European and world markets;

— being implemented within the framework of cooperation agreements applying to enterprises of more than one European country and, wherever possible, at least three European countries;

— presenting clearly identifiable positive features arising from cooperation on a European scale, in particular by offering new possibilities of expression or new outlets to European creators and professionals;

— containing adequate financial commitments on the part of participating enterprises;

— contributing to the development and wider audiovisual diffusion of programmes of countries with a weak production capacity and having limited linguistic coverage in Europe;

— promoting new technologies for the production and transmission of films and audiovisual programmes.

RELATIONS BETWEEN AUDIOVISUAL EUREKA, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, AND OTHER EXISTING COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS

1 Various concrete initiatives have already been undertaken by the European Community (MEDIA pilot programme, Framework Programme for Research and Development), or by the Council of Europe (Eurimages Fund).

Audiovisual Eureka projects are not conceived as a substitute for existing cooperation frameworks, their objective being rather to extend or complement these as appropriate.

2 The European Community will be able to participate in Audiovisual Eureka projects, in particular through its programmes.

3 The Council of Europe is invited to cooperate in Audiovisual Eureka.

4 As necessary, the Audiovisual Eureka Coordinators' Committee will check with the competent instances of the Technological Eureka on the complementary nature and appropriate synergy of their respective projects.

INTERVIEWS WITH FILM MAKERS

LIST OF FILM MAKERS CONTACTED FOR INTERVIEW

Bob Quinn, Cinegael, Carroroe, Co. Galway. 091 95158.

Lelia Doolan, Killeenaran, Kilcolgan, Co. Galway. 091 96010.

Tiernan Mc Bride, Roebuck Moving Pictures, Roebuck House, Leinster Lawn, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14. 86574.

Pat Murphy, Aeon Films, Roebuck House, Leinster Lawn, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14. 806574.

Joe Lee, City Vision Productions Ltd, 42 Dawson Street, Dublin 2. 777816.

Hilary Mc Loughlin, c/o Windmill Lane Pictures, 4 Windmill Lane, Dublin 2. 713444.

Mark Kilroy, Mirror Films Ltd., 44 Nassau Street, Dublin 2. 537721.

Margo Harkin, Derry Film and Video Collective, 1 Westend Park, Derry. 080504 260326/260128

Martha O'Neill, Film Base, Eustace Street, Dublin 2. 962425.

Fergus Tighe, Film Base... 796716.

David Kavanagh, IFI, Eustace Street, Dublin 2. 6795744.

Alan Gilsenan, Yellow Asylum Films Ltd., 6 Montague Street, Dublin 2. 781016/781269

Donald Taylor Black, Poolbeg Productions Ltd., 10 Hagan Court, Lad Lane, Dublin 2. 760928.

Louis Marcus, Louis Marcus Film and Video, Fortfield Drive, Dublin 6. 906723.

Russ Russell, Windmill Lane Pictures, 4 Windmill Lane, Dublin
2. 713444.

Conor Mc Anally, Green Apple Productions Ltd., 15 Sir John
Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2. 711711.

Arthur Lappin, c/o Pearson Productions, 27 Dawson Street,
Dublin 2. 772951.

Michael Colgan, Little Bird Films, 122 Lower Baggot Street,
Dublin 2. 614245.

John Baragwanath, Gandon Productions, 27 Harcourt Street,
Dublin 2. 784148.

Morgan O' Sullivan, MTM/Tara Productions Ltd., Ardmore
Studios, Bray, Co. Wicklow. 862971.

Michael Algar, (Murikami Wolf) Garden Flat, 10 Croswaite
Park East, Dun Laoighaire, Co. Dublin. 783296/783199

Don Bluth, Sullivan Bluth, Phoenix House, Block 2, Connyngham
Rd, Dublin 2. 795099/795047

LETTER SENT TO FILMMAKERS

A Chara,

I am currently undertaking postgraduate research
with the School of Communications DCU for the award of a
Masters degree. My research is examining the relationship
between "Irish identity" and the audio-visual sector in
Ireland. I am particularly interested in the independent
production sector in Ireland and how a 'private' sector deals
with the concept of Irish identity which is usually perceived
to lie within the public service domain.

Having spent the past year examining the concept of
Irish identity and the history of the audio-visual sector in
Ireland - especially its relationship with the state, I am
now focusing on the present state of the audio-visual sector.

To make my study worthwhile I feel it necessary to
establish the views of representatives from the audio-visual
sector and for this reason I would hope that you (or a
colleague operating in the same area) would participate in
this research by agreeing to an interview with me in the near
future. I want my study to contribute to debate on the audio-
visual sector in Ireland in light of the many changes taking
place in this area. Informed discussion is vital if any
progress is to be made and if we are to know what role an
Irish audio-visual sector has to play both at a national and
international level.

I will contact you by phone late this week or early
next week at   (a contact no. I received from Film
Base). If you are unlikely to be available at this number at
this time, I would be obliged if you would contact me at the
School of Communications (ext. 188). If you are unable to
contact me perhaps you could leave a message with our
secretary (ext.220) as to when I could contact you.

I realise your time is precious and somebody else's research is probably at the bottom of your list of priorities but as I stated earlier your help is vital to the success of this piece of research and by partaking in it you would be contributing to a much neglected area of research and informed debate.

Looking forward to meeting you.

Yours

Celia Keenaghan

LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Mark Kilroy, "Mirror Films", 06-06-90.

Michael Algar, "Murikami-Wolf", 07-06-90.

David Collins, "Windmill Lane", 07-06-90.

Louis Marcus, "Louis Marcus film & Video", 08-06-90.

Kevin Moriarty, "MTM Ardmore", 10-06-90.

Donald Taylor Black, "Poolbeg Productions", 12-06-90.

Arthur Lappin, freelance (at "Pearson Productions" at
time of interview), 13-06-90.

Alan Gilsenan, "Yellow Asylum" 14-06-90.

Tiernan Mac Bride, "Roebuck", 14-06-90.

Joe Lee, freelance, 20-06-90.

Lelia Doolan, 26-06-90.

Bob Quinn, Cine Gael, 26-06-90.

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Sexton, R.   International Services Division, Industrial
             Development Authority.
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Buckley, P. Principal of the Arts and Culture Division,
             Department of the Taoiseach. 10-10-90.

O'Brien, D. Coras Trachtala Teo.
             Telephone Interview, 19-10-90.

Byrne, S.   Irish Film Centre Building Company.
             Telephone Interview, 18-02-91.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

1. How many people are employed by your company?

2. How long is your company in operation?

3. What type of production are you mainly involved in?

4. Do you receive state support - under what auspices?

IRISH IDENTITY

5. Do you see a difference between Irish cultural identity and Irish national identity - what is it?

6. Do you think that film or television has an important role to play in sustaining an Irish identity? Is it important to sustain an Irish identity?

7. How important is 'Irishness' in the production of a film or programme?

8. Is cinema capable of making the same contribution to Irish culture as eg. theatre, poetry, fiction...?

9. Is cinema the 'nation talking to itself' - 'telling its own stories...?

10. Does it have an important role in projecting images of Ireland abroad - a positive or a negative image?

THE STATE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

11. What is the state's role in sustaining and consolidating national identity?

12. How do you perceive the independent production sector's relationship with the state? Could it be improved upon?

13. Does Public Service depend on the state?

PUBLIC SERVICE VS. FREE MARKET

14. Do you think that film and television production should answer primarily to cultural or commercial imperatives?

15. Is there any sense in which a public service remit falls upon the independent sector?

16. Do you believe that the Irish independent production sector are independent? If yes, how? If not, why?

INDIGENOUS PRODUCTION

17. Rate the following in order of importance in determining the "Irishness" of a production:

    * Origin of funding in Ireland.

    * Irish artistic control - script/direction...

    * Directed primarily at an Irish audience.

    * Irish themes - subject matter.

    * Located in Ireland.

    * Personnel - actors.

    * Give employment to Irish crews etc.

    * Other.

18. Who supports a truly indigenous industry in terms of training, facilities houses etc.?

19. How important is the aid of the Arts Council in supporting an indigenous industry?

20. Should the Film Board be replaced or could you suggest a more suitable alternative?

BROADCASTING AND THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION SECTOR

21. Is theatrical distribution and exhibition important to Irish film? How could it be imporved upon in Ireland?

22. How would you describe (i) the independent production sector's relationship and (ii) your own company's relationship with RTE?

23. Do you see a qualitative difference between material made specifically for television, material made specifically for cinema and material made for video?

24. Does Public Service Broadcasting in Ireland provide sufficient outlet for independent productions? Do you think TV3 will more adequately cater for the sector's needs?

THE FUTURE

25. How have European initiatives in the audiovisual sector benefitted (i) the Irish independent production sector, (ii) you?

26. Does Europe provide better outlet for Irish cinema than America?

27. Do you think it is viable for a vibrant independent production industry to survive within national frontiers?

28. How do you see (i) the future of the independent production sector in Ireland, (ii) your own future within it?

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KEY
IT = Irish Times
IP = Irish Press
II = Irish Independent
ST = Sunday Tribune
SP = Sunday Press
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