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Through the Looking Glass: How the Mass Media Represent, Reflect and Refract Sexual Crime in Ireland

Michael J. Breen

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Introduction

The publication of the Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) report (McGee, 2000) was a landmark event in the documenting of sexual crime in Ireland. The core of the report was based on the results of a survey of more than 3,000 members of the general public about their attitudes and beliefs and their own lifetime experiences of sexual violence. Commissioned by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and carried out by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, the report chronicled as never before the extent of sexual abuse and violence in Ireland. The results were startling.

One in five women (20.4 per cent) reported experiencing contact sexual abuse in childhood with a further one in ten (10.0 per cent) reporting non-contact sexual abuse. In over a quarter of cases of contact abuse (i.e. 5.6 per cent of all girls), the abuse involved penetrative sex — either vaginal, anal or oral sex. ... One in six men (16.2 per cent) reported experiencing contact sexual abuse in childhood with a further one in fourteen (7.4 per cent) reporting non-contact sexual abuse. In one of every six cases of contact abuse (i.e. 2.7 per cent of all boys), the abuse involved penetrative sex — either anal or oral sex. ... One in five women (20.4 per cent) reported experiencing contact sexual assault as adults with a further one in twenty (5.1 per cent) reporting unwanted non-contact sexual experiences. Over a quarter of cases of contact abuse in adulthood (i.e. 6.1 per cent of all women) involved penetrative sex. ... One in ten men (9.7 per cent) reported experiencing contact sexual assault as adults with a further 2.7 per cent reporting unwanted non-contact sexual experiences. One in ten cases of contact abuse in adulthood (i.e. 0.9 per cent of all men) involved penetrative sex. (McGee, 2002, Executive Summary)

These figures clearly indicate the need for further research and the authors of the report identify several strands of research that need to be done. Among these they include a strand for media research:

The role of the media is crucial in developing an accurate and comprehensive understanding of sexual violence among the general public. Strategies to support the media in its representation of sexual violence should be considered as part of the public awareness campaign (McGee et al., 2002: 290).

This paper is part of a response to that recommendation. It seeks to identify the nature and extent of media reporting on sexual crime in Ireland, with a specific emphasis on the reporting of such crime in the national newspaper of record, *The Irish Times*.



Theory & Literature

The literature dealing with the power of the press in shaping and informing public opinion is extensive, as is the literature dealing with the reporting of sexual crime.

It is well established that the mass media play a role in the formation of public opinion. They are also selective in the messages transmitted, they are directive in trying to shape and mould opinion (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). While there are clearly external forces at work in terms of what enters the news, it is abundantly evident that there is much left to the choices of the individual editor or journalist, as well as many influences that act from within media organizations (White, 1950; Breed, 1960; Weaver, 1979; Schudson, 1989; Salwen & Garrison, 1989; Shoemaker, 1991). The media carry out a surveillance function for the public. The central task confronting the media is to engage the attention of the public and then to activate that public without overwhelming it with information by distinguishing effectively between that which is important and that which is not.

Agenda setting theory states that those issues that receive prominent attention in the media become the problems the reading and listening publics regard as the nation's most important. Lippmann referred to the 'pictures inside the heads' of individuals which were altered by information (1922: 5). He also developed the idea that the 'pictures' influenced by the media were not a matter of random chance, but arose directly from media choices (p.12). Items only get placed in the news stream if they are a matter of media routines or if they are made into an issue in some fashion (p.15).

Whatever about the manner of how items get into the news stream, it is those items that have influence, for clearly the public cannot be influenced by that of which it does not have any knowledge. As Cohen puts it:

That is to say, then, that the press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about (1963: 13).

McCombs and Shaw (1972) examined the connections between media content and issue salience, building on Lippmann's assertion that it is the 'pictures in our heads' that drive our behaviours. Expanding on Cohen they wrote:

Agenda setting is considerably more than the classical assertion that the news tells us what to think about. The news also tells us how to think about it. Both the selection of objects for attention and the selection of frames for thinking about these objects are powerful agenda-setting roles. Central to the news agenda and its daily set of objects — issues, personalities, events, etc. — are the perspectives that journalists and, subsequently, members of the public employ to think about each object (1993: 62).

The clear consequence of agenda setting theory is that it is the framers of the news who wield a vast amount of control over how the public views various events and personalities. Agenda setting is not simply a function of journalistic choice. Becker (1980: 530) points out that agenda setting is driven in part by a number of elements including individual desire to be informed, the needs that are met by the mass media, and the ability of the individual consumer to respond to media cues.

According to Iyengar and Kinder (1987), people hold 'tacit theories' regarding national problems. Included in these tacit theories are what they perceive as causes and moral accountability. The notion of tacit theories is interesting. Such opinions, they say, are apparently formed primarily by the media. The public can only make decisions on the information that it has at its disposal, which Iyengar (1991: 132) calls 'accessibility of information', which is highly dependent on the pattern of news coverage. While it is



clear that other elements enter into the accessibility equation, such as political leanings, socioeconomic status, personal values, religious orientation, and cultural perceptions, Iyengar argues that accessibility of information on public affairs is primarily dependent on media content.

The framing of stories is of key relevance in the issue of agenda setting. According to Kitzinger (2000) media templates are routinely used to emphasize only one clear perspective, to serve as rhetorical shorthand/shortcuts, and to help audiences & producers contextualize stories. These templates have a threefold effect: they shape narratives around specific issues, they guide public opinion and discussion, and they set the frame of reference for the future. Research analysis of media templates allows researchers to develop understandings of how reality is framed, how various elements of social life are constructed and how media power is operationalized in society.

Thus 'Vietnam' is a template for a failed or mired war, and is routinely used in relation to the US invasion of Iraq. 'Watergate' refers to political scandals, and is such a strong template the suffix -gate carries its own derived meaning. 'Jamie Bulger' is shorthand for a host of events related to child abuse, child abduction and child murder. And most recently, '9/11' has become a multifaceted template that references a gamut of issues from terrorism to public panic to security to xenophobia. The power of these templates lies in their association. 'Vietnam' references political failure, political cover-up, public protest, military failure, the draft, body bags, tenacious enemies, My Lai, the Tet offensive, war veterans, and, above all, military failure.

Media templates are key events with an ongoing shelf life beyond the conclusion of news happenings. They are defined by their retrospective use in secondary reporting rather than contemporaneous coverage and therein lies their power. Because they are used to explain current events, they emerge of themselves as a point of comparison and as proof of an ongoing problem. Templates are used to highlight patterns in particular issues or social problems. Media templates have a single primary meaning or sense rather than being the focus for debate, and they are rarely questioned.

There are, says Kitzinger, a number of operating implications that follow from the use of templates: simplification/distortion, minimization of alternate textual readings, and osmosis. Simplification and distortion indicate that details may be blurred, dissenting accounts forgotten and various pertinent facts (from past or present) may be misrepresented or disregarded. Minimal opportunity for alternative readings implies that the various events are pared back, often simplistically, to their essence, without nuance, that alternative interpretations from audiences are neither facilitated nor accommodated because the audience is only exposed to secondary accounts of events, and the very events themselves are recalled differently by those who were aware of the contemporary reporting, such is the power of the template. By osmosis Kitzinger means that the meanings attached to template events are, in part, created by the interaction between such episodes and subsequent linked cases. The meaning of media templates may be both reinforced and altered as they are applied to events as they unfold.

The literature on sexual crime provides a second backdrop to this research. Wilczynski's 1999 content analysis of 1,302 child abuse reports in 1995 in New South Wales established that criminal justice agencies were the predominant sources. Incongruity between offender and offence was emphasised and law and order agendas promoted. Abusers in authority situations were 47.2% of all cases (priests, teachers, police officers, scoutmasters, politicians, lawyers, etc). Often the authority status was signalled in headlines: 'Scoutmaster lured children'; 'Priest fondled girl's breast in blessing'. She argues that the large amount of media coverage is certainly not in most instances an indication of quality. Public assumptions about what constitutes real child abuse often remain unchallenged.

A sample analysis of Irish Times reports in 1997 disclosed a single case of child neglect. Only two years earlier in 1995 the Eastern Health Board reported 222 cases of



child neglect while during the same period the Mid-Western Health Broad had 313 reports (McDevitt, 1998).

Other research deals with the different foci used in news reporting of sexual crime. Stephenson (1987) contentiously argues that the escalation of the problem of child abuse might prove to be something of a 20th century cultural myth. Kitzinger (1995) records the disproportionate focus on abuse outside the home. Franklin and Parton (1991), writing about the media reporting of Cleveland and other child abuse cases in the UK, state that events are sensationalized and trivialized, vital issues are misrepresented, and scapegoats are sought.¹ Colling's (2002) work on child abuse in South Africa concluded that:

The results suggest that newspaper reports of child sexual abuse do elicit spontaneous attributional activity, that statements implying offender culpability are the most frequently employed attributional category, and that attributional activity is inhibited by stereotype congruent depictions of abuse (p.1135).

Goddard and Liddell (1994) express specific concern about tabloid reporting, stating:

Child abuse is political and media coverage cannot be avoided. When things go wrong as they can on occasions the temptation to introduce 'legislation by tabloid' may be hard to resist. Given that policy and practice will be influenced by the media, those concerned with child protection need to make greater efforts to use the media constructively (p. 361).

There are clearly a number of issues about the nature and extent of sexual crime reporting, especially in relation to offences against children. As Cheit (2003) put it

Several recent studies suggest that coverage of child sexual abuse is unlikely to be widespread in the sense of covering a wide range of cases. Rather, the cases that receive significant coverage are likely to follow a common pattern in crime reporting: one that exalts the unusual, thereby turning the most uncommon events into the ones that seem common. ... The content of the top 10 stories bears out several traditional concepts of newsworthiness. These stories tended to involve "the bizarre and the unusual," the dramatic, and/or the famous (p. 609).

This paper examines *The Irish Times* coverage of sexual crime over a ten year period in light of the literature documented above. The primary research focus is to document the co-relation between the media portrayal of sexual crime and its reality on the ground, while the secondary focus is to compare Irish coverage with that of the UK and US on the same topic.

Method

The data for the content analysis were drawn from the Lexis-Nexis database. For each year between 1993 and 2002, five weeks were chosen at random using the random selection function in MS Excel. In the event of the same week being sampled in any given year, an additional week was randomly selected. The total number of weeks selected was 50. For each week, the above databases were searched using a date-gate limiter with a search term encompassing variations of sexual crime:

(sex! w/2 (abuse or assault or attack or offence or harassment or molestation)) or rape or bestiality or buggery or incest or (gross w/1 indecency) or paedophil! or (child! w/3 molest!)

¹ In 1987, a significant number of allegations of child sexual abuse were made in the Cleveland area of England. Two consultant paediatricians at a Middlesbrough hospital were responsible for many of these allegations, based on an unproven medical diagnosis termed the anal dilatation test. A Public Inquiry was set up and was chaired by Justice Butler-Sloss. More than 80% of the allegations were found to be false. In 1991, children were taken into care in Orkney following false allegations of ritual abuse by their parents. In 1992, a Public Inquiry criticised Orkney Social Services and produced 194 recommendations for changes in child care practices. In 1994, a government report found that there was no basis to the multitude of satanic child abuse claims.



This term automatically netted all stories related to the search term and variations thereof such as 'molestation of children', 'child molestor', 'sexual abuse' etc. The term 'child abuse' was deliberately omitted from the search as the term is ambiguous, covering physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children as well as child neglect. For the purpose of this paper, matching Irish law, only victims under the age of seventeen were deemed to be children. The MediaWeb library of television news stories at RTÉ was searched with the same terms and programme details were downloaded for each story. While these are not full text data, they do give an account of RTÉ news coverage of the topic.

The stories were downloaded and transferred into an Excel database. The number of stories yielded by this initial search is given in column 1 of Table 1. Column 2 indicates the number of stories remaining after all non-relevant stories were purged; these included stories about sexual crime in other countries, rape in wartime, and EU subsidies for oil-seed rape.

Table 1: Number of stories initially sampled and finally selected by source

	Source		Total
	<i>Irish Times</i>	<i>RTÉ News</i>	
Initial Sample	1127	48	1175
Final Sample	571	38	609

These stories were then coded according to a predefined coding scheme by three independent coders. The full variable list is given in Appendix 1. Scott's pi for each variable was in excess of 0.93 indicating a very high level of intercoder reliability.

The statistics on sexual crime, both known to Gardaí and those in which criminal proceedings were commenced, were drawn from the Annual Reports of An Garda Síochána, 1993-2002. An Garda Síochána supplied the researcher directly with a breakdown of sexual crime according to victim age for the 10 years in question.

Findings

Table 2 shows the breakdown of stories across the sample in terms of sexual crimes against children and adults. Over the ten years, 66.7% of all *The Irish Times* stories in the sample were about child sexual abuse compared to 65.8% in RTÉ.



Table 2: Number and percentage of stories by victim type by newspaper

Victim Type	Source Title		
	<i>Irish Times</i>	<i>RTE News</i>	
Child	381	25	406
	66.7%	65.8%	66.7%
Adult	176	7	183
	30.8%	18.4%	30.0%
Unspecified	14	6	20
	2.5%	15.8%	3.3%
Total	571	38	609
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3 shows a similar table with a breakdown by specific crime type. *RTE News* gives more coverage to rape than any other type of crime, with sexual assault the second most frequent crime. The reverse is true for *The Irish Times*. Murder with sexual assault accounts for only 3% of *The Irish Times* sex crimes coverage whereas it accounts for more than 6% of the *RTE News* stories. Sexual harassment constitutes 3.5% of stories in *The Irish Times* but is absent entirely from the *RTE News* sample. Incest features in 2.8% of *Irish Times* stories but not at all in *RTE News*. It is important to note that in both *The Irish Times* and *RTE*, incestuous cases are covered but the term 'incest' appears not to be used.

Table 3: Number and percentage of stories by specific crime type by newspaper

Specific crime	Source Title		
	<i>Irish Times</i>	<i>RTE News</i>	
Rape	161	10	171
	30.6%	62.5%	31.5%
Sexual assault	311	5	314
	59.0%	31.3%	57.8%
Buggery	11	0	11
	2.1%	.0%	2.0%
Incest	15	0	15
	2.8%	.0%	2.8%
Murder	16	1	17
	3.0%	6.3%	3.1%
Sexual Harassment	13	0	15
	2.5%	.0%	2.8%
Total	527	16	543
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Tables 4 and 5 show the data for the reporting of gender in the sampled stories across the news sources. Stories with male victims make up 21.7% of *The Irish Times* stories whereas the RTÉ News sample represents male and female victims in equal numbers.

Table 4: Number and percentage of stories by victim gender by source

Victim gender	Source Title		
	<i>Irish Times</i>	<i>RTE News</i>	
Male	124	8	132
	21.7%	50.0%	22.5%
Female	257	8	265
	45.0%	50.0%	45.1%
Unspecified / Not Applicable	190	0	190
	33.3%	.0%	32.4%
Total	571	16	587
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In Table 5 we see a similar breakdown for the gender of the perpetrator. *The Irish Times* samples has seven stories with female perpetrators (1.2%) and 417 stories with male perpetrators (73%). There is no example of a female perpetrator in the RTÉ News sample.

Table 5: Number and percentage of stories by perpetrator gender by source

Perpetrator's gender	Source Title		
	<i>Irish Times</i>	<i>RTE News</i>	
Male	417	26	443
	73.0%	100.0%	74.2%
Female	7	0	7
	1.2%	.0%	1.2%
Unspecified/Not Applicable	147	0	147
	25.7%	.0%	24.6%
Total	571	26	597
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The stories were coded for the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator. These data are shown in Table 6 (child victims) and Table 7 (adult victims). In relation to child victims, excluding the 'Other' category, both *The Irish Times* and RTÉ News have 'Authority figures' as the most frequent relationship in the sampled stories (42.6% and 90.0%). The RTÉ news stories have 'Strangers' at 5.0% whereas *The Irish Times* has 2.9% of stories in that category. There is a wide variation in the total percentages for child victims where there is a familial involvement: 16.4% of stories in *The Irish Times* compared to 5% in the RTÉ news stories.



Table 6: Number and percentage of stories by victim perpetrator relationship by source for child victims

Child's Relationship to Perpetrator	Source Title		
	<i>Irish Times</i>	<i>RTE News</i>	
Stranger	10 2.9%	1 5.0%	11 3.0%
Parent	38 10.9%	1 5.0%	39 10.5%
Sibling	3 .9%	0 .0%	3 .8%
Uncle/Aunt	10 2.9%	0 .0%	10 2.7%
Other relative	6 1.7%	0 .0%	6 1.6%
Authority figure	149 42.6%	18 90.0%	167 45.1%
Boyfriend/girlfriend	1 .3%	0 .0%	1 .3%
Other	131 37.4%	0 .0%	131 35.4%
New acquaintance	2 .6%	0 .0%	2 .5%
Total	350 100.0%	20 100.0%	370 100.0%

Table 7, for adult victims, shows a very different distribution. In *The Irish Times* stories, excluding the 'Other' category, the highest number of stories are about 'New acquaintances' (9.3%), 'Authority figures' (9.9%) and 'Strangers' (7.4%). In the RTÉ news stories the breakdown is 50:50 between 'Strangers' and 'Authority Figures'.



Table 7: Number and percentage of stories by victim perpetrator relationship by source for adult victims

Adult Victim's relationship to Perpetrator	Source Title		
	<i>Irish Times</i>	<i>RTE News</i>	
Stranger	12 7.4%	1 50.0%	13 7.9%
Parent	1 .6%	0 .0%	1 .6%
Uncle/Aunt	1 .6%	0 .0%	1 .6%
Other relative	3 1.9%	0 .0%	3 1.8%
Authority figure	16 9.9%	1 50.0%	17 10.4%
Boyfriend/girlfriend	2 1.2%	0 .0%	2 1.2%
Partner/Spouse	5 3.1%	0 .0%	5 3.0%
Other	106 65.4%	0 .0%	106 64.6%
New acquaintance	15 9.3%	0 .0%	15 9.1%
Colleague	1 .6%	0 .0%	1 .6%
Total	162 100.0%	2 100.0%	164 100.0%

Table 8 details the word counts for stories, broken down by victim type and by victimgender in *The Irish Times*. Stories overall about male victims are longer than stories about female victims; this is statistically significant ($t=4.6$, $p<.001$). Child stories are also longer; this is also statistically significant ($t=3.18$, $p<.01$). Stories about male adult victims are longer than stories about female adult victims, and statistically significant ($t=3.41$, $p<.001$).



Table 8: Mean of newspaper word count by victim type and gender

		Source
Victim	Victim gender	<i>Irish Times</i>
Child	Male	414
	Female	305
Adult	Male	301
	Female	287

Tables 9 and 10 show the categories of perpetrator professions, in those stories where they are identified as such, for each source. Table 9 is for child victims and Table 10 for adult victims. In *The Irish Times* data, 68.1% of stories about sexual crimes against children, where the profession of the perpetrator is identified relate to clergy and religious. The corresponding figure is 70% for RTE news. The next most common category of perpetrator in *The Irish Times* is 'Teacher/Coach' (13.1%), followed by 'Police/Military' (6.9%). In the RTE news sample, the 'Teacher/Coach' category covers 25% of stories.

Table 9: Number and percentage of stories by perpetrator category by source for child victims

Child Victim	Source Title		
Professional Category	<i>Irish Times</i>	<i>RTE News</i>	
Cleric/Religious	109 68.1%	14 70.0%	123 68.3%
Medical	1 .6%	0 .0%	1 .6%
Teacher/Coach	21 13.1%	5 25.0%	26 14.4%
Police/Military	11 6.9%	0 .0%	11 6.1%
Farmer	3 1.9%	0 .0%	3 1.7%
Other (Named)	7 4.4%	1 5.0%	8 4.4%
Entertainer	1 .6%	0 .0%	1 .6%
Business	2 1.3%	0 .0%	2 1.1%
Professional	1 .6%	0 .0%	1 .6%
Blue Collar	4 2.5%	0 .0%	4 2.2%
Total	160 100.0%	20 100.0%	180 100.0%



The pattern is somewhat different in the case of sexual crimes against adults. In those stories where the profession of the perpetrator can be identified, 'Police/Military' have the highest number of stories in *The Irish Times* (34.5%). No valid conclusion can be drawn about the RTE news sample as there is only one story in the adult category where the perpetrator profession is identified.

Table 10: Number and percentage of stories by perpetrator category by newspaper for adult victims

Adult Victim Professional Category	Source Title		
	<i>Irish Times</i>	<i>RTE News</i>	
Cleric/Religious	4 13.8%	0 .0%	4 13.3%
Medical	4 13.8%	0 .0%	4 13.3%
Teacher/Coach	1 3.4%	0 .0%	1 3.3%
Police/Military	10 34.5%	1 100.0%	11 36.7%
Farmer	2 6.9%	0 .0%	2 6.7%
Business	5 17.2%	0 .0%	5 16.7%
Student	1 3.4%	0 .0%	1 3.3%
Blue Collar	2 6.9%	0 .0%	2 6.7%
Total	29 100.0%	1 100.0%	30 100.0%

The Irish Times stories were also coded for prominence, as being either on page 1 of the newspaper or not. Table 11 shows numbers and percentages of stories for the various professional categories of perpetrators. Overall sexual crime stories with clergy as perpetrators constituted 69.2% of all sexual crime front page stories in *The Irish Times* sample. These figures must be interpreted with caution as the N is quite small.



Table 11: Number and percentage of stories by perpetrator category by front page by newspaper

Professional Category	<i>The Irish Times</i>			
	Page 1		Other Pages	
	N	%	N	%
Cleric/Religious	9	69.2%	104	58.8%
Medical	0	.0%	5	2.8%
Teacher/Coach	0	.0%	22	12.4%
Police/Military	3	23.1%	18	10.2%
Farmer	0	.0%	5	2.8%
Other (Named)	0	.0%	7	4.0%
Entertainer	0	.0%	2	1.1%
Business	0	.0%	7	4.0%
Professional	0	.0%	1	.6%
Student	0	.0%	1	.6%
Legal	0	.0%	0	.0%
Sports	0	.0%	0	.0%
Blue Collar	1	7.7%	5	2.8%
Politics	0	.0%	0	.0%

Table 12 gives the same data for sexual crimes against children only. Of all such stories in *The Irish Times* 90% were about clergy/religious perpetrators but the same caveat as to interpretation applies.

Table 12: Number and percentage of stories by perpetrator category by front page by newspaper for child victims

Professional Category	<i>The Irish Times</i>			
	Page 1		Other Pages	
	N	%	N	%
Cleric/Religious	9	90.0%	100	66.7%
Medical	0	.0%	1	.7%
Teacher/Coach	0	.0%	21	14.0%
Police/Military	0	.0%	11	7.3%
Farmer	0	.0%	3	2.0%
Other (Named)	0	.0%	7	4.7%
Entertainer	0	.0%	1	.7%
Business	0	.0%	2	1.3%
Professional	0	.0%	1	.7%
Student	0	.0%	0	.0%
Legal	0	.0%	0	.0%
Sports	0	.0%	0	.0%
Blue Collar	1	10.0%	3	2.0%
Politics	0	.0%	0	.0%



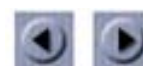
Table 13 shows the Garda crime statistics for sexual crimes. These data are drawn from the Annual Reports of An Garda Síochána. Table 14 shows similar data but only for those under 18. These figures were supplied to the researcher by An Garda Síochána, but they were unable to supply an age breakdown for 1998 and 1999. It is important to note that the categories for sexual crime were changed in 2000 with the introduction of the Pulse computer system. For the purpose of clarity in these two tables, all crimes of rape, including male rape, are included in the rape category. Similarly all crime of unlawful carnal knowledge of under-15 and under-17 females have been folded into a single category.

Table 13: Garda Crime Statistics for sexual offences 1993-2002

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
Sexual assault	368 63.67%	382 61.81%	604 68.33%	551 67.36%	602 60.62%	598 61.15%	431 56.19%	549 60.53%	1048 65.62%	1626 68.61%	6759 64.31%
Aggravated sexual assault	14 2.42%	9 1.46%	17 1.92%	8 0.98%	11 1.11%	11 1.12%	5 0.65%	12 1.32%	18 1.13%	24 1.01%	129 1.23%
Rape * inc Sec. 4	143 24.74%	184 29.77%	191 21.61%	180 22.00%	256 25.78%	292 29.86%	218 28.42%	290 31.97%	401 25.11%	497 20.97%	2652 25.23%
Buggery	12 2.08%	9 1.46%	17 1.92%	34 4.16%	80 8.06%	29 2.97%	78 10.17%	23 2.54%	36 2.25%	94 3.97%	412 3.92%
Unlawful carnal knowledge	27 4.67%	18 2.91%	40 4.52%	34 4.16%	34 3.42%	30 3.07%	27 3.52%	15 1.65%	78 4.88%	102 4.30%	405 3.85%
Incest	14 2.42%	16 2.59%	15 1.70%	11 1.34%	10 1.01%	18 1.84%	8 1.04%	18 1.98%	16 1.00%	27 1.14%	153 1.46%
TOTAL	578 100%	618 100%	884 100%	818 100%	993 100%	978 100%	767 100%	907 100%	1597 100%	2370 100%	10510 100%

Table 14: Garda Crime Statistics for sexual offences against persons under 18, 1993-1997, 2000-2002

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	2000	2001	2002	TOTAL
Sexual assault	250 69.60%	267 71.60%	391 71.70%	288 69.20%	310 65.00%	87 58.80%	106 55.50%	141 57.80%	2067 67.30%
Aggravated sexual assault	7 1.90%	5 1.30%	5 0.90%	4 1.00%	4 0.80%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	4 1.60%	33 1.10%
Rape	53 14.80%	69 18.50%	85 15.60%	71 17.10%	97 20.30%	48 32.40%	67 35.10%	47 19.30%	576 18.80%
Buggery	9 2.50%	5 1.30%	11 2.00%	13 3.10%	20 4.20%	4 2.70%	5 2.60%	13 5.30%	90 2.90%
Unlawful carnal knowledge	30 8.40%	20 5.40%	47 8.60%	35 8.40%	41 8.60%	5 3.40%	8 4.20%	18 7.40%	239 7.80%
Incest	10 2.80%	7 1.90%	6 1.10%	5 1.20%	5 1.00%	4 2.70%	5 2.60%	21 8.60%	67 2.20%
TOTAL	359	373	545	416	477	148	191	244	3072



Tables 15 and 16 should be examined together. Table 15 is a summary of the Gardai sexual crime statistics 1993-1997 and 2000-2002. Table 16 represents the same period from the content analysis data. In the official statistics, the most common crime against children is sexual assault (67.29%). The same is true of the content analysis data (76.4%). The figures for rape in relation to children are also broadly similar, 18.8% in the official statistics and 16.9% in the media reports. Incest accounts for 2.2% of the official statistics but 5.1% of the media reports. In relation to adults, the official figures indicate that sexual assault is the most common offence (64.3%) whereas the media reports have rape as the most frequent (67.3%). In the comparisons between adults and children, a different picture emerges. In the official figures rape is committed almost three times as often against adults as against children (73.1% v. 26.9%) whereas in the media reports it appears twice as often (62.6% v. 37.4%). According to the Gardai the majority of victims of sexual assault are adults (63.9%) whereas media reports imply that children are overwhelmingly more commonly such victims (85.8%). In the official statistics, buggery is a more common crime against adults (70.5%) whereas in the media reports the reverse is true (66.6% for children) but the N here is very small.

Table 15: Total counts, row and column percentages for sexual crime 1993-1997 and 2000-2002

		U18	Adult	All
Rape		576	1566	2142
	Row %	26.9%	73.1%	100.0%
	Column %	18.8%	27.5%	24.4%
Sexual assault		2067	3663	5730
	Row %	36.1%	63.9%	100.0%
	Column %	67.3%	64.3%	65.4%
Buggery	90	215	305	
	Row %	29.5%	70.5%	100.0%
	Column %	2.9%	3.8%	3.5%
Incest	67	60	127	
	Row %	52.8%	47.2%	100.0%
	Column %	2.2%	1.0%	1.5%
Aggravated sexual assault		33	80	113
	Row %	29.2%	70.8%	100.0%
	Column %	1.1%	1.4%	1.3%
Unlawful carnal knowledge		239	109	348
	Row %	68.7%	31.3%	100.0%
	Column %	7.8%	1.9%	4.0%
TOTAL	3072	5693	8765	
	Row %	35.0%	65.0%	100.0%
	Column %	100%	100%	100%



Table 16: Total counts and percentages for sexual crime 1993-1997 and 2000-2002 from *The Irish Times* and RTÉ news

Category of crime Specific crime	Child	Adult	Total
Rape	43	72	115
Row%	37.4%	62.6%	100.0%
Column%	16.9%	67.3%	31.9%
Sexual assault	194	32	226
Row%	85.8%	14.2%	100.0%
Column%	76.4%	29.9%	62.6%
Buggery	4	2	6
Row%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Column%	1.6%	1.9%	1.7%
Incest	13	1	14
Row%	92.9%	7.1%	100.0%
Column%	5.1%	.9%	3.9%
Total	254	107	361
	70.4%	29.6%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Discussion

The findings detailed provide some insight into media reportage of sexual abuse in Ireland, as represented by *The Irish Times* and RTÉ news. In both these sources, stories about child abuse are twice as frequent as stories about sexual crimes against adults, although the Garda statistics report that the opposite is true. (One important caveat here is that the Garda crime figures are often questioned in terms of their reliability, but it is certainly reasonable to suggest that sexual crime is underreported to the Garda, based on the evidence of the Rape Crisis Centres and other agencies.) Sexual crime against children is over-reported in the media and sexual crime against adults is under-reported. Stories with female victims predominate, in keeping with prevalent data from the SAVI report that women are more likely to be victims of sexual crime than men. Perpetrators in the media reports are overwhelmingly male, with little reporting of sexual crime female perpetrators, although the SAVI report indicates a higher incidence of female perpetration than is evident in the media reports.

Within the media reports of sexual crimes against children, 15.6% of such crime is attributed to parents or family members, 3% to strangers and 45% to authority figures. This contrasts very strongly with the SAVI figures which suggest that strangers are responsible for about 20% of child abuse, 16.8% by family members (fathers, uncles, cousins, siblings) and 4.6% by authority figures (clergy, teachers).

Victims of sexual crime are also differentiated on the basis of the amount of coverage. In *The Irish Times*, male child victims get most coverage followed by female child victims. Among adult victims, male victims get more coverage than female victims. In those



stories where the profession of the perpetrator of sexual crime against a child is identified, 68.3% focus on clergy/religious perpetrators, although SAVI indicates that such perpetrators are responsible for 3.2% of child sexual abuse. Similarly, 14.4% of such stories are about teachers and coaches as perpetrators, whereas SAVI indicates that the true figure for this category is about 1.2%.

Rape of children is over-reported and rape of adults under-reported. The rape of adults is also more frequently reported than the sexual assault of adults although sexual assault is a much more prevalent crime against adults than rape. Compared to the official figures, the sexual assault of children is also over-reported.

The nature of coverage outlined above is problematic in some respects. While there are important points of convergence between the media reports and official statistics, there are also areas of strong dissonance. In particular, the focus on sexual crimes against children prevents the development of appropriate public outrage about sexual crimes against adults. Current media reportage of sexual crimes against children is inadequate in that it fails to document the totality of the nature and reality of such crimes.

It would also be highly desirable to extend the current research beyond the two chosen media forms, as these do not constitute the total spectrum of Irish news media. It would also be useful to investigate whether linear forms of reportage are different from non-linear forms, and whether the content of radio reporting is different from television reporting which is heavily reliant on visuals.

The mass media exert powerful influences in society. In relation to the uncovering of sexual crime against children, the media have been major players by revealing the extent of a problem that had been hidden for many decades. The cases of Brendan Smyth and the McColgan family² are excellent illustrations of what the media can achieve. While much has been done, much remains to be done. The reporting of the findings of the SAVI report, summarised at the top of this paper, did not produce the kind of outrage that might have been expected given what was revealed. At the time of writing this paper, *The Irish Times* itself had only 22 references to the report since it was published in April 2002.

The power of the media as an influence for public policy cannot be overstated. It is therefore critical for Irish society that, in the matter of sexual abuse and violence, its citizens are as well informed as can be about the reality of the problem. The current patterns of reporting are somewhat deficient in this respect. This is especially true in relation to the level of reporting on sexual crime against adults. As the SAVI report indicates, 42% of women respondents reported some form of sexual abuse or assault in their lifetime, as did 28% of men respondents. This is clearly an ongoing social problem and tackling it into the future will require comprehensive and accurate media reporting.

² Brendan Smyth was a Norbertine priest who was convicted of child sexual abuse crimes in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The media played a significant role in highlighting the inadequate response to his crimes by the Catholic Church and by the state and led to the downfall of the government in 1994. The McColgan children went public in revealing years of abuse by their father, Joseph McColgan, who was sentenced to 238 years in prison in 1995. The McColgans' courage in coming forward publicly was seen a landmark in encouraging other incest victims to take action against their abusers.



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APPENDIX 1

The coding scheme involved the following variables:

Story ID

Source Title

Date

Year

Page

Words

Category of crime

Crime type (specific)

Victim gender

Victim age then

Victim age now

Victim's Profession

Victim's relationship to Perpetrator

Victim's marital status

Perpetrator's gender

Perpetrator's age then

Perpetrator's age now

Perpetrator's Profession

Perpetrator Identified

Perpetrator's marital status

No of allegations or charges

Stage of legal process

Sentence in Months

Story genre

Perpetrator's Professional Category

Headline descriptor victim

Headline descriptor perpetrator

Headline descriptor crime

Story focus

Region of country

Perpetrator cannot be named for legal reasons? Y/N

Actual Incest

Headline perpetrator gender

Headline victim gender



Media and Protests: The Utilisation of Communication Technologies by Environmental Movements

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Liam Leonard

Introduction

A notable feature of the recent political landscape has been the increasing incidents of confrontation between grassroots and elites. These conflicts have occurred in the wake of the declining relevance of the traditional left-right dichotomy, and have been exemplified by the campaigns of opposition led by environmental groups against the globalised corporate sector. This article will examine how new forms of political expression may arise from the environmental movements' utilisation of the new technologies of communication as a strategic tool in their campaigns of protest. The use of internet and media technologies by environmental groups has facilitated the growth of a network of committed activists, who provide scientific and technological expertise to like-minded protests around the globe. By exploring movement use of media and internet technologies, this paper will outline new approaches taken by grassroots groups as part of their resistance to corporate and institutional actors. The spread of environmental protest in Ireland through the increased use of communications technologies will be examined in regard to the Galway for a Safe Environment (GSE) anti-incinerator group. GSE's ability to utilise internet technologies to forge links with global anti-toxics movements will provide evidence of the extensive nature of the links available to grassroots groups who embrace cyberprotest as a tool of protest.

The paper will explore the manner in which communication technologies enhance protest movements by providing leverage and influence for grassroots groups in an era characterised by knowledge flows and technocratic expertise. Internet linkages facilitate innovative approaches to political opportunity structures for movements through emergent features of cyberprotest that create a new nexus of capabilities in a globalised age. The 'repertoires and cycles of protest' (Della Porta and Diani, 1999) of new social movements have come to be underpinned by the onset of interactive knowledge flows, networked alliances, improved tactical approaches and advanced mobilisational capabilities through the development of cyber protest strategies.

Use of internet technologies

The use of internet technology as a basis for support between disparate protest groups is strategically augmented by the utilisation of media networks eager for a steady supply of presentable items on potential ecological crises for their ceaseless broadcasts. The information highway has become a vehicle for the dissemination of the various components of the environmental movement: academic and scientific expertise, political strategies, legal frameworks and the location of globalised support networks. By facilitating the spread of information which enhances campaigns of protest, the new technologies of communication have become a vital tool in the arsenal of the environmental movements globally.



Castells defines internet technologies as a 'privileged tool for acting, informing, recruiting, organising and counter-dominating' (2001: 137). Through the application of communication technologies, localised environmental movements can link with similar groups on a global basis, learning from the hard earned experiences of previous campaigns. This has transformed the once isolated pockets of environmental resistance into a world-wide movement able to challenge transnational corporate polluters, in the place of regional campaigns of resistance. The increasing reliance on communication technologies by environmental groups has seen a transformation in activists' profiles; changing from the politically dogmatic campaigner to that of a media-friendly professional with a high level of expertise in a related field. This use of expertise has created what Castells has called 'the new dynamics of social movements' (2001: 138).

Mobilisation of social movements

While internet sabotage from computer 'hackers' is an established strategy of the politics of the information age, it is the ability of social movements to mobilise and communicate through information technologies which provides a degree of dynamic innovation to the politics of protest. The internet has become the activists' meeting house in the information era. Networks of opposition have been established and continue to reinforce protests globally, with such success that industries and institutions are now attempting to restructure their own practices in response to the new cultural and political expression of environmental values. This process of redefining cultural values has traditionally been part of old social movement agendas, however, internet technologies make this redefinition or reinterpretation of values much easier for relevant movements today.

This shift in social movement capabilities can be seen in the transition of protest groups from a reactive force for change within a dominant ideological paradigm to that of a cultural movement which can set the campaign agendas as witnessed in the ability of Greenpeace to influence public perceptions of the environment. In turn, old political conflicts can have their overall boundaries redrawn in this era of communication technologies, as cultural values are redefined through information flows. In this way, old political values (and conflicts) can be resurrected through a campaign based on communication of new perspectives.

The restructuring of political and cultural values through the technologies of communication has become an important strategy for social movements in their campaigns of action. It is what Castells refers to as 'mobilisation around meaning' (2001: 140). The importance of new political understandings of meanings becomes evident in relation to the crisis of legitimation facing democratic politics. As mainstream politics veers towards a centrist, liberal democratic monolith, radical political expression has adopted new organisational forms, with traditional hierarchies replaced by internet links which can give equal voice to a multitude of concerned activists, each able to give as much or as little to a campaign as internet technology allows.

Furthermore, social movements' campaigns are now structured around the technologies of communication. The medium can affect the message, and often shape it. For instance, a movement's success or failure may be based on media depictions of certain aspects of a campaign, rather than being perceived on any subsequent outcome. Public attitudes are swayed by media images, such as Greenpeace running a flotilla in the Irish Sea, alongside ships carrying a nuclear cargo for British Nuclear Fuels. Resolution to the vexed question of nuclear power is not the expected outcome of this form of protest. However, Greenpeace gains a large amount of public support for their movement from the transmission of these images. Ultimately, the media is utilised to create transferable emotiveness around a political event, through the creation of a moral frame.



The link between internet mobilisation of protests and satellite news coverage is evident from the events surrounding the Seattle and Genoa anti-globalisation protests. These protests and the massive publicity they received from global media networks has elevated protest to a new level, giving symbolic meanings and outlets for political expression to a new generation of activists. Issues of significance for young people, such as anti-corporatism or environmentalism, can now be forced on to the agendas of powerful groups such as the G7, with an immediacy that by-passes the slow and cumbersome cycle of parliamentary elections. The immediacy of internet communications increases the spontaneous nature of protest events, making them at once attractive to both the casual activist and the media networks which follow these events.

The emergence of global networks of disaffected young people has enhanced the anti-globalisation movement's ability to mobilise campaigns of protest. Throughout the last decade a new generation of politically motivated activists with advanced networking capabilities has become part of the discourse of new millennium politics, as characterised by 'McLibel' and Monsanto anti-corporate campaigns (Klein, 2000). Communication technologies are a central component of consumer activism that targets sweatshop production by Nike or unsustainable modes of transport such as SUVs. Cyber protesters can challenge multinationals that are now recognised as 'the most powerful political forces of our time' (Klein, 2000).

For protest movements, the internet allows for a strategic diversity which prevents such movements from becoming stifled by drawn-out campaigns which can sap morale. Through communication technologies, the battleground for protests can be shifted at the press of a keyboard button. This immediacy gives protest movements the ability to link and mobilise with key allies globally. Key events are utilised as mobilisation strategies, resulting in the expansion of democratic deficit and moral frames through the filter of any ensuing media coverage. An example of this can be seen in the events around the 2002 'Reclaim the Streets' protest in Dublin. As the police response to the actual march was severe, the media coverage and public outcry about police actions on the day led to a prolongment of the event's salience with the media.

The ability to challenge globalised networks or power by protest movements has become an important aspect of the politics of the new century. As traditional institutions are increasingly redundant, new equations of power pit grassroots protest movements against the globalised industrial-military complex. Communication technologies, once the preserve of the latter, have become the weapon of choice for the former. Strategically, the mobilisation, coordination and publicity needed for protest movements at a global level can only be achieved through communication networks. What becomes clear from an analysis of how protest movements utilise communication technologies is the increasing importance of these new forms of technology as a tool for spreading information and organising resistance. The new technologies of communication ultimately create a platform for forms of political resistance which can respond to the needs of concerned citizens in an increasingly globalised world.

The centrality of the media

Essentially, the strategic impact new media forms have had on protest movements has been based on a movement's ability to influence overall media agendas. The ratings potential of protest coverage is dependent on two main themes: the message of the movement, and the potential for an attention-grabbing media event emanating from that movement's activities.

Therefore, the subject of movement salience becomes a critical aspect of how media attention is maintained. According to Dearing and Rogers (1988), there are three main features in the issue maximisation process. These are part of an agenda building



structure which incorporates factors such as feeding the insatiable appetites of communications elites such as multimedia corporations through the provision of movement events which embrace the spectacular, and a coordination of media, public and policy agendas. This fusion of demand, expectation and need shapes wider understandings of the contentious social events which will maintain public attention, as well as viewer ratings.

A central feature of this analysis is the importance of the issue in the context of social expectations. Issue salience is achieved through extensive media coverage, but the issues can only be ignited into activism through the intervention of movement entrepreneurs or gatekeepers. Issue importance is maintained by 'public' and 'policy agenda setting' (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). From this perspective, policy response to an issue is dependent on the importance such an issue is granted by public and media agendas. In this way, successful outcomes to social movement activity are demonstrated to be increasingly reliant on that movement's ability to influence professional media elites, in addition to provoking a public response to their issue of concern. Subsequently, the media's role in a new political equation, as a filter for conflicts between grassroots and elites, becomes a crucial aspect of the new political dynamic.

A further understanding of the centrality of media to the grassroots movements can be achieved through an analysis of what has been termed the 'editorial gatekeeper'. It is the role of such gatekeepers to decide what events in society are noteworthy enough to feature on front page or primetime news reports. Their importance to a grassroots movement in need of public support is paramount, far exceeding policy makers or other members of the bureaucratic elite. While political disputes still require the exchange of views from adversarial groups, the influence of media on the public perception of that dispute ultimately influences the outcome of political contestations.

What becomes evident from this analysis is the importance of media advocacy and editorial support for grassroots movements to gain leverage. In response to this challenge, movements have achieved a greater degree of media professionalism, combined with technological expertise. As the influence of advertisers increases, media coverage and subsequent editorial support can be effectively driven or censored by commercial demand. Another form of external pressure applied to media has been demonstrated by the US government's determined steering of the military action taken in Iraq in 2003. In a new departure for war coverage, journalists were embedded with various regiments across the field of operations. Open criticism of the war led to public accusations of unpatriotic behaviour, and even treachery.

Invariably, the media's coverage of social events can be shaped by an underlying ideological perspective. The meanings of societal disputes around topics such as environmental or human rights, are subject to an ideologically based conflict of definition. Here again, the media play a central role, ordaining the public perception of social issues, which is flavoured by inherent ideological demands. One result of this shift in social perception has seen an increased cultural significance of the aesthetics of political disputes, as demonstrated in the campaign of Greenpeace against the French and UK nuclear industries. A further demonstration of the cultural significance of political media coverage can be gleaned from a study of the anti-globalisation phenomenon. This movement has drawn the lines of demarcation clearly, between a grassroots coalition of environmentalists and pacifists, and the formal institutions of global power, such as the G7 and IMF. In this way, the anti-globalisation movement allows potential activists the widest definition to associate themselves with certain pro-environment and anti-war sentiments with which many people feel some form of empathy. As a result, media coverage is guaranteed as a mass-mobilisation of a broad range of groups from academics to anarchists provides the potential for a 'media event', the focus of which is readily provided by the heavy-handed response of local security forces.



The Galway for a Safe Environment campaign

From an Irish perspective, the utilisation of media and internet has become a central feature of the recent anti-incineration protests in the West of Ireland, undertaken by the Galway for a Safe Environment (GSE) group. One of the most interesting aspects of GSE's campaign was their utilisation of internet technology and expertise to propagate their position on the potential health risks posed by incineration. By utilising information such as the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2000 report on the dangers of dioxins from incineration, which was accessed from the internet, GSE were able to transfer information through what Castells (1996) has called 'global computer-mediated communication (CMC)', in order to influence Irish media reports on the incineration debate. A GSE committee member discussed this point in the course of an interview:

The internet has had a big impact on this and other environmental campaigns. A good example of this is that on the day the US EPA report was released, we were able to have it from the front page of the Washington Times that morning ... hearing about this at one o'clock (Irish time), to getting Dr. Paul Connet on the Six One news, through internet connection ... It's remarkable that the consultants involved in the Galway Waste Plan have a highly paid PR firm working for them, and yet, I'd say without beating our own drum, that we've beaten them hands down in the local media (O'Bradaigh, 2000).

GSE has been successful in its utilisation of both local and national media in regards to getting across its side of the incineration debate. Committee members maintain that a run of well received television appearances, particularly one where they debated the incinerator issue with former Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, were successful, due to their ability to present expertly sourced information, which allowed journalists to trust their perspective on the issue. This strategy was based on 'contacts and other campaigns', where GSE picked up on the maxim: 'Source everything you use. If you can't source it, don't say it' (Leonard, 2005).

What surprised GSE, and aided its campaign, was that 'the consultants didn't adopt the same standards, and tended to throw sweeping statements' (Leonard, 2005). From this, the local print media began to show editorial support for GSE's campaign, despite a history of hostility to anti-ecoprotest positions during previous campaigns such as the divisive anti-sewage-treatment plant campaign in Galway during the early 1990's. This challenging of one form of 'expertise', that of the paid consultant, by another, that of a protest group armed with good information and the internet, has led to the rise in a new form of social movement expert, the 'incident entrepreneur' (Della Porta and Diani, 1999), which in turn has facilitated new levels of professionalism among the environmental lobby.

The significance of advocacy researchers for protest movements is highlighted in the following passage from an interview with a GSE committee member:

The day has gone when highly paid consultants can come into a community and tell them ... that this is perfectly safe. I mean, it took one of our neighbours, a librarian, to find in five minutes on the internet, a great number of highly damaging facts in recent scientific publications. These articles gave a lie to what the consultants were telling us (Ó Brádaigh, 2005).



New form of politics

GSE's campaign is representative of a global phenomenon of protests against corporate actors reinforced by the utilisation of media and information technologies, as well as expertise garnered from establishment sources but used for anti-establishment purposes. This use of establishment sources, such as GSE's use of the US EPA report, is both a result of and part of the process of overcoming national boundaries and embracing a global definition of these issues. As global networks are formed and information and technology shared, the role of community protestors has been transformed. What GSE's campaign has shown is that highly skilled and informed groups of protestors can outflank both government authorities and private consultants, leaving environmental disputes to be contested in the field of media primetime and internet cyberspace.

This represents a problem for both the public governance and the private corporate sectors, as environmental movements move away from social movement campaigns of extreme actions or violent protest, (despite the actions of a relative minority in Seattle and Genoa) and instead present themselves as alternative-minded, environmentally conscious NGOs with a laptop in one hand, and a protest placard in the other. Where once violence from social and environmental movements, at protests or otherwise, gave authorities the excuse to respond with the strong arm of the state's military and police apparatus, such repression by the state can be avoided by technologically driven protests.

This avoidance of direct confrontation between protestors and the authorities on the streets or at the site of environmental dispute allows for a broader public empathy with the protest movements aims. Furthermore, this strategy of utilising technologies and expertise gives protest movements an air of respectability, which belies their anti-establishment motives, while crucially allowing for increased media access. Indeed, this strategy has become a feature of media processes, as the use of sourced information, conveyed by state of the art information and communication technologies, has become a central part of both journalistic and editorial news gathering.

This form of political expression through technology utilisation has evolved from the unease felt by local communities in the face of the loss of powers at local and national governmental levels, and the rise in multinational globalisation. As the power of the nation state recedes, communities are utilising the new technologies of the information age, and combining them with specialised areas of expertise, to directly oppose corporate entities or toxic industries.

Theoretically, GSE's campaign represents a new form of protest, one which differs from previous environmental disputes in Ireland. Essentially, GSE can be seen as part of what Castells (1996) had described as 'an array of transnational social forces animated by environmental concerns' rather than a protest group rooted in either NIMBY [Not In My Back Yard] politics or deep green ideology. As such, the GSE campaign can be linked to a worldwide anti-corporate movement which, while having environmental concern as a basis for their thinking, has as much to do with addressing the onset of risk society and democratic deficit as any emergent eco-consciousness.

In the Irish case, this crisis is represented by the onset of a consumer society and a reliance on multinational investment that has led to industrial pollution and a waste crisis for society. Despite an increased economic output, many communities in Ireland have begun to experience a sense of alienation from this 'Celtic Tiger' economy, as multinationals have imposed on both the environment and quality of life of many citizens.

The political processes, both in Ireland and internationally, have been altered to meet the demands of this new form of politics. As the campaign of GSE has shown, this new form of politics is based on both the fears of local communities in the face of the growing



power of the multinational waste management sector (of which the incineration industry is but one component) and a growing democratic deficit presented by the weakness of the state in responding to its citizens' fears and needs in regard to both waste management and the subsequent health risks it may pose. Ultimately, the citizenry has responded to this challenge through protest movements, circumventing established political channels, and turning the new technologies of the corporate sector on the corporations, to oppose environmental degradation. When viewed from an international perspective, this new movement of political resistance has become both an important arena for political expression, and a new form of political action.

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Raiders of the Lost Archive: the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Film Industry 1942

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¹ RICFI: Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Film Industry.

² Rockett (1988 and 2001) refers to the report as *The Film in National Life* and identifies 1943 as the date of its completion. In fact the document gloried in the more mundane title *The Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Film Industry* and was submitted to Lemass in March 1942. The confusion over the title is understandable, however, give that part of its inspiration derived from an earlier British Report called *The Film in National Life*. By the same token were it not for Rockett's pioneering research in the 1980s, we might still be unaware of the simple fact of the report's existence.

³ The earliest references in the available files mention a proposal from a John E. Harding and George Carney to establish a Film Producing Company in Ireland and an April 16 1928 meeting between them and D. O'Hegarty from the Department of Industry and Commerce who reported on the meeting to his Secretary, Gordon Campbell. Nothing appears to have come of the meeting. See NAD S 13914A.

⁴ Leydon to Lemass 25 May 1937, R 303/GB/18.

⁵ Lemass to Leydon, 26 May 1937, R 303/GB/18.

⁶ Lemass to Leydon, 26 May 1937, R 303/GB/18.

In 1938, Sean Lemass, as Minister for Industry and Commerce, established a three-man committee with a broad remit to examine and report on every aspect – actual and putative – of the Irish film industry. This report would examine not merely the exhibition, distribution and production of film but also its potential as a cultural force and the extent to which the established censorship regime was fulfilling its obligations to 'protect public morality against any danger of contamination or deterioration which might threaten it through the influence of cinema' (RICFI, 1942: 44).¹ The committee spent four years working on the report but despite their efforts, it was never published and to all intents and purposes disappeared from both the Department of Industry and Commerce and the National Archive. As a consequence the report acquired an almost mythical status among film scholars: its contents (indeed its very existence) could only be inferred through a few tantalising references in Dáil Debates and National Archive documents. As a consequence academic references to the report have been – inevitably and unavoidably – partial and imprecise.²

However, the conclusion drawn by some scholars that since the report was never published it was never acted upon requires some revision in light of its recent 'rediscovery'. At 55 pages long the report represents the first substantial attempt to draw up a coherent policy covering all aspects of cinema in Ireland. Not only do its pages offer a fascinating insight into officialdom's often ambiguous (if not actually schizophrenic) relationship to the cinema but the various Department of Industry and Commerce memos relating to its genesis suggest much about the Irish cultural politics in the 1930s and 1940s. Most importantly, the content of the report suggests that it had a very real impact on Irish film policy in the decades after the Emergency.

The report was a response to two sets of pressures. First, the Department of Industry and Commerce had been receiving proposals relating to the establishment of Irish film industry (most of which centred on the building of a film studio) since 1928.³ Typical of these was a detailed scheme submitted in February 1937 by Eric Boden, an employee of the Irish Hospitals Trust in the US. Although Boden originally contacted the Taoiseach, Eamon De Valera, his proposal was quickly passed on to the minister in the department, Sean Lemass who in turn passed it to his civil servants for their assessment. The response was muted: although accepting the entertainment and cultural value of cinema, they questioned the finances of Boden's scheme. Boden did not propose investing any capital of his own whilst the unhappy state of the contemporary British film industry did not augur well for the prospects of an Irish industry. Summarising his colleagues' findings, the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Commerce, John Leydon, told Lemass that 'the prospect of establishing the industry on a healthy basis in this country is extremely remote ... and I do not myself think that the stage has been reached when such a scheme should be seriously considered'.⁴

Nonetheless Lemass responded to the effect that the growing importance of the industry was such that 'a detailed examination of the difficulties of its establishment should be undertaken before an adverse conclusion is reached'.⁵ To that end he requested that Leydon establish 'a committee on the subject'.⁶

What Lemass's reference to the industry's 'growing importance' meant was not made



explicit. However the most likely answer draws us to the second factor driving the establishment of the committee: the intervention of Father Richard Devane, SJ. Devane had a long-established interest in things cultural dating from his tenure as head of the Irish Vigilance Association, a Catholic organisation which since the 1920s had dedicated itself to ridding Ireland of 'objectionable literature'. In 1926 he had testified as an expert witness to the Committee on Evil Literature, (the conclusions of which shaped the drafting of the 1929 Censorship of Publications Act) drawing their particular attention to the dangerous abundance in Ireland of literature on birth control.⁷ Given these conservative credentials Devane proved quite progressive when he turned his attention to the cinema.

As Rockett (2001: 161-164) notes, Devane's interest in cinema had been piqued by a 1935 *Irish Press* campaign which had castigated elements of the industry for its effect on public morality. Although supporting the campaign, Devane's critique of cinema was more nuanced than the *Press*'s crude posturing: he called for a government enquiry into all aspects of cinema to enable a fuller understanding of its cultural, educational and 'national' potential. He repeated this call in April 1937 in letters to the *Irish Press* and *The Irish Times*. Notwithstanding the fact that in the interim Pope Pius XI had published an encyclical on the motion picture, *Vigilanti Cura*, which advocated a censorious approach to dealing with the cinema,⁸ Devane suggested that cinema be regarded in a more positive light. Referring to the official (State) attitude towards cinema – regarding it as 'a mere plaything or as a gift from the powers of evil' – he argued that 'as a consequence we have done nothing positively and constructively to use it as we should' (Devane, 1937a). He suggested that the establishment of an enquiry would enable Ireland to 'advance towards the position of regarding the cinema, not as something suspect or as an enemy, but as a powerful instrument in the cultural development of our people' (Devane, 1937a). Nonetheless he acknowledged the need to maintain a firm grip on the industry: for Devane the ultimate aim of the enquiry was 'to examine into the best means of establishing central State control through a National Films Institute.'⁹

Lemass might conceivably have ignored Devane's calls were it not for the fact that on 22 April 1937, the priest wrote to De Valera seeking a meeting to pursue an enquiry. In preparation for that meeting, De Valera sought the views of his cabinet on the cinema industry in the Saorstát (Free State).

Most of the departments had little or no comment to make in contrast to the Department of Industry and Commerce who responded immediately asserting that they had been considering the establishment of a film-production unit 'for some time'. Quoting figures quite obviously borrowed from the Boden proposal, their memo to De Valera stated that Lemass had

... recently decided that a full examination should be made of all the difficulties standing in the way of a national film-production enterprise. He also came to the conclusion that this matter could best be investigated in the first instance by a small inter-Departmental Committee composed of representatives of this Department and the Departments of Finance, Education and Justice. Steps have been taken to appoint this committee and it is the Minister's opinion that their report should be awaited before any further examination of the question is undertaken.¹⁰

In fact, Lemass had not instructed Leydon to establish such a committee until two days after De Valera informed his ministers of the imminent meeting with Devane. Given this it seems likely that the attempt to portray the department as having been long engaged in the consideration of the film industry (an assertion not particularly supported by available documents from the department in the National Archives) and the suggestion that any response to Devane should wait till after Lemass's own proposed committee had reported, represented an attempt by Lemass to head off any possibility

⁷ See NAI JUS 7/2/9 for details of Devane's testimony.

⁸ For example the encyclical noted of 'bad motion pictures' that '[t]hey are occasions of sin, they seduce young people along the ways of evil by glorifying the passions, they show life under a false light, they cloud ideals, they destroy pure love, respect for marriage, affection for the family.' From *Vigilanti Cura*, dated 29 June 1936.

⁹ 'The Cinema and the Nation', Article, Richard S. Devane, *Irish Press* 12 April 1937.

¹⁰ Secretary, Department of Industry and Commerce to Private, Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach 24 June 1937. S 10136. In this regard it is worth mentioning the Department of Industry and Commerce were probably familiar with a November 1936 report by a British Board of Trade Committee on the British Film Industry which offered a detailed explanation of the dominance of the UK market by US films. It stressed the importance for the US industry not only of its large domestic market but also of practices such as block and blind booking by renters (distributors) operating within the UK market. Note that the estimated cost of the studio appears to have been based on the Eric Boden memorandum discussed in R 303/GB/18.



that the de facto determination of cinema policy might fall to Devane, with whose views Lemass did not entirely sympathise (Flynn, 2005).

On June 12 1937 John Leydon wrote to JJ McElligott at the Department of Finance seeking sanction for Lemass's proposed committee:

The Minister realises that the suggestion presents many features of difficulty... but, having regard to the growing importance of the cinema from many points of view, he considers that the problem should be thoroughly (sic) investigated.¹¹

¹¹ Leydon to McElligott
12 June 1937. S 10136.

The response of the Department of Finance was, even by that department's conservative standards, spectacularly negative, refusing to even countenance the committee's establishment. Their reluctance was predicated on a combination of economic and ideological grounds. McElligott pointed out that even a native industry which managed to produce 50 films per annum could only make a minor dent in the country's cinematic balance of payments deficit given that approximately 1,000 films were imported every year. He also pointed to the severe losses experienced by the UK industry 'notwithstanding the much greater financial resources of the former country'.¹²

¹² McElligott to Leydon,
14 July 1937. S 10136.

In the light of these facts the Minister cannot see how a film industry could operate here without sustaining heavy losses which would have to be borne by the Exchequer.¹³

¹³ McElligott to Leydon,
14 July 1937. S 10136.

McElligott firmly rejected the establishment of the committee. Clearly irked, Lemass wrote to one of his own civil servants:

The Department of Finance minute purports to be an answer to the question, or one of the questions, which the proposed committee was to examine. We are not trying to make a 'prima facie case' for the establishment of the film industry but to have examined whether it is practicable, and if so on what lines, and what are the advantages and disadvantages etc... There is no case which can be made against an enquiry directed to these aims. Please reply to Department Finance accordingly and say that I must insist on this committee being set up.¹⁴

¹⁴ Lemass to Ferguson,
20 August 1937, R 303
3/5.

Thus instructed Leydon and other departmental officers repeatedly sought sanction and participation for such a committee from the Department of Finance. They adopted a slightly altered rationale in their communications, however, stressing that they were not seeking to make a case for the establishment of an industry:

It was, perhaps, not made sufficiently clear in our official minute that we were not as a Department desirous of making a case for the establishment of the industry but wished to have as much information as possible made available in the form of a considered report. Assuming even, that the report contained sufficient evidence that it was not possible, except at an unreasonable cost to State funds, to carry on film production in the Saorstát, it was felt that this would have the useful effect, at least, of enabling the Department to deal with the series of proposals which have been for several years past put to the Department from time to time.¹⁵

¹⁵ R.C. Ferguson (official,
Industry and Commerce)
to JJ McElligott (Finance)
23 August 1937, R
303/Gb/18.

It is difficult to square the assertion here that the primary function of the committee was to collate information that would allow the Department to deal with (and implicitly reject) private proposals to establish film production with a quote from Industry and Commerce's response to De Valera's query about Devane which argued that a film industry 'adapted to the national cultural and educational outlook of the country' could only 'be done as a State or semi-State undertaking'.¹⁶ After all, why mention state intervention if it wasn't on the agenda?

¹⁶ Secretary, Industry
and Commerce to Private
Secretary, Department of
the Taoiseach 24 June
1937, S 10136.



Nonetheless Lemass got his way: in November 1937 after a few more inter-departmental iterations, the Department of Finance approved the committee on the condition that the report remain confidential to be purely used for ‘the information of Ministers and for Departmental guidance’.¹⁷ This insistence suggests a suspicion on the part of the department that – if made public – the report might form the basis for something more ambitious than simply answering questions relating to the film industry. After several more exchanges between the two departments, the following terms of reference for the committee were set out:

To examine and report on

- (1) the feasibility and approximate cost of establishing a film industry (producing, developing, printing &c.) in Éire;
- (2) the extent, if any, to which, and the conditions, if any, upon which, financial or other assistance should be afforded to such industry by the State, having regard to the use of the film for educational, agricultural, industrial, tourist, cultural and general propaganda purposes;
- (3) the present system of distribution of films in Éire and any changes in that system which may be desirable;
- (4) the extent to which it is desirable to limit the ownership and control of cinemas in Éire by non-national persons or bodies;
- (5) the extent to which it is desirable further to control the exhibition of films in Éire in the interests of moral, national and cultural development.¹⁸

Industry and Commerce immediately set about forming the committee with representatives of its own department, and from the Departments of Education and Finance: E.M. Forde (the chair) a principal officer from Industry and Commerce, Seoirse MacNiocaill, a General Inspector from Education, T S Kealy, an assistant principal from Finance and E J C McEvoy, a junior executive officer from Industry and Commerce who acted as secretary. As its composition suggests, the committee was far from expert in the field of the cinema. In June 1939, Leydon wrote to McElligott seeking sanction for committee trips to London and Kerry to observe the workings of British studios and assess the Killarney studio facility where five years earlier, local garage owner Tom Cooper and 250 locals had produced *The Dawn*.¹⁹ Noting with regard to exhibition and distribution that the committee had already ‘acquired a fairly intimate knowledge of these spheres of activity’, Leydon conceded that the same could not be said of production:

In this connection it may be stated that no member of the Committee has ever been inside a film studio, and, without a clear conception of what a film studio is like and some insight into the problem of production, any conclusion the Committee ... will have on the feasibility of establishing a film industry in Ireland must necessarily be restricted.²⁰

Hence the request (to which Finance acceded) to sanction a London trip,²¹ scheduled to begin on 11 September, 1939. However the outbreak of war led to the visit being cancelled and the committee ruefully concluded that they would have to ‘suspend almost entirely’²² their work. Nevertheless, as the war dragged on the committee recommenced its work in fits and starts. In consequence the committee’s deliberations were informed by evidence or representations received from bodies or individuals within Ireland. These mainly came from one of two backgrounds: those associated with the film industry in Ireland (i.e. distributor and exhibitors representative organisations and a handful of would-be film-makers);²³ and those associated with the Catholic Church.

¹⁷ McElligott to Leydon, 25 November 1937, R 303/GB/18.

¹⁸ Contained in a letter from R.C. Ferguson to the Secretary of the Department of Justice 28 January 1938, R 303/GB/18.

¹⁹ See Rockett et al (1987) or Barton (2004) for an account of the remarkable circumstances surrounding the production of this film.

²⁰ See Ferguson to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, 14 July 1939, R 303/GB/18.

²¹ The committee intended to visit Denham Studios in Buckinghamshire, Elstree, Pinewood, Pathe Studios in London and the laboratory of George Humphreys and Co. They also intended to visit the BBFC, the BFI and representatives from the GPO Film Department and the Cinematography Films Branch of the British Board of Trade. See Ferguson to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, 14 July 1939, R 303/GB/18.

²² Lorcan O’Brien to Assistant Secretary (Leas Rúnaí) (P Ó Cinnéide?) of Department of the Taoiseach 18 October 1940, R 303/GB/18.

²³ In fairness, this group did include several individuals/companies who had actually made films: Tom Cooper who had made *The Dawn* in 1934 and 1935, Richard Hayward who produced the featurette *In the Footsteps of St. Patrick* and the Educational Film Company of Ireland which had produced the feature length *Kilmainham Jail*.



These included Richard Devane who outlined his ideas on encouraging indigenous production and on adjusting the practice of censoring films (and whom the committee singled out in their concluding remarks as having offered 'invaluable help' to their work). The committee also met a committee of two bishops appointed by the Catholic Hierarchy.

The Committee finally submitted a completed draft of the report in March 1942. Despite having never made it to London, they did address the production element of their terms of reference albeit with the caveat that the production section would 'have been of greater value had the committee had a practical knowledge of production methods'.

The report was divided into chapters dealing with exhibition, distribution, production and censorship of films in Ireland. The penultimate chapter discussed how the establishment of a National Film Institute could address some of the problems thrown up in the earlier chapters. As a result it represented a comprehensive oversight of (and offered a profound insight into) official thinking on the role of cinema in Irish cultural affairs. Furthermore, the fact that it was written on the understanding that it would not be made public led the committee to express their views in relatively unguarded terms. As such the document is unusually revealing. It is also quite impressive in its nuanced grasp of the political economy of the film industry, including the implications for Ireland of the global nature of the industry.

The opening chapter focused on the exhibition sector. Dublin exhibitors had sought to convince the committee that the number of cinemas in the capital had reached saturation point and that further openings would inevitably cause existing theatres to close. As a corrective the exhibitors suggested licencing cinemas to prevent redundancy in the market. The committee retorted that it was unprepared to accept the contention that exhibition 'should be an exception to other forms of enterprise in which a reasonable amount of competition is regarded as desirable' (RICFI, 8). It was not entirely against state regulation of the sector, however. Noting growing concentration of cinema ownership in the form of cinema chains, it expressed a classical economist's concern with market tendencies towards oligopoly. Thus it approvingly noted the call by independent cinema owners to place a ceiling on the total number of seats cumulatively held by an exhibitor or group of exhibitors.

The threat of 'alien penetration' of exhibition prompted a call for state intervention on quite different principles – those informing the Control of Manufactures Act, the legal instrument which had instituted economic protectionism in 1932. Whilst acknowledging that this had not been a problem hitherto (with the possible exception of the Dublin market) the committee noted that there was nothing to prevent 'foreign interests' from securing control of Irish exhibition. Close reading of the report suggests that the committee was motivated not only by a desire to keep Irish cinemas in Irish hands, but also by a concern to prevent very particular hands from gaining control of exhibition. Half a decade earlier the *Irish Press* campaigned against three British-owned Dublin cinemas asking 'whether certain interests in this country are to use their trading position here to endeavour to influence the Irish attitude to moral and social questions' (*Irish Press*, 6 February 1935, cited in Rockett, 2001). The report was more explicit, singling out Jewish ownership of Irish cinemas as a cultural threat:

It was considered undesirable that a service such as the cinema, which nowadays plays so large a part in the social and cultural life of the community, should be controlled to such an extent as at present by persons whose *ideas and general outlook are alien to those of the majority of our people.* (p. 10, italics added)

Somewhat grudgingly the committee acknowledged that the Constitution did not recognise any racial discrimination between citizens and that 'legislation could not be introduced which would be directed, surreptitiously or otherwise, against Jews in



particular' (p.11). Nonetheless these views reflect Ruth Barton's point that in the middle years of the 20th century culture in Ireland effectively meant the expression of a collective identity designed to stabilise the still-nascent nation-state (Barton, 2004: 9). In a context where identities which deviated from the norms approved by cultural nationalism were regarded as potentially dangerous, 'alien' control of the means by which such identities were represented would not be tolerated.

However exhibition was not the only sector of the film industry influencing the range of representations available to the Irish public. Similar concerns are evident in the report's discussion of distribution, which adverted to the 'cultural significance' of that fact that alien film distributors 'determine[d] the extent and nature of the supplies that we may be allowed to receive' (RICFI, 13).

For the most part, however, a more hardnosed economic protectionist perspective informed the committee's examination of distribution. Whereas oligopolistic tendencies were only a theoretical threat in exhibition, they were demonstrably present in distribution. The committee described the position enjoyed by subsidiaries of Hollywood and British distributors in the Irish market as effectively creating 'monopoly conditions'. Noting that 'over £200,000 a year is exported in film rental from this country by representatives of foreign film companies', (p.14) the committee pointed out that the 'only contribution of any consequence that foreign renters are called upon to make in return...is that represented by the import duty on films' (p. 16).²⁴ Furthermore not only did these overseas agents afford Ireland 'little benefit by way of employment or revenue' but, crucially, their dominant position in the market hindered 'the growth of an independent film renting industry' (p. 13).

This last point was critical not because the committee was concerned with the development of a domestic distribution sector per se but because of the committee's recognition of the relationship between distribution and their core interest – production. The report noted that 'even if we acquired control of distribution we should still be in the hands of alien producers'. However, the obverse was also true: developing an indigenous production sector was pointless unless Ireland had some say over distribution both inside *and outside* Ireland. Noting that the cost of even low-budget films was out of proportion to the revenue which could be expected from the Irish market the report concluded that access to international distribution was a prerequisite for a commercially successful industry:

... the normal cost of producing a feature film of the less expensive kind is from £20,000 to £30,000. The maximum revenue that can be expected from the distribution of a successful film in this country is from £3,000 to £4,000. From this it is clear that the Irish market alone would be unable to support a major film industry. (p. 18)

Yet the committee was pessimistic about the prospects of securing such distribution, even in countries with a substantial diasporic Irish population:

In the United States competition is so keen and the market dominated to such an extent by the big Hollywood producer-renter-exhibitor trusts that the possibility of gaining a secure footing in that market is slight. In other countries, besides competition from Hollywood interests, opposition would be encountered from organisations endeavouring with Government support to develop a native film industry. (p. 18)

Even within Ireland, the dominance of US/UK distributors was such that Irish films would find it difficult to access local screens. The committee cited the widespread practice of block-booking whereby US and UK distributors forced exhibitors to book films en bloc, with the result that Irish theatrical schedules were fixed up to 15 months in advance which 'would make it difficult for an exhibitor to find a place in his programme for any Irish film that might be available' p. 15).

²⁴ It should be noted that this was not an insignificant contribution: the report estimated that the state raised £60,000 in import duties each year, a useful top-up to the £280,000 annually collected from cinemas in the form of Entertainments Duty.



Yet, having established that foreign dominance of domestic and international distribution posed difficulties for Irish production, the committee was tentative in proposing remedies. In the international arena, the report suggested that the Irish state could 'encourage' US distributors to acquire one or two Irish features a year by threatening to introduce import restrictions on Hollywood films if the distributors failed to play along. With regard to the indigenous market the report discussed how to bring about market conditions conducive to the establishment of an Irish distribution company. Specifically the report suggested replacing existing duties on imported films with a more progressive film hire tax. Such a tax would be levied as a percentage of a given film's gross theatrical earnings. In theory this might encourage Irish capital to undertake speculative investment in the distribution of riskier (i.e. non-Hollywood) titles whilst punishing the more successful (i.e. Hollywood) titles.

However, the committee was circumspect about the likely response of the distributors to such moves. The distributors interviewed 'made it clear that they would not suffer their income from this country to be diminished' (p.16). In practice this raised the possibility of distributors retaliating by:

withholding film supplies in the hope that the resultant dislocation of the Irish cinema trade would ultimately induce the Government to reconsider its decision. That renters would have little hesitation in adopting such tactics is indicated by the action taken by them in Mexico and in Italy when State measures threatened their interests.
(p. 17)

Thus the committee recommended that any state action with regard to distribution adopt at most a '*reasonably* firm attitude' (p. 17, italics added).

Having at least partially dealt with distribution the report cited far more prosaic difficulties in the chapter on developing production in Ireland. Chief amongst these were the absence of any substantial studio facilities or of any company regularly producing films on any scale. Neither gap was likely to be filled in the absence of state intervention. Given this, 'the first step in the establishment of an Irish film industry would be the setting up of a State film studio' (p. 20). The scale of studio envisaged by the committee was modest – £25,000 for initial capital costs and £8,000 per annum thereafter in operating costs – but was nonetheless likely to require government (financial) assistance 'for an indefinite period' (p. 20), given that few producers would be expected to make use of the studio in its early years.

Such indeed was the small scale of studios envisaged by the committee that the report seriously discussed buying out and improving the facility built in the mid-1930s by Tom Cooper for *The Dawn* since such an upgrade would be cheaper than building a new studio. Further since the committee felt that a single efficient studio would be ample for any likely demand 'for some considerable time' (p. 20), they reversed their earlier objection to regulating competition, effectively recommending that the studio be granted monopoly status 'in order to avoid uneconomic competition' p. 20).

Turning to the core question of the report – how to encourage native enterprise to actually produce films – the committee (inevitably) concluded that further state assistance would be essential. This might take the form of 'a partial re-imburement of production costs' (p. 21) via grants funded by the film hire tax mooted in the previous chapter on distribution. Given such assistance the committee pragmatically concluded that any native Irish film industry might be able to begin producing short films. Even shorts presented difficulties however. In addition to the need to regulate block booking 'so as to give exhibitors an opportunity to book home-produced short films' (p. 21), the report noted that the trend towards double features and ciné variety was squeezing the market for shorts. Obliging cinemas to reserve screen time for domestically-produced shorts was considered but ruled out on the pragmatic grounds that 'the initial output of a native film industry would not be sufficient to fill it' (p. 22).



Indigenous newsreel production appeared a more encouraging prospect. The report noted that newsreels screened in Ireland were produced by four overseas companies which generally failed to do justice to domestic stories:

Irish events of significance are often allowed to pass unchronicled and so-called Irish editions of newsreels may not include a single item of Irish interest. When Irish matter is recorded it forms only a small proportion of the news items shown and it is sometimes presented in an unsatisfactory manner. (p. 22)

The committee was confident that the public would welcome a higher proportion of Irish news. Furthermore the report cited several native enterprises which had expressed an interest in newsreel production. Unfortunately all of those enterprises asserted – and the committee accepted – that commercial viability required monopoly rights for newsreel production and the imposition by government of a quota for domestic newsreel on exhibitors to ensure access to theatres. Nonetheless the committee argued such concessions should be seriously examined as the only alternative means of increasing the amount of domestic content in newsreels – offering tax incentives to the existing foreign news reel companies – would still leave the ‘selection and mode of presentation of the news ... in the hand of foreign companies’ (p. 23).

In sum then with regard to production the conclusions of the report were somewhat gloomy:

... a native film industry could never hope to replace to any large extent imported films by native films. Apart from an occasional full-length film its scope would be restricted to the production of short films and to films for education, industrial, agricultural tourist and general propaganda purposes. Its prospects of ever becoming self-supporting would depend on the extent to which a foreign market could be secured, and while this would depend to some degree on the quality, artistic merit and general appeal of the productions, other obstacles in the way are so great that it would be wise in considering the question of the establishment of a small-scale film industry to proceed on the assumption that its products would seldom procure exhibition outside the country. The greater portion of the cost of films produced in this country would in these circumstances have to be met from public funds. (p. 25)

The question of precisely how those public funds might be dispensed was addressed in the next chapter examining the pros and cons of a National Film Institute. For the committee the prevalence of such bodies in European and Commonwealth countries demonstrated that although ‘the significance of the film is being increasingly realised elsewhere’ (p. 34), in Ireland ‘it has hardly begun to be taken seriously’ (p. 34). In words that echoed the 1924 Dáil Committee on Broadcasting (which argued for state control of that medium),²⁵ the report argued that cinema was too important to be left to ‘commercial interests ... but should be controlled and directed so as to serve the national interest’ (p. 34). Responsibility for this would fall to a ‘National Film and Cinema Board’ charged with the ‘supervision and direction of all activities relating to film and the cinema’ (p. 34).

More specifically it was envisaged that the Board would undertake some of the activities suggested earlier in the report such as regulating the scale of cinema chains and the extent of foreign ownership of exhibition theatres. It would also act as a focus for production activity, offering encouragement, advice and – on occasion – funding for prospective producers. Finally, the Board was expected to offer input on the question of who might run any state-funded film studio and was to offer advice on encouraging overseas producers to film in Ireland. In short the Board would effectively bear de facto responsibility for defining film policy in Ireland.

²⁵ The Dáil Committee viewed ‘the use of wireless telephone for entertainment, however desirable, as of vastly less importance than its use as ministering alike to cultural and commercial progress’ DD 28 March 1924.



However, the committee described as ‘perhaps the most important function’ of the board the promotion of film for ‘purposes of education, culture and general propaganda’ (p. 35). Demonstrating almost limitless faith in the power of the medium, the report asserted that there was ‘no subject of the school curriculum which does not lend itself in a greater or less degree to film treatment’. Similarly with regard to cinema’s cultural potential the report suggested that

An important contribution could be made towards the development of national culture by the exhibition of films dealing with the history and institutions, traditions and customs, literature, music, games and pastimes of the people. (p. 37)

However, it was at the nexus where culture and education met that the report identified cinema’s single greatest potential: ‘reviving the National Language’. Using words which would find an echo 50 years later in Michael D. Higgins’s legitimisation of state investment in Irish-language broadcasting, the committee opined:

It is outside the schools, however, that the film can make its greatest contribution to the work for the language. It is generally recognised that the main difficulty now to be surmounted is that of maintaining the use of Irish in the after-life of the young people leaving school. While a considerable amount of Irish is being spoken outside of the schools it must be admitted that the language has not yet found its way into the main stream of our national life, and it is to be feared that the majority of our young people rarely or never hear it after the termination of their school careers. The regular use of Irish in the cinemas would provide a remedy for this; indeed it may be regarded as essential for the restoration of the language. (p. 36)

In reading the report from a 21st century perspective, however, what is striking about such language is less its confidence in the influence of film than the inability of the committee to conceive of film as an art form in its own right. Barton (2004: 9) has noted that Irish cinema has ‘struggled to find its own place in a critical environment dominated by the literary’. Certainly the general approach of the interdepartmental committee unproblematically assumed that cinema was primarily useful for remediating (and reinvigorating) existing cultural forms rather than constituting an art form in its own right.

Nonetheless the emphasis on the potential power of cinema found further echo in the report’s final chapter which – following representations from the representatives of the Catholic Hierarchy and other Catholic organisations²⁶ – addressed the practice of film censorship. Rockett (2004) has recently demonstrated the extraordinary zealotry with which Irish Film Censors of the 1940s undertook their work. Notwithstanding this the Hierarchy asserted that even when the censor had finished his work ‘there were still sometimes matters to which exception could be taken’ (p. 44). The precise nature of these matters was not specified but the committee noted objections to films characterised ‘by a materialistic philosophy which Ireland as a small Christian nation was striving to resist’ (p. 44). Indeed the complainants argued that ‘some of the concepts presented in these films were in fact directly opposed to principles embodied in the Constitution’ (p. 44) although precisely which principles was not divulged. Given this the Hierarchy argued that the provisions of the existing 1923 Film Censorship Act were too general and that they should be replaced by a code of a more detailed character.

Particular attention was drawn to the negative impact of films on young people. The committee heard that although specific acts of juvenile delinquency could rarely be blamed on individual films, nonetheless the ‘cumulative effect’ of watching films ‘could be regarded as being definitively conducive to crime or immorality’ (p. 47). Furthermore:

²⁶ See for example the section on ‘Representations on existing censorship provisions’ on page 44 of the report.



There was also a number of films in which the way to wealth and worldly success was shown to be quick and easy, without the need for hard work and perseverance. The operation of films of the above kinds upon young minds was generally more subtle and insidious than in the case of the more markedly undesirable films but their influence was nonetheless real. (p. 47)

The implication was that juvenile cinema-going required special regulation. The obvious solution was to issue limited certificates but the committee counselled against this option, noting that existing practice had refrained from the issuing of 'adult only' certificates on the grounds that limited certs would cause more problems than they would solve, stimulating 'morbid curiosity' and inciting 'the precocious' to evade the law.

More paternalistic concerns militated against the committee's acceptance of the suggestion that children under ten should be entirely banned from the cinema. Although acknowledging that cinema was 'no place for the child of tender years' the committee noted that the circumstances of many Irish households - 'particularly those of the poorer classes' - were such that that a ban on young children would create hardship for such families. Instead the committee suggested that the proposed National Film and Cinema Board might circulate information about films they considered particularly suitable for showing to children.

Despite the views advanced by the hierarchy, the committee advised against making any substantive changes to the existing censorship code. Ironically they did so on the grounds that such changes might have the opposite outcome to that sought by the hierarchy, i.e. that forcing the censor to operate within a more strictly defined code might force him to pass films which the extant code permitted him to cut or ban. In a frank admission of how censorship actually operated in Ireland of the 1940s, the committee expressed the feeling that:

the efficiency of censorship lies with the censor rather than the code, and that the highest degree of efficiency is attainable when the censor has the largest amount of freedom consonant with the maintenance of the fundamental principles upon which the censorship rests. (p. 46)

With those comments the main body of the report concluded.

Lemass's immediate response to the report is not recorded but subsequent policy decisions suggest that he was most concerned with the prospects for establishing an indigenous production sector. To recap, the committee concluded that a financially viable Irish film industry required access to export markets, but that the oligopolistic nature of the US market and the protectionist nature of other national markets would make this difficult to achieve. Therefore any hypothetical Irish production sector would necessarily be small-scale and probably state-subsidised.

This was hardly encouraging: it effectively confirmed what Lemass's own civil servants and the Department of Finance had long asserted - that a commercially viable Irish film industry was impossible. In the event, however, this conclusion did not dishearten Lemass but prompted him to engage in some lateral thinking about the problem: namely, if an indigenous film industry was impossible, were there any alternative means by which film-making activity in Ireland might be encouraged? While he pondered this question, Lemass took a strategic decision to park the report lest its gloomy conclusions be seized upon by others (in particular, the Department of Finance) as definitively closing the question:

I think action on it must be suspended for the time being. I do not consider it necessary to circulate it to the Govt. I would prefer not to do this until I would submit recommendation as to action as well.²⁷

²⁷ Lemass to ???
(Leydon?) 20 May 1942.



Thus, despite several frustrated public and Dáil requests in 1943 and 1944 as to what action would follow the completion of the report, it remained unpublished. (These included several attempts by Richard Devane to include the document in his one-off publication, *Irish Film Handbook 1943*). Nonetheless, some of the report's recommendations relating to the educational potential of cinema were progressed. In February 1943, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Planning, constituted by Lemass along with De Valera and Sean MacEntee (the Minister for Local Government) instructed the Department of Education to 'examine the question of acquiring or renting education films ... and arranging for their display throughout the country'.²⁸ This was followed in December 1943, by the establishment of a further inter-departmental committee (this time representing Education, Finance, Industry and Commerce, Agriculture and Local Government and Public Health) which considered the report's recommendations relating to the promotion of educational films and films in the Irish language. This committee would ultimately recommend the advancing of funds to the National Film Institute of Ireland the establishment of which under Richard Devane (with the all-seeing 'patronage' of John Charles McQuaid, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin) had been announced in July 1943. Thus from 1945/6, as a consequence of the report, the institution which would later become the Irish Film Institute received an annual grant of £2,000 via the annual Science and Art allocation of the Department of Education for the purposes of acquiring a library of education films and producing films on behalf of government departments.²⁹

²⁸ Extract from minutes of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Planning attached to a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Education to the Secretary of Industry and Commerce, 10 February 1943. R 303/GB/18.

²⁹ These films were not necessarily produced by the Institute itself. A 1947 memo outlines the arrangement: '... a department desiring to have a film made on a particular subject makes application to the Institute, which invites tenders for the production of the film, enters into a contract with a film-producing concern, and makes all the necessary commercial arrangements, subject to the requirements of the Department commissioning the film, and to the sanction of the Departments of Education and Finance as to the cost of the production'. Memo prepared by the Department of Industry and Commerce on 'Use of Irish in Films' dated simply August 1947. R 303/GB/18.

However the report would ultimately have much more substantial impact on the shaping of the state's longer-term policy on film production. By impressing on Lemass the difficulties entailed in creating an Irish film industry, it led him instead to consider how to encourage the development of a *film industry in Ireland* i.e. one based on foreign direct investment from US and UK production companies. In effect then the 1942 report framed Irish film policy for the next 26 years, from Lemass's 1946/47 proposals that the state should build and run international scale film studios, through to the decisions taken between 1957 and 1960 that the state should entirely underwrite not just the building of Ardmore studios but also the production of overseas productions there via the Irish Film Finance Corporation. It was, therefore, not until the 1968 Report of the Film Industry Committee (the Huston Report), that that policy was reconsidered and the idea of promoting an indigenous industry revived (Flynn, 2005).

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Journalism education in Ireland

Nora French

The start of journalism education in Ireland is generally dated from the 1960s with the setting up of the journalism course in the College of Commerce, Rathmines. However, there were some earlier initiatives in the first decade of the 20th century. A series of lectures was organised by the Institute of Journalists in Trinity College Dublin in 1908-9 (Hunter, 1982; Institute of Journalists, 1909) and journalism is said to have become a degree subject in Queens College/University College Cork around the same time (Stephenson and Mory, 1990; Murphy, 1995). These efforts appear to have rapidly faded. They coincide with similar initiatives in Britain which were also unsuccessful, in contrast to the United States, where journalism education was developed in several locations such as the universities of Missouri, Wisconsin and Columbia University, New York, which to this day, remain strong providers in the field.

The reason for this activity in the early 20th century in the US and Britain is linked to unease amongst both journalists and public at the standards of journalism at that time. The commercialisation of journalism and the rise of the yellow press raised concern for the quality of news and for the working conditions of journalists. Attempts were made on both sides of the Atlantic to professionalise the industry. In the US, where the normal route to professionalisation of any group of workers was through higher education (McChesney, 2003), university level education in journalism was successfully established in the 1900s (Weaver, 2003; Johansen et al., 2001). In Britain, where the normal route to professionalisation was through the establishment of a professional body (Siegrist, 1994), the Institute of Journalists (IOJ) was set up by Royal Charter in 1890, but this was quite soon superseded by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), which as a trade union, proved itself a successful means of protecting journalists' interests. Nevertheless, there were attempts in Britain to establish programmes in journalism education. These included the setting up of a private school of journalism in London in 1887-88 (David Anderson's London School of Journalism, 200 The Strand), and various initiatives by the Institute of Journalists at London, Birmingham and Leeds between 1887 and 1909. They also included a 1908 conference in London on journalism education to which American speakers were invited, indicating an awareness of the development of education in the US. The most long-lasting initiative was the setting up of the Diploma for Journalism at the University of London which ran from 1919 until 1939. A small-scale operation, it closed at the start of World War 2 and never reopened (Hunter, 1982; Stephenson and Mory, 1990; Esser, 2003).

As Ireland at the time was politically part of the United Kingdom, both the lecture series in Trinity and the attempted development of journalism in UCC can be seen as part of the phenomenon occurring in Britain. Foley (2004) has argued that Irish journalism in the 19th century was distinctive from that in Britain in being more political and less a commercial enterprise than in the rest of the UK and the US. He also argues that Irish journalists were both more idealistic and more middle class than in Britain. Yet then as now, journalism in Ireland was closely linked to that of Britain, as evidenced by the organisation of Irish journalists by the NUJ. Likewise journalism education has always mirrored that in Britain, as distinct from that in the US or in other European countries (see Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha, 2003). The resemblance is reinforced by the relative similarity of the higher education systems in Britain and Ireland.

The 1960s were a time of expansion in higher education in Ireland in general but especially in the areas of vocational and technological education (Coolahan, 1981; White, 2001). The OECD reports *Training of Technicians in Ireland*, (1964) and



Investment in Education (1965), and the start of economic development in the country as a whole supported this expansion. However, the move to set up provision to educate journalists preceded the two OECD reports and was instigated by the industry rather than any educational body, perhaps energised in the early 1960s by the establishment of an Irish television service and by the opening up of press coverage of Northern Ireland (Horgan, 2001). This initiative can be closely related once again to what was happening in journalism education in Britain.

The 1949 report by the Royal Commission of the Press in the UK found the training for journalists to be inadequate. As a result of this report, all bodies representing the press – unions, editors, management and proprietors – came together to form what by 1955 had become the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). The NCTJ became the cornerstone of journalism training in Britain. It firstly set up day release courses which by 1965, had changed to block release. Alongside these a one-year full-time course in journalism was developed which was run in various colleges accredited by the NCTJ (Stephenson and Mory, 1990; Esser, 2003).

In Ireland, the NUJ instigated the setting up of journalism education in 1963 by writing to the then Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, on the need to provide training for young journalists. Lemass gave his support, a Committee for the Training of Journalists was established and arrangements were put in place to commence a part-time release programme in Rathmines that same year (see Aja, 2000). This course consisting of a half day weekly session over two years (Fox, 1967), was repeated for the next four years and, in 1968, was replaced by a one year full-time course. The course was accredited by the London-based NCTJ and was similar to that offered in British colleges at the time, with some adaptations to the Irish context. The Rathmines course was important as the only preparation for entry to journalism in the country. Admission to it was competitive and it was widely recognised as equivalent to a degree for employment within the print and broadcast press.

The development of journalism education

Since those first beginnings, there has been a gradual expansion in provision in the number of courses available, their level and duration (Horgan, 2001). Currently, the main higher education centres for professional journalism education in the Republic of Ireland are: Dublin City University (DCU), Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), formerly University College Galway, and two private colleges, Griffith College Dublin and Dublin Business School. DCU runs a three year honours degree and a one-year masters' programme; DIT runs a four-year honours degree and a one-year masters' programme; NUIG has a one-year masters' programme. Griffith College's range of programmes comprise a three-year undergraduate honours degree, a three-year ordinary degree and a one-year graduate diploma. DBS since 2004 has a three-year honours degree.

The College of Commerce Rathmines was one of the six third level colleges under the local education authority, the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee, (CDVEC) which were brought together informally in 1978 to form the DIT. DIT was set up by statute in 1992 (Dublin Institute of Technology Act, 1992). The programmes at DIT represent continuity with the original programme from the 1960s. This programme was developed and run in close relationship with the industry, both the union, the NUJ, and employers, NNI (National Newspapers of Ireland) and PNI (Provincial Newspapers of Ireland). The union had great influence over the course, insisting on restrictions in the number and age of students (maximum 21 years) admitted to the course, and through the NCTJ, determining the duration of the course and much of its content. The one-year certificate course was extended to two years in the late 1970s. Its curriculum reflected the NCTJ skills based approach, with the different elements of practical



¹ See Stephenson and Mory (1990: 192 foll.) for further details of the NCTJ syllabus.

journalism being complemented by courses in law, politics and public administration, and economics.¹ The Rathmines course went beyond the requirements of the NCTJ in these areas and also included Irish and French. Until the mid 1980s, one of the external examiners was from the NCTJ and a representative from the NUJ and the PNI sat on the interview board for student admissions. From the late 1970s, there were increasing tensions because of the restrictions insisted on the course by NCTJ and supported by the union and the college's desire to up-grade the course (Conway, 2006). In a paper from the Dublin branch of the NUJ, the union's feeling of ownership over the course is apparent in its expressed annoyance at its exclusion from decisions by the college, particularly over the extension of the course to two years. It, on the other hand, wanted the input to be reduced from 20 students per year to twelve and had its own proposals to make also about the course content and admissions procedures (NUJ, 1981).

In 1978, Rathmines, by then part of DIT, set up a three/four year course in communications that was originally intended to include journalism. However, the course developed into a film and broadcasting degree without any element of journalism. Apart from opposition from the industry, the eventual exclusion of journalism also reflected the views of the professional media lecturers on this course who, coming from RTÉ were accustomed to journalists being categorised as different and distinct from other media professionals.

In 1982, the newly founded National Institute for Higher Education Dublin (NIHE) developed a post-graduate diploma in journalism. It was able to take advantage of the blockage that was occurring in the development of the Rathmines course, and it reflected the development of similar post-graduate courses in Britain at that time, for example, at the University of Wales in Cardiff and City University, London (Stephenson and Mory, 1990: 19-21). The course was established without the agreement of the NUJ and without accreditation from the NCTJ. After initial opposition, the NUJ soon gave recognition to this course, despite the fact that it was contrary to its policy regarding the appropriate level of education and age of entrants to the profession.

The reason why NIHE developed a journalism programme and became heavily involved in media education more generally has, of course, to do with the original development of this institution in the seventies. The government at the time wished to develop higher level technological education in the country and proposed to set up two new institutions in Dublin and Limerick. In Dublin, the plan was that the higher level work of the DIT colleges should be moved to the new institution; courses and staff were to be transferred from one institution to the other. However, the plan failed, mainly because local government (through the CDVEC) and central government did not agree on who should control the new body. The government went ahead to set up a completely new institution, the NIHE. Although courses were not transferred, it went on to develop its own programmes in several of the areas already found in DIT, including journalism and the wider media/communications field (White, 2001:149-153; Duff et al., 2000: 28-33). NIHE was given university status in 1989 and changed its name to Dublin City University (DCU).

DCU up-graded its course to masters level in 1990. At that stage, the courses in DIT and DCU were, it could be said, in line with what the government had intended with the higher level professional course being delivered in the new institution and DIT continuing the lower level work. However, this situation was to change in the next few years.

DIT developed its post graduate diploma in journalism in 1994 and converted the diploma course to a masters degree in 1997. In the 1990s also, both colleges established four-year honours undergraduate degrees in journalism, in 1992 in the case of DCU and in 1994 in DIT. This again was following the trend in Britain and elsewhere in Europe where it was argued, for example at meetings of the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA), that the one-year masters courses were not a sufficient response to the need for graduate journalists. The constraints of a one-year



course greatly limited what could be covered in the curriculum. A more thorough education in all aspects of journalism could be offered in the longer undergraduate programmes. Also, the aspirations of those graduating with masters degrees did not match many of the job opportunities available in the industry, for example, for work with the local and regional press and for work as generalists rather than as specialists in the field which these post-graduates would have studied for their primary degrees.

The two degree programmes were relatively similar, both being situated in larger media communications schools, and both drawing on general theoretical work in media communications alongside the different elements of journalism practice. Languages were also included in both programmes. They have diverged more recently. Since 2002, DIT's programme has been titled 'BA Journalism with a Language', with less emphasis on communications theory and more on languages. DCU, in contrast, dropped languages in 2004, refocused more on law and politics and cut the length of the programme from four to three years.

The course in NUIG was established as a Post-Graduate Diploma in Applied Communications in 1988 (O'Sullivan, 2003). Despite its title, it was a one-year course in professional journalism. Its distinctiveness lay in being offered through both Irish and English, thus supporting the Irish language media many of which are based close by in Galway or the Connemara Gaeltacht. In 2002, NUIG extended its English language course to an MA in Journalism. The Irish language course remains a diploma under the old title *Árd Diplóma í gCumarsáid Fheimeach*, and has developed into a more general course in media practices. Galway has been the only centre for professional journalism education outside Dublin.

Griffith College was established in 1974. It was one of a number of private colleges set up for commercial purposes which, especially between 1980 and 2000, took advantage of the shortage of third level places in the public education system (White, 2000: 242). It concentrates mainly on business and law apart from journalism. In the mid 1990s, it took over the journalism course originally established by Newman College in the 1980s. Newman College, run by the Catholic organisation Opus Dei, closed a relatively short time after the journalism course was started because of financial difficulties. Griffith College has expanded the original two-year certificate programme and by 2004 was offering a three-year degree in journalism, a three-year diploma and a one-year graduate diploma. Its courses are validated by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) DCU, DIT and NUIG have the right to validate their own courses.

The journalism degree offered in DBS is a very recent development. DBS is mainly a business school with some humanities programmes. Its degree programme, validated by HETAC, started in 2004.

Elsewhere there are courses that include elements of journalism, in higher education in the universities and institutes of technology, and in further education colleges.

The BA in Media Studies introduced in the National University of Ireland at Maynooth in September 2002 suggested journalism as a career option for graduates. However, although the course content included some practical courses in media production, journalism per se did not figure in the curriculum and the reference to journalism has been dropped. The University of Limerick has a BA degree in English and New Media the content of which is purely academic yet journalism is again listed as a possible career opportunity for graduates. Mary Immaculate College, affiliated to the University of Limerick, offers Media Communications as a subject on its BA degree. This degree is intended as a liberal arts programme – the prospectus even quotes Aristotle's definition of the aim of liberal education as the education and studies 'that exist for their own sake'. However, the media communications section somewhat contradicts this as the programme includes 'a theoretical and practical approach to journalism, both print and electronic media' (www.mic.ul.ie, 10.5.06). Some of these



centres may go on to develop professional journalism courses. Currently, they do not offer them, nor do they have journalist lecturers on their staff or recognition from the NUJ.

Among the institutes of technology, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology has since 1998, run a degree programme BA Gnó agus Cumarsáid (Business and Communications) which includes a module in Irish language journalism. Cork Institute of Technology has been running a part-time certificate in printing for some time that includes some training in journalism skills. Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology has developed a course in radio broadcasting that attracts a National Certificate in Humanities (Radio Broadcasting) from HETAC.

It is worth noting that, notwithstanding their interest in the 1900s, the traditional universities have not become involved in journalism education with the exception of the minor engagement of NUIG and possibly Maynooth. The University of Limerick is a new university, and similar to DCU in having an explicit orientation towards applied, technological education. NUIG has a particular national role with regard to the Irish language and an orientation to the needs of the west of the country which explains its courses. Maynooth, the smallest of the universities, has most need to attract students and media courses tend to be very popular, which may have influenced the decision to move into this area. Its department of sociology was well positioned to contribute to the area and the non-profit-making media production company, Kairos Communications, on its campus also provided resources on which it could draw. The three largest and arguably most eminent universities, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and University College Cork, have remained aloof despite the fact that, under pressure from government and other sources such as the OECD and the EU to assist in the economic development of the country, the overall tendency has been for their programmes to become more vocationally oriented (White, 2001: 257). They have concentrated on areas of vocational education that are economically relevant such as information technology, business and biotechnology. Areas that are socially relevant have not gained their attention to the same extent. This is another similarity with the UK where, despite the many universities offering journalism programmes, only two are long established universities, the University of Wales at Cardiff and the University of Sheffield.

At the further education level, (i.e. post-secondary education below third level) a certificate in print journalism is awarded by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). There are a relatively small number of candidates for this award, coming mainly from Dublin and Cork. One college of further education in Dublin, Coláiste Dhúlaigh, has gained recognition from the NUJ, mainly through the argument that because of its location, this college gives an opportunity to the more disadvantaged students to become journalists.² FETAC's certificates in related areas such as radio production and media production include optional modules in, respectively, research skills for journalists and print journalism.

² The argument has been disputed as the majority of students have not come from the immediate vicinity of the college.

The Involvement of the NUJ

From the start, the national and provincial papers and the NUJ were involved in the Rathmines course but the latter was always the more vocal and influential. Yet the position of the NUJ is now greatly changed from what it was in the first two decades from the early 1960s to the early 1980s. Then, it had a great measure of control. Its perception of its role at that time can be clearly seen in the 1981 report from the NUJ Dublin branch which gives a detailed critique of the course and makes proposals in order

to control the input and output of the course in a way that reflects the realistic job opportunities, protects the interest of members in the industry and safeguards professional standards (NUJ, 1981).



The NUJ was stronger in Ireland than in Britain during this time, essentially operating a closed shop for entry to the profession (Stephenson and Mory, 1990: 222). It then started to lose its grip on educational developments. As already noted, the DCU course from 1982 was contrary to its policy regarding the level of education and the age of entrants to the profession. It gave recognition to this course however, once it was successfully up and running. The course in Galway was given recognition without any controversy because the issue of post-graduate qualifications had already been decided with regard to DCU and there was strong support from the regional press for the course. Newman College also had its advocates in the NUJ because of its links with the Roman Catholic Church and it was given recognition. This recognition transferred to Griffith College when the course transferred and has been expanded by Griffith College to its current three courses. The connections with Newman College and now Griffith College were not universally accepted, because of the religious ethos in Newman and because of the private, commercial ethos in Griffith College. The practical advantages of NUJ recognition for these courses is that all students are entitled to temporary union cards and 'stages' are more easily made available within the industry.

In 1989, the union set up a committee to review the situation regarding training because of the expansion in courses and because Rathmines was no longer the cornerstone (Stephenson and Mory, 1990: 223). Employers were represented on the committee; DCU and DIT preferred not to participate as members of the committee but agreed to co-operate in any way they could. The report in its draft form (NUJ, 1989) made far-reaching proposals for a comprehensive approach to journalism education. These included the setting up of an institute for journalists similar to those of other professions and the development of a multi-level approach to education, with certificate, diploma degree, post-graduate conversion courses and masters courses for experienced journalists. It speaks of the need for the study of journalism as an academic discipline, the lack of which has led to

the failure to engage in the type of rigorous study and examination of the role and nature of journalism, the role of the media in national life and the development of ethical standards and procedures in journalism (NUJ, 1989: 17).

This lack, it was felt, also

contributed to the relative paucity of serious media study and comparative and critical analysis of journalism output and media standards in general (NUJ, 1989: 17).

The chair of this committee was Christina Murphy, then also education editor of *The Irish Times*. The report was a reflection of her strong interest and views on journalism education. As a member of the management at her newspaper, she was in fact the NNI representative on the committee. Her subsequent ill-health was one of the main reasons why the report and the work of the committee never went any further. The other was that the Irish section of the NUJ gained a lot more independence from the London headquarters in the 1990s, was set up with its own executive council, and turned its attention to issues of more immediate day to day relevance to its members. Education had been one of the few areas within its remit before then.

In recent years, the only concern of the union regarding education has been to do with the recognition of courses. Its earlier view of its controlling role in journalism education in order to control entry to the profession has long gone. According to Michael Foley (2005), a member of the NUJ executive and of the 1989 committee on education, the former education committee has fallen into disuse and more recently the union executive has been making the decisions on course recognition. There is disquiet about how the decisions are made, as there is no firm policy or set criteria. As mentioned, some members were concerned at the recognition given to Griffith College and even more so to Coláiste Dhúlaigh. Requests have come in from other colleges in recent years



but a stop has been put to processing them in order to allow time for discussion and reflection.

The NUJ's position in the industry is not as strong as it was either. It does not organise journalists in some of the more recent press organisations such as the commercial television channel TV3, some local radio stations and the *Ireland on Sunday* newspaper. In education, DCU's and DIT's course development in the 1990s took place independently of the NUJ. Both colleges include input from the industry for the development and review of their journalism courses as they do for all professional courses. This input, however, does not come through the NUJ but through industry experts identified and chosen by the colleges themselves. The situation is thus different from professional education in other fields in the country where professional bodies have formal links with courses and accredit them, for example, in accountancy, engineering, and the medical sciences.

It is also different from the UK where industry accreditation and recognition of courses is more firmly established. There are three British accreditation bodies for journalism education, for the print industry (NCTJ: National Council for the Training of Journalists), for the magazine industry (PTC: the Periodicals Training Council) and the broadcast industry (BJTC: the Broadcast Journalism Training Council). (The on-line industry is not accredited). The NUJ gives recognition to courses with accreditation. However, there is dissatisfaction within higher education in the UK about the accreditation process (Taylor, 2002), over the lack of understanding of higher education systems and processes on some panels, the lack of academic representation on the panels, the old style separation into three separate bodies for different media which does not match the growing media convergence and cross media careers of most journalists. The Association for Journalism Education, (AJE) has been discussing alternative proposals for accreditation but so far, there are no firm proposals or decisions.

It might be noted that the BJTC in particular has made approaches to extend its activities to Ireland in recent years. They have met with some interest from the private sector colleges and broadcasters. However, there is currently no interest from those who might be regarded as the main players, DCU, DIT and RTE. Formal accreditation from the media has not been an issue of great concern to DCU or DIT. This no doubt reflects DIT's previous experience with the NCTJ, the current situation in the UK and the generally satisfactory relations between colleges and industry in this country.

The current situation

At present, DCU and DIT are recognised as the primary centres for journalism education. They both run highly sought after courses at undergraduate and masters level, courses that are aimed at the teaching of professional practice as well as more theoretical approaches to journalism. Both also are involved in research and have students taking research degrees up to doctorate level. DCU has an annual intake of approximately 40 undergraduate students and 25 post-graduate students each year; the corresponding figures for DIT are 30 at undergraduate level and 20 at post-graduate level. The points required for entry to the undergraduate degree in DCU was 455 minimum in 2005, in DIT, 440. It should be noted that these figures are in sharp contrast to those for the two private colleges which stood at 260 for Griffith College and 230 for Dublin Business School (DBS) in the same year.

Whereas DIT has a longer tradition, DCU has currently somewhat of a lead in journalism education as can be seen from the higher student numbers and the higher points required for entry to the undergraduate course. It also has been involved in journalism research over a longer period. In DCU, journalism is part of the School of Communications with a chair of journalism, the only one in the country. Journalism in DIT comes under the School of Media with one of the two departments in the school, the Department of Communications and Journalism, focussing on journalism and related areas.



NUIG has the status of a traditional university in Irish terms, compared with DCU and DIT, but the small scale of its activity means that it is a minor player in journalism education.

In line with private higher education in the country in general, Griffith College and DBS fall a long way behind DCU and DIT in terms of the level required for entry to their courses and in terms of research. Griffith College has been successful in running its journalism programmes in its own way. In the future, it will be interesting to see whether these two colleges will develop beyond their present teaching roles or whether they will fade away as the demographic and economic situation in the country becomes less favourable to them. Their focus has already changed to attracting foreign rather than Irish or other EU students.

Journalists and journalism education

In any discussion of journalism education, it is important to note that only a minority of Irish journalists have taken such courses. There is no standard educational requirement for entry to journalism, with the result that journalists exhibit a wide spectrum of educational levels and qualifications. Corcoran and Kelly Browne (1998: 9) in their profiling of Irish journalists found that 61 per cent of their sample had primary or advanced college degrees, 19 per cent had completed the Leaving Certificate only and 1.8 per cent had left school at 16 or less. A mere 25 per cent had studied journalism at college and a further 20 per cent had completed a formal journalism apprenticeship. Corcoran and Kelly Browne's survey was confined to journalists in the national print and broadcasting press where educational levels are likely to be higher than in the regional and local press. Their findings supported Declan Kiberd's view (1997:34) when he spoke of 'the haphazard nature of recruitment to the profession of journalism'. This phrase accompanied his more contentious assertion that one of the major problems of the media is 'the absence of top class training for journalists'. The overall confusion on the issue can be further highlighted by a quote from Collins, a former editor of the *Irish News* in an interview with Ivor Kenny (1994: 33) where he stated that 'journalism is essentially a non-academic trade. I like to think of it as a trade, not a profession'.

Such findings and quotations are indicative of the confusion surrounding journalism education in general, not only in Ireland but in most European countries and in North America too (Fröhlich et al, 2003). Delano and Hennington's (1995) survey of the British press found that only a minority of respondents (22 per cent) thought a degree necessary for entry to journalism, and as in Corcoran and Kelly Browne's survey in Ireland, British journalists were found to have the same wide range of educational levels and qualifications. Journalists argue strongly amongst themselves as to whether they are professionals or merely 'hacks'.

It is difficult to establish the basis for journalism education, when there is no clear agreement on the role of the journalist and the sort of education required for working in journalism. And indeed, journalism education has been slow to develop in higher education, compared with similar semi or quasi professional occupations such as teaching or social work (see Bines and Watson, 1992; Hoyle and John, 1995).

Newman (1995) can be said to have foreseen these difficulties. In *The Idea of a University*, written in 1852, he drew attention to what he saw as the antithesis between what is required for journalism or 'periodical literature' and what is required for intellectual training. He contrasted the former with 'its incessant demands for views at a moment's notice on all matters of the day' with the 'science, method, order, principle and system' required for critical scholarship. Journalism, though quite firmly established at this stage in Irish higher education, is still negotiating its way towards critical scholarship of its practice, and is still debating how journalism programmes should be structured and shaped in order to educate those who wish to become journalists.



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Censorship and Secrecy: the Political Economy of Communication and the Military

Tom Clonan

Research and reporting: military censorship

The political economy of communication encompasses a broad body of literature that explores linkages between mass communication media and power brokers or 'elites' at a societal level (Boyd-Barrett and Newbold, 1995; Chomsky, 1996; Downing et al., 1995; Golding and Murdock, 1996; Herman et al., 1998; Keeble, 2000; Kellner, 2001; Mc Chesney and Wood, 1998; Mosco, 1996; Schiller, 1992). The literature focuses on a number of key power brokers within society such as the legislature, judiciary and a wide variety of powerful state agencies, including the armed forces, that would seek in their interactions with media organisations to regulate, control and direct public communication. The literature equally identifies powerful business and corporate interests within the commercial sector as power brokers who through ownership, direct investment and the powerful influence accruing from advertising revenues condition 'compliant' print and electronic media that constantly re-state hegemonic views and positions. The study of how these power brokers interact is often referred to as political economy (Mosco, 1996). Boyd-Barrett (1995:186) defines the political economy of communication as follows:

The term 'political economy' in communication research has a broadly 'critical' signification, often associated with macro-questions of media ownership and control, interlocking directorships and other factors that bring together media industries with other media and with other industries and with political economic and social elites ... Secondly, political economy also has an interest 'in examining the social whole or the totality of social relations that constitute the economic, political, social and cultural fields'. Thirdly, it is committed to moral philosophy, having an interest in social values and moral principles.

The purpose of this article is to examine specifically the 'social whole or totality of social relations' that exists between communications researchers in the academic field along with communications practitioners in the journalistic field with the armed forces. In order to focus on these two particular stakeholder relationships, the author will reflect on two unique sets of experiences, initially as an academic researcher with the Irish military and subsequently as a journalist in practice with the US military. The article will demonstrate the explicit manner in which both the Irish and international military operate – consistent with critical aspects of the political economy of communication rationale – to control information flow and to seek to limit or restrict by way of censorship any messages that are perceived to be threatening to the vested interests of the powerful.

The communications researcher and the Irish military

In 1995, the author of this article, then a serving army officer in the Irish Permanent Defence Forces (PDF), completed an MA in Communications in Dublin City University



(DCU). On completion of the MA, the author commenced researching a PhD into the 'Status and Roles Assigned Female Personnel in the Irish Defence Forces'. The PhD consisted of an exhaustive equality audit of the Defence Forces' internal communications environment, in terms of written policies or evolved 'de facto' standard operating procedures, as they applied to female soldiers.

In commencing this research, the author enjoyed privileged access to the research setting as an 'insider'. (For 'insider' research in secretive settings, see Van Maanen, 1982: 116; Renzetti and Lee, 1993: 5; Maykut and Morehouse, 1996: 70; Mitchell, 1993: 47). The Defence Forces, like most armies, comprise a workplace setting which is for the most part confined within a series of fortified premises throughout the state. Casual physical access to such a setting – let alone the privileged and prolonged access to documents and informants necessary for research – would be almost impossible for the 'traditional' model of PhD student. Such a student, normally a university 'outsider' with negotiated access to the setting via the organisational gatekeeper, would have severely limited access to informants and documents within a military setting.

Even as an insider (a commissioned officer at the rank of lieutenant) the author was still required to receive written permission from the general staff in order to conduct the doctoral research. The permission to conduct the research was granted to the author by his superiors on the 22nd July 1996. The letter of permission, referenced CC/A/CS3/8, contained a number of conditions for the conduct of the research. Specifically it stated,

I am directed to inform you that the Director of Training approves Lt. Clonan's request to produce a Doctoral Thesis on the subject outlined provided that,

- a. The work is not published
- b. The exercise is funded by himself
- c. Any time off necessary is sanctioned

The literature on research methodology is filled with references to powerful 'gatekeepers', such as the Director of Training, whose permission must be sought in order to enter the field (Jorgensen, 1989: 45-6; Renzetti and Lee, 1993: 27, 123-30; Smith and Kornblum, 1996: 22; Mitchell, 1993: 10; Van Mannen, 1982: 108-9). The literature on research methodology suggests that such gatekeepers may impose conditions or restrictions on researchers and may in certain circumstances go so far as to attempt to influence the outcomes of research. Bernard (1988: 161) warns of such preconditions. Renzetti and Lee (1993: 27) echo such warnings:

Powerful gatekeepers can impose restrictions on researchers in ways that constrain their capacity to produce or report on findings that threaten the interests of the powerful.

The precondition 'provided that ... the work is not published' had far reaching effects for the researcher. Whilst data gathering within the setting was made possible with the letter of permission, at a later point, when the doctoral research was to be presented for examination, the Registrar's office in DCU sought a legal opinion on the military authorities' precondition 'provided that ... the work is not published'. In 1998, DCU's solicitors had formed the view that to circulate the PhD to officers of the university for the purposes of examination would constitute a form of publication. The author was informed that he would have to return to the gatekeeper – the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces – and seek a clarification or a 'letter of comfort' giving DCU permission to examine the doctoral thesis and lodge it to the library.

The issue around publication of the dissertation was complicated by two further matters. The audit of policies, standard operating procedures and memoranda within the PDF as they applied to female personnel necessitated consultation with an archive of documents within the research setting that came under the scope of the Official Secrets



Act. Simply stated, all of the documentary data consulted or made available to the researcher were classified as 'Restricted', 'Confidential' or 'Secret'. In addition, as an unanticipated and unexpected outcome of the research process, the findings uncovered evidence of widespread sex-based discrimination and bullying against female personnel within the PDF.

Bearing these factors in mind, the data contained within the doctoral thesis fits the classic definition within the literature on research methodology as to what constitutes 'sensitive' research. Renzetti and Lee (1993:5) define such a subject as

A sensitive topic is one that potentially poses for those involved a substantial threat, the emergence of which renders problematic for the researcher and/or the researched the collection, holding and/or dissemination of research data.

The research material was certainly sensitive, as it was concerned with systematic barriers to paid employment in the public service for women wishing to join the Defence Forces along with the abuse of female employees within the PDF. The research material did not contain any information that compromised the operational or intelligence security of the Defence Forces. Despite this and given that the Official Secrets Act contains a clause allowing for the communication of 'restricted' information 'when it is his (sic) duty in the interests of the State to communicate it' (Section 4, Official Secrets Act, 1963) the researcher found himself in the invidious position of having to seek further clarification/permission in relation to the examination of his research from a potentially hostile employer – a personal and professional dilemma that, to my knowledge, no other researcher within DCU has had to face.

The personal and professional dilemmas for 'insider' researchers posed by the twin factors of secrecy and sensitivity are not dealt with in a comprehensive manner in mainstream literature on academic research methodology (see Miller, 1998). The researcher duly contacted the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces and received written permission from him on the 25th of June 1998 to 'Conduct Research and Produce PhD Thesis'. In this letter addressed to the Registrar of DCU and contained as an appendix within the PhD thesis, the then Chief of Staff states:

In June of 1996, Captain Clonan sought and received permission to produce a PhD thesis on female personnel within the PDF ... This is to confirm that the Defence Forces have no objections to the publication of the thesis for academic purposes. The thesis may be circulated to officers of the university and any internal examiners for the purposes of evaluation and examination. The thesis may also be held in the library of the university for reference purposes.

This allowed the PhD thesis to be examined. Finally, in November 2000, the PhD thesis was lodged to the library in DCU. Some of the findings of the thesis in relation to the bullying and sexual harassment of female personnel within the PDF found its way into the wider public domain in August 2001 when Ireland's largest circulation tabloid newspaper *The Sunday World* ran a story on the issue. This article was followed up by the remainder of the tabloid and broadsheet newspapers during the final weeks of August and received extensive print and electronic media coverage. The then Minister for Defence, at the author's behest, convened an independent enquiry into the author's research which reported in March, 2003. This independent 'Study Review Group' vindicated the researcher's findings in relation to the treatment of women personnel within the Defence Forces.

Despite the fact that the Chief of Staff gave permission for the PhD to be lodged to the library in DCU in 1998 and that since 2000 the research has been on the public record in an accessible academic repository, many of the serious issues raised by its findings, specifically with reference to sex-based discrimination within the PDF, have not yet been publicly aired. As of March 2006, over five years since the research was



published in DCU library, the PDF still had no explicit equality mission statement or comprehensive and well-publicised equality policies as would be advocated in the literature on equality matters and as would be understood by official bodies such as the Equality Authority in Ireland. In this regard, the Irish military authorities would also appear to be out of step with their counterparts in the British and US military.

Over a quarter of a century after women were permitted access to the organisation in 1980, the PDF at three per cent female strength has the one of the lowest female participation rates among the ranks of the European military. The average strength for female personnel among NATO armies is around 15 per cent. The US military comprises between 20 and 25 per cent female personnel.

The author would contend that the preconditions imposed by the military authorities have placed limitations on the widest possible dissemination of the findings of this research. This is a negative dynamic that is identified in both the current literature on research methodology and in the political economy of communication. In both canons, such a negative dynamic is hypothesised as being consistent with or contributing to the preservation of a given status quo – in this case perhaps for an all-male elite (the general staff) within a male-dominated organisation (the PDF).

The journalism practitioner and the US military – Guantanamo Bay

In addition to lecturing in the School of Media, Dublin Institute of Technology, the author is also a member of the National Union of Journalists and is a journalist in practice. Following retirement from the military and particularly following the 9/11 attacks in September 2001, the author has provided constant military and security analysis to both the print and electronic media in Ireland and Britain on a freelance basis. In September of 2005 this freelance arrangement was formalized in the print media context and the author became Security Analyst for *The Irish Times*.

In this capacity, the author applied to visit the US detention facility in Guantanamo Bay in order to report on and analyse conditions there. The US military authorities at the US Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba responded positively to this request. As part of the US military's Southern Command (Southcom) area of responsibility, the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay comes under the command of the Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO) and runs as a parallel operation and support to the US military operation in Afghanistan.

In a process similar to that undergone by journalists seeking to be 'embedded' with US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, JTF-GTMO required the author to undergo a comprehensive background professional and security screening prior to consenting to the visit. This screening included a formal request from the US military authorities for such details as Irish social security number, home and business address, press accreditation details, passport details and samples of previously published newspaper articles.

This pre-screening of the journalist, including as it does a request for previously published material, is suggestive of a pre-emptive effort on the part of the US military authorities to pre-censor potentially disruptive journalists or reportage. This would appear to be consistent with the highly selective exercise of control by powerful gatekeepers alluded to in the earlier part of this article – where access to sensitive information is often granted only when certain preconditions are met. In this instance, one of the preconditions sought by the 'powerful elite', in this case JTF-GTMO, appears to consist of an auditing of copy for evidence of compliance or otherwise with US foreign policy imperatives.

With the screening complete and the consent given in principle, the author had to satisfy the visa requirements for work in the United States. During the visa interview, the author was asked if he had ever participated in or witnessed a conflict. The author



was also asked to indicate if he had ever trained in the use of weapons or explosives or visited such countries as Syria or Lebanon – presumably territories listed as ‘rogue’ states by the US Department of Homeland Security. Having answered ‘yes’ to all of these questions in the spirit of full disclosure, the author was then understandably asked to explain where such expertise and exposure was acquired. My account of UN service as a commissioned officer in the PDF was sufficient to allay any suspicions on the part of the US embassy staff who were unfailingly courteous and helpful.

However, it did strike me that a history of such visits to ‘rogue’ states by other journalists – particularly those not ‘embedded’ with US forces – might in some way constitute a barrier, legitimate or otherwise, to entry into the United States. In this way, security screening, in unscrupulous hands, might be used to pre-emptively censor or deny entry to journalists perceived as ‘non-compliant’ or ‘off-message’.

With US visa and JTF-GTMO requirements satisfied, the author finally received an officially approved and stamped US Navy ‘Area Clearance Request’ form for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. On arrival by air to Guantanamo Bay the author was only allowed to exit the plane on production of this form.

Having been granted permission to ‘dismount’ the aircraft by a number of heavily armed US troops at Guantanamo, the author was then asked to sign the ‘Ground Rules’ or JTF-GTMO’s ‘Media Policy at Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba’. This comprehensive, five page document contained a litany of restrictions and pre-conditions on reporting which effectively limit the journalist’s ability to fully describe conditions at Guantanamo Bay.

The restrictions which are too numerous to fully explore here contain such blanket phrases as:

By signing this document, a National Media Representative (NMR) is agreeing to abide by the following conditions: a. To not publish, release, discuss or share information identified by JTF-Guantanamo personnel as being protected.

Other blanket provisions are included in the document such as ‘d.4. Embargoes may be imposed by the JTF-Public Affairs Officer when necessary to protect security’.

In addition to these embargoes and restrictions, JTF-GTMO also ensured that the author was accompanied at all times by a military Public Affairs Officer and a further Intelligence ‘Operations Security’ Officer, who was in civilian clothing and who was only referred to by forename. No other identifying information was supplied. At the end of the visit to the Camp Delta complex, the author also had to submit to a ‘security review panel’ which audited all still or video imagery taken during the visit and which was entitled to examine the author’s laptop or written notes taken during the period on Guantanamo Bay.

JTF-GTMO’s media policy document also points out that in addition to all of these restrictions, embargoes and scrutiny by Department of Defence officials, the journalist is liable to ‘criminal prosecution’ if in violation of the ‘ground rules’ or ‘instructions of the Public Affairs escort’.

In essence, the security pre-screening process, the JTF Media Policy document, the PAO and Operations Security escort along with the ‘security review panel’, individually and collectively comprise a system of censorship with which the journalist must comply in order to gain access to the story.

Despite the imposition of these restrictions, the author was given access to all five detention camps on Guantanamo including those containing ‘non-compliant’ and ‘high-risk’ categories of prisoners. The author was also given more or less complete access to all of the military personnel on the island and was allowed free rein in on-the-record interviews to discuss any aspect of the camp’s activities.



At the security review panel, no images, text or notes taken by the author were deleted, copied or censored by the US military authorities. Following the publication of the articles in *The Irish Times* in October and November of 2005 – which were explicitly critical of Camp Delta – the author received only positive feedback from JTF-GTMO and the US Embassy in Dublin. The nature of this off-the-record verbal feedback consisted of an acknowledgement of some of the ethical dilemmas posed by ‘war’ and an agreement that on some issues, the US Embassy would have to ‘agree to disagree’ with some points raised in the series of articles.

The author did feel however that the combined restrictions amounted to an explicit attempt on the part of the military authorities in their capacity as state-sponsored gatekeepers to impose restrictions on researchers/journalists in ways that constrain their capacity to produce or report on findings that threaten the interests of the powerful (see Renzetti and Lee, 1993: 27). In this case, the powerful elite in question consists of the Bush administration, JTF-GTMO’s political masters.

Conclusion

This article has sought to highlight the manner in which both the Irish and US military operate systems of censorship that act to control the range and content of information communicated by both academic researchers and professional journalists. It highlights the links between normative critical theory as articulated by the political economy approach to communication whereby ‘powerful elites’ within society would seek to control potentially disruptive information and messages in order to preserve hegemonic views or the status quo. It also highlights similar concerns raised in the literature on research methodology about powerful gatekeepers particularly where access is an issue and especially as it relates to sensitive issues in secretive environments – whether that is the abuse of female employees in the Irish military or the circumstances surrounding hundreds of detentions at the US Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay.

The challenge for both academic researchers and professional journalists alike as they interact with the military is to be aware of this dynamic and to evolve professional responses that in some way counteract the unequal power relationship imposed by censorship. This aspiration is one of the central tenets of the political economy approach to communication – whether it is in learned discourse as researchers or popular discourse as journalists.

According to Mc Chesney:

The political economy of communication ... can probably be distinguished from all other forms of communication research by its explicit commitment to participatory democracy. Research is driven by a central premise drawn directly from classical democratic political theory: the notion that democracy is predicated upon an informed participating citizenry and that a political culture typified by an informed citizenry can only be generated in the final analysis by a healthy and vibrant media system. Accordingly, the political economy of communication has a strongly normative critique of the ways in which state policies and the media ... serve this ‘democratic function’ (McChesney et al., 1998:8).

I would conclude therefore that both journalists and researchers alike should adopt a robust professional ideology in order to counter state-sponsored attempts to suppress unpalatable truths by the imposition of legally binding restrictions and impositions. In order to counter these impositions, the first requirement is for insight on the part of



researchers and journalists as to the motivation of powerful gatekeepers in this regard. The second requirement is perhaps for collective action and lobbying on the part of third level institutions on the one hand and professional journalistic associations on the other to counter the military's justification for unnecessary censorship systems – often put in place in the name of 'the security of the state'.

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John David Bourchier: an Irish Journalist in the Balkans

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Michael Foley

This article is based on initial research into the life of Bourchier carried out while the author worked on an EU journalism education project at the University of Sofia, Bulgaria.

Introduction

In 1920, the funeral took place at the Rila Monastery in Bulgaria's Rhodope Mountains of the journalist John David Bourchier (1850-1920) of Bruff, Baggotstown, Co Limerick, Ireland. One newspaper in Sofia led with the headline: 'Our Bourchier is dead.' When news of his death became known in Sofia, a crowd gathered outside the hotel where he had lived on and off for 30 years. His funeral service was in the Alexander Nevski Memorial Church, a stunning monument of neo-Byzantine architecture that commemorates the Russian soldiers who died in the fight for Bulgarian freedom in 1877, from what is still referred to as the Turkish yoke. The Irish man's body lay in state in the cathedral, with his face uncovered in the Orthodox tradition. He had a huge funeral, and the crowds lined the route through the city as the cortege made its way to the mountains.

King Boris personally granted Bourchier's wish to be buried at Rila monastery. Rila is a mysterious place, situated in a high valley, surrounded by forests and high peaks that remain snow covered for much of the year. The fortified monastery is one of the most beautiful in Bulgaria, a country famous for its remote monasteries. It is also the centre of Bulgarian Orthodox spirituality. Bourchier is buried just outside the monastery walls. His grave is a simple granite slab, enclosed by a low metal rail, in a forest clearing. From the grave, the cupola of the monastery church can be seen. Today it is hard to find but, when he was buried, the clearing was much greater, and it would have been clearly visible from the road leading to the monastery gate.

One of Sofia's major roads is named Bourchier Boulevard. At what was the Grand Hotel Bulgarie, the only home he had in the Balkans, is a plaque describing *The Times* correspondent as a 'sincere friend of the Bulgarian nation and a champion of the Bulgarian national cause'. Once a brand of cigarettes was named in his honour, and a set of commemorative stamps issued with his image, including one featuring Bourchier wearing the Bulgarian peasant dress he liked to wear.



From 1888, Bourchier covered events in Bulgaria and the Balkans for the *London Times*. He was, however, much more than a reporter. He was, both publicly and privately, a defender of Bulgarian interests, who pleaded its cause internationally and insisted that Bulgaria and the Balkans had significance outside those deemed important by the great powers. Bourchier was at his post for 30 years, to the extent that he actually identified with the Bulgarian people and their national interests. At the same time, he maintained, it was still possible to be an impartial reporter while recognizing the rightness of a cause. In the 1990s, journalists covering wars in the Balkans would continue to struggle with the same issues.



Bourchier was one of many Irishmen who found their niche as reporters working in London or covering events abroad for the British press. A few of these are inscribed on a monument in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral commemorating journalists who covered military campaigns in the Sudan and other areas. The Irish names include Edmond O'Donovan of the *Daily News*, who had worked for the *Freeman's Journal*, and Frank Power of *The Irish Times*.

Also listed on the monument in St Paul's is Sir William Howard Russell, of *The Times*, 'the first and greatest war correspondent'. Russell, who was from Tallaght, Co Dublin, covered the Crimea war, with some controversy, for the *London Times* and like Bourchier was a graduate of Trinity College Dublin and of Anglo-Irish stock.

Early life and career

Bourchier was born in 1850 into a family that could trace its roots back to the Anglo-Normans and, through his mother's family, to the Huguenots. After his father's death, his mother moved back to her family home at Castlecomer, Co Kilkenny, a place Bourchier also viewed as home right to the end of his life.

Bourchier was educated at Portora Royal, Enniskillen, at Trinity College Dublin and Cambridge University. He was a classical scholar and a musician. He intended being called to the Bar, but his increasing deafness on the one hand and lack of money on the other thwarted that ambition. Instead, he became a teacher at the English public school, Eton, where he was by all accounts unhappy. According to his biographer, Lady Grogan, he 'was unconventional and felt himself fettered and trammelled by the conventions of Eton; he made some lasting friends amongst the boys, but as a whole the genus boy did not appeal to him' (Grogan, 1932: 7). Nevertheless, he remained 10 years at Eton, despite his encroaching deafness which made teaching increasingly difficult. He took little part in school life but did write for a number of magazines and periodicals, including one piece on evictions in Ireland. After he left to take up journalism in the Balkans he was granted a small pension for three years (ibid).

According to a 1996 reassessment of Bourchier in his old newspaper, *The Times*, written to commemorate the restoration of his grave at Rila:

He was a private man, nervous, haunted by growing deafness, probably homosexual, but he became a close confidant of kings and ambassadors in their labyrinthine intrigues (*The Times*, 1996).

Journalism offered an alternative that Bourchier was aware of from the time he started teaching. He wrote for periodicals and magazines and there was little doubt that he viewed writing for reviews as building up an alternative to life at Eton. Lady Grogan says he wrote occasional articles for the press.

Some of his earliest described scenes of evictions in Ireland and drew the notice of *The Times*, though they were not written for that paper but published by the *Globe*; and these, I believe were largely responsible, together with his linguistic ability, for the offer on the part of the *Times* of foreign correspondent in the Near East. (Grogan, 1932: 7)

In 1888, aged 38 years, while on his way to the Adriatic coast, as recommended by his doctor, he had dinner with the British Ambassador in Vienna. There he met the *Times* Austrian correspondent, an old Etonian named Brinsley Richards. They discussed his journalistic ambitions but Bourchier had few illusions about his own talents as he had no experience writing about politics or foreign affairs. Several weeks later, he



received a telegram from the same correspondent, asking if he was free to cover a peasant uprising in Romania, and then go to Bulgaria which was in a state of turmoil, following a war, a coup by military officers, and the forced abdication of Prince Alexander. The Bulgarians subsequently found a new prince, Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg.

Bourchier travelled to Romania where, with journalistic luck, the uprising had grown in strength. He sent a few dispatches, and then went on to Bulgaria to cover Ferdinand's first tour of his territory. He never returned to teaching. During his first three years in the Balkans, he was freelance, offering pieces to the *Times* and to other reviews and journals. He wrote a long series on Bulgaria for the *Fortnightly Review*, which shows that it was the scenery that first attracted him, but it was not long before he became an expert on the politics of the region.

He travelled all over the Balkan Peninsula, making his first contacts with the insurgents seeking the independence of Crete, a cause he would also champion. He visited monasteries, and the remoter parts of Bulgaria, often living with peasants, eating their food and living in their homes, giving him a unique insight into the people and the place. He also learnt Bulgarian and Greek and had a passing knowledge of other languages of the area. He was gregarious and, despite his deafness, made friends and contacts easily.

Bourchier covered four wars and many insurrections in Crete, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Romania, and Macedonia. Four kings he knew had to abdicate, and of the rulers and statesmen who were often his sources of information, eighteen met violent deaths. He also wrote with great authority on the archaeology of Greece and the classical world, and is credited with popularising interest in ancient Greece through his articles in the *Times*. He also covered the first Olympic Games in 1896.

Bulgaria before Bourchier

In Bulgaria, during the 1870s, a nationalist movement grew in opposition to the Ottoman empire. In April 1876, an armed uprising in several Bulgarian regions took place which was suppressed by the Ottoman forces with such ferocity, wiping out entire villages, that European opinion swung entirely behind the Bulgarians. Support for Bulgarian independence thus became a fashionable cause. Gladstone's defence of the Bulgarians is still commemorated in Sofia, where he too has a street named after him. Following the uprising, the great powers tried to gain independence for Bulgaria through negotiations with the Ottoman Empire, but they were dismissed by the Turks. Finally, when all diplomatic efforts failed, Russia declared war on Turkey.

The outcome of the Russo-Turkish war was the Treaty of San Stefano. The treaty, signed in March 1878, established Bulgaria as a huge state that took in some of the Aegean coast, Thrace and, most importantly, much of present day Macedonia. According to the historian, R J. Crampton, it was 'in territorial terms ... as much as any Bulgarian nationalist could have hoped for or even dreamed of' (Crampton, 1997: 85).

It was, however, too much for Britain and Austro-Hungary who feared Bulgaria would become a major factor in Russian influence in the Balkans; it was Russian action, after all, which led to Bulgarian independence. They insisted that San Stefano be ripped up, and a new treaty, the Treaty of Berlin, was signed in July of the same year. This time, Bulgaria lost all it had gained and ended up 37 per cent the size it had been under San Stefano. It lost its gains in Macedonia, which had included the cities of Ohrid and Skopje, the present day capital, which was returned to Ottoman rule. The new, reduced Bulgaria would remain a vassal state of the Ottoman sultan (as in the San Stefano treaty) with a Christian prince, elected by the Bulgarians. Again, according to Crampton: 'The new Bulgarian state was to enter into life with a ready made programme for territorial expansion and a burning sense of injustice meted out to it by the great powers' (Crampton, 1997: 85). That was the state of play when Bourchier arrived in



1888, and would remain the main influence on Bulgarian politics up to the Second World War and beyond.

This was the context in which Bouchier began working as a journalist. Bulgaria and the Balkans were seen as pivotal to the stability of Europe and relations between the powers. It was this that made Bouchier so influential, in a way a foreign correspondent can never be today. His reports from the Balkans were read by politicians and the foreign office in London at a time when Britain was a major power and viewed events in the Balkans as important to the future of Europe. He was in constant touch with the House of Commons' Balkan Committee, and even though reporters were not given a by-line, the longer pieces for the likes of the *Fortnightly Review* ensured that he was a well-known expert on Balkan affairs. He also wrote the sections on Greece, Romania and Bulgaria for various editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. His position on *The Times* was not made permanent until January 1892, when he received a letter from the newspaper's manager, Moberly Bell, informing him that owing to other changes among *Times* correspondents, 'you will accordingly be fully recognised as our correspondent there' (Sofia) (Grogan, 1932: 20).

Reporting Bulgaria

Bouchier was regularly accused of bias towards Bulgaria, especially by Greece, over his support for the Bulgarian wish to integrate Macedonia. But it was the Bulgarian government that accused him of false reporting, following the assassination of the former prime minister, Stefan Stambolov. Bouchier had been a good friend, despite what he described in the *Times* as Stambolov's 'decidedly Orientalist methods of government'. Bouchier wrote further: 'A heavy responsibility rests with those who refused Stambolov permission to leave the country, and who, detaining him here like a prisoner, neglected the measures necessary to ensure his safety' (*The Times*, 1895).

Outcry followed what was seen as an accusation against the government. Prince Ferdinand protested to the *Times*, eliciting a letter to Bouchier from the director of that newspaper's foreign department, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace:

One thing, however, you ought to bear in mind: if you do your duty you will not satisfy the Palace. Already I have received complaints about your telegrams, and I have replied that I have full confidence in your judgment and impartiality. To this I have added that I do not believe any man with the independence of judgment requisite in a *Times* correspondent can possibly satisfy the authorities. (in Grogan, 1932: 46)

In the best journalistic tradition, Sir Donald followed this message with another saying:

As the spirit of political assassination seems to be abroad in Bulgaria it might be as well if you sent us a biography of Prince Ferdinand. I sincerely trust that it may lie in our pigeon hole for many years, but it is well to be prepared for all emergencies'. (ibid)

Bouchier had to leave Bulgaria because of his reporting of atrocities against Pomaks, Bulgarians who had converted to Islam, who were attacked in retaliation whenever Macedonians suffered at the hands of Turkey. He was ordered by the *Times* to go into a dangerous mountainous region to find eyewitnesses to corroborate his reports. It took 12 weeks hard investigation, interviewing frightened Muslims, but in the end he proved that there had been terrible atrocities against them.

However much he was able to show, to the satisfaction of the *Times* at any rate, that he was impartial, he was still able to identify with the aspirations of both the people of



Crete and the Bulgarians, to the extent that he was able to advise governments and senior officials. At the time of the formation of the Balkan league, prior to the first Balkan war, he even acted as a secret mediator between governments.

When his differences with the Bulgarian authorities dissipated, he moved back to the two hotel rooms he occupied in Sofia, opposite the Royal Palace. He was often seen galloping on his horse through the city, with his Bulgarian servant, Ivan Gruev. He was also frequently at the royal palace and the king (Ferdinand had declared full independence in 1908 and was now king) could be heard by passers-by over the palace wall, bellowing into Bouchier's ear trumpet as he briefed the correspondent.

Bouchier covered the two Balkan Wars as well as the First World War. He worked tirelessly to get Bulgaria to enter the war on the side of the allies. He knew that Bulgaria would side with whoever would guarantee an outcome that would include integrating Macedonia into Bulgaria. Both sides were interested in courting Bulgaria, if only to ensure that the country's large army would not be used against it. The price was, of course, Macedonia. The Central Powers were willing to offer not just Macedonia, but Thrace as well. The Allies were willing to offer parts of Thrace and whatever parts of Macedonia Serbia was willing to give up, following its success in the Second Balkan War in 1913. Bulgaria entered the war in 1915 on the Central Powers' side.

Following the war, Bulgaria lost nearly all the gains it had made by entering the war at the signing of the treaty of Neuilly, in 1919. Bulgaria was not represented at the treaty negotiations. However, Bouchier acted as an unofficial representative. He moved into rooms in Paris and argued with whoever would talk to him that Bulgaria was only a belligerent because of its unfulfilled national destiny, the integration of all Bulgarian people, including those in Macedonia. It was the losses of the Second Balkan War of 1913 that caused it to join the Central Powers. Had the allies offered them what was rightly theirs, he argued, Bulgaria would not have joined the other side. It was a matter of justice and freedom for a people who, he maintained, were ethnic Bulgarians but had never been allowed to live together as Bulgarians, except for a brief period following the treaty of San Stefano. In a letter to the *Times* in January 1919, he wrote that the question being dealt with at the peace conference was one of 'ethnography, not rewards and punishments, and since it was so, Bulgaria's rightful claim to Macedonia, were not to be disregarded' (quoted in Pandev et al., 1993: 10).

He had left Bulgaria when it joined the war, and reported for the *Times* from Ukraine and Russia, before returning to London. He retired from the *Times* in 1918 and so, presumably, felt free to argue what he perceived as the rightness of the Bulgarian cause. The writer and journalist, Robert Kaplan, in his book, *Balkan Ghost*, compares Bouchier's role at the peace conference to that of T.E. Lawrence, Lawrence of Arabia, with his arguments for the future independence of Arabia (Kaplan, 1994: 230). He is correct in that they were both lone voices, arguing for a cause that no one was interested in anymore. Even more poignant was that while Bouchier probably knew more about Bulgaria and the Balkans than anyone else at the Conference, he was never consulted:

The reason is not far to seek. Bouchier was looked on as the champion of an ex-enemy country, and all that he has to say was discounted and discredited in advance. (Grogan, 1932: 186)

With his pension from the *Times*, Bouchier planned to write books, including a memoir, dividing his time between his Kilkenny home, London and Sofia. He purchased some land in Sofia on which he planned to build a house, named the Curragh. Bouchier's health was not good, but he gave himself no rest. In Ireland he wrote articles for reviews, all dealing with the future of the Balkans. He even spent some time in a Dublin nursing home before returning to Bulgaria.



Outsider in Britain, champion in the Balkans

Bourchier was born into an Anglo-Irish family in the mid 19th century, with all that implies as far as class, position, and political opinions. However, as history shows such generalizations do not always apply. There was another factor, his living in England from the time he went to Cambridge and then to Eton to teach. With the scarcity of biographical material, (there is one biography, and diaries that record little more than dates and appointments), it is not fanciful to suggest that Bourchier's support for and strong advocacy of Bulgarian independence and for the freedom of Macedonia and earlier, Crete, was influenced by his own experiences.

Bourchier was a typical product of his class. He identified with Britain and never seemed to allude to his Irish birth. Those he met were not necessarily struck by his Irishness. In fact the Irish journalist and parliamentarian, TP O'Connor, when asked to write an appreciation following Bourchier's death, remarks that he believed Bourchier was a fellow countryman, but he was not aware of that when they met. His biographer, Lady Grogan, suggests he had some stereotypical qualities such as gregariousness, which she ascribed to his being Irish. In his writings, with the exception of some early pieces he wrote while still at Eton, he never wrote nor made comparisons with Ireland. Nevertheless, it is not too fanciful to speculate as to what affect his background had on his thinking, There was nothing like going to England for the Anglo-Irish to realise how different the Irish part of their identity made them. It also true that the Anglo-Irish or Ascendancy were not English. As the nationalist literary figure Daniel Corkery wrote:

It would be well for all outsiders who would understand Ireland and its tragic history, or indeed any phase of it, always to keep before them the fact that the Ascendancy mind is not the same thing as the English mind. (Corkery, 1924: 9)

Acceptance in Britain on equal terms was not always the case for the Anglo-Irish. William Howard Russell craved that acceptance by the British establishment, and, despite the immense influence of his journalism, it only came late and somewhat reluctantly. In 1853, a British captain in the Crimea war, writing home, gives an indication of how Russell was perceived by the English establishment:

a vulgar low Irishman ... but he has the gift of the gab, uses his pen as well as his tongue, sings a good song, drinks anyone's brandy and water and smokes as many cigars as foolish young officers will let him, and is looked by most in camp as a Jolly Good Fellow. He is just the sort to get information, particularly out of the youngsters. And I assure you more than one "Nob" has thought it best to give him a shake of the hand rather than the cold shoulder en passant, for [he] is rather an awkward gentleman to be on bad terms with. (quoted in de Burgh, 2000: 34)

So working either at the heart of empire in London or in North Africa or other theatres of imperial adventure, or in the case of Bourchier, in the Balkans, the Irish journalist is an outsider because of his Irishness or because of his politics, all of which force him to be detached, objective. Irish journalists at home and abroad were often forced to adopt a detachment that allowed them to go about their job even when their own politics clashed with the politics of the publication. This was clearly the case for Bourchier who so often differed in his views of the Balkans from those of both the *Times* and especially the British government to the extent that following the First World War he was a champion of one of the enemy states.

Sir Shane Lesley nicely summed up the ambiguity of the establishment towards both the Irish and journalists in a quote that given Bourchier's career he might have found amusing:



The Etonian is the most marked among the types that spring out of the public school. He is the caste composed of ruling and adventurous, half educated but honourable men. All professions accept his leadership except journalism and stock jobbing, which, as subsidiary to literature and commerce, are largely left to Celts and Jews. (Leslie, 1916: 47)¹

¹ I am grateful to Professor Tadhg Foley of NUI, Galway, for drawing this to my attention.

Bourchier's championing of small nations, such as Crete, and, most importantly, Bulgaria, was not unique, though his understanding and identification with the Bulgarian and Macedonian peasantry was. His knowledge of Bulgarian and Greek, his understanding of customs and traditions and the feelings of Bulgarians towards him indicates more than a fashionable obsession with the Other. It could well be that his Irishness, and being an outsider, allowed him a different and very non-English view of the Balkans, permitting him to see the world through the eyes of others. His view was not just romantic, but also political, in terms of independence, liberty and democracy, views that would also be at variance with the majority of his own class at home in Ireland.

Only days before he died, he was asked to give an address to a Macedonian delegation. He thanked them for their appreciation of his efforts 'for the cause of justice and freedom', continuing:

The principles of autonomy and self-determination, proclaimed by President Wilson and accepted with enthusiasm by all the statesmen of Europe, have been rejected by those to whom Providence has entrusted the sacred duty of providing for the welfare and future happiness of the Balkan people. In no single instance has the right of plebiscite been accorded to any of those people. To find a parallel for the crime which has been committed in the dismemberment of your country we must go back to the partition of Poland in the 18th century. Poland has waited and the day of her liberation has come. Be assured that the day of freedom will also dawn for Macedonia. (Grogan, 1932: 204)

After his death, there were many tributes to Bourchier. Former prime ministers of both Greece and Bulgaria described him as a friend of their respective countries. As late as 1983, the official Sofia Press published *The Times Correspondent Reporting from Sofia* (Pandev et al, 1983), a collection of Bourchier's articles, mainly used to argue for the incorporation of Macedonia into Bulgaria. According to the introduction (p.10), 'Bulgaria cherishes the sacred memory of James Bourchier'. The collection was declared a modest tribute to his work as a 'journalist and a humane man, a champion of the oppressed and a fighter for equality in relations among the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula' (ibid). In the end, this remarkable journalist, scion of the Anglo-Irish, was commemorated by kings, peasants, politicians and even the Communist authorities of Bulgaria.

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Burke, R. 2005. *The Decline and Fall of The Irish Press*

Dublin: Currach Press. 440pp., €19.99 (pbk.)

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Eddie Brennan

To date the most noteworthy book on the *Irish Press* has been the Mark O'Brien's (2001) *De Valera, Fianna Fáil and the Irish Press*. O'Brien spans the 20th century explaining the creation and decline of the paper. Burke's book offers a more recent history devoting an entire book to a period that O'Brien discusses in two closing chapters (1980-2001). In this respect the two books are excellent companion pieces, which together offer a comprehensive history of the *Irish Press*.

To understand ownership, diversity and readership in the present we must understand the past. In this respect, the demise of the *Irish Press*, as one of three major national titles, has left an important legacy for Ireland's media ecology. Burke offers many lessons of relevance to today's media. In his account of Ralph Ingersoll's involvement with the *Irish Press* he offers a grim account of a meeting between media and speculative trading. Ingersoll, described as a 'debt without fear entrepreneur', acquired a 50 per cent share in the two subsidiaries of the Irish Press Group. This was to be a mark of prestige for Ingersoll Publications in the midst of a spending spree on low-cost provincial papers in the United States. Typically, these papers were editorially gutted to accommodate advertising. This combined strategy was to elevate Ingersoll to the level of media mogul. Ingersoll, however, became undone: initially, with the demise of the *Saint Louis Sun*, a flagship project; secondly, most of his assets were tied up in junk bonds acquired through the advice of Michael Milken (later jailed for racketeering). While the Ingersoll deal initially appeared to be a lifeline for the *Irish Press* its involvement in a web of global finance added to its woes.

Ingersoll adopted a one-size-fits-all approach to his American newspaper titles. Burke quotes him as saying 'my conception of a well-managed newspaper is the difference between a 10 per cent profit margin and a 30 per cent profit margin'. Similarly, the management strategies of Eamon de Valera Jnr. showed no awareness of the peculiarity of newspaper management as was evident in the Press Group's approach to new production technologies.

Following Eddie Shah's union-avoiding freesheets and Rupert Murdoch's union-destroying Wapping initiative, the days of hot metal printing were clearly numbered. All Irish newspapers made the, sometimes painful, transition to computerised typesetting but none suffered the level of convulsion seen at the *Irish Press*. Burke cites Tim Pat Coogan who recalled that 'alone of all the major Irish newspaper groups, the Press papers managed to create a strike over the introduction of computerised typesetting'.

New technology may have been a catalyst in the paper's demise but the true cause lay elsewhere. As Burke sets out in great detail, it was a catalogue of strikes, stoppages, price increases, along with an infamous misjudged editorial that eventually sank the *Irish Press*. This was, in large part, a story of bad management at the hands of Eamon de Valera Jr. The fate of the *Irish Press* is captured by a metaphor used in the opening pages of the book. It is a description of a black Mercedes driven by Eamon de Valera while ferrying Vincent Jennings, general manager of the Irish Press Group, on their many trips to the Four Courts. The state of the car mirrors the fate of the newspaper.

No longer as powerful or as prestigious as it once was, the car is showing signs of wear and tear. Its owner is in the driving seat only as a result of inheritance. He has never held the steering wheel of any vehicle before taking over this one. (Burke 2005: 23)



The ultimate reason for the demise of the *Irish Press* then went beyond bad management in its final years. It faltered because of the legacy set by its founder Eamon de Valera. Despite being an important national title it was run as a dynastic system that failed to adapt to a changing society. In this respect, Burke's book neatly links up with O'Brien's work. O'Brien reveals Eamon de Valera's tactics in the paper's creation and follows them to the paper's downfall. Burke, however, complements and adds to this by bringing an unprecedented level of detail to these final years.

The book is reasonably lengthy at 398 pages plus notes. A formidable piece of research, it is at the same time a well paced and compelling read throughout. *Press Delete* is likely to become essential reading for anyone hoping to understand Irish media past and present.

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Conor Brady *Up with the Times*

Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2005. 286pp., €19.99 (hdbk.)

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As a former journalistic employee of *The Irish Times*, and therefore a former subordinate of Conor Brady, your reviewer can hardly be expected to resist the temptation to scold the newspaper's ex-editor for the editorial shortcomings of this memoir. So let's get that out of the way: on more than one occasion in the book the same information is repeated, in similar phrases, on separate pages, as though two different drafts are co-existing here; the author gets a number of details in the history of *The Irish Times* wrong, e.g. when precisely the newspaper began to run its summary 'News Digest' on page-one; and, quite significantly, his chapter on 11 September, 2001 (when he was absent from the paper's offices) gives the mistaken impression that *The Irish Times* failed to publish the following day. In fact the paper did not publish on the 'national day of mourning', Friday, 14 September. While Brady doesn't explicitly state that it failed to appear on the 12th, his time-sequence is sufficiently misleading to have caused Gill & Macmillan to state as much in its press release for the book's launch.

This sort of error means that anyone using *Up with the Times* as a historical resource should proceed with caution. Nonetheless, it is an important book that provides some new insight into the Irish newspaper business during what will doubtless be remembered as a crucial period of change for the medium and the country. Brady became editor of *The Irish Times* at the very end of 1986, and left the job (assuming the lofty title of 'Editor Emeritus'), in late 2002. With the help of the Celtic Tiger, the demise of the Press group and the low emphasis placed on the Irish 'quality' daily market by British titles, he led the paper to a 50 per cent rise in circulation over that period, while contending with the threats and opportunities presented by 24-hours news channels and the internet.



Brady is not shy about highlighting the millennial significance of this time period, nor about showing the special place of an *Irish Times* editor in understanding and anticipating social change. He starts the book with a series of vignettes from his first few months in the job in 1987, when, slightly bewildered, he encounters, in turn: an expert colleague, who assures him that the Soviet Union is unravelling; Charlie Haughey, who tells him the Irish economy is going to take off, with a 'bright young fella' called Dermot Desmond revolutionising financial services, a 'new cultural district' in Temple Bar and 'a fella called Goodman up in County Louth' getting Irish beef into international markets big-time; Pádraic White of the IDA, who tells him the microchip business is set for massive growth and Ireland is going to be 'well placed'; John Hume, who tells him peace is coming to Northern Ireland; and Father Dermot McCarthy, who tells him the Catholic Hierarchy has lost touch with Irish society.

It is a nice conceit, and one that establishes for the reader that the author is a big-picture kind of guy, prepared to think hard and talk to the right people around Ireland's changing place in the world and his newspaper's changing place in Ireland. His reflections lead him to the conclusion that *The Irish Times* should stop viewing itself in relation to the British or US (or indeed other Irish) media, that it is in many ways more comparable to an upmarket Danish or Finnish paper. And those papers, he notes, get much of their foreign news from their own correspondents, so the news reflects their countries' unique outlook. Thus *The Irish Times* develops a controversial, unprecedented (and now reduced) foreign presence under Brady.

Brady is not retrospectively hard on his own judgments, either about such large and long-term matters or about coverage of particular stories and personalities – the Bishop Casey affair, President Mary Robinson. Readers and former colleagues might take issue with his views on these and other matters. Meanwhile, the major thread of negativity that runs through his book, and probably its most important contribution for those seeking a close understanding of how this esteemed media institution has functioned internally, is the story of the recurring crises around the operation of the company that runs *The Irish Times* and the trust that owns it.

The terms of *The Irish Times* Trust establish some of its most attractive alleged values, including a commitment to peace, diversity and openness to minority views. Perhaps more importantly, the trust also protects the paper from take-over by a Murdoch or an O'Reilly for as long as it stays solvent. But for Brady's tenure it seems the main consequence was that the business was in the hands of an all-powerful chairman, Major Thomas McDowell – 'the Major', complete with monocle, waistcoat and pocket-watch. While Brady doesn't suggest he was hamstrung editorially, it is clear he views the tense and muddled corporate environment, the jockeying for position, the arrogance and ambition of many executives from the 'commercial' side of the house, as having been substantial and unwelcome distractions that limited his achievements in an editorship that had already lasted longer than he intended when it was brought down by the paper's post-9/11 financial crisis.

Brady's legacy is, nonetheless, considerable. *Up with the Times* is not the last word on it. But it is intelligent and thoughtful, and should be read by anyone interested in a powerful insider's view of establishment Ireland and its media, in a period of intense upheaval that has not yet ended.



Tony Harcup *The Ethical Journalist*

London: Sage Publications, 2006. 224pp., £60.00 £19.99 (pbk.)

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Michael Foley

Tony Harcup insists that this book is not another book about ethics, but a book about journalism, and he is correct. There are no mentions of Plato, Aristotle or Kant nor is there anything about deontology, utilitarianism, relativism or consequentialism. What it is about is journalism, but within an ethical context. It is a work that is designed to encourage journalists to think about doing journalism, to reflect critically on journalism while they are doing it.

Journalists in Britain and Ireland have famously brushed ethics aside as something that might stop them doing their jobs, that would put obstacles in their way, as if ethics was something real hacks knew nothing about and were better hacks for that.

Harcup takes a different view:

Whether we recognise it or not ethics are involved in every story we follow up or ignore; every quote we use or leave out or tidy up; every bit of context we squeeze in, simplify or exclude; every decision to create (sorry report) a 'row'; every photograph we select or 'improve'; every sound bite we choose to use; every approach from an advertiser trying to influence editorial copy; every headline we write, every question we ask or don't ask. For the ethical journalist, it is not enough to have a bulging contacts book or a good nose for news, being an ethical journalist also means asking questions about our own practice. (p. 6)

In other words, ethics is where the big questions are asked such as: What is good journalism? What is the purpose of journalism? What are news values? In other words, Harcup puts ethics central to journalism and journalism education.

There is good reason for this. In Britain and Ireland journalism education comes out of a vocational tradition that placed emphasis on how to do it, with little reflection on why. As journalism has developed as an academic area of study, it has struggled to establish a theoretical base. It has often borrowed from areas of communications or media studies that are not particularly relevant or fruitful as they do not focus on the essence of journalism as a field of professional practice.

Into this came ethics as a subject that had already been adopted as a place where discussion could reflect on what journalism was about. It has been assumed that this came from the US where ethics has played a major role in academic journalism, for a number of reasons, mainly, I believe, because it offered something approaching academic respectability within the US system.

This has not been the case this side of the Atlantic, especially in Britain and Ireland. As is the case with a number of journalism academics here who now teach and write about ethics, Harcup come from activism within journalism. He has been involved in the alternative press, has been an activist in the National Union of Journalist and has been a member of the NUJ's ethics council. The concerns of union activists over the past 20 years are evident in the issues Harcup has chosen to raise, especially his comments on how journalists can take action to defend ethical standards and the role of collective action in this. The immensely practical nature of this work is an indication of Harcup's background as a working journalist, involved for many years with people who thought



about what they do, not in an academic context but in the newsroom, at meetings and with other journalists. It is also evident in how the book is put together. As well as showing an impressive grasp of recent scholarship, he also includes many interviews with journalists, and it is refreshing to hear the voices of journalists talking about their practice.

It is that background that makes this book a surprisingly optimistic work. His examples of where journalists have served society and democracy well are here alongside the bad examples. At the same time he is not complacent. This book chronicles the bad and the ugly as well as the good.

He is particularly good on the British regulatory system, a chapter we in Ireland should read carefully. The model planned for this country has already taken on some of the criticism Harcup makes of the British Press Complaints System (PCC), especially the make up of the press council itself. Unlike the British model it is planned that our Council will not merely include editors as is the case in the UK, but also working journalists and members of society who are not journalists. Harcup talks of the PCC's 'narrow remit' and the fact that 'from the start it was based on the model of a customer complaints department rather than on an engagement with journalism and ethics as components of citizenship, social responsibility and democracy'. The PCC was the regulatory model most favoured by Irish proprietors and the editors of the British newspapers in Ireland. Read Harcup and you will understand why.

However, where this book scores is in how journalists can take control themselves in defending journalism standards, which is probably the most important thing we can teach our students. He gives examples, from the *Daily Express* to local newspapers, to journalists in Russia, Greece, and Ukraine, during the Orange revolution, who took action to defend editorial freedom, to oppose censorship, or to offer society a vision of what journalism can do. It has not always worked but sometimes it does. In the UK journalists seeking higher ethical standards received no help from the PCC.

This is Tony Harcup's second book. His first was *Journalism Principles and Practice*, published in 2004. That was hugely well received. It attempted to bridge the gulf between the practice of journalism and the theory. Failure to find that bridge leads young journalists to replicate the mistakes of their elders and continues the anti-intellectualism within journalism that discourages questioning or reflection. This book carries on the work of the first. *The Ethical Journalist*, as the title implies, puts ethics and reflection back onto the journalist and makes it central to what he or she does while emphasising the importance and role of journalism in democracy.

As with his previous book there is a very comprehensive and useful bibliography. One small correction. *The Guardian* newspaper's readers' representative, which he praises and claims as the inspiration for such offices in many parts of the world, was in fact inspired by the readers' representative at *The Irish Times*, as *The Guardian* acknowledged when its office was established.



Notes for Contributors

Irish Communications Review aims to provide a forum in Ireland for research, analysis and discussion of all matters relating to media communications and to communications studies. Media communications encompasses broadcasting, film, journalism, public relations, advertising, media education, etc. Studying the media within their political, cultural, economic and historical contexts, it seeks to encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences, and to present information on new developments relevant to the field. International as well as national issues will be examined. *Irish Communications Review* covers research reports, analytical articles, documents, statistical data and book reviews.

Irish Communications Review welcomes contributions from practitioners, academics and researchers. They should be addressed to: The Editors, *Irish Communications Review*, Department of Communications and Journalism, Dublin Institute of Technology, Aungier St., Dublin 2, Ireland.

Contributions to the journal may be made under any of the following headings: a) Articles, normally 4,000 to 6,000 words, excluding tables, illustrations and references; b) Reports and commentary accompanying documents or data, 2,000 to 4,000 words; c) Book reviews, not exceeding 1,000 words; d) Thesis abstracts, 500-700 words; and e) Pictorial, photographic and visual essays. While we welcome unsolicited book reviews, potential reviewers should consult the editors before undertaking a review.

Publication is not automatic and all editorial decisions are taken by the editors based on advice given in blind reviews of all contributions. Submissions may be accepted, rejected or accepted with major or minor revisions based on such reviews.

Contributions must not have been published elsewhere with substantially the same content or simultaneously be under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Contributions should be submitted both electronically and in hard copy. They should be double spaced, 12 point font size in Times New Roman style and with generous margins. The hard copy should be single-sided. A separate sheet should contain the title, author's name and affiliation(s) in the form required for publication, and a biographical note of not more than 100 words. Contributors of articles are asked to submit an abstract of 300 words.

British spelling should be used. The text should be sub-divided by section headings.

Footnotes, numbered consecutively, should be used sparingly and placed at the end of the article: they should apply only for substantive material whose inclusion in the text would be distracting. Citations in the text should follow the author-date-page system, e.g. Sheehan (1987:5) or (McLoone and McMahon,1994:10) or (Clancy et al., 1986).

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Bell, D. (1992) 'Purely an Academic Matter: Relating Critical Theory and Production Practice within Media Studies' *Irish Communications Review*, 2:26:34.

Kelly, M. (1984) 'Twenty Years of Current Affairs on RTÉ' pp89-106 in M.McLoone and J. MacMahon (eds.) *Television and Irish Society. 21 Years of Irish Television*. Dublin: Radio Telefis Éireann.

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