

CHAPTER 6

MEDIATING DIVERSITY: IDENTITY, LANGUAGE, AND PROTEST IN IRELAND, SCOTLAND, AND WALES

Niamh Hourigan

European national broadcasters have historically operated in political and cultural contexts where constructions of national identity and the related symbolic significance of national languages are heavily embedded in the structure and output of national services, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in the United Kingdom or Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ) in the Republic of Ireland. Successful campaigns for indigenous minority-language television services have involved forcing or persuading national governments to recognize that national broadcasting institutions are not meeting the cultural or linguistic needs of ethno-linguistic minority language groups, such as speakers of Irish, Welsh, or Scots Gaelic. However, once this gap in existing services has been publicly acknowledged, the process of developing new television services that cater to the needs of minority-language speakers begins.

The process of policy negotiation that underpins the establishment of a minority-language television service involves combining the expertise of broadcasting professionals from national and regional networks, politicians, civil servants, and language activists. While minority-language activists often publicly dominate the latter stages of television campaigns, they are very rarely in control of the process of policy negotiation that occurs after the official decision to establish the service has been taken. In many cases the structure and output of the minority-language television service that emerges out of this process of deliberation is very different from the television channel originally envisioned by language campaigners.

In Canada and Australia the need to cater to diverse language communities has also posed many challenges for language activists and broadcasting policy-makers. The Australian public-service broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Commission, has created a binary model. Its main service, known simply as ABC, serves the “national” community and its output is shaped by prevailing definitions of national identity. According to Gay Hawkins (1999, 177),

In the history of ABC, duty to the Australian people or the nation has been a central component of the institution’s political rationality. This assumption of the people as a given, continuous and fixed in time, has been invoked not only to justify and explain the necessity and object of the broadcasting service (the people are the immanent subjects of national broadcasting policy), but also as a central rhetorical strategy in various narratives of nation emanating from ABC.

ABC’s sister service, the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), is a channel dedicated to all other diverse linguistic and cultural groups in Australia, including Aboriginal and migrant minority-language communities, and thus represents a national alternative broadcasting space. SBS also, as Gay Hawkins comments, broadcasts

shows that are experimental, intellectual and esoteric, that have restricted appeal—that in television terms, constitute diversity and quality. In this way, SBS speaks not just to those named as “other” but also to those desiring better or intelligent TV, to those who could be identified as a taste community rather than a community of difference.

The attempt by SBS to blend its responses to the needs of diverse groups has generated some controversy, with representatives of minority-language groups arguing that minority-language programming is losing out to programming with a cosmopolitan orientation.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has adopted an approach similar to that of European broadcasters by establishing specific services dedicated to individual language groups, such as

Radio-Canada Télévision for Francophones (although this has been less successful than the private French-language alternative TVA), as well as supporting community broadcasting initiatives, resulting in the establishment of new local services such as the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). Partly because Canada is officially bilingual (English and French), rather than multilingual, indigenous and immigrant communities have had to fight much harder to establish minority-language television services oriented towards their needs.

Despite a range of policy initiatives to protect linguistic diversity in both countries, however, each of these solutions to the demand for minority-language television has generated controversial policy conflicts at regional and national level. A number of contributors to this volume have explored the more abstract questions relating to contemporary cultural diversity. This chapter focuses principally on the applied cultural conflicts that can arise from the challenges of reconciling the needs of indigenous ethnolinguistic communities within Britain and Ireland with the dominant English-language culture. The emergence of campaigns for television in the Welsh, Scots Gaelic, and Irish languages is examined in detail here, in the light of continuing attempts to challenge prevailing definitions of national identity in these countries. The broadcasting services resulting from these campaigns are reviewed in order to ascertain how they correspond to the original demands of activists. The construction of identity within the output of the resulting television services, S4C, TG4, and CCG, is then scrutinized in order to discover how these cultural initiatives have affected discourses of collective identity within each indigenous minority-language community. Finally, attempts to acknowledge indigenous linguistic diversity in Britain and Ireland are contrasted with broadcasting initiatives in Canada and Australia that aim to highlight the commonality of experience between indigenous and immigrant linguistic minorities.

IDENTITY AND MINORITY-LANGUAGE TELEVISION IN IRELAND, SCOTLAND, AND WALES

The concept of identity has become a central theme in analysis of conflict and change in advanced industrial societies. Stuart Hall (1990) has argued that identity should be viewed not as a fixed state

but as a process of becoming: "Perhaps instead of viewing identity as an already accomplished fact, with the new cultural practices it represents, we should instead think of identity as production which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside, representations." National identities represent a specific form of collective identity. Anthony Smith (1991) argues that any attempt to forge a national identity is a political act with political consequences. The construction of national identities in Europe has often historically involved the elevation of one language, one religion, and one set of traditions. By elevating one culture and language, national elites frequently neglected or stigmatized minority languages and cultures. This stigmatization operated as an effective instrument of oppression. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani (1999) comment:

The ability to impose negative and stigmatised definitions of the identity of other groups constitutes, effectively, a fundamental mechanism of social domination. If a group is perceived by the rest of society to be the bearer of values and experiences which, if not deviant, are certainly backward, dysfunctional, and potentially harmful to the common good, and if its members are not able to spread alternative representations successfully, then members' capacity for collective action will be extremely limited.

Identity questions are linked to language concerns at a number of levels. Language can create a key boundary between communities within a nation state. European national governments have traditionally sought to extinguish any such boundaries within their own borders. Minority and regional language groups have often been ignored or oppressed because they represent a challenge to the notion that a single national language represents the linguistic reality of the population and thus provides a coherent basis for a unifying national identity.

In successive editions of his book *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson (1991) has developed the link between language and national identity to include an analysis of how media, and newspapers in particular, have contributed to the "vernacularization of national languages." In tracing the construction of imagined communities, Anderson comments,

Print capitalism created languages of power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars. Certain dialects were closer to each print language and dominated their final forms. Their disadvantaged cousins, still as assimilable to the emerging print-language, lost caste, above all because they were unsuccessful (or only relatively successful) in insisting on their own print-form.

The elevation of these single national languages was intensified by the arrival of the new media of radio and television. The American media theorist Monroe Price (1995) comments, "If print made people aware, however dimly, that there were millions of others sharing the same experience and reading the same material, television had an intensified impact." For most of the twentieth century, television in Europe was controlled by national broadcasters appointed by national governments that were quite open about their aspirations to support national identities. According to David Cardiff and Paddy Scannell (1987), the BBC, for instance, was directed to "forge a link between the disparate listeners and the symbolic heartland of national life." This complex relationship between national broadcasters and governments had two major effects on indigenous minority-language communities. First, these communities and their cultures were marginalized, ignored, or, worse, stigmatized within the output of national broadcasting services. In this way national broadcasting services became part of the effective "tools of domination" used against minority groups within nation states. Second, the creation of associated national broadcasting elites had an adverse effect on political leaders and elites within indigenous minority-language communities, who were often among the dissidents ritually screened out by national broadcasting professionals.

Demand for television broadcasting services in indigenous minority languages did not become prevalent in Europe until the 1970s. While concern about the absence of minority languages from radio was voiced during the 1920s and 1930s, the advent of television effectively increased the invisibility of indigenous minority languages on the broadcasting spectrum. A number of national European broadcasting services made token gestures to the broadcasting needs of these communities by providing short programmes, usually at weekends, generally focusing on religious

issues or traditional customs. However, minority-language activists gradually began to perceive the broadcast media as both a huge potential threat and an important tool. The use of pirate radio by protest groups in the 1960s, particularly the student movement in the United States and Europe, highlighted the liberating and empowering qualities inherent in radio and television. Ironically, the recession of the 1970s improved the relative economic position of European indigenous linguistic minorities, as it hit many urban, traditionally industrialized areas while the rural areas, where many indigenous minority-language communities were concentrated, were left relatively untouched. The narrowing of the economic gap gave these language movements more confidence in asserting their demands for broadcast media within European nation states.

The late 1960s and 1970s proved to be a time of turbulence for the larger minority-language groups, such as the Welsh language community. During the late 1980s and the early 1990s smaller language groups, such as Scots Gaelic speakers, became increasingly radical in campaigning for a television service. A number of external factors contributed to the growing success of campaigns during this period. The growth in satellite communications technology and the increasing popularity of the community broadcasting movement meant that national broadcasting institutions had themselves become subject to increasing fragmentation and regionalization. The lack of central cohesion in a number of nation states and the presence of the European Union (EU), which actively supported regionalism, allowed indigenous European linguistic minorities to assert their demands more confidently.

There are a number of significant reasons that prompt language groups to campaign for television services. Ned Thomas (1971) has argued that, unlike a stable rural community, the modern language community is so diverse that it requires broadcast media in order to remain cogent and cohesive. Television can also provide a language community with an open channel for discussion, allowing conflicts to be resolved and a sense of identity as an "imagined community" to be forged. W. R. Howell (1992) has focused on the element of prestige that media can confer on minority languages. This is particularly important in the linguistic development of children, as they tend to attach a high degree of credibility and legitimacy to what is broadcast on television. Television services often generate an

associated young elite who by their presence increase the likelihood of the language being perceived as fashionable. Commenting on the Welsh experience, John Davies (1994) states,

Never before had there been a numerous group of people, fairly young, employed in a well-paid, glamorous profession and working through the medium of Welsh. The Cuppies (Welsh-speaking Yuppies) came into existence almost exclusively because of media expansion and their lifestyle was the subject of envy.

In a review of minority-language media in western Europe, Mike Cormack (1998) highlighted a number of historical and structural factors that have had a direct influence on the success of these campaigns. The demand for television services appears to be particularly effective when the community involved constitutes an ethnic as well as a linguistic minority within the state. The political status of the linguistic group within the broader nation state is also a key factor. During their media campaigns neither the Welsh nor Scots Gaelic groups could appeal to a devolved regional political administration for support. Activists were regarded as indigenous minority-language speakers within a broader nation state, the United Kingdom, although they obviously constituted a much larger group, in relative terms, in the stateless nations of Scotland and Wales. In contrast, the Irish language is designated as the first national language of the state in the Irish Constitution, so the government was officially dedicated to the protection and support of the language during the course of the campaign. However, as only a small minority of Irish citizens use the language on a daily basis, Irish speakers do not enjoy many of the privileges usually associated with national languages.

Finally, the symbolic status of the language can affect the success of these campaigns. Languages such as Welsh and Irish have been directly linked to political nationalism, whereas the relationship between the Scots Gaelic language and Scottish nationalism is more problematic. Scotland's second minority language, Lowland Scots, has closer links to the Scottish nationalist movement. One Scottish television executive, Rhoda MacDonald (1993, 13), has stated that "you couldn't possibly support Plaid Cymru [the principal

nationalist political party] in Wales and not speak Welsh. We all know the political connections with the language in Ireland. Gaelic is not like that. The Scottish nationalists don't insist that Gaelic is their everyday language."

In reviewing the Welsh, Irish, and Scots Gaelic campaigns for minority-language television it is essential to examine the operation and outcome of each protest movement, as well as the broader engagement of activists with the processes of identity at a regional and national level. These campaigns represented a targeted challenge to the policies of national governments around the management of diversity within the broadcast media. Each campaign had a profound impact on the cultural policies of the British and Irish governments in relation to the management of the needs of culturally and linguistically distinct groups.

CAMPAIGNS FOR TELEVISION SERVICES IN WALES, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND

Welsh is by far the most strongly placed of the Celtic languages, as there are approximately 500,000 speakers of the language within the borders of Wales. Welsh speakers were among the first European linguistic minorities to become aware of the potential effects of broadcast media on their language. As early as 1927 the Welsh Board of Education stated that "we regard the present policy of the British Broadcasting Corporation as the most serious menace to the life the Welsh language" (quoted in Davies 1994). The roots of the campaign for the Welsh-language television service Sianel Pedwar Cymru (S4C) can be traced to a lecture given in 1962 by the writer Saunders Lewis, who prophesied the demise of the Welsh language. This resulted in the formation of the Welsh Language Society, which began to campaign for a Welsh-language television service in 1966. It was primarily a student movement, but it enjoyed the support of many groups within Welsh society, including religious and nationalist organizations.

Activists used a variety of confrontational tactics during the campaign, such as occupations of television studios and the destruction of broadcasting masts. These tactics were characterized as "symbolic acts of damage." There were also violent protests about the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969. During the early 1970s activists began to systematically refuse to pay their television licences,

and by 1973 a number of activists had been imprisoned for failing to pay the fines imposed for refusing to pay their licences. Before the general election in 1979 both the Labour and Conservatives parties promised that legislation for the establishment of a Welsh-language television service would be put before Parliament in the following year. However, after Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher took office she reneged on the commitment, prompting the leader of Plaid Cymru to threaten to go on hunger strike. The threat proved to be the catalyst for a wave of renewed protest throughout Wales. Under this pressure the Conservatives capitulated and S4C was established in 1982.

Scots Gaelic has never enjoyed the numerical weight in Scotland that characterizes the Welsh language in Wales. Speakers of the language are found primarily in the peripheral regions of the Highlands and Islands. During the late 1970s the activities of the Scots Gaelic language movement were rather subdued in comparison to the confrontational tactics that characterized language activism in Ireland and Wales. However, this changed dramatically in the early 1980s. J. MacLeod (1993) comments,

A decade ago, weary of unsuccessful pestering for a more aggressive approach to arresting the Gaelic decline, there came schism. Younger, hard-headed individuals broke away to form *Commun nan Gaelic* (CNAG) under the direction of a formidable Lewisman, John Angus MacKay, [and] it began campaigning for Gaelic to enjoy the same status wrought for Welsh in Wales.

This new organization spearheaded the campaign for the provision of Gaelic-language television programmes. With a much smaller base of speakers (65,000), the Scots decided not to campaign for a separate channel. Activists felt that such a campaign would not enjoy popular support. Gaelic-language activists instead proposed that a fund be established to finance the production of programmes in Scots Gaelic to be broadcast on Scotland's three existing terrestrial channels. Scots Gaelic campaigners adopted a conciliatory approach to the Conservative government, stressing the economic benefits of the project for Highland development. An economist was employed to quantify these benefits and activists also argued that provision

of funding might improve the performance of the Conservatives in Scotland at the next election. This conciliatory approach won over the British Government, which established the Gaelic Television Fund (CTG, later renamed CCG) in 1990.

Despite the constitutionally guaranteed position of the Irish language in the Republic of Ireland, its speakers remain a minority within Irish society, and language policy is rarely defined separately for English-speaking and Irish-speaking (Gaeltacht) regions. There is some dispute about the official numbers of Irish-language speakers in the Republic of Ireland. According to figures from the Central Statistics Office, in 2004 1.6 million people, in a population of 4.1 million, could speak Irish, but only 350,000 used the language on a daily basis, while 155,000 used it once a week. Gaeltacht districts have been regarded as language centres for learners from the cities rather than as districts in need of special cultural safeguards. Irish-language activists have found themselves in the unusual position of being “trapped on a pedestal” within a state that is formally committed to upholding their linguistic identity but does not, in their view, recognize their linguistic distinctiveness and needs in practice.

The campaign for Irish-language television lasted for twenty years, from 1975 to 1995, and involved a wide variety of groups. There were substantial divisions between these movements concerning the type of television service being sought. Some activists favoured a completely separate minority-language service similar to S4C. Gaeltacht activists sought a local-access service for Gaeltacht districts. Other groups believed that the task of broadcasting in the first national language should remain within the remit of the national broadcaster, RTE.

The Irish language television campaign was established initially by the media committee of the state’s pre-eminent Irish-language organization, Conradh na Gaeilge. Activists were heavily influenced by the experiences of Welsh-language media activists and adopted their own campaign of studio invasions and licence fee defaults. However, in 1986 the Irish government closed the legislative loophole that had provided some justification for the licence default campaign and the use of this form of protest decreased. In 1987 Gaeltacht groups took up the cause of Irish-language television and established a pirate television service in Connemara. The success of this “pirate

television" tactic prompted Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Charles Haughey to allocate 500,000 *punt* (Irish pounds) to investigating the feasibility of creating a new Irish-language television service. However, Irish-language activists were quick to indicate that they would never accept the model of local-access television being put forward by Gaeltacht campaigners. The funds remained unspent for the next two years as government officials became aware of the extent of the conflict between Gaeltacht and Irish-language campaigners over the television issue.

In 1990 an umbrella organisation, FNT, was established in order to unite the two factions of the campaign. It proposed a compromise model of Irish-language television combining elements of the Gaeltacht access model with dimensions of the nationally oriented service favoured by Conradh na Gaeilge. FNT received considerable support from the Labour politician Michael D. Higgins, who, in 1993, became minister for arts, culture and the Gaeltacht. He quickly created two committees, which included campaign activists, to investigate the viability of establishing an Irish-language television service. On the basis of the findings of these two committees he formulated a memorandum, which was approved in 1993. *Teilifis na Gaeilge*, or TG4 as it subsequently became known, was established in 1996.

S4C, CTG, AND TG4: MINORITY-LANGUAGE IDENTITIES IN PROCESS

The campaigns for minority-language television services in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales can be viewed as among the purest forms of cultural politics in relation to debates about the management of diversity within European societies. Members of these communities sought to create their own electronic spaces where they could control definitions of reality and shape explorations of cultural identity. Having examined the emergence and operation of the Welsh, Scots Gaelic, and Irish campaigns, it is necessary to trace how the subsequent establishment of minority-language television services corresponded to the original demands of campaigners.

Welsh-language activists had been specific in demanding a service completely separate from the national British channels operated by the BBC, Independent Television (ITV), and Channel Four. The new Welsh service would be oriented to the needs of the Welsh-speaking

population rather than operating as a “shop window” for Welsh culture aimed at the greater British population. As a result of this mandate S4C was established to operate as a Welsh opt-out from Channel Four. As S4C’s main audience is bilingual in English and Welsh, it made little sense to broadcast dubbed or subtitled versions of major U.S. or British productions that could be viewed in English on other channels. As François Grin and François Vaillancourt (1999, 32) comment, this decision “forced S4C to engage early on in the commissioning of new programmes, giving it a distinct identity that other television services, even in major European languages, do not necessarily provide.”

Many activists involved in the campaign for Welsh-language television had envisioned the establishment of an independent Welsh news service as an essential mechanism whereby the distinctiveness of Welsh ethnolinguistic identity could be developed. However, when S4C began operating it became clear that this enthusiasm for independent news was not shared by S4C’s management. It was agreed that BBC Wales would provide the channel’s daily news bulletins. During the first year of S4C’s operation a debate raged among former campaigners and broadcasting officials about the legitimacy of this service. David Bevan (1984) comments,

Among some reviewers, however, considerable reservation has been expressed about the effectiveness of certain programmes as vehicles for the transmission of cultural identity. Much of this has focused on the main evening news programme, *Newyddion Saith*, which has come under severe attack from some Welsh speakers. In the review and correspondence columns of the Welsh-language press there have been frequent complaints about the programme, which was designed to play a pivotal role in developing the Welsh identity of S4C. It has provided largely a recycling of the main British and international news stories carried by the network channels of the BBC on their early evening news programmes, which many viewers have already seen.

The tension between traditional and modern images of the Welsh-language community on S4C also caused controversy. During the campaign some activists had emphasized the importance of

minority-language television as a forum where traditional elements of Welsh-language culture, such as music and folklore, could be celebrated. However, when S4C was established greater emphasis was placed by management on the creation of a modern image of the Welsh-speaking community. This attempt to modernize Welsh-language identity received substantial policy support from Welsh cultural agencies. Grin and Vaillancourt (1999, 29–30) noted that television is a tool particularly suited to modernizing a minority language culture: “It has powerful symbolic implications, in that it contains potential for establishing the legitimacy of a minority language in the sphere of modernity—a key strategic area, since the revitalisation efforts are typically bogged down by the association between a minority language and the ‘traditional sphere’.”

Audiences within the Welsh-language community did not automatically accept this modernized reconfiguration of Welsh language identity. Programme-makers at S4C encountered problems in getting younger and older groups to accept youth-oriented images of Welsh-language culture conveyed through soap opera, game shows, and young people’s programmes. Commentators identified programming for teenage audiences as one of the weakest areas of S4C’s output. In a study of young Welsh speakers, H. Gruffudd (1996) found that only 10 percent of young people could name a Welsh-language programme providing rock music, and only 5 percent a programme of Welsh light entertainment, and, significantly, some respondents derided these programmes as “pale and unconvincing imitations of Anglo-American pop.” At the same time older language activists insisted that the youthful orientation of S4C resulted in extensive lexical borrowings from the English language and a dilution of the “purity” of the Welsh language. For instance, the current affairs programme *Heno*, which used more “street Welsh,” was criticized by traditionalists, who condemned S4C for, in their view, lowering its language standards.

However, assessments of the achievements of S4C on a broader cultural level were more positive. Kevin Williams (1997) comments,

The importance of S4C’s contribution to the cultural regeneration of Wales cannot be overestimated. Sitting in the middle of Wales’s media landscape, it has helped to galvanize other areas of Welsh cultural life. It has provided confidence

to Welsh-speaking endeavours, either by television events or giving outlets to artists to express themselves. The channel has directly and indirectly, through financial and non-financial means, enabled the laying down of a platform to support cultural production in Wales.

However, as regards identity politics Geoff Jones (2002) has argued that the establishment of S4C has removed much of the energy from Welsh nationalism, which has traditionally been embraced most enthusiastically by the middle classes. Jones notes that “the nationalist movement which developed between the two world wars was a petit-bourgeois movement, more concerned with preserving and developing Welsh culture, a culture specifically defined by the Welsh language.” He notes that nowadays “fluent Welsh is a passport to the cushy jobs in the media and cultural industries.” The creation of these “cushy elites” appears to have diffused the intensity of demands for Welsh political independence. In contrast to the confrontational dynamic of the television campaign during the 1970s, commentators noted the mild and gentle nature of Welsh nationalism during the debate about political devolution in 1997. Jonathan Freedland, a columnist on the London newspaper *The Guardian*, noted,

There is no Welsh equivalent of the *Braveheartism* on show north of the border, little of Scotland’s defiant urge to cast off the yoke of English rule ... because they have a national tongue, effectively lacking in Scotland, people are relaxed about the other trappings of nationhood. Mind you, it’s also true that the language campaigners have got most of what they want, from simultaneous translation in Welsh council chambers to S4C, the all-Welsh TV channel. Once a boiling issue, the heat has now all but gone.

Thus the establishment of S4C has served to underline the distinctiveness of Welsh ethnolinguistic identity within British broadcasting culture. Middle-class activists who campaigned for the television service have achieved, by and large, the recognition of separateness that they desired during the 1970s. Paradoxically, this success has diminished the intensity of demands for greater political

autonomy among Wales's middle classes. Following the radical revision of the Labour Party's policies under Neil Kinnock, John Smith, and Tony Blair during the 1990s, the working classes in South Wales have begun to vote in greater numbers for the nationalist party Plaid Cymru. Significantly, this increasing popularity in working-class areas has prompted the party's leadership to move away from the language issues traditionally associated with its middle-class supporters. Indeed, Plaid Cymru began to pull away from language issues during the devolution debate in 1997, while, as Geoff Jones (2002) comments,

over the last century the question of the Welsh language has been the touchstone of nationalist thinking. But it is clear that in the foreseeable future not more than a quarter of Welsh people will be fluent in Welsh. Plaid Cymru acknowledged that fact, and the need to widen their appeal in South Wales, by changing their name in 1998 to the bilingual form Plaid Cymru/The Party of Wales.

However, while the service has not had a galvanizing political impact on the Welsh-language community, its managers have developed a controversial mission to modernize the image and cultural identity of the Welsh-speaking community in Wales.

The Gaelic Television Fund (CTG/CCG) was established to finance the production of Scots Gaelic television programmes for the schedules of Scotland's three main terrestrial television services. Because of this structure CCG programmes were designed to serve as a "shop window" for Scots Gaelic culture, aimed at the broader Scottish population as well as Scots Gaelic speakers. In justifying this majority-oriented approach to Scots Gaelic broadcasting, Rhoda MacDonald (1993) commented,

Yes, it may sound trite, but I want Gaelic to become trendy. I want the trendy West Endies in Glasgow to start clamouring for a Gaelic playgroup. It's already happening. I know that may be a dangerous path because trends pass, they become fads. But there are many people who are now embarrassed that they don't speak Gaelic.

Making Scots Gaelic fashionable was part of the latent ambition among Scots Gaelic speakers to encourage a greater number of Scots people to embrace the language as a central tenet of Scottish national identity. Mike Cormack (1994) characterized the mission of the CCG thus:

It represents an attempt by a relatively small and cohesive group of Gaelic-language activists to do two things: to alter the Gaelic community's self-perception and to alter the broader Scottish public's view of Gaelic. To put it another way, they are attempting to reconstruct the collective identity of the Gaelic community and, at the same time, alter the position of the language within popular definitions of Scottish identity. Indeed, the generally negative reactions to the whole enterprise evident in the Scottish tabloid press are best read as a refusal to accept this broader redefinition of Scottish identity.

The "shop window" dimension of Scots Gaelic broadcasting had a direct impact on the news service. Those CCG-funded news and current affairs programmes that received high audience ratings exhibited a tendency to focus on the more positive elements of Gaelic culture. Cormack notes,

In the daily Gaelic news programme a reverse of the more usual news values appears, with only good news about Gaelic being reported. This is not as one-sided as it may seem, since the bad news about Gaelic emerges only slowly in long-term trends, whereas the good news appears in the form of specific events and initiatives ... To say that there is an unduly optimistic view of the language being promulgated in these programmes is not to imply that a conspiracy is taking place, since it is simply the consequence of the fact that programmes are planned, commissioned, made and watched for the most part by people who want the language to survive, and are optimistic about the chances of this happening. However, this does mean that a rather inaccurate view of the current situation is given.

This rose-tinted view in Scots Gaelic news programmes appeared to be shaped by a self-conscious need to portray a positive image of Scots Gaelic culture to the English-speaking majority.

CCG programmes mirrored the Welsh strategy in attempting to create a more modernized image of Scots Gaelic speakers. The CCG committee encouraged the inclusion of young people as presenters and panellists on entertainment and current affairs programmes. There were also attempts to portray Scots Gaelic as a living language in urban settings where it was not spoken. The learners' series *Speaking Our Language* even featured scenes taking place in Glasgow. As Cormack (1994, 119) notes, "The series showed rather surreal images of Glasgow shop assistants, waiters, estate agents, and passers-by all speaking Gaelic as if it was the only language spoken in the city." Critics have argued that the more traditional elements of Highland life were in fact systematically screened out of CCG's portrayal of the Scots Gaelic community and some viewers were dissatisfied with the lack of attention to the more traditional aspects of Scots Gaelic life. As J. McLelland, writing in *The Scotsman* in 1993, lamented, "So much for television's representation of Gaelic culture ... What a showcase this is, what a waste of time and money! Where are the songs, poetry and stories of Gaeldom?"

Initially, the overall audience response was very positive. In 1993 the huge audience ratings initially achieved by CCG-funded programmes prompted some commentators to argue that the Scots Gaelic model represented a more efficient mechanism for minority-language broadcasting than the Welsh model of a separate channel. Rhoda MacDonald (1993, 13) claimed that, "S4C, the Welsh language channel has very low viewing figures compared to us. Its highest-rated programme has 120,000 viewers. Our Gaelic programmes regularly attract up to half a million viewers in our transmission area alone." However, as audience ratings declined dramatically during the late 1990s two problems with the structure of the CCG became evident. First, funding administered through the Treasury was vulnerable to government budget cuts: programming was reduced substantially in 1998 due to financial constraints. Second, because of the CCG's position as a finance-provider rather than commissioner, members of the committee had little control over the time slots in which programmes were broadcast. After initial enthusiasm the BBC and ITV both relegated Scots Gaelic programmes to less prestigious late-night and weekend slots. In 2001 the Education, Culture and Sport Committee of the Scottish Parliament found that,

viewing figures for some of these early programmes were high and there was evidence that they were attractive to non-Gaelic speakers. However, the reduction in peak-time transmission, particularly on [the ITV channels] STV and Grampian, has eroded this positive effect. The use of very late-night transmission (which was, before the advent of CTG, the norm for Gaelic programmes) adds to the ghettoization of Gaelic programming.

The ghettoization that Scots Gaelic broadcasters feared and that had initially prompted them to seek slots on mainstream channels occurred anyway.

The overall impact of CCG-funded programmes in Scotland has been less profound than the impact of S4C on Welsh-language culture. The structure of the CCG fund, which emphasized the spread of Scots Gaelic programmes throughout the schedules of mainstream channels, has not created the appropriate conditions for a Scots Gaelic electronic discursive space. Attempts to reconfigure the position of Scots Gaelic language in relation to Scottish national identity have been largely resisted, particularly by the working classes in the Lowlands of Scotland. This identity project seems to have been based on a desire to extend the parameters of the Scots Gaelic community and, in doing so, increase the power of Scots Gaelic-speaking elites. However, the Scots Gaelic language is an unsuitable source for this cultural project, as regional and sectarian cleavages remain pervasive in shaping collective identities in Scotland.

Despite the failure of the CCG project Scottish political nationalism was on the rise throughout the 1990s, but Scottish nationalists look to Lowland Scots culture rather than Scots Gaelic culture as a source of collective identity. Hollywood films such as *Braveheart* and elements of Scotch culture such as the Highland Games or the poems of Robert Burns have played a greater role in the Scottish nationalist revival than Scots Gaelic culture. Therefore, while CCG programmes may have contributed to a greater awareness of Scottish identity, the Scots Gaelic language has not been recognized as a central tenet within this dynamic form of Scottish nationalism.

Unlike the Welsh or Scots Gaelic communities, the Irish-language community does not have a specific regional or class base. Irish-speaking regions are spread throughout Ireland's western coastal

areas, and an increasingly large proportion of the Irish-speaking community is based in Ireland's burgeoning cities and towns. Given the widespread comprehension of the Irish language within the Irish population, TG4 is the only one of the three services under review here that potentially had the capacity to operate as an alternative national television service. TG4 management decided to take advantage of this opportunity and market the Irish-language television service as a national channel using the slogan *Súil Eile*, meaning "another eye" or "another perspective" in English. Management viewed Irish-language broadcasting as offering another perspective on national identity, rather than providing a resource for a minority language culture. This perspective is at odds with the ideological position of Gaeltacht activists involved in the campaign for TG4, who characterized their protests as a part of a campaign for minority rights.

The aspiration to provide an alternative service to the national community was reflected in the content of TG4's programme output. Commissioners developed programmes focusing on elements of Irish social and cultural experience that had not been explored by the national broadcaster, RTÉ. For instance, the TG4 soap *Ros na Rún* was the first drama on Irish television to feature an open homosexual relationship. Programmes also dealt with "New Age" spirituality, vegetarianism, and the dance music scene in Ireland, and featured urban themes such as drug use, fashion, and architecture. TG4's management developed a number of highly successful music programmes, which combined English-language pop music with Irish-language presentation. These programmes could be characterized as an extension of the modernization strategy adopted by S4C and CCG, but Irish-language broadcasters took this process to a more advanced level, attempting to modernize both the image of the Irish-language community and the entire sphere of broadcasting in Ireland. Cathal Goan, the first director of TG4 and now director general of RTÉ, along with Pádraic Ó Ciardha, played an enormous role in shaping the structure and output of the new service. He told the author in an interview in Dublin (April 22, 2002), "From my perspective, how we set about engaging with the particular language circumstances and attitudes to language in Ireland would have to be secondary to a commitment to a kind of broadcast culture which wasn't absolutely about the language."

TG4's programme content has thus tended to prioritize lifestyle issues and alternative cultural perspectives over more conventional forms of political and cultural debate. It is possible to argue that the programme output of the service has represented the first attempt to explore and reflect the experiences of the "new middle class" in Irish society, a group relatively ignored within the output of RTÉ. The rise of a new middle class in Europe has been linked to changes in the postwar period when young people, assured of the satisfaction of material needs, developed non-material needs such as self-actualization and participation. This has been coupled with an erosion of more conventional values relating to work and career, and the decline of the traditional work ethic. Members of the new middle class often work in the new knowledge-based occupations and have less loyalty to traditional middle-class institutions. Lifestyle is often a means of political and cultural expression for members of this class.

The late 1990s was a remarkably opportune period to embark on this cultural project. The renewed prosperity of the Irish economy, coupled with religious scandals and immigration from Africa and eastern Europe, contributed to the rapid transformation of Irish society. The impact of these profound social and cultural changes on identity processes in Ireland had not been explored to any great extent within the programme content of RTÉ. Programming on the national broadcaster during the late 1990s reflected the ageing profile of its workforce, as well as severe budgetary constraints. Indigenously produced programming was remarkable for the paucity of ideas and originality in content or structure. The national broadcaster relied heavily on material imported from Britain and the United States, and home-produced programmes were often weak, low-budget imitations of Anglo-American programme concepts. TG4 broadcasters took advantage of this weakness to challenge RTÉ within the national electronic discursive space. They sought to provide programming that reflected newly prevalent dimensions of Irish cultural experience. An innovative schedule of original home-produced programmes was marketed to the majority-language audience through a series of poster, television, and radio campaigns on English-language media outlets. Yet, to the disappointment of many Irish language speakers, TG4's aspirations to create an alternative national service did not extend as far as the news service, which, like its CCG and S4C counterparts, became fully integrated

into the national broadcaster's news service. Many campaigners were deeply disturbed by this structure, arguing that independence from RTE was essential to the creation of an Irish-language public sphere. However, as management regarded Irish speakers as a national group rather than a linguistic minority, the creation of an independent news service was not prioritized within TG4's broadcasting policy.

TG4's launch in 1996 was successful and the service received high audience ratings. However, reception problems and a slump in audience figures during the first six months of transmission caused some critics to predict that the new television service would fail. After the first year of broadcasting TG4's audience had stabilised at 1 percent of the national audience. It became clear to management that the Irish-language service would not be able to sustain its claim to government funding if audience ratings did not improve. A number of key alterations were made to improve the performance of the service: these included the change of name from *Teilifís na Gaeilge* (TnaG) to TG4. This name change identified the service as Ireland's fourth national television channel and forced cable companies to place it in a more prominent position among their services. In 2002 TG4's audience share stabilized at 4.5 percent, an audience level that allowed management to sustain their claim to funding (although it has since fallen to around 3 percent).

Cathal Goan, in the interview already cited, described the service as the most successful language revitalization initiative undertaken since the foundation of the Irish state, and added, "That doesn't mean that it guarantees the Irish language's future, but it gives it a position of acceptance as a modern contemporary tool of communication and expression." However, Gaeltacht campaigners argue that the establishment of an alternative national service should not have been the priority of TG4's programme-makers, but, rather, they should have focused on providing an accurate reflection of the daily experience of the farmers and fishermen who inhabit the Gaeltacht regions. From the perspective of these campaigners, the aspiration of management to provide a national rather than a minority-oriented service represented a continuing denial at state level of the distinctiveness of the Gaeltacht experience. Donnacha Ó Ealaithe, one of the Gaeltacht campaigners for the service, commented in an interview with the author in Galway (June 12, 1996), "In case of misunderstanding, I want to explain to people that, although we are

not against RTE 3 [his term for TG4], that is not what we are seeking. We want local television for the people of the Gaeltacht, as we got Raidio na Gaeltachta."

It is clear that TG4's eclectic mix of drama and lifestyle programmes does not appeal strongly to the ageing rural population of the Gaeltacht. Goan admitted when interviewed, "Some people have said to me that there have been casualties along the way, that we have ruthlessly abandoned tradition in order to pursue a modern audience." However, he argues that this nationally oriented approach was necessary in order for the service to create a sufficient audience to survive and sustain claims to government funds. Goan concluded, "This wasn't a service which would be judged on its own terms, it would be judged in a media market mostly by people who were not either conversant with what we wanted to do or the language in which we wanted to do it." It appears, therefore, that TG4's management succeeded in creating an alternative national service within the Irish mediascape where new voices and alternative views are being heard, but that this discursive space does not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the daily experience of many Irish speakers, particularly members of Gaeltacht communities.

AUSTRALIA AND CANADA: CONTRASTING FRAMEWORKS

Although there are continuing controversies about the structure and output of the three Celtic-language television services, the positive outcome of these campaigns indicates the degree to which indigenous linguistic minorities were privileged within Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and indeed the EU more generally. In countries such as Canada and Australia, broadcasting initiatives that involve recognition of linguistic diversity have often begun with a focus on the needs of immigrant language communities, such as those speaking Italian, Greek, Hindi, Punjabi, or Chinese, as part of an embrace of multiculturalism. In contrast, within the EU there remains a significant difference in status between indigenous and immigrant languages. The latter are, for example, explicitly excluded from the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (1992). Immigrant language groups are also prevented from applying for funding under the EU's extensive minority language initiatives, administered through the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages and the

associated Mercator group of organizations, which focus on the media, education, and legislative initiatives. Immigrant language policy is generally the preserve of national governments within the EU, where the emphasis is generally on assimilation rather than minority language rights. Apart from community broadcasting initiatives, immigrant television in Europe is dominated by attempts to access television services from countries of origin through cable or satellite services, with very little representation of immigrant languages by public-service broadcasters (see Ogan 2001).

As countries of settlement, Canada and Australia have adopted more inclusive approaches to the management of linguistic diversity on television, avoiding any general privileging of indigenous over immigrant communities. SBS, Australia's publicly owned "diversity" channel, began television broadcasting in 1985 under the slogan "Bringing the world back home." It has statutory obligations to address primarily the needs of immigrant communities and also at a lesser level, the needs of indigenous Aboriginal language groups. It provides an important supplementary service to community broadcasting initiatives that offer dedicated minority-language services. SBS represents an acknowledgement that there is some commonality of experience between immigrant and indigenous linguistic minorities, while acknowledging the specific challenges of providing a service that represents the diverse interests and experience of indigenous peoples.

Within the Canadian television industry there have also been several initiatives aimed at combining the resources, broadcasting expertise, and policy skills of indigenous and immigrant minority-language broadcasters in order to create a "diversity" sector. In 2004 an Agreement of Cultural Alliance was formalized between OMNI Television, the Rogers Corporation network serving migrant communities, and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. Jean LaRose of APTN noted, "Aboriginal peoples in Canada and ethnocultural Canadians have a lot in common and frequently face the same barriers in the broadcasting industry," while Leslie Sole of OMNI added that "although markedly different in history, these audiences have a real need for positive reflection, access to television, and inclusion into the Canadian media landscape" (see APTN 2004, 2). A "Diversity in Broadcasting" website, which features contributions from immigrant, indigenous, and French-language services, has also been established (at www.cab-acr.ca).

Given the potential of these projects to provide shared financial resources and collective policy expertise, it is significant that initiatives focusing on “diversity” broadcasting have not appealed to indigenous minority-language groups in Ireland, Scotland, or Wales. There is no evidence of any significant political or cultural collaboration between immigrant and indigenous language groups in these countries, although several policy-makers have argued that these communities have much to learn from each other’s experiences. The report of the Linguistic Minorities Project (1985, 12) noted a research gap which currently remains, observing, “The Project has been struck by how little contact there still is between researchers and practitioners working in bilingual areas and school systems, even between England and Wales. Many of the newer minorities in England could benefit from the Welsh experience and expertise.”

A clue to this lack of collaboration lies in the language hierarchies of Canadian society, which provide a clear example of why minority-language projects framed in terms of “diversity” can be problematic. While immigrant and Aboriginal languages are central to the construction of the “diversity” sector in Canada, it is clear that these languages do not enjoy the political, cultural, or economic status of French. Although the French-speaking community is technically a linguistic minority in Canadian society, French has official equal status with English under the federal policy of bilingualism, which has resulted in the establishment of a comprehensive range of services and a high level of political recognition and legal protection. Thus, the status of official language clearly generates much more of what Pierre Bourdieu describes as “linguistic capital” than for a language that is categorized as part of a group of (indigenous or immigrant) languages benefiting from general diversity initiatives. Bourdieu’s concept of “linguistic capital” helps to clarify how the social status of a language has a direct impact on the livelihoods and opportunities available to speakers of the language. As he argues (Bourdieu 1991, 18–19),

The more linguistic capital speakers possess, the more they are able to exploit the system of differences to their advantage and thereby secure a profit or distinction ... the speaker’s assessment of the market conditions and the anticipation of the likely reception of his or her language products operate as internalized constraints on the very process of production.

Given the intensity of the protests that characterized the campaigns in Ireland and Wales, in particular, it is clear that language activists were seeking to improve the cultural, political, and economic status of their respective languages as much as possible. Activists wished to challenge, expand, and reframe prevailing definitions of national identity to include them at official levels, rather than accept initiatives framed in terms of a generalized openness towards diversity. Therefore, by allying themselves with immigrants, who are already marginalized within the EU, indigenous minority-language activists in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales would have been risking a downgrading of status by creating a binary opposition between those framed as part of the “national” and all other diverse groups. Instead these communities were seeking to rework the construction of the “national” in order to include their linguistic and cultural identities, and thus dramatically improve the status of their languages.

CONCLUSION

Activists involved in campaigns for minority-language television services in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales regarded the creation of such services as mechanisms whereby a number of key processes could be achieved. They argued that the political, cultural, and symbolic status of their respective minority languages could be improved, and that new discursive spaces could be created where the distinctiveness of their minority-language identities could be explored. However, an examination of the structure and output of these services indicates that the outcomes of the campaigns have been much more complex than activists originally envisaged.

First, the input of civil servants and broadcasting professionals dramatically altered the structure of these services, moving them away from the broadcasting models put forward by activists during media campaigns. A key lesson emerging from the Celtic-language television campaigns is that language activists must remain engaged in the process of policy negotiation after the initial official decision to establish a service has been taken, in order to ensure that the resulting institutional structure reflects their original demands. For instance, the creation of independent news services, which activists characterized as a high priority during the campaigns for S4C, CCG, and TG4, took second place to the emphasis placed by broadcasting professionals on the creation of more modernized images of minority-language communities.

Second, differing constructions of the relationship between minority-language identities and national identities had an enormous impact on the structure and output of these services. The Welsh-language service S4C was structured very clearly around the needs of a group who viewed themselves and were viewed by others as a minority-language group within British society. Scots Gaelic speakers also viewed themselves as a linguistic minority, but the aspiration among activists to extend the boundaries of their collective identity in relation to Scottish national identity led to a number of problems regarding the legitimacy and realism of the Scots Gaelic language world as constructed within CCG project. The Irish language is already claimed as the first national language of the Irish state, although it is spoken by a minority of Irish citizens. It can be argued that the difficulties faced by TG4 management in portraying the cultural world of the more disadvantaged sectors of the Gaeltacht community also led to problems regarding the legitimacy and realism of some programming, although the service has proved relatively successful in appealing to parts of the broader Irish population.

Analysis of minority-language politics often suggests that protest groups representing emerging linguistic minorities are hostile to national identities and to the national cultural groups that draw on these discourses. However, a review of the experiences and problems faced by activists and policy-makers engaged in debates about minority-language television indicate that this presumption cannot be sustained. It is clear that once Welsh speakers felt that the cultural boundaries of their language community were being respected and acknowledged by the broader national community, the intensity of their hostility towards British national identity and national institutions diminished. Scots Gaelic broadcasters were seeking to reconfigure their position within definitions of Scottish national identity rather than to undermine its status or legitimacy. The activities and output of TG4 serve to underline the position of Irish as the first national language rather than allow the language to be claimed as a cultural badge by any one minority group. Minority-language activists are thus not necessarily hostile to national identities. Rather, they are seeking to renegotiate their own position in relation to national identities, in order to explore and highlight the significance and distinctiveness of their cultural experiences.

Finally, the experience of Canadian and Australian minority-language television projects presents evidence of a contrasting approach, where there has been a greater recognition of the commonality of experience between immigrant and indigenous linguistic minorities. However, the contrast also highlights the difference in status or “linguistic capital” between language communities served by “diversity” initiatives and language communities, such as the Francophone community in Canada, which seek to obtain greater official and institutional status for their language.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Benedict (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd ed. London: Verso.
- APTN (2004, March 10). Press Release, “Rogers OMNI Network and Aboriginal Peoples Television Network Sign Cultural Alliance” [online]. www.aptn.ca/content/view/40/39 [consulted March 12, 2007].
- Bevan, David (1984). “The Mobilisation of Cultural Minorities: The Case of Sianel Pedwar Cymru.” *Media, Culture and Society* 6, 103–17.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power: The Economy of Linguistic Exchange*, ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, and Cambridge: Polity Press [translation by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson of texts including *Ce que parler veut dire*. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1982].
- Cardiff, David, and Paddy Scannell (1987). “Broadcasting and National Unity,” in *Impacts and Influences: Essays on Media and Power in the Twentieth Century*, ed. James Curran, Anthony Smith, and Pauline Wingate. London: Methuen, 29–37.
- Cormack, Mike (1994). “Programming for Cultural Defence: The Expansion of Gaelic Television.” *Scottish Affairs* 6, 114–31.
- Cormack, Mike (1998). “Minority Language Media in Western Europe.” *European Journal of Communications* 13:1, 33–52.
- Cormack, Mike, and Niamh Hourigan, ed. (2007). *Minority Language Media: Concepts, Critiques and Case Studies*. Clevedon (North Somerset): Multilingual Matters.
- Davies, John (1994). *Broadcasting and the BBC in Wales*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Della Porta, Donatella, and Mario Diani (1999). *Social Movements: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Education, Culture and Sport Committee of the Scottish Parliament (2001). *Report on the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee*. Scottish Parliament Paper 473. Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament.
- Freedland, Jonathan (1997, September 8). "A Kinder, More Gentle Nationalism for Wales." *The Guardian* [London].
- Grin, François, and François Vaillancourt (1999). *The Cost-Effectiveness Evaluation of Minority Language Policies: Case Studies on Wales, Ireland and the Basque Country*. ECMI Monograph no. 2. Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein: European Centre for Minority Issues.
- Gruffudd, H. (1996). *Language Conflict and Young People: Mass Media and Threatened Languages* [mimeo].
- Hall, Stuart (1990). "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture and Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 220–39.
- Hawkins, Gay (1999). "Public Service Broadcasting in Australia: Value and Difference," in *Communication, Citizenship and Social Policy: Rethinking the Limits of the Welfare State*, ed. A. Calabrese and J. C. Bergelman. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 173–87.
- Howell, W. R. (1992). "Minority Language Broadcasting and the Continuation of Celtic Culture in Wales and Ireland," in *Ethnic Minority Media*, ed. S. H. Riggins. London: Sage, 217–42.
- Jones, Geoff (2002). "A Quiet Political Earthquake?" *Socialism Today* 46, 12–29.
- Linguistic Minorities Project (1985). *The Other Languages of England*. London: Routledge.
- MacDonald, Rhoda (1993). "Renaissance or Preservation: Gaelic Broadcasting." *Media Educational Journal* 14, 13–16.
- MacLeod, J. (1993). "Thoughts on Gaelic." *Media Educational Journal* 14, 17–20.
- McLelland, J. (1993, February 15). "Scots Gaelic TV." *The Scotsman*.
- Ogan, C. (2001). *Communication and Identity in the Diaspora*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Price, Monroe (1995). *Television: The Public Sphere and National Identity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Smith, Anthony (1991). *National Identity*. London: Penguin.
- Thomas, Ned (1971). *The Welsh Extremist: A Culture in Crisis*. London: Victor Gollancz.
- Valaskakis, G. (1992). "Communication, Culture and Technology: Satellites and Northern Native Broadcasting in Canada," in *Ethnic Minority Media*, ed. S. H. Riggins. London: Sage, 45–77.
- Williams, Kevin (1997). *Shadows and Substance: The Development of a Media Policy for Wales*. Llandysul, Ceredigion: Gomer Press.