



# Cultivating 'the heavies or opinion-forming press': nation branding, Irish economic development and the British press, 1958–1966

Mark O'Brien

To cite this article: Mark O'Brien (2023) Cultivating 'the heavies or opinion-forming press': nation branding, Irish economic development and the British press, 1958–1966, Irish Political Studies, 38:2, 256-277, DOI: [10.1080/07907184.2022.2152796](https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2022.2152796)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2022.2152796>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 06 Dec 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 409



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



OPEN ACCESS



# Cultivating ‘the heavies or opinion-forming press’: nation branding, Irish economic development and the British press, 1958–1966

Mark O’Brien

School of Communications, Dublin City University, Dublin 9, Ireland

## ABSTRACT

The transition from economic protectionism to free trade in the late-1950s saw the Irish government embark on a project to improve the state’s image abroad. Up to that point, the state had endured a tempestuous relationship with British newspapers and the adoption of free trade necessitated a new rapport to encourage positive coverage of the industrialisation project. The key components of this strategy were the courting of British newspapers through state sponsorship of special supplements, facilitating visits by British journalists to industrial sites, and providing interview access to senior ministers. Such actions constituted the state’s first exercise in nation branding and represented a sea change in how it interacted with British media. This article offers an analysis of this project to project an image of a modern, industrial Ireland for overseas consumption. It finds that the project was only partly successful: while much coverage highlighted the state’s economic modernisation, this was often accompanied by commentary that was critical of the lack of social change. It also finds that the tensions present in this initial nation branding project also characterised later nation branding projects.

**KEYWORDS** Ireland; nation branding; free trade; British press; Seán Lemass

## Introduction

For the Irish state, the 1950s was a time ‘of crisis leading to a transition from protectionism to free trade’ (Girvin, 1989, p. 196). Throughout that decade ‘the idea of a virtuous Ireland surrounded by economic and ideational walls of tariff and censorship was dying, but nothing much had yet taken its place’ (Gavin, 2011, p. 13). By the mid-1950s, the political class had concluded that ‘economic and cultural protectionism would have to be abandoned in favour of free trade, and that multi-national capital would have to be used to supplement local capital’ (Garvin, 2004, p. 144). Communicating

**CONTACT** Mark O’Brien  mark.obrien@dcu.ie  School of Communications, Dublin City University, Dublin 9, Ireland

© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

this fundamental policy change was a challenge that fell to Seán Lemass on his appointment as Taoiseach in 1959. Lemass was well aware that the policy change had to be communicated differently to various audiences. For the domestic political audience the change had to be presented not as a u-turn but as the next step in nation building. As Susan Baker (1986) has demonstrated, the *Irish Press* newspaper was utilised in this campaign to convince the Fianna Fáil faithful that the policy switch was policy progression rather than policy regression.

However, communicating the change abroad was a different matter. Since independence in 1922, the Irish state had endured a tempestuous relationship with British newspapers and in an attempt to change this Lemass embarked on the state's first nation branding project. For this initiative Lemass championed state sponsorship of supplements in British newspapers; he established an interdepartmental committee on publicity abroad; he engaged in correspondence with the proprietors of British newspapers; and he visited London to address senior editors in 1964. Such actions represented a sea change in how government viewed and utilised the media in the pursuit of economic development. This article presents an analysis of this nation branding project that sought to construct an image of a modern, industrial Ireland for overseas consumption. To construct the analysis all files relating to British publications between 1950 and 1966 held by the National Archives of Ireland were reviewed. These files came principally, though not exclusively, from the Department of An Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs (formerly External Affairs).<sup>1</sup> Lévesque (2008, p. 127) has likened the task of archival research to a courtroom hearing. Historians examine the available sources and, 'having considered their internal consistency and meaning, historians engage in corroboration, that is, a complex comparative evaluation of the facts presented and claims made in one source with those made in other, related sources', come to a conclusion based on those sources. Green and Troup (2016, pp. 232–235) note that 'narrative is central to the explanation of change over time, one of the most important dimensions of historical research and writing, and is also the principal means by which historians seek to achieve empirical coherence or logical consistency'. Of key importance to historiography is what Hackett Fisher (1989, p. xi) has called 'braided narrative' whereby description and analysis are interwoven. While both Tosh (2002, p. 149) and Burke (1991, p. 237) have argued that narrative and analysis need to be consciously integrated in historical narrative, for Lemon (1995, pp. 53–54) historical narrative 'does not need articulating on each occasion through explanatory and analytical discourse but is actually embedded in a *form* of discourse exclusive to itself (viz. narrative)'. Adopting Hackett Fisher's (1989, p. 11) 'braided narrative' method this article examines government thinking on the role of overseas media in relation to economic modernisation and reveals the tactics

employed by government in its attempts to engage in nation branding and secure favourable coverage from British newspapers. It also evaluates this nation branding project and finds that some of the core problems that Lemass encountered are replicated in contemporary nation branding projects initiated by the Irish government.

### British newspapers and the post-war Irish state

Following the relaxation of wartime newsprint rationing in 1950 British newspapers vied with each other to capture Irish market share. Between 1947 and 1950 annual sales of British daily titles in the Irish state increased from 4,571,556 to 6,076,284. Over the same period, annual sales of British Sunday titles rose from 15,704,988 to 23,849,652 (Devane, 1951). In 1964, the value of imported newspapers stood at £477,000; in 1969 it stood at £1.18 million, with the bulk of the rise attributed to Sunday titles. While price increases contributed to this rise in value, volume accounted for 62% of the increase (Mullane, 1971). The growing presence of British newspapers in the Irish state caused considerable anxiety within government circles in relation to how such titles covered Ireland. For example, in 1951, the department of external affairs observed that 'one of the most effective lines of foreign propaganda against this country is that it is priest-ridden' and that it constantly sought 'to off-set the anti-Irish slant of certain of the material appearing in these [British] papers'.<sup>2</sup> In 1952, the *Manchester Guardian* published a five-part series criticising the export, for food purposes, of horses from Ireland to France. Written by Canadian journalist Patrick Keatley, the series recounted the journey of a consignment of horses to an abattoir in France.<sup>3</sup> The series prompted what the department of external affairs called 'a shoal of letters' to the Irish government with 'most of them expressing polite surprise and protest but a few containing threats to cancel holidays in Ireland'.<sup>4</sup> Five years later *The People* reported on how, as one politician put it, 'auctions of slave-labour' were being held in the west of Ireland. The minister for external affairs, Frank Aiken, described the report as 'a fantastic exaggeration [of] a custom in some parts of the country for men who want agricultural work for a season to meet farmers who are looking for help, in certain towns on certain dates'. Noting that there was no truth that those seeking work were required to demonstrate their strength 'by lifting barrels, bending nails or raising carts off the road' Aiken reported that 'an appropriate letter had been written to the editor of the English paper concerned'.<sup>5</sup> Influential magazines such as *The Spectator* and *New Statesman* also caused concern. Writing in *The Spectator* in 1956, University College Dublin, professor of history T. D. Williams observed that 'Ireland is doubtless going somewhere. Nobody really knows where its goal, either in internal or in foreign policy, lies; and nobody cares – much'.<sup>6</sup> In 1959, the

editor of *New Statesman and Nation*, Kingsley Martin, criticised the Roman Catholic Church's involvement in the Irish education system and declared 'it is the historical propaganda taught in these schools that is primarily responsible for the continued recruitment of young men into the IRA'.<sup>7</sup> How representative all this is of overall coverage by British publications is debateable but it is at least indicative of the sensitivities present as the government embarked on its nation branding exercise.

Ameliorating such coverage required strategic engagement with the proprietors, editors and journalists of such publications. In terms of media engagement, Lemass was a pragmatist. As former managing director of the *Irish Press* between 1948 and 1951 he was acutely aware of how the press industry operated, and, in his dealing with journalists, he was frank and forthright. As remembered by long-time *Irish Times* political correspondent, Michael McInerney (1975) during his time as Tánaiste between 1957 and 1959 Lemass held weekly press conferences with political correspondents: 'in one case a talk extended for nearly three hours: and the field was wide open ... though much was non-attributable'. As Taoiseach, Lemass had no time for what he viewed as stereotypical media portrayals of the Irish state. In a 1960 memorandum on the establishment of Telefís Éireann, he expressed the hope that the new service would avoid 'stage-Irishisms, playboyisms, etc.' and that in its coverage of social problems it would 'encourage objective presentation of facts and constructive comment'.<sup>8</sup> Such pragmatism also informed Lemass's nation branding project that sought to construct an image of a modern industrial Ireland for overseas consumption. For this project Lemass championed state sponsorship of supplements in British newspapers; he established an interdepartmental committee on publicity abroad; he engaged in correspondence with the proprietors of British newspapers; and he visited London to address senior editors in 1964. Such actions represented a sea change in how the Irish government viewed and utilised the media in the pursuit of economic development.

## Nation branding

As noted by Nadia Kaneva (2011, p. 117) 'nation states have historically used various form of persuasion to advance their political, economic, and cultural agendas'. For example, Bolin (2006) has examined the World Fair as a long-standing mechanism of nation branding from the middle of the nineteenth century where nations sought to impress the world with their inventions and culture. But, as Szondi (2008, p. 4) noted, 'earlier versions of nation branding can be considered tactical rather than a strategically planned, holistic, and coherent activity'. The contemporary version of nation branding is most influenced by Simon Anholt who has described the process as 'national identity made tangible, robust, communicable, and above all useful' (Aronczyk,

2009, p. 294); 'a deliberate capture and accumulation of reputational value' (Anholt, 2007, p. 27); and the cultivation of a competitive identity to promote brand exports, entice foreign direct investment, attract tourists and demonstrate influence (Anholt, 2007). For Ying Fan (2010, p. 101) nation branding represents 'a process by which a nation's image can be created, monitored, evaluated and proactively managed in order to improve or enhance the country's reputation among a target international audience'. In a similar vein, Szondi (2008, p. 5) defines nation branding as 'the strategic self-presentation of a country with the aim of creating reputational capital through economic, political and social interest promotion at home and abroad'. Gudjonsson (2005, p. 285) defines the process as 'when a government or a private company uses its power to persuade whoever has the ability to change a nation's image. Nation branding uses the tools of branding to alter or change the behaviour, attitudes, identity or image of a nation in a positive way'. For Kaneva (2011, p. 118) nation branding 'includes a wide variety of activities, ranging from "cosmetic" operations, such as the creation of national logos and slogans, to efforts to institutionalise branding within state structures by creating governmental and quasi-governmental bodies that oversee long-term nation branding efforts'. Indeed, for Anholt (2008, p. 23) the most ambitious architects of nation branding envisage it as 'a component of national policy, never as a "campaign" that is separate from planning, governance or economic development'. This, for Peter Van Ham (2001, p. 6) creates the prospect of politicians being brand managers.

However, such activity is not without its critics. Kaneva (2011, p. 131) has described nation branding as 'an ideological project which reinterprets nationhood in relation to neo-liberalism'. Similarly, Ishita Sinha Roy (2007, p. 571) has critiqued the process as 'the fetishistic construction of national identity through specific image-signs'. For Melissa Aronczyk (2009, p. 294) the process can reduce the nation to 'an ensemble of non-threatening fragments of culture, history, and geography defined by committee'. In terms of nation branding and nationalism, Van Ham (2001, p. 3) observed that 'the brand state's use of its history, geography, and ethnic motifs to construct its own distinct image is a benign campaign that lacks the deep-rooted and often antagonistic sense of national identity and uniqueness that can accompany nationalism'. For Aronczyk (2009, p. 294) this represents the sanitisation of nation identity as 'in its ability to combine diverse motifs of heritage and modernisation, domestic and foreign concerns, and economic and moral ideologies, nation branding is presented as a "2.0" version of nationalism, as a more progressive form of patriotism than its chauvinistic or antagonistic counterparts'.

In the Irish context, John Fanning (2006, p. 235) has noted that Ireland can claim to have been 'one of the first countries to consciously manage its brand image'. While marketing the country as a tourist destination began in the

1950s, the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) began advertising the country as a location for overseas investment in the late 1960s. As Fanning (2006, p. 77) observed these campaigns ‘concentrated on communicating the range of financial incentives available from the Irish government to persuade overseas firms to re-locate in Ireland. There were classic functionally based campaigns that were successful in raising the profile of a country which was widely regarded as an economic backwater’. There followed the IDA’s ‘Young Europeans’ campaign of in the 1970s and 1980s, which constituted ‘the first attempt to consciously brand the country’ (Fanning, 2006, p. 235). However, as this article demonstrates, governmental concerns about nation branding began in the late-1950s, with the genesis being the adoption of free trade.

### ***Lemass, supplements, and the interdepartmental committee for publicity abroad***

As Olins (2002, p. 243) noted, the reason states engage in nation branding ‘is because their reality changes and they need to project this real change symbolically to all the audiences, internal and external, with whom they relate’. The stark reality change inherent in the switch from economic protectionism to free trade – and what this meant for how the nation was branded abroad – is apparent from the early days of Lemass’s premiership. Shortly after Lemass became Taoiseach in June 1959, he was informed by the department of external affairs that a *Financial Times* journalist, Basil Bicknell, intended to visit Dublin ‘to investigate the question of a 12-page feature on Ireland’.<sup>9</sup> As recorded in a memo of a meeting between Bicknell and Lemass, the cost of such a production was an issue of concern for the title. To resolve this, Lemass assured Bicknell that the government would bulk-buy copies of the supplement and would also ensure that state-sponsored bodies purchased sufficient advertising.<sup>10</sup> Lemass’s assurances had the desired effect: a letter from the IDA to the department of industry and commerce, which was forwarded to Lemass, indicated that it had been advised by *The Financial Times* that it had decided to issue a 48-page supplement on Ireland.<sup>11</sup> Among the semi-state companies that took full or half-page adverts in the supplement were the Industrial Credit Corporation, IDA, Córas Tráchtála (Irish Export Board), ESB, Bord Fáilte, Irish Shipping, Bord na Mona, and Irish Steel.<sup>12</sup> Published in April 1960, the supplement – ‘*Republic of Ireland: A Financial Times Survey*’ – carried articles reviewing Irish society, the economy, finance, trade with the UK, the export drive, industrial development, and numerous profiles of various manufacturing sectors. Lemass’s introduction presented a general outline of the Programme for Economic Expansion, with an assertion that ‘the growing preoccupation with freer trade on the continent of Europe suggested reconsideration of our protectionist policy’.

He also made a play for British investment by declaring that 'the good results achieved by the many British concerns which have already set up plants in Ireland should be an encouragement to other British industrialists to follow their example'.<sup>13</sup>

However, the articles reviewing various aspects of the state were not wholly uncritical. In his article reviewing Irish society, Brian Inglis noted that the policy of protectionism pursued from the early 1930s had been driven by the same person who had now ditched the policy. As Inglis put it, 'the drive for economic self-sufficiency had reached a dead end. Although he was himself the chief engineer of the Irish industrial revival [protectionism] Seán Lemass has few illusions: if he feels that the present economic currents in Europe leave his government with no alternative but to abandon *Sinn Féin* he will abandon it tomorrow *sans phrases*'.<sup>14</sup> As Dublin correspondent for *The Financial Times* Garret FitzGerald delivered a more positive outlook on developments by declaring that 'new factories are being established at a rate which exceeds anything hitherto experienced. Where there were half a dozen new factories built in 1956, and a dozen in 1958, there were 30 last year [1959], and many more are already under way for the current year, including some of the largest enterprises that have been established in Ireland during the past 40 years'. By pursuing such development FitzGerald concluded that 'the Republic of Ireland may be expected to succeed during the 1960s in reversing the adverse trends which have held back its development in the 1950s'.<sup>15</sup> As per Lemass's indication to Bicknell, a bulk order of the supplement was purchased: the IDA ordered 4,000 copies for distribution to Irish embassies worldwide.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, a later letter from the IDA to external affairs described the *Financial Times* as 'one of the most important publications for our work overseas'.<sup>17</sup> In this the IDA may have been alluding to the fact that between 1961 and 1966 Lemass contributed an economic review article for the *Financial Times's* annual 'Spotlight on Europe' supplement. Thought written by civil servants and consisting of straightforward economic data, the articles occasionally acted as a messaging platform for stressing the state's determination to meet the criteria for EEC membership. For example, in his 1961 contribution Lemass stressed that the Irish government 'accepts fully the objectives of the Community, both political and economic' while his 1962 article asserted that 'the Irish economy is at present undergoing a progressive modernisation' and that 'to prepare for the impact of greater competition, a systematic overhaul of industry is being conducted'.<sup>18</sup>

Other supplements follow suit. In January 1961, the *Daily Mail* approached the government suggesting a supplement timed around St. Patrick's Day. With a circulation of 2,280,000 and a readership of over 11 million people the fear of how the supplement might portray the state loomed large, with external affairs noting that *Mail* was 'persistently hostile to this country – much more so that, for example, the *Daily Express*'.<sup>19</sup> Having approved the



supplement Lemass wrote to the title's proprietor, Lord Rothermere, to express his desire that it 'would give an accurate portrayal of Ireland' and to note that the government viewed the supplement 'as a very valuable opportunity of presenting to the readers of the *Daily Mail* an accurate, up-to-date image of modern Ireland – an image which we are not always successful in presenting outside our own shores'. In reply, the paper's managing director assured Lemass that the supplement would be 'accurate and authoritative'.<sup>20</sup> Significantly, Lemass also wrote to several government departments about a possible government policy on supplement sponsorship. Noting that several approaches had been made 'seeking to interest him in proposals for general background publicity abroad on behalf of Ireland' Lemass asked that consideration be given to 'the question of entrusting some government department with responsibility, and funds, for general publicity and advertising on behalf of Ireland abroad'.<sup>21</sup> A vague response from Jack Lynch, the minister for industry and commerce, noted that the department was 'not in a position to offer any definite view on the merits of general publicity as opposed to special publicity by the various individual interests concerned'.<sup>22</sup> The response from the secretary general at the department of finance, Ken Whitaker, was more assertive. Whitaker noted that any such undertaking would be 'supplemental to the large expenditure already incurred by state-sponsored bodies promoting investment, tourism and exports' and asserted that 'where suitable newspaper supplements are proposed, it will be found that these bodies take advertising space'. Whitaker's advice to Lemass was blunt:

The most effective publicity which Ireland can secure is that which is generated by good economic management at home, and a policy of independence, integrity and helpfulness in our external relations. Unsolicited testimony to our efficiency and good sense has already done much more to create a new 'image' of Ireland that any advertising campaign, however well-organised or expensive, is likely to achieve.

Nonetheless, he felt it incumbent to suggest that any such publicity body should be based at external affairs.<sup>23</sup> Three weeks later, a ten-page memo to Lemass elaborated on Whitaker's initial views. It asserted that:

... a country's standing abroad rests on the way it conducts its affairs in different walks of life – government, personal freedom and behaviour, moral, educational and cultural standards, financial and economic stability, business conduct and honesty and, in the case of smaller countries at least, a sense of measure ... It is doubtful whether any country can consistently reflect a falsely flattering picture of itself ... the emphasis should rather be on building up a record of achievement in all fields of national endeavour – a record which will speak for itself.

In Whitaker's view, 'internationally esteemed activities, such as Ireland's work at the United Nations and the service of the Irish troops in the Congo,

although not deliberately designed to attract favourable publicity, actually do have that effect and may well indeed have a greater impact than would planned publicity activity (e.g. by means of advertisement)'. He also observed that 'press advertising suffers, to some extent, from the psychological disadvantage that recourse to it by a government has come to be associated with efforts on the part of the government concerned not so much to publicise objective virtues as to counter an unfavourable impression, not necessarily ill-founded, in the mind of the reader'. Concluding his considerations of Lemass's idea Whitaker warned that 'the cost of such publicity campaigns is extremely high' and that 'the existence of special provision for such purposes would rapidly become known and pressures by advertising firms and advertising departments of newspapers would develop to an intense degree, perhaps even to the point of blackmail when a newspaper would demand equal treatment with a rival'.<sup>24</sup>

A week later, Lemass issued his decision – which reflected Whitaker's thinking but kept the notion of supplement sponsorship very much alive. Lemass decreed that 'the question of operating a programme of background publicity, to be financed from a special allocation of voted monies, need not be pursued further for the time being'. However, he also asserted that 'it should be realised that unfavourable ideas regarding Ireland exist abroad and that it is desirable in the national interest that damaging misconceptions should be corrected'. To that end, Lemass decreed that 'work directed at projecting a proper "image" of Ireland abroad should be regarded as coming within the responsibilities of the department of external affairs' – but he also suggested that 'it might be of advantage to have an advisory committee representative of the departments of external affairs and other interested departments'. Such a committee should consider 'ideas mentioned in recent correspondence regarding general publicity, with a view to adopting such as them as may be regarded as effective in countering adverse publicity abroad and projecting a better "image" of Ireland'. Similarly, 'proposals for newspaper supplements on Ireland and other similar propositions should be dealt with by the department of external affairs, who would refer such proposals to the inter-departmental committee'.<sup>25</sup>

The first meeting of this interdepartmental committee on publicity abroad took place in April 1961 with Lemass's memo serving as its terms of reference. Chaired by Sean Ronan from external affairs, it had representatives from the departments of industry and commerce, finance, transport and power, and agriculture. At the meeting Ronan noted that 'the practice most frequently used by the department and its offices abroad in replying to unfavourable articles appearing foreign publications was to supply material to some third party who would endeavour to have it inserted in the form of a letter in the publication concerned'. In line with Lemass's wishes, the committee decided on two tactics to cultivate positive publicity for Ireland abroad. It

discussed 'inviting selected journalists to visit Ireland as guests of the state with the object of collecting material for articles on modern Irish life and progress' and the sponsorship of supplements. However, whatever about visits by journalists, the costs of which could be off-set by semi-state entities, external affairs remained wary of sponsoring supplements and of involving the committee in any decision relating to same. Ronan noted that 'proposals in connection with newspaper supplements were comparatively rarely received [and so] there did not therefore appear to be any necessity for direct action by the committee in respect of the majority of newspaper supplements'.<sup>26</sup> Thereafter, the bulk of the committee's records relate to a multitude of proposals by filmmakers to make promotional films about Ireland with external affairs handling any requests for supplement sponsorship.

Shortly before this meeting, the *Daily Mail* had published its supplement, with a short foreword by Lemass extolling the economic progress being made by the state. It devoted four pages to Ireland's development with adverts being taken by the Irish government, the IDA, Bord Fáilte, Córas Tráchtála, Aer Lingus, the ESB, Bord na Mona, and Irish Steel. The supplement was not cheap: the government's advert alone cost £2,480 and the state purchased 1,000 copies of the supplement for distribution to embassies worldwide.<sup>27</sup> In its review of the supplement external affairs asserted that it might assist in the government's efforts 'to enlist the *Daily Mail's* support (or at least the removal of their hostility) for future efforts to present a fair picture of Ireland abroad'.<sup>28</sup> Writing to Rothermere post-publication, Lemass observed that the supplement would 'assist the readers of your influential newspaper to gain a better understanding of the circumstances of our country and help to dispel some erroneous ideas regarding Ireland which unfortunately persist'.<sup>29</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by one reader in Yorkshire who wrote to external affairs to tell how the supplement 'has been read by millions of readers here in England, and will have changed the opinions of many in this country of Eire in general, as the general opinion held was that the country was backward, lacking progress in adopting itself to modern methods in industry'.<sup>30</sup> The Irish embassy in London was effusive in its praise:

The supplement was well received and highly praised by Fleet Street journalists from papers as dissimilar to the *Daily Mail* as *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Spectator*, and *The New Statesman*. All praised it for its professional competence and for the emphasis which it laid on the economic aspects of Irish activity... Perhaps the most important aspect of the impact which this supplement may have made would be in helping to change the image of Ireland as a somewhat backward and feckless country, an image which one comes across too often here. Old concepts die hard but well-written unsentimental supplements in mass-circulation papers (such as the *Daily Mail*) will undoubtedly help to kill the sentimental picture of Ireland which is too frequently projected and too easily received in Britain.<sup>31</sup>

For its part, the interdepartmental committee observed that the most visible impact in terms of British media coverage of the Irish state's development had occurred when the BBC had sent a television crew and reporter to Shannon Airport and various factory sites. As the committee noted, one newspaper review of such reportage had concluded that it 'must have opened many a sentimental eye just about as wide as it will go'.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, the ice between the government and the *Daily Mail* had been broken: a subsequent three-part series – 'Ireland's Golden Opportunity' – on the state's economic development was published by the *Mail* in November 1961, with external affairs noting that the reportage was 'unusually favourable for this paper'.<sup>33</sup>

Despite Lemass's wishes for the interdepartmental committee to work on supplements, requests from British titles in relation to supplements were not handled by the committee. Instead they were handled within external affairs. In February 1962 the department received an approach from the *Daily Herald* which was planning a 17 March 'special feature [that would] deal primarily with the development of industry and commerce in Ireland'. Stating its readership stood at five million the paper asserted that it was 'very widely read by representatives of management, unions, planning committees, and other bodies which operate in industrial organisations throughout Great Britain'.<sup>34</sup> A consultation with the Irish embassy in London followed in which the latter noted that the title's circulation had fallen to 1,395,000 for the six-month period of July to December 1961 as opposed to 1,418,000 for same period the previous year. Nonetheless, it noted that by sponsoring a supplement with the *Daily Mail* the government had 'created a precedent'. It also noted that 'the *Daily Herald* has always been friendly to Ireland – more so than the *Daily Mail* – and there would be a lot to be said for repaying that friendship by helping them officially with the supplement'.<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, the department decided against direct sponsorship and suggested that semi-state companies buy advertising space if they so wished; no supplement was published.

The following year the department turned down a similar proposal from the *Daily Sketch* which had approached it about a four-page feature on the state with an introductory statement by Lemass. A consultation with the Irish embassy in London resulted in the latter describing the *Sketch* as 'a very unimpressive paper with a smaller circulation (953,291) than any other morning paper except *The Times* and *The Guardian* which are, in any event, in a totally different class'. Describing its influence as 'negligible' the embassy saw 'little advantage in advertising in it'. Indeed, the embassy asserted that it doubted 'whether it is the type of paper for which the Taoiseach should write. In its sensationalism it out-Mirrors the *Mirror* (which has at least a circulation of 4½ million) and as you know, devotes its space principally to cheesecake, beatniks, gang warfare, divorces, and sex-crime

generally'.<sup>36</sup> While the department declined involvement with the *Sketch's* supplement, on this occasion the paper pressed on – albeit in a reduced format. Its international weekly edition of 3 April 1963 carried a colour front page picture of Dublin's O'Connell Street and an advert for the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes. On an inside page it carried a brief review of the state's economic development alongside several adverts for meat-packing firms and an auctioneering house.<sup>37</sup>

A subsequent supplement by *The Sunday Times* – 'Thirteen Aspects of Emergent Ireland' published in September 1962, with the text in this instance written by Brian Inglis – was described by the department as 'save for one or two things that might have been better phrased, is unobjectionable as one might expect'.<sup>38</sup> It remains unclear whether this was a sponsored supplement or not as no record of it can be found (it is not on file in the National Archives and a search by *The Sunday Times* could not locate the publication in its archives). The Irish embassy in Canberra, Australia requested fifty copies of the supplement and also observed that it would issue an embassy bulletin based on it 'because the average Australian's veneration for anything emanating from Britain is so great that a bulletin quoting *The Sunday Times* could be very effective'.<sup>39</sup>

However, when the ambassador, Sean Keenan, viewed the supplement, he changed his mind. While conceding that the supplement was 'well written and attractively produced' and that it was 'a very desirable advance to find a paper like *The Sunday Times* willing to devote a supplement to Ireland and to write without bias', he felt it 'scarcely suitable for general circulation by the embassy to Australian readers'. Keenan's reasoning lay in the fact that Inglis had adopted an impartial approach and while 'this apparent objectivity is an advantage from the point of view of having his assessment of Irish progress accepted by British readers' he worried what effect it would have on Australian readers. Noting that the Australian press tended to focus on the negative aspects of Ireland Keenan believed that 'publicity material circulated by the embassy should contain only favourable facts [since] the Australian press would reproduce the critical aspects to the complete exclusion of the favourable facts reported in the supplement':

The statement attributed to a factory manager that it takes workers an extra day to dry out after church holidays could be seized upon with great glee by the column writers in the *Sydney Telegraph* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. They might also welcome Mr Inglis's allegation that the Irish way of life is indolent and, of course, the picture of the solicitor ushering a bullock out of his office would be irresistible. The hot tap that yielded only cold water at the end of a distant corridor in an Irish hotel would also be good for many hearty laughs.

While Keenan felt that 'that circulation in Britain could be advantageous ... the Australian attitude to things Irish is about at the same stage now as

the British attitude was thirty or forty years ago'.<sup>40</sup> In response, the department noted that 'the prestige of the paper and the general favourable trend of the reporting would justify taking a chance in regard to the undesired features' though it accepted Keenan's 'reluctance to circulate the supplement further'. To compensate, the department enclosed extracts from 'British newspapers of standing' that it regarded as being 'indicative of the great and steady improvement in the treatment which Ireland has been getting in the British press over the last year or more'.<sup>41</sup> These extracts included material from an article on Ireland – 'Ourselves Alone: Forty years On' – written, independently of state involvement, by David Holden for *The Guardian*. Having spent two weeks in Ireland, Holden noted that the state was 'cracking its old shell of isolation and isolationism'. Itemising the new – American, Dutch, Japanese, Italian, Israeli and German – factories that had begun production Holden concluded that the state was 'beginning to escape from the cocoon of her own legend through the pull of the new international culture and the push of the new Irish generation'.<sup>42</sup>

### *Visitations, interviews and press coverage*

The introduction of free trade also prompted a burst of visitations in both directions as Irish politicians travelled to London to woo senior British journalists and the latter travelled to Dublin to view a modernising Ireland for themselves. One of the first journalists to visit the state to review developments was the incoming political correspondent of *The Economist*, Norman St. John-Stevas, who visited in 1960. Writing to external affairs the Irish embassy in London stressed that it was 'important that he should meet the right people rather than that he should have his future writing on Ireland coloured by distorted views'. Along with interviewing Lemass, St. John-Stevas also visited the Shannon Tax Free Zone and the new Liebherr (crane) factory in Killarney.<sup>43</sup> The net result of this facilitation was mixed. St. John-Stevas's first article noted that 'Ireland is at last joining the twentieth century', praised Lemass as 'a realist rather than a romantic', declared that 'a determined effort is being made to expand the economy' and noted that 'the days of the Irish as the playboys of the western world are strictly numbered'.<sup>44</sup> However, his second article focused on social issues, at the core of which he found 'the Roman Catholic Church, a sociological as much as a religious phenomenon'. The Irish were, he declared, 'never happier than when on their knees rattling their beads rather than following the Mass'. He also noted that 'the Irish are almost unique in their belief that chastity is possible, but they pay for this achievement with a definite puritanism, a certain sanctimoniousness, and a rapid fall from grace when exposed to a more challenging environment'. Such attitudes could, in his view, hold back economic progress and he could not 'dismiss the nagging suspicion that the victory

after all may not go to progress; the old, wise, sad, Celtic soul of Ireland may not be ready to descend to limbo yet'.<sup>45</sup> What Lemass and those who facilitated the visit thought of this reportage is not recorded on file. Two years later, another visit by an *Economist* journalist, Nicholas Harrman – described by the Irish embassy in London as 'a very good person, extremely likable and very sympathetic' – brought better results.<sup>46</sup> Having interviewed Lemass, Harman concluded that 'Ireland's application to the Common Market is a revolutionary step in Irish history, yet it seems that Irishmen, irrespective of their political party, are almost solidly behind the Government'.<sup>47</sup>

However, not all interactions with the 'quality' press went so smoothly. In early 1962, having been approached by *The Sunday Times* in relation to a series of articles on the state, external affairs went to great lengths to facilitate the paper's reporter who was described as 'a very reputable journalist, who knows a great deal about Ireland and has many friends here. He is well-disposed towards us'. Extensive arrangements were made for the reporter to visit numerous industrial sites – such as the Verolme Shipyard, the national oil refinery and Irish Steel in Cork; the Liebherr crane factory in Killarney; and Shannon Airport – and to conduct interviews with President Eamon de Valera, Taoiseach Seán Lemass, minister for external affairs Frank Aiken, and the leader of Fine Gael, James Dillon.<sup>48</sup> While the reporter arrived in Dublin none of the visits or interviews went ahead. An irate letter from the department to the Irish embassy in London noted that having missed several appointments and having been contacted at his hotel the department concluded that the reporter was 'under the weather'. Having been informed that his interview with the President was cancelled the reporter later turned up at Áras an Uachtaráin but was refused admission on the grounds that he was 'badly under the weather'. Clearly annoyed, the department noted that 'we have been embarrassed by the events'.<sup>49</sup> While it is unclear whether the embassy took up the issue with *The Times* a subsequent letter from the department to the embassy noted the reporter had returned to Dublin the following week seeking (unsuccessfully) to conduct the interviews.<sup>50</sup>

Such was the level of British media interest in the country's development that Lemass was persuaded by Irish embassy in London to visit the city and address 'city editors' at a lunch to be held during 'Ireland Week' – a series of events held around St Patrick's Day organised by entities such as Córas Tráchtála, Bord Fáilte, and Aer Lingus to promote Ireland as an attractive industrial and tourism destination. The city editors were, the embassy asserted, 'extremely influential in forming public opinion on financial and economic matters'.<sup>51</sup> Visiting London during 'Ireland Week' 1964 Lemass addressed the city editors at the Café Royal and struck a pragmatic tone by declaring that he did not intend to speak about 'wishes or hopeful aspirations, but about hard facts and realistic calculations'. He spoke frankly about the move from agriculture to industry as the driver of economic growth and

observed that between 1962 and 1963 British exports to Ireland had increased from £142m to £157m while Irish exports to Britain had risen from £139m to £152m.<sup>52</sup> Afterwards, Lemass visited the offices of the *Financial Times* in Cannon Street. A memo on the visit expressed the hope that it would 'not only provide positive publicity in this paper but enable the Taoiseach to make contact with the paper's staff etc.'<sup>53</sup> However, despite its frankness Lemass's speech did not make a splash in the British press. Reviewing the visit for the *Sunday Independent*, journalist Proinsias Mac Aonghusa (1964) declared that 'a visiting aborigine from Australia would have received more attention from the English press than the two Irish leaders were given' (Lemass had been accompanied by Tánaiste Sean MacEntee).

But while instant coverage may not have been forthcoming, it is possible that the visit was successful in cultivating longer-term positive coverage. Later that year *Daily Mail* journalist Charles James visited Dublin and interviewed Lemass on the state's economic development. Reviewing the resultant article – 'How Ireland is Beating Its Growth Target' – external affairs concluded that it represented 'something of a breakthrough image-wise for us in a paper like the *Daily Mail*. The treatment is serious and straight-forward and avoids the usual misconceptions. The time and effort spent on such journalists for some time past must be considered to be well worth while'.<sup>54</sup> In a similar vein, *Daily Express* editor John McDonald also interviewed Lemass and 'left Dublin very impressed with the progress we are making'. McDonald's series on the state's economic and social development was described by the department as a 'very favourable reference to Ireland in a paper which over the years has been consistently anti-Irish'.<sup>55</sup>

Such was the volume of visiting journalists, and, in the context of the talks on the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement 1965, the need to project a modern image of the state that external affairs sought to standardise its processes for cultivating both long-term and relatively instantaneous positive coverage in the British press. In May 1965 a memo noted that 'top priority should be given to an invitation through the [London] Ambassador to the editors and their wives to come here on individual visits. We should expect not one line from any of these visits but the long-term effects should be extremely worthwhile'.<sup>56</sup> A subsequent memorandum expanded on this cultivation strategy and likely outputs:

There is no doubt that there is a number of editors and owners of important British newspapers whose general attitude to this country would be considerably improved by having them here for 7–10 days. Each editor and his wife would spend a quite holiday here with the absolute minimum of meetings and briefings. I would envisage a small dinner with the Taoiseach or Tánaiste as host, a tour of the country – it being ascertained in advance whether the visitor was a keen golfer, fisherman etc. the tour being designed to meet his interests ... This Department should bear the total cost ... We do not want to



over-stress our economic and social progress to these editors and owners but rather to give them an opportunity of seeing the Ireland of to-day in a leisurely way and of having a quite discussion with the Taoiseach and other members of the government. In the long-term a dozen selected visits of this kind could have a profound influence on British attitudes to Ireland.<sup>57</sup>

This marked a step-up in terms of planning and strategic engagement with overseas press. Canvassed for his thoughts on such a strategy, Conor P. O'Brien, who was then publicity manager of Shannon Free Airport Development Ltd., provided a short report based on his experience of working at British newspapers such as *The Times*, *Sunday Express*, *News Chronicle* and news agencies such as Reuters and United Press International. According to O'Brien, any such strategy should focus on 'familiarising editors with Ireland's politics, economics, general background and future plans, to inform editorial opinion at the highest level and by so doing, obtain greater interest and consideration for Irish affairs than operates at present'. It should also focus on 'the creation of goodwill towards Ireland through the press [and] to influence, even indirectly, senior British opinion regarding the negotiation of trade, tourist and political agreements'. O'Brien advised the department to concentrate on 'the heavies or opinion-forming press' which he identified as *The Times* ('moulded by the owning interests'); *Financial Times* ('considerable political influence'); *The Economist* (which he noted as having once been owned by Irishman Brendan Bracken); *The Daily Telegraph* ('traditionally right wing Conservative, is often anti-Irish in editorial tone'); *The Guardian* ('Liberal, has been traditionally friendly towards Ireland'); *Observer* ('pro-Ireland'); *The Sunday Times* ('Owned by Lord Thomson. I believe that Thomson, provided he saw some publicity either for himself or his newspaper group, would be more than ready to visit Ireland'); and *The Sunday Telegraph* ('seems to be growing in circulation and authority').<sup>58</sup>

For reasons unknown, the invitation to editors did not go ahead. The following year, 1966, saw a plethora of British journalists visit Dublin – this time in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of 1916 Rising – resulting in several profiles of the state's development, with much mention of the centrality of the Roman Catholic Church in Irish life. Among these was a profile – 'Modern Ireland' – written by the special correspondent of *The Observer*, Patrick O'Donovan. Ostensibly written for the *Montreal Star* the profile was syndicated around the world via *The Observer's* news distribution service. For its part, the Irish embassy in London felt that the proposed profile would 'provide a good platform for our point of view if he [O'Donovan] is handled properly'.<sup>59</sup> Although the files do not record a reaction, O'Donovan's pen portrait of the state and the changes going on within it can hardly have pleased external affairs:

It is church-going, heavily clothed, conservative, relatively unpolitical, and it lusts, like all the other members of societies on the make, after the new,

good things of life – cars, refrigerators, foreign holidays and television sets. This is not the sort of society for which the martyrs died, but it is the sort that most of the world grasps at when it is offered. At long last it is coming to Ireland. Only the most tweed-entwined, twilight Gaelic romantic could mourn its comfortable approach.<sup>60</sup>

A similar tone characterised a profile of the state written by Mervyn Jones, special correspondent of *New Statesman*. Again the Irish embassy in London recommended that 'in view of the importance of the paper' Jones's request for interviews with government ministers should be facilitated.<sup>61</sup> External affairs concurred 'in view of the general wide influence and particular importance of this magazine in British Labour Party circles'.<sup>62</sup> In his article – 'Ireland's Unfinished Revolution: Prosperity in Sight: Freedom in Doubt' – Jones, having rehearsed the familiar narrative of industrial development, devoted a substantial portion of his article to literary censorship. Noting that 'the censorship is the most familiar symbol of Ireland as seen from outside' he reported that Edna O'Brien, whose novels had been banned, had recently been invited to attend a meeting at Limerick to which over 500 people showed up. When attendees were asked whether they had read her work, over 80% indicated that they had. As Jones concluded, 'the ensuing gale of laughter may do more than years of protest to blow away the censorship'. Jones also reported how, when he asked Lemass how long more the censorship provisions would last, Lemass responded that, while he accepted he was growing old it seemed to him 'that the world has got obsessed with sex'. Nonetheless, Jones concluded that 'the forces of change are in the ascendant [and] the banning of serious literature has become exceptional'.<sup>63</sup>

Later that year external affairs resurrected its plan to invite British journalists to visit the state and organised a week full of official interviews, functions and site visits. The journalists met with the minister for industry and commerce, Patrick Hillery, the minister for agriculture and fisheries, Charles Haughey, and had lunch with Lemass. All this was interspersed with visits around the country to view factories and industrial estates with sponsored lunches and suppers every day, including a banquet at Bunratty Castle in County Clare, and a visit to the Guinness Brewery in Dublin. The visit also included a work-free day in Killarney, County Kerry with optional fishing, golfing or sight-seeing arranged, attendance at a theatre show and attendance at the All-Ireland Football Final at Dublin's Croke Park.<sup>64</sup> Extraordinary as it may seem the departmental files do not contain any articles arising from this visit: similarly an online search of British newspapers does not return any significant articles in the relevant timeframe. In any event, this engagement marked the highpoint of the state's engagement with British media, in terms of cultivation if not coverage, on the issue of Lemass's economic development policy.

## Conclusion

As noted by Baker (1986) the switch from protectionism to free trade saw the architect of both policies, Seán Lemass, engage in a strategic communication exercise, via the *Irish Press*, to convince the Fianna Fáil party faithful that the policy change was the next step in nation building that would end partition. To communicate the policy switch to external audiences, particularly the British press, Lemass initiated the state's first exercise in nation branding, though, as indicated by government archives, this occurred more so by accident than design. As noted by Szondi (2008, p. 4) 'earlier versions of nation branding can be considered tactical rather than a strategically planned, holistic, and coherent activity'. Lemass's attempts at nation branding were certainly tactical rather than strategically planned. As demonstrated by the archives there was no strategic plan to communicate the policy switch to external audiences. It was only after *The Financial Times* suggested the production of a state-sponsored supplement that the government began to consider how to communicate the switch abroad. Thus the government's actions were re-active rather than pro-active and, as indicated by the archives, disagreement about how best to secure positive press coverage soon emerged. While Lemass favoured sponsored supplements, the other key figure in the policy switch, the secretary general at the department of finance, Ken Whitaker, argued strongly against the idea. In Whitaker's view, positive coverage secured by sponsored supplements was suspect and the most effective positive coverage was that which occurred organically in response to positive developments in the state or in the state's actions abroad. As shown by the archives, the result of this disagreement was a halfway house: an interdepartmental committee on publicity abroad that did not function in any appreciable way.

Nonetheless, this article finds that these discussions helped shape the government's emerging policy in relation to publicity abroad as deliberate cultivation of positive coverage in the British press was pursued. Such actions represented a sea change in how the government interacted with British media as senior politicians visited London to address the British media and various departments arranged for British journalists to visit industrial sites. However, as the archives demonstrate, despite this ever-growing professionalism within the public service in terms of branding Ireland, those journalists often counterpointed economic development with social stasis. Literary censorship and the central role of the Roman Catholic Church featured frequently in British press coverage, much to the chagrin of government. For this, the mixed messaging of government was a contributing factor. As noted by Baker (1986, p. 66) Lemass's appeals to the Fianna Fáil party faithful 'required the use of a nationalist ideology, including appeals to patriotism, anti-partitionism, and the language movement, to justify an anti-nationalist policy rooted in

the notion of free trade' – all of which suggested that nothing substantial was changing. However, as noted by Van Ham (2001, p. 3) in its stressing of the economy, nation branding 'lacks the deep-rooted and often antagonistic sense of national identity and uniqueness that can accompany nationalism'. These two contradictory sets of messages – the preservation of tradition for domestic audiences and the introduction of modernity for overseas investors – ensured that, in the British press, negative social coverage continued to be a counterpoint to the economic good news championed by Lemass.

Such contradictory messaging in nation branding was, and remains, difficult to avoid. As noted by O'Connor (1993, p. 70) at the same time that Lemass was signalling a modern Ireland that welcomed industrial investment, the Irish Tourist Board was emphasising leprechauns, shillelaghs and shamrocks as representative of a rural, pre-industrial, pre-modern society. In terms of contemporary Irish nation branding exercises Clancy (2011) has noted the same 'old Ireland' versus 'new Ireland' contradictions in recent tourism campaigns while Boughton (2022, p. 93) has observed that the tension between 'selling both the new and the old Ireland simultaneously' was also present in the recent Global Ireland 2025 project and the UN Security Council campaign. The challenges in branding the nation that, as evidenced by the archives, Lemass encountered in the 1960s remain unresolved in the contemporary nation branding exercises overseen by his successors.

## Notes

1. Files from the Department of Justice relating to British publications during this period were excluded as their content related to matters of morality and the Censorship of Publications Board. For an analysis of these files see O'Brien (2022).
2. National Archive of Ireland (NAI), TSCH/3/S2321 A, dept. of external affairs memo, 16 March 1951.
3. Keatley's articles were republished in *The Irish Times*, 16–20 June 1952.
4. NAI, DFA/6/414/3, memo, 18 June 1952.
5. NAI, DFA/5/340/12/226; Dáil Éireann debate, 30 October 1957.
6. NAI, DFA/6/414/24/117, T. D. Williams, 'The Political Scene' in *The Spectator*, 20 April 1956, 527–528.
7. NAI, PRES/1/P5557, Kingsley Martin, 'Dublin Diary' in *New Statesman and Nation*, 7 November 1959, 615–616.
8. NAI, TSCH/S14996, memo, 30 March 1960.
9. NAI, TSCH/3/S16676, memo, 9 July 1959.
10. NAI, TSCH/3/S16676, memo, 15 July 1959.
11. NAI, TSCH/3/S16676, memo 11, August, 1959.
12. NAI, TSCH/3/S16676, 'Republic of Ireland: A Financial Times Survey', 11 April 1960.
13. NAI, TSCH/3/S16676, Seán Lemass, 'Plan for Expansion' in *Republic of Ireland: A Financial Times Survey*, 11 April 1960, 1–2.
14. NAI, TSCH/3/S16676, Brian Inglis, 'Forgetting the Past' in *Republic of Ireland: A Financial Times Survey*, 11 April 1960, 3.

15. NAI, TSCH/3/S16676, Garret FitzGerald, 'Economic Projects to Check the Emigrant', in *Republic of Ireland: A Financial Times Survey*, 11 April 1960, 4.
16. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/11, memo, 30 March 1960.
17. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/11, letter, 4 August 1966.
18. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/11, Lemass article for *Financial Times* 'Spotlight on Europe' supplement, December 1961; NAI, TSCH/3/S17327/62, Lemass article for *Financial Times* 'Spotlight on Europe' supplement, December 1962.
19. NAI, TSCH/3/S16976/61, Irish embassy in London memo, May 6, 1961 & department of external affairs memo, 16 January 1961.
20. NAI, TSCH/3/S16976/61, Lemass to Rothermere, February 9, 1961; reply from MD, 13 February 1961.
21. NAI, 2005/82/636, memo, 16 January 1961.
22. NAI, 2005/82/636, letter, 26 January 1961.
23. NAI, 2005/82/636, letter, 24 January 1961.
24. NAI, 2005/82/636, memo, 10 February, 1961.
25. NAI, 2005/82/636, memo, 16 February 1961.
26. NAI, 2005/82/636, minutes, 20 April 1961.
27. NAI, TSCH/3/S16976/61, *Daily Mail* supplement, 13 March 1961 and associated correspondence.
28. NAI, TSCH/3/S16976/61, memo, 14 March 1961.
29. NAI, TSCH/3/S16976/61, 15 March 1961.
30. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/14, letter, 26 March 1961.
31. NAI, TSCH/3/S16976/61, memo from Irish embassy in London, 6 May 1961.
32. NAI, TSCH/3/S16976/61, Interdepartmental Committee on Publicity Abroad, memo, undated. The review was published by *The Sunday Times* (undated clipping).
33. NAI, DFA/5/366/65/197, series dated November 14–16, 1961; memo, 23 November 1961.
34. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/28, letter, 1 February 1962.
35. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/28, letter, 7 February 1962.
36. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/36, letters, 20 March 1963.
37. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/36, *Daily Sketch* (international edition), 3 April 1963.
38. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/33, memo, September n.d., 1962.
39. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/33, letter, 3 October 1962.
40. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/33, letter, 23 November 1962.
41. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/33, letter, 3 December 1962.
42. NAI, DFA/5/316/300/33; *The Guardian*, 14 September 1962.
43. NAI, DFA/5/366/65/148, memo, 27 May 1960.
44. NAI, DFA/5/366/65/148, *The Economist*, 'Ireland Revisited I, 23 July 1960, 373–374.
45. NAI, DFA/5/366/65/148, *The Economist*, Ireland Revisited II, 30 July 1960, 482–483.
46. NAI, DFA/5/366/65/213, *The Economist*, 9 February 1962.
47. NAI, DFA/5/366/65/213, *The Economist*, 9 February 1962.
48. NAI, DFA/366/65/201, memo, 4 January 1962.
49. NAI, DFA/366/65/201, letter 18 January 1962.
50. NAI, DFA/366/65/201, letter 25 January 1962.
51. NAI, TSCH/3/S17492/63, letter from London embassy to external affairs, 22 July 1963.
52. NAI, TSCH/3/S17492/95, speech to city editors, 16 March 1964.

53. NAI, TSCH/3/S17492/95, memo, 3 March 1964.
54. NAI, 2011/39/225, memo, 8 December 1964.
55. NAI, 2011/39/254, memo, 20 January 1965.
56. NAI, 2011/39/250, memo, 10 May 1965.
57. NAI, 2011/39/250, memo, 18 May 1965.
58. NAI, 2011/39/250, report, 29 June 1965.
59. NAI, 2011/39/282, memo, March n.d., 1966.
60. NAI, 2011/39/282, *The Bulletin* (Sydney, Australia), 16 April 1966.
61. NAI, 2011/39/283, memo, n.d.
62. NAI, 2011/39/283, memo, 25 April 1966.
63. NAI, 2011/39/283, *New Statesman*, 1 July, 1966.
64. NAI, 2011/39/250, memo, September n.d., 1966.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributor

**Mark O'Brien** is Head of the School of Communications, Dublin City University. He is the author of *The Fourth Estate: Journalism in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Manchester University Press, 2017) and co-editor of *Political Communication in the Republic of Ireland* (Liverpool University Press, 2014).

## References

- Anholt, S. (2007). *Competitive identity: The new brand management for nations, cities and regions*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anholt, S. (2008). From nation branding to competitive identity: The role of brand management as a component of national policy. In K. Dinnie (Ed.), *National branding: Concepts, issues, practice* (pp. 22–23). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Aronczyk, M. (2009). How to do things with brands: Uses of national identity. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 34(2), 291–296. doi:10.22230/cjc.2009v34n2a2236
- Baker, S. (1986). Nationalist ideology and the industrial policy of Fianna fail: The evidence of the Irish press (1955–1972). *Irish Political Studies*, 1, 57–66. doi:10.1080/07907188608406425
- Bolin, G. (2006). Visions of europe. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(2), 189–206. doi:10.1177/1367877906064030
- Boughton, M. (2022). A new nation brand strategy? Global Ireland 2025 and the UN Security Council campaign. *Administration*, 70(3), 85–105. doi:10.2478/admin-2022-0020
- Burke, P. (1991). History of events and the revival of narrative. In P. Burke (Ed.), *New perspectives on historical writing* (pp. 233–248). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Clancy, M. (2011). Re-presenting Ireland: Tourism, branding and national identity in Ireland. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 14(3), 281–308. doi:10.1057/jird.2010.4
- Devane, R. S. (1951). British papers. *The Irish Times*, p. 5.
- Fan, Y. (2010). Branding the nation: towards a better understanding. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6(2), 97–103. doi:10.1057/pb.2010.16

- Fanning, J. (2006). *The importance of being branded*. Dublin: Liffey Press.
- Garvin, T. (2004). *Preventing the future: Why was Ireland so poor for so long?* Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Gavin, B. (2011). *News from a republic: Ireland in the 1950s*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Girvin, B. (1989). *Between both worlds: Politics and economy in independent Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Green, A., & Troup, K. (2016). *The houses of history: A critical reader in history and theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Gudjonsson, H. (2005). Nation branding. *Place Branding*, 1(3), 283–298. doi:10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990029
- Hackett Fisher, D. (1989). *Albion's seed*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaneva, N. (2011). Nation branding: Towards an agenda for critical research. *International Journal of Communication*, 5, 117–141.
- Lemon, M. C. (1995). *The discipline of history and the history of thought*. London: Routledge.
- Lévesque, S. (2008). *Thinking historically*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Mac Aonghusa, P. (1964, March 22). Taoiseach was ignored. *Sunday Independent*, 9.
- McInerney, M. (1975, July 19). Open government. *The Irish Times*, 9.
- Mullane, D. (1971, January 7). Grants for papers recommended. *The Irish Times*, p. 4.
- O'Brien, M. (2022). Indecent and suggestive pictorial matter: banning Picture Post in Ireland. *Media History*, doi: 10.1080/13688804.2022.2051460.
- O'Connor, B. (1993). Myths and mirrors: Tourist images and national identity. In B. O'Connor, & M. Cronin (Eds.), *Tourism in Ireland: A Critical Analysis* (pp. 68–85). Cork: Cork University Press.
- Olins, W. (2002). Branding the nation — the historical context. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4&5), 241–248. doi:10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540075
- Roy, I. (2007). Worlds apart: Nation-branding on the national geographic channel. *Media, Culture & Society*, 29(4), 569–592. doi:10.1177/0163443707076190
- Szondi, G. (2008). *Public diplomacy and nation branding: Conceptual similarities and differences*. [https://www.diplomacy.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Public\\_Diplomacy\\_and\\_Nation\\_Branding\\_Conceptual\\_Si.pdf](https://www.diplomacy.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Public_Diplomacy_and_Nation_Branding_Conceptual_Si.pdf).
- Tosh, J. (2002). *The pursuit of history: Aims, methods, and new directions in the study of modern history*. London: Pearson.
- Van Ham, P. (2001). The rise of the brand state: The postmodern politics of image and reputation. *Foreign Affairs*, 80(5), 2–6. doi:10.2307/20050245