Solid to liquid culture: The institutional, political and economic transformation of New Zealand state broadcasting

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Abstract

This thesis examines the cultural development of New Zealand state broadcasting and proposes a new institutional paradigm based around the discursive potential of digital and social media. In framing the political, cultural and institutional elements of New Zealand broadcasting through an historical schema based around Zygmunt Bauman’s concept of the shift between ‘solid’ (national) to a ‘liquid’ (global) culture, the thesis examines New Zealand state broadcasting through three distinct cultural phases: as a vehicle for the narrative of the settler colony; as a site for cultural struggle over national identity; and as a means to convey a commodified version of national identity in the era of competitive, trans-global media. I argue that in each of its administrative and governance configurations, the state broadcaster has operated to disseminate the prevailing ideology and in this capacity has never effectively functioned as a public service. Since the 1990s the development of digital media technologies, and the modes of production and consumption associated with those technologies, has made subverting the accepted economic and structural broadcasting paradigm possible. In the final chapter I turn to Habermas’s notion of the public sphere and the concept of public commissioning in order to propose a re-imaged form of public service media in New Zealand.
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Preamble: controversy over public broadcasting in 2012

In 2011 New Zealand’s Minister of Broadcasting Jonathan Coleman announced the National government’s decision to cease funding for the digital public broadcasting channel TVNZ 7 effective from the end of July 2012. Coleman’s decision marked the end of the latest chapter in the saga of public broadcasting in New Zealand that had been ongoing in various forms since the establishment of the state broadcasting network in 1936. Reacting to the decision, media studies academics Drs Peter Thompson and Trisha Dunleavy authored an open letter of protest to the government that was subsequently signed by over 70 members of New Zealand’s academic community. The letter’s message was that free-to-air and universally accessible public service media is a significant component of the democratic process and as a means of facilitating national identity. The authors maintained that New Zealand’s commercial and competitive broadcasting model was inadequate as a democratic public forum. Thompson & Dunleavy (2011) write:

If New Zealand is a country with high ambitions, it needs to ensure that it has a healthy media environment. Public service is an essential ingredient of this because it provides a range of options not covered by the commercial sector. Most OECD countries ensure that citizens have access to at least one public service television channel. They do so both as a response to market failure and as a recognition that public television can contribute to a better informed society. And knowledge is a crucial asset for any country in the contemporary world.

Public service television is even more important in a country of such limited size. Our small population means that New Zealand’s commercialised television channels simply cannot provide the range of programming that viewers want and should be able to access in the interests of democracy as well as cultural identity.
The letter leaves the concept of public service broadcasting undefined, but the programming values, expectation of the state’s role in its governance and ownership, and assumptions about the democratic function of public service broadcasting are implicit in the letter’s content.

Across the world public service broadcasters have defined their objective and values through a variety of statutory and policy documents (Wessler et al 2008; DeBrett 2009: 807). In 1985 independent research body the British Broadcasting Research Unit (BRU) published a list of recommendations summarizing the central ideals of programming and delivery mechanisms common to a number of public service broadcaster. These are:

- Geographical universality. Broadcast programmes should be available to the whole population.

- *Universality of appeal*. Broadcast programmes should cater for all tastes and interests.

- There should be special provision for minorities, especially disadvantaged minorities.

- Broadcasters should recognise their special relationship to the sense of national identity and community.

- Broadcasting should be *distanced from all vested interests*, and in particular from those of the government of the day.

- *Universality of payment*. One main instrument of broadcasting should be directly funded by the corpus of users.

- Broadcasting should be structured so as to encourage *competition in good programming rather than competition for numbers*.

- The public *guidelines for broadcasting should liberate rather than restrict* broadcasters. (Broadcasting Research Unit 1985: 8)
These elements are recognized and accepted tropes of public service broadcasting and are replicated across a number of networks and territories. For example Cunningham (1993) and Papanastassopoulou (2002) both cite the BRU’s list as a cornerstone of public service broadcasting in the European and Australian mediascapes respectively. The significance of TVNZ7 to New Zealand broadcasting was due to the channel being the state’s first commercial-free public service vehicle since the establishment of the state network in 1936.

The launch of the digital network in 2003 was one of several broadcasting initiatives implemented by the Labour government between 1999 and 2008 that included the TVNZ Charter in 2003 and the establishment of the Māori Television Service (MTS) in 2004. These initiatives were viewed by media commentators as a significant interventions into the operations of the state broadcaster and breathed new life into the academic debate in New Zealand concerning public service broadcasting (Comrie and Fountaine 2005, 2005a; Thompson 2004, 2010; Dunleavy 2011). The protests against TVNZ 7’s closure were organized in conjunction with the opposition Labour Party and the channel’s abolition highlighted the conflicting objectives for broadcasting held by New Zealand’s two main political parties.

TVNZ’s digital channels (including TVNZ 7 and the children’s channel TVNZ6) and the TVNZ Charter were public broadcasting mechanisms incorporated into the existing TVNZ framework and demonstrated Labour’s commitment to the principle that TVNZ should operate within a public service mandate; however in employing these initiatives two hurdles needed to
be overcome. Firstly, TVNZ has no history of public broadcasting; and secondly, the initiatives were to be undertaken in the backdrop of TVNZ’s day-to-day commercial activities. This led to complaints by TVNZ executives that the “dual mandate” under which the network operated was highly problematic (Thompson, 2004: 1). The situation was described by the then-TVNZ Chief Executive Ian Fraser as being like “rendering unto God and unto Caesar at the same time” (quoted in Thompson 2004: 1), inferring that achieving the twin objectives was a practical impossibility, especially since no regulatory concession had been made to TVNZ’s commercial imperative with the establishment of the digital public service channels.

In contrast with the Labour Party’s objective to supply public service broadcasting, the National Party, that assumed power in 2008, have affirmed a preference for a free-market approach broadcasting. In 2012 the National Party’s broadcasting policy expressed a commitment to TVNZ as a commercial enterprise and employed a contestable funding model for any publicly funded programming. The policy states:

We’re committed to quality public broadcasting content, but we want to ensure our investment returns the best results for New Zealanders.

**Funding the best programmes**

We believe content is best provided through NZ On Air’s contestable funding processes, which promotes competition allowing the best possible content to make it to the screen.

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¹TVNZ operates as a Crown-owned company and as a corporate entity it must pay an annual dividend to the government (as the sole shareholder). I discuss TVNZ’s corporate structure in greater detail elsewhere in this Introduction and in Chapter Three.
Sustainable public broadcasting

Under National a clear direction has been set for Television New Zealand. The dual mandate that Labour imposed has been removed, allowing TVNZ to focus on being a successful television company screening quality programmes. (New Zealand National Party 2012)

The emphasis on contestable public funding for programming re-affirms the notion that as a state-owned commercial network TVNZ is due no advantage in the free market environment and emphasizes that the state broadcaster is a commercial rather than a public service entity.

Both the National and Labour parties claim their policies will foster quality programming. National’s position is to encourage competition between broadcasters, allowing programme makers to attract niche audiences. Conversely Labour’s broadcasting policies since 1999 represent the Party’s belief that TVNZ should hold public service obligations. But despite investing the state broadcaster with cultural imperatives over solely economic ones, Labour retains the demand for TVNZ to pay the government an annual dividend. As I note above, these policies demanding the broadcaster to follow a ‘dual mandate’ are arguably a primary cause of difficulty in the management of TVNZ.

These divergent and changeable policy positions between the two main political parties indicate that both the ideal and the implementation of a robust public broadcasting service remain highly problematic in the New Zealand perspective. In this thesis I examine the historic, cultural, political and economic
context that informs the current broadcasting environment, and explore how
digital technologies and their associated forms of production and reception may
subvert these conventional systems by changing the economies of scale inherent
in conventional broadcasting and reducing the role of the state in broadcasting
operations. In charting a genealogy of New Zealand state broadcasting I seek to
argue that each of the various institutional models has thus far failed to
adequately function as a ‘public service’ despite such an ideal being both implicit
and explicit in the agenda of various broadcasting initiatives since the
establishment of the national network in 1936. My purpose is to examine and
discuss the relationship between the output and institutional design of the New
Zealand state broadcasting at three key moments between 1936 and 2012 and
then to subsequently offer an alternative public broadcasting model based on
the Habermasian theory of the public sphere and employing the discursive and
participatory potential of social media and digital technologies.
Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to examine the relationship between national broadcasting and national identity in New Zealand as this relationship has been influenced by various political, economic and cultural elements. In order to develop this analysis I am drawing from three key sources of information: institutional and legislative frameworks that have governed broadcasting; the programming output produced and commissioned by the state broadcaster; and through the processes of external gatekeeping bodies charged with producing local content.

The argument I present is that national broadcasting founded upon the one-to-many model of conventional mass broadcasting primarily serves an ideological function by providing a particular version of national identity. This has transitioned at various times in response to political, economic or cultural forces, including the influence the colonial relationship between Britain and New Zealand, the influence of identity politics and the impact of free-market economics on the operations of national institutions and the articulation of national identity. I argue that at various moments that has been a conflation and confusion between the concepts of state broadcasting, public broadcasting and local broadcasting. This been reiterated through numerous vehicles including the media and scholarly debates, and perpetuated by the state broadcaster itself through its gatekeeping mechanisms. My objective in identifying the ideological function of New Zealand broadcasting thus demands a clarification of the
various systemic, political and economic factors relevant to broadcasting policy and output. The primary objective thus constitutes a critique of the cultural role performed by New Zealand’s state-owned broadcaster and as a response to this critique I conclude this thesis by positing the notion that interactive digital media technologies have the potential to subvert both the conventional institutional framework and the ideological dominance of the state media, thus introducing a new paradigm for New Zealand broadcasting.

In conducting this research I have drawn material from government documents, including parliamentary debates, annual reports from the state broadcaster, official enquiry findings and media releases from state officials, alongside scholarly work in the field of media studies, New Zealand history and cultural studies. This work is a contribution to a developing field already occupied by a number of key works. This includes Patrick Day’s two comprehensive histories of New Zealand broadcasting, *The Radio Years – a history of broadcasting in New Zealand* (1994) and *Voice and Vision – a history of broadcasting in New Zealand* (2000). Ian McKay’s 1953 volume *Broadcasting in New Zealand*, Robert Gregory’s *Politics and Broadcasting – Before and Beyond the NZBC* (1985) and *Revolution in the Air* by Paul Smith (1993) all provide valuable accounts of the politics of broadcasting at specific historic moments. Analysis conducted by Avril Bell (1995) and Roger Horrocks (1995) offers important and divergent perspectives on the role of New Zealand on Air (NZOA) in the deregulated mediascape. Bell’s argument in particular forms the basis for the critique of NZOA in Chapter Three. Also significant is Peter Thompson’s wide-ranging examination of the public broadcasting initiatives undertaken by the
Helen Clark-led Labour government (Thompson, 2000; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2008) and Trisha Dunleavy’s research into the historical and cultural development of public broadcasting in New Zealand (Dunleavy 2005; 2008). Of special note is Dunleavy’s 2011 work with Hester Joyce, *New Zealand Film & Television: Institution, Industry and Cultural Change* that serves as an essential template for this study. Jo Smith’s research into the Māori Television Service (2006, 2011), including her collaboration with Sue Abel (2008) is also an important influence on my discussion of biculturalism in New Zealand broadcasting. An additional but significant recent addition to the scholarly field of New Zealand bicultural media is *The Fourth Eye – Māori Media in Aotearoa New Zealand* (2013) edited by Brendan Hokowhitu and Vijay Devadas. Here chapters by Abel, Chris Prentice and the editors’ introduction have all been invaluable source, especially for Chapter Two of this thesis.

*Object of study and theoretical framework*

The object of analysis comprises an historical examination of New Zealand broadcasting between 1936 and 2012. Chapter One discusses the period 1936 to 1962, when broadcasting governance was under the jurisdiction of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) and radio was the predominant mass broadcasting medium. State-owned radio remains a significant element in the New Zealand mediasphere with the Radio New Zealand National, Radio New Zealand Concert and Radio New Zealand International stations currently representing the country’s only public service broadcasters operating through a chartered mandate. However in order to keep the perimeters of the thesis within
workable limits, from Chapter Two onward the focus of the thesis shifts from radio to television as the latter has been the predominant vehicle for the representation of culture and society in New Zealand since its establishment in 1960 (Simmons, 2004: 68). I contend that the political and cultural relationships between the institution of radio and the New Zealand state are varied and, at times, contentious and contradictory, especially since the 1980s when the issue of government funding for a public service broadcaster is subject to political debate and scrutiny. Given the political issues surrounding radio broadcasting in New Zealand, I felt that a focus on both radio and television would extend the perimeters of the thesis beyond practical limits, hence my decision to focus on television from post-1960 onward. In Chapter Four I broaden the analysis to digital and internet-based technologies, but television remains the primary object of study.

The framework of this thesis comprises a chronologically-based genealogy of New Zealand broadcasting. As noted above, Chapter One examines the period 1936-1962; Chapter Two examines the shift in broadcasting in the wake of the establishment of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation in 1962 and goes on to examine how the state broadcaster responded to rise of bicultural politics and culture in the 1970s. I conclude the chapter discussing the development of Māori media, specifically those arguments surrounding the establishment of the Māori Television Service and its repercussions concerning the role of Māori within TVNZ. Chapter Three examines the reproduction of New Zealand national identity in the context of the de-regulated broadcasting environment. Chapter Four examines digital and internet-based broadcasting
and the potential these technologies may hold in changing the economic and political paradigm of conventional broadcasting.

In presenting my argument I have employed two distinct theoretical structures as well as engaging in a theory of the state in a particular way. In order to examine the ideological role of state broadcasting I am employing an Althusserian framework in which to examine the state. By taking this approach my argument rest on the notion that broadcasting constitutes an ideological state apparatus by a favouring and reiteration of ideas and beliefs most beneficial to society’s ruling class (Althusser 1971/2006: 92). Althusser argues that media is a primary Ideological State Apparatus alongside religion, education, the legal system, the family and culture through the dissemination of particular values. Here I acknowledge that some historical and technological nuances are relevant to this study and need to be identified in the context of the political and economic elements inherent in New Zealand broadcasting as these impact the way I use my primary theoretical frameworks.

The definition of ‘state broadcasting’ as it is employed in this thesis is historically contingent. During the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) governance period the influence of the state is unequivocal given the monopoly administrative system and the NZBS’s lack of editorial independence. This period, examined in detail in Chapter One, is where the New Zealand state broadcaster can be mapped easily onto the Athusserian model. But even as broadcasting’s administrative and policy structures have retreated from the heavily state centric model, first with the introduction of the NZBS and the
influence of independent voices through the national broadcaster during the 1970s, and later in the de-regulated broadcasting environment where public service broadcasting has been predominately supplied via specific state mechanisms such as New Zealand on Air (NZOA), the state has been highly influential in the provision of cultural material.

The articulation of the state is highly influential in my application of theoretical/conceptual frameworks. In Chapters One to Three I map the historical trajectory of New Zealand state broadcasting, taking into account the institutional, technological and governance elements that contribute to the production of a national narrative and cultural identity. Here I adopt the ideas developed by Zygmunt Bauman in his 2011 volume *Culture in a Liquid Modern World* as the primary theoretical framework. This work continues Bauman’s engagement with culture and globalization that began with *Liquid Modernity* (2000) and continued with *Liquid Life* (2005). These texts examine the transition of culture from its modernist incarnation based on national (homogenous) narratives, to the contemporary trans-national and globalized forms of culture that can be framed through the concepts of post-modernism and late capitalism. I am using Bauman’s work because the transition from a homogeneous ‘solid’ articulation of national culture, to a global, postmodern, ‘liquid’ form accurately captures the transitions made in New Zealand across three distinct periods: i) the era of the settler narrative; ii) the period of ‘struggle’, typified by the rise of a Māori political identity and the development of the bicultural polity; iii) the period of de-regulation, representing the present environment dominated by the global free-market.
Bauman’s theory depicts a global cultural framework where meaning is increasingly made via individual rather than collective action. In Chapter Four I develop the argument that the production and reception models made possible by new media can function as an intervention to the commercial mediascape by allowing the media to become a participatory and democratic space. In order to frame this interventional, I shift the primary theoretical model Bauman to a Habermasian approach, notably the neo-Habermasian scholarship that has come from Europe since the millennium where the new dialogue and broadcast logics are examined through public sphere theory (Moe, 2010; Valtysson, 2010; van Dijck, 2012; Salvatore, 2013). Further to this intervention, Chapter Four also examines the concept of public commissioning as a model through participatory culture could engage with the cultural and community ideals associated with public service broadcasting.

For the purpose of this thesis, public sphere theory functions as a response to the development trajectory of conventional broadcasting systems. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962/1989), Habermas examines the political and commercial elements of mass broadcasting as fundamentally detrimental to the democratic potential of the public sphere. He argues that as the mass media grew in scope, agency of individuals (and their opportunity for participation) radically decreased owing primarily to the economic-political complex inherent in media infrastructures.

To the extent that the press became commercialized, the threshold between the circulation of a commodity and the exchange of communications among members of a public was leveled; within the
private domain the clear lines separating the public sphere from the private became blurred. On the other hand, however, to the extent that only certain political guarantees could safeguard the continued independence of its institutions, the public sphere ceased altogether to be exclusively part of the private domain (Habermas 1962/1989: 181).

Habermas’s critique of mass broadcasting extends across various institutional forms, including public service broadcasting, state broadcasting and commercial broadcasting. As this critique is based on the corrupting influence of mass representation, the development of digital and internet-based technologies offers the potential to re-individualize the communicative process (Rasmussen 2013: 98) and thus provides the platform for a re-imagined version of the participatory public sphere. In this instance Habermas’s critical analysis of mass broadcasting postulates a parallel framework to that of Bauman, whose primary analysis is the shift from a nationally (state-centric) broadcasting model to the globalized and commodified mediasphere.

The shift between Bauman’s conception of an increasingly globalized form of cultural production and a Habermasian-inspired notion of a neo-public sphere demands some clarification. A central theme running through Bauman’s work is the increased individualization of society facilitated by the combined political and economic influences of neoliberalism and globalization. This process of individualization has, Bauman argues, led to the fragmentation of collective cultures (whether they be national or other conventional forms of collective), and where ideals of freedom become interwoven with those of consumption. In recent times scholars including Alison Stenning (2005), Valarie Hey (2005) and Will Atkinson (2008) have situated Bauman as being distinctly
anti-class in his post-millennial writing. For Atkinson, Bauman’s ideas parallel those of Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991), in being based on the notion that self-identity and individual agency are principal forces within global society, and, subsequently, represent a mode of being most sought after by human subjects. Atkinson argues that, for Bauman, class membership represents ‘solid’ modernity and is thus an anathema to the flexible identity and the ability to change one’s physiological and material situation on a whim that is advantageous in the era of late capitalism (Atkinson: 6). Such a reading of Bauman makes the inclusion or defense of any form of collective problematic. This includes the notion of class as a community (Stenning 2005) or collectives based on either national or non-national affiliations, such as ethnic ties, that are considered inconsequential against the individualizing force of contemporary culture. However as I discuss in Chapters Two and Three, identification based on association to such collectives remains a central characteristic of the mediascape. Even if such representations have been highly commodified within the commercialized media environment.

In the context of this thesis, the purpose of using Bauman’s analysis was partly to illustrate the increasing fluidity with which the national narrative could be articulated, and to parallel the transition towards this fluidity (from what was once fixed notions of national identity) with the increased de-regulation of political and economic systems. Here the phenomena of public service broadcasting functions to illustrate both the transition in national narrative and the transition in the prevailing economic and institutional structures governing New Zealand. The argument presented in the final chapter is that interactive
technologies may affirm some collective logics that are ignored (or at least, poorly served) by the commercial mediascape. As I discuss in Chapter Two in relation to the Māori Television Service, the objective of creating a media space beyond the hegemonic narratives of nationhood or the evocation of idealized individualism created by globalized neoliberalism has always been desirable but not always available. However although Bauman’s analysis tends ostensibly towards a politically ambivalent reading of the neoliberal march towards the individualization of culture, Atkinson maintains that “issues of stratification, polarization and inequality have never disappeared from Bauman’s work” (7), with this differentiation based on access to capital and, in turn, who has freedom of mobility (versus those who are compelled to be mobile against their will). Atkinson suggests that for Bauman “class is no longer a salient feature of society” (3-4), but I suggest this is a feature of the prevailing economic conditions and may be re-considered as the possibility for new collective voices emerge from novel media platforms and audience cultures.

The shift in Chapter Four towards Habermas is intended as a mechanism through which new delivery and reception forms may be theoretically examined. The argument I raise here is new media forms offer the possibility for collective visions and, as such, may serve to disrupt the transition towards individualization promoted by neoliberalism. As Winseck (2014) notes, also in relation to the New Zealand context, the current structural and economic environment remains problematic in terms of a significant shift towards a new public sphere as the major telecommunication companies and government administration of broadband still operate on a logic of corporate interest rather
than being orientated towards innovative service delivery. Taking the Winseck's argument into account, Chapter Four is not intended to suggest that digital media offers a utopian vision for public service programming, but rather the possibility of disrupting existing models.

The objective of introducing neo-Habermasian theory into an analysis of public broadcasting is to occupy the seemingly contradictory space between the individualization of media engagement, concepts and practices of democracy and forms of collective action. There is difficulty in constructing a working model for participatory public service broadcasting without resorting to conjecture about normative actions and ideals associated with cultural assumptions. Furthermore this participatory culture needs to operate primarily outside the operations of the state because, as I discuss in Chapters One to Three, the state, through the advantaging of neoliberalism, plots a course towards its own irrelevance. The engagement of Habermasian and neo-Habermasian theory and the concept of public commissioning in Chapter Four owes a debt to Habermas’s own analysis of state governance that appears in *Between Facts and Norms* (1990), notably the objective for civil society to exist in a liberal political culture distant from the influence of partisan politics (371). Here I suggest that the concept of public commissioning offers something of a blueprint for a technological and social form of engagement, but to function as a form of public service, its operations would be dependent on the emergence of new (or returning) forms of collective identification where a unified viewpoint can be encouraged.
The Transformations of Culture in New Zealand State Broadcasting

The purpose of Chapters One to Three is to map the way New Zealand’s state broadcasters have articulated cultural identity through three distinct phases. Adopting the concepts Bauman applies in *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, I describe these three phases as:

1) the culture of the settler narrative (what Bauman refers to as the ‘solid’ phase of culture (2011: 11);

2) the culture of struggle (where a plurality of voices stake their claim on the ‘solid’ culture);

3) the ‘liquid’ (2011: 11) culture: where the political basis for culture gives way to an economic one and the articulation of culture and identity becomes simultaneously commodified and globalized.

As a basis for his arguments, Bauman elucidates the three concepts of culture. Two of these relate to each other: the first being an aspirational articulation of culture To explain the second concept Bauman draws on Pierre Bourdieu’s work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984) where culture is described as “a technology invented for the creation and protection of class divisions” (Bauman: 4). For Bauman the two concepts represent the transition of culture across the process of colonization. Like the political act of colonial
conquest, the objectives inherent in the first definition of culture are a
“proselytizing mission planned and undertaken in the form of attempts to
educate the masses and refine their customs” (7). But once the “proselytizing
mission” has been completed, the second function of culture is then to create and
protect the hierarchical order imposed by the colonizers. To determine and
promote particular forms of cultural knowledge over others:
“the intended product (a ‘populace’ turned into a ‘civic body’) was formed and
the position of the educating classes in the new order was assured – or at least
accepted as such” (10).

The third articulation of culture marks a departure from the previous
two. Drawing on the concept of postmodernism and the process of globalization,
Bauman situates ‘liquid’ culture as being a product of global capital. The
consumption of which is not directed by political (colonial) influences but by
individual choice and economic capability. This form of culture consciously and
deliberately disrupts the hierarchical construction of the previous forms.
Bauman quotes cultural studies researcher Richard Peterson observing:

   We see a shift in elite status group politics from those highbrows who
snobbishly distain all base, vulgar, or mass popular culture… to those
highbrows who omnivorously consume a wide range of popular as
well as highbrow art forms… In other words no works of culture are
alien to me: I don’t identify with any of them a hundred per cent,
totally and absolutely, and certainly not at the price of denying myself
other pleasures. I feel at home everywhere, despite the fact (or
perhaps because of it) that there is no place I call home. (2-3)

Applying Bauman’s definition of ‘liquid’ culture to broadcasting means a
transformation in the constitution of power: from a political to an economic
form. This represents the cultural manifestation of global free-market policies.
But although this form of culture is defined by the absence of the conventional relationship between the state and the broadcaster, the image and symbolic resonance of the nation state is retained as a commodified object. In this respect the ideals contained in the previous cultural narrative remain, but they are modified to suit market demands. This form of broadcasting culture exists in a crowded and commercial mediascape, contrasting with the single state networks in which the previous forms have operated. The environment is also global in the sense that there is no necessity for ‘state’ broadcasters to remain government-owned (the notion of a state broadcast can be reduced to a branding motif). Conversely, if state-ownership is retained, there is no inherent privileged position for that broadcaster in the competitive environment.

Broadcasting Culture in the Service of the Settler Colony

Chapter One examines the period 1936 to 1960 when broadcasting was administered by the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS). During this period broadcasting operated to construct and maintain national culture as a ‘solid’ (Bauman: 11) entity. This occurred via a conglomeration of several factors: the election in 1935 of the strongly paternalistic first Labour government that legislated for a single state broadcaster; the strict censorship the government imposed on the broadcast of political material; the firm cultural ties with Britain as the colonizing power (and an accompanying reverence with which New Zealand officials held British institutions, notably the BBC); and the relationship between the narrative of the settler colony and the development of infrastructure. The principle issue I examine in Chapter One is that state
broadcasting developed as a means to perpetuate the political status quo and to promote the notion of New Zealand possessing a unique but homogenous national culture. Taking Bauman’s descriptions of culture, this period represents an amalgamation of the Enlightenment and the hierarchical manifestations of national culture. The Enlightenment definition, based on a singular, but dynamic and aspirational articulation of culture, is relevant insofar as the NZBS did have educational/paternalistic objectives. This is evident in the programming of European high culture material and the promotion of European values within the context of a colonial nation state. Drawing on the work of Philippe Beneton, Bauman observes that the Enlightenment definition of culture exists only in relation to Eurocentric values because it was only in the European context that cultural elements were incorporated into state institutions. “The [cultural] ideal was discovered in Europe and that it was there that it was defined by legislators in political and social institutions, and by the ways and models of individual and communal life.” (Bauman: 53). The NZBS’s broadcast of cultural material extended into popular culture, delivered primarily through the ‘B’ network of local commercial stations. The state network thus provided both a high culture and popular culture representation of New Zealand. But through diverse genres the NZBS became a vehicle for a singular version of national identity representing a modernist political and cultural mode.

The NZBS’s institutional framework operated to ‘solidify’ the national narrative. The educative hegemony represented by high culture and cultural hierarchies inherent in the production and broadcast of mass popular culture transmitted by a monopoly service together operated in “the service of the
status quo” (Bauman: 11). Here, the dynamism promised by the Enlightenment form of culture is repressed by the political demands of creating a culturally and politically homogenous national identity.

The Representation of Biculturalism and the ‘Culture of Struggle’

In Chapter Two the subject of analysis is primarily the articulation of biculturalism and the representation of Māori. This incorporates an extended period between the establishment of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC) in 1962 and the launch of the Māori Television Service (MTS) in 2004. I identify this period as representing a ‘culture of struggle’ within New Zealand broadcasting as the state network became a site where issues of cultural identity were being contested. Here I discuss the political and historic factors that contributed to the development of identity politics (in gender, race and ethnicity) in the second half of the twentieth century. Furthermore I examine how Māori groups adopted these new political movements as a means to disrupt the colonialist perspectives that had dominated New Zealand’s cultural landscape. The ‘struggle’ I identify here functions on two interrelated fronts. The first is the emerging bicultural narrative rising from the Māori protest movement and the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 tasked to investigate historic breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi by the Crown. The second concerns the institutional changes applied to broadcasting by the state, designed to introduce new voices into the national mediasphere.
The institutional changes imposed on the state broadcasting networks both serve to advance the transition of broadcasting towards a de-centered, ‘liquid’ environment, and to promulgate the protracted period of struggle. From the early 1970s, successive policies have attempted to create a competitive environment, even under the monopoly system. This included establishing a second channel governed by a separate institutional body, lifting restrictions on advertising and programming hours and eventually de-regulating the broadcast mediasphere thus making provision for private companies to compete with the state. These changes in broadcasting policy (occurring over a 17 year period from 1972 to 1989) certainly advanced the transition towards a free-market broadcasting environment. But the on-going institutional changes and process of reviewing and analyzing broadcasting operations that accompanied each change would be met with calls for greater bicultural inclusion in programming. Thus the debates surrounding issues of inclusion and representation during the 1980s mark a shift in broadcasting culture, from struggles concerning cultural dominance, to struggles concerning economic dominance. The establishment of the MTS marks a terminal moment for the culture of struggle as, firstly, the bicultural narrative is achieved by way of the eventual de-regulation and fragmentation of the mediascape; and secondly the acknowledgement that effective biculturalism was never achieved through the existing state broadcasting service.
State Broadcasting in the Post-deregulation era

The de-regulation of New Zealand broadcasting in 1989 is a significant moment in the transition to the 'liquid' modern world. On one level, allowing private networks to compete against the state broadcaster represents the ascendency of a free-market ideology. But the fragmentation of the mediasphere, a process made more acute by the development of new production and reception technologies, means the multitude of new collectives (existing both inside and outside of the national borders) may be served by targeted, private and niche media forms. In New Zealand the subscriber-based Sky network carries a variety of channels targeting specific cultural and ethnic communities, this includes KTV1 and MBC carrying Korean programming, NHK from Japan and CCTV, ETTV and Phoenix Television from China. On the Freeview digital free-to-air network, TV33 is a locally-operated Chinese language station targeting the Chinese-New Zealand audience. The network’s subsidiary channel, TV44, carries programming about Chinese culture and commerce for a “mainstream” (TV44) New Zealand audience. As the Channel's website states:

TV44 is a bridge between New Zealand and China. It will be a new opportunity to learn more about China and world for the mainstream society in New Zealand. TV44 aims to promotion to contribute in Chinese New Zealander integrating into mainstream society. (TV44)

In this environment the same demarcations of culture that Bauman identifies exist, but they are specific to particular groups. Furthermore the notion of cultural inclusion in broadcasting is also subverted as the fragmented mediascape denies inclusion and representation in favor of multiple exclusive networks catering to niche demographics. Here the nation state's role in defining
cultural boundaries is becoming redundant. Instead there is a rupture between the legal functions of citizenship – the rights and obligations that accompany a person’s residency in a particular locate – and the representation of culture and the phenomena of belonging.

Axiologically speaking, cultural relations are no longer vertical but horizontal; no culture can demand or be entitled to subservience, humility or submission on the part of any other simply on account of its own assumed superiority or 'progressiveness'. Ways of life drift in varied and not necessarily coordinated directions; they come into contact and separate, they approach and distance themselves from one another, embrace and repel, enter into conflict, or initiate a mutual exchange of experience or services – and they do all this (to paraphrase Simmel’s memorable phrase) floating in a suspension of cultures, all of a similar, or of a wholly identified specific gravity. (Bauman: 37)

As a contrasting cultural form from the hierarchical modernist construction of identity that typified the radio era, broadcasting in the de-regulation era can be viewed as a liberating moment. However, when a system based on economic freedom is introduced into a broadcasting environment still bound by the technological and infrastructure models of the past, issues relating to fiscal supremacy, commercialism and competition become prioritized over issues of culture. A defining factor of 'liquid' culture is the commodification of the nation state. This is manifest in an adversity to critique, (an element 'liquid' culture shares with 'solid' culture) and is typified by the nation state trans-figured as an adaptable and changeable entity where ideals of universality of the nation is replaced by the objective of maximizing ones audience.
Public broadcasting through the public sphere: a new paradigm for public service broadcasting

The proposal of an alternative public broadcasting paradigm allowing individuals to participate in the national mediasphere through social media channels marks this thesis’s intervention into the study of New Zealand broadcasting. In Chapters One through Three, Bauman’s framework serves to elucidate the transition occurring in state broadcasting since 1936. I contend the trajectory of this transition is towards a mediasphere inhabited by a plethora of self-sustaining niche broadcasters operating independently from any national jurisdiction and targeting a potentially global audience. As a contrary position, in Chapter Four I draw on Jürgen Habermas’s notion of the public sphere as a theoretical base to outline a system designed to (re)create a national media audience, but in a form that permits access into the gatekeeping and production processes. This intervention is based on the argument that conventional broadcasting systems will always be fundamentally exclusive due to the gatekeeping processes that are based on the decisions of small, elite bodies (regardless of whether this is through corporate or state models). Although the digital broadcasting paradigm disrupts these conventions to some extent, the gatekeeping power still remains in the hands of producers/networks.

The ease with which individuals may potentially create and consume media products via digital and internet technologies may remove various hierarchical and prejudicial obstacles to public service broadcasting. This
includes disrupting the limitations of conventional scheduling, notably the marginalization of minority interest programming and, conversely, the promotion of mainstream mass-appeal programming typical of a hybrid commercial network such as Television New Zealand (Easton, 1997). In addition, the production and broadcast technologies associated with digital broadcasting can operate with greatly reduced costs to that of conventional broadcasting, and programming agendas can be established through interaction between the producer/broadcaster and the audience, rather than being dictated by having cultural or political elements imposed from external forces.

The development of the internet has been shadowed by scholarship proclaiming the technology to be a close iteration of Habermas’s ideal public sphere (van Dijck, 2012: 163). This perspective was prompted by two significant features of the internet: its capability for multi-dimensional interactivity; and its situation outside of traditional governance regimes (corporate power or state power). These elements have, arguably, become intensified through the development of social media. But rather than evolving into a model for collective voices, the internet’s development has been typified by more sophisticated forms of political manipulation and commerce. Following Dean (2010), van Dijck describes the influence of capitalist institutions on social media users as capturing the users “in intensive networks of enjoyment, production and surveillance” (164). In this respect, the mapping of public sphere theory directly onto internet technology is problematic and would not happen solely through the construction of the technological infrastructure, but requires a certain level of cultural buy-in from the public. Although such involvement between the
public and the broadcaster may be foreign in the context of conventional broadcasting, similar interactions (and a constant and normalized democratic process) occurring across several platforms are part of the established format of entertainment television. Furthermore, operations such as crowd-sourcing (fundraising) have also assisted in introducing new democratic modes to everyday practice and it is in this context that a system of public commissioning could be implemented.

**Temporal limits of this study and the differentiation between state and public broadcasting**

The temporal perimeters of this thesis extend between 1936 and 2012. It begins with the establishment of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) and ends in 2012, when the John Key-led National government dis-established TVNZ 7, Television New Zealand’s (TVNZ) digital public service channel. The abolition of TVNZ 7 marked the removal of the final public service mechanism put in place by the previous Labour government (1999-2008). The abolition of TVNZ 7 by National serves as a recent example of the political right wing’s ideological opposition to the concept of a state-funded public broadcasting service (see Preamble).

Since the establishment of the state network in 1936 there has been considerable conflation of the concepts of public service broadcasting and local content as they have been discussed in media commentary and scholarship. This
confusion/conflation has its origins in the NZBS era when the monopoly system combined with a state media culture centered on the censorship of information, and a mythologizing of the BBC culture, led to the perception that material produced by the NZBS constituted public service broadcasting albeit without any legal mandate or defining terminology. As the broadcasting and cultural context of New Zealand has developed the circumstances surrounding the defining terms has changed. From the 1970s onward, notably in the wake of the Adam Report into broadcasting (see Chapter Two) there was shift in the material produced by the state-owned broadcaster towards programming that represented social and cultural diversity rather than providing a culturally homogenous version of national identity (that had been the case throughout the NZBS era and during the first decade of the NZBC). Once public service broadcasting came to be defined as being a representative media form (rather than being based on educative, paternalistic ideals or driven by a protective/prohibitive ethos) differentiating between public service and local content became difficult. Such differentiation was made more problematic by the financial imperative placed on New Zealand broadcasting through the hybrid commercial model. In an historical overview below, I will foreground the way concepts of public service broadcasting, state broadcasting and local content have been employed in the period being examined in this thesis.

The NZBS was not New Zealand’s first state broadcasting institution, but it did represent the state’s intention to incorporate broadcasting into a

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2 The New Zealand Broadcasting Service in 1936 represents the incorporation of broadcasting governance under direct ministerial control. However this process
ministerial entity and was thus part of the widespread nationalization process undertaken by the Michael Savage-led first Labour government (1935-1938). Furthermore, Labour did not demand the NZBS operate with any specific public service objectives, but the state-owned monopoly model, driven by a heavily state-centric political culture, led to the interpretation by politicians, the media and the public that the national broadcasting network should operate with public service intentions (Gregory, 1985: 20). These elements have been intensified through the lack of any consistent or robust legislation guaranteeing political or editorial independence for the state broadcaster or any specific public service guidelines for programming (with the exception of the short-lived TVNZ Charter). The absence of binding public service legislation has resulted in of institutionalization could only occur if a material infrastructure and broadcasting culture was already established. A broadcasting network had been developing across New Zealand since the early 1920s and two governance institutions had been established prior to the NZBS: The Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand (1925-1931) and the New Zealand Broadcasting Board (1932-1935). The Radio Broadcasting Company was an industry-led group primarily tasked with administering a licensing system for new radio operators and thus establishing a regulatory framework on what had been an unregulated broadcasting environment. The Radio Broadcasting Company operated with the profit-driven ideals of free enterprise, but its administrative duties were directed through the government’s Postal and Telegraph Service. This represented the initial integration of broadcasting from a private to a state enterprise that would continue until the present (Day, 1994: 131). The New Zealand Broadcasting Board was a semi-autonomous body but operated under the jurisdiction of the Postal and Telegraph Service. In part the board’s duties were an extension of those of the Radio Broadcasting Company, to administer and regulate the developing broadcasting industry. Further to this, the Broadcasting Board was occupied with extending the network infrastructure across the country. Other nations, especially settler colonies, faced difficulties establishing broadcasting infrastructure especially given the lack of transportation and industrial support that was common early in the twentieth century. Unlike the development of infrastructure in Australia, the United States or Canada, where the primary difficulty lay in crossing vast distances, in New Zealand, the rugged, mountainous terrain and isolated and sparse population provided a distinct set of engineering challenges to be overcome (Day, 1994; Horrocks, 2004).
broadcasting policy being subject to significant changes depending on the ideological perspective of successive governments. Since the introduction of television between 1960 and 1962 the purpose and obligations of the state broadcaster have become confused further as the definitions of local and public service broadcasting has become conflated across a number of discourses. Whilst the concepts of public service broadcasting/media, state broadcasting and local content demand clarification, I maintain that these definitions are subject to particular historical contingencies.

The nexus between state and public service ideals originates in the relationship between the state and the public during the 1930s. As Gregory notes, “government controlled broadcasting was accepted as an integral element in an essentially paternalistic, ‘overhead’ democracy, where the governing party was seem to mirror and embody the expectations and aspirations of the polity as a whole” (Gregory, 1985: 20). During the NZBS era, the state broadcaster fulfilled a number of roles adding to the public’s perception of the paternalistic alignment between the state, the broadcaster and the national popular culture. This included operating the national network of B stations (local commercial stations) alongside the national network that carried government broadcasts and imported and locally produced high culture material. Furthermore the broadcaster’s carriage of civic information and nationalist propaganda during World War Two solidified its political and cultural significance to the state. The combined narratives of the settler colony and the nation at war made the NZBS a vehicle for a modernist homogeneity and thus perpetuated a cultural identity that mirrored the political and economic institutions and discourses of the day.
During the radio era there was a deliberate perpetuation of the link between the NZBS and the BBC. The colonial deference with which New Zealand held Britain (King 1985) was maintained in broadcasting content and its associated media coverage. When the NZBS launched the *New Zealand Listener* in 1939 as a new listings and broadcasting news publication, the first issue carried messages of welcome from the BBC and the South African and Australian national broadcasters, each inviting the NZBS into the Commonwealth community of national broadcasters (*New Zealand Listener* 1939: 3). Such associations were perpetuated by the NZBS’s programming of BBC material between the 1930s and 1950s. The use of this material, symptomatic of the shared cultural and political allegiances, especially during World War Two, can be viewed as a way for the NZBS to broadcast news reports without the need for local reporting (besides the broadcast of government issued statements) (Gregory: 20). These comparisons are, therefore, based partially on material similarities, including the state-centric monopoly structure and the ethos of paternalism; and partially on unsubstantiated concepts.

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3 Notwithstanding the ongoing perception of similarity between the BBC and the NZBS, the relationship between each broadcaster and their respective governments provides a significant chasm between the two institutions. Until 1962 the NZBS operated essentially as a broadcasting arm of the government. This contrasts markedly with the editorial independence of the BBC, the culture of which was defined early with the Corporation’s refusal to acquiesce to government pressure during the general strike of 1926. (Briggs: 1985: 96-106)
Broadcasting culture

The defining features of public service broadcasting altered significantly in the post-World War Two period when media representations became subject to a number of external political and economic pressures. In Britain, the passing of the Television Act (1954) made competition against the BBC possible, with the ITV networks launching in the following year. ITV's strong regional focus transformed British television broadcasting culture from one driven by the London-focused and middle-class paternalism of the BBC, to one more celebratory of regional diversity. In addition, the demand placed on the BBC to "retain the attention of the mass audience" (Tracey 1998: 74) altered significantly the Reithian paternalism that typified the BBC since the 1920s. This change of broadcasting culture marked a shift in emphasis for public broadcasting: from a vehicle primarily designed for mass education, to a means of representing social diversity. This sea change in what constitutes public broadcasting would also occur in other territories and would be highly influenced by the cultural, economic and political movements occurring across the global stage in the second half of the twentieth century. This included the rise in identity politics that sought to problematize many of the cultural assumptions of colonialism and patriarchy, described by Purvis & Hunt (1999) as when the "rhetoric of universality and equality has strained against the actuality of marginalized groups subordinated on the basis of their race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexuality, etc" (459). Also significant was the transition in economic agendas across a number of nations during the same period. The retreat from the collective perspective that typified the modernist
state, the political disillusionment with collectivism and welfarism and the rise of neoliberalism all marked a significant turning point in the way state entities represented the citizenry. The transition from “citizens to markets” (O’Malley & Jones, 2009: 98) introduced an individualizing logic into the process of (self) identification and eroded the former synergy between the state's requirements/desires/objectives and those of citizens. In the increasingly individualizing cultural climate, the logic of public broadcasting has shifted from directing the citizenry to affirm state ideology to integrating the national audience (recognized as a collection of individuals rather than a homogenous whole) into a widely inclusive national narrative.

For New Zealand the 1970s and 1980s were a period of considerable ideological struggle that would be played out in state broadcasting. The national narrative, which had been dominated by the colonial and settler ideology, was becoming a more contested site as the articulation of biculturalism became more robust. Throughout the 1960s the main priority of state broadcasting executives was the development and extension of infrastructure and it would not be until the early 1970s that the cultural or public service potential of broadcasting was examined (Dunleavy, 2008: 800). The 1972 government-commissioned Adam Report (published in 1973 under the title The Broadcasting Future of New Zealand) would foreshadow both the future commercialization of broadcasting (by recommending the expansion of television to two channels, partly as a means of maximizing advertising revenue), and the emerging rhetoric that espoused broadcasting’s role in the representation of cultural diversity. A number of the Adam Report recommendations were adopted by the NZBC,
including the provision of a second channel and the adoption of colour
transmission\(^4\). In addition, a new post-colonial narrative was beginning to
emerge in some of the NZBC produced and commissioned programming at the
time. These new perspectives on both broadcasting and national culture are
illustrated in the documentary series *Tangata Whenua* (1974) and in the
costume drama *The Governor* (1977). The era of experimentation and
competition facilitated by institutional changes to the state broadcaster\(^5\) that
produced this programming would later be described as “the golden years” for
local television (Dunleavy, 2005: 66). This programming (discussed in detail in
Chapter Two) attempted to subvert the accepted logic of colonialism that had
dominated local media since the establishment of broadcasting. *Tangata
Whenua* constituted an ideal public service programme: it was locally produced;
represented cultural diversity; and was educational. But this series is one of very
few that fulfilled such criteria. The scarcity of public service material produced
by the state broadcaster belies the lack of political support for this type of
programming (Cocker, 1998: 13).

\(^4\) Other recommendations pertaining to the provision of specialist broadcasting
outlets for the Māori and Pasifika communities would materialize. But these
were limited to radio until the establishment of the Māori Television Service in
2004. Colour transmission was introduced by the NZBC in 1974 to precede the
Commonwealth Games that were held in Christchurch that year (Farnsworth,
1992: 192)

\(^5\) The NZBC was abolished in 1974 and replaced with separate corporations to
administer TVOne (the existing television service) and South Pacific Television
as a stand-alone, but still government owned, channel. Radio New Zealand was
administered as a stand-alone organization.
Government funding for local content and public service broadcasting

Government funding for public broadcasting in New Zealand has come via several specific mechanisms. Due to the hybrid commercial model and fluctuations in government policy broadcasting there has always been considerable slippage between public service and local content in terms of projects that meet funding criteria. Between 1961 and 1999 the state administered a universal license fee (known as the Public Broadcasting Fee, or PBF) payable by each household with a television set. The PBF alone was never sufficient to fund the state network (Horrocks 2004; Dunleavy, 2011), hence the need to supplement revenue through advertising. Furthermore throughout the period of its existence the PBF was often subject to political dispute, with the concept of a universal compulsory levy for being ideologically problematic for politicians representing a right wing economic perspective. The disregard for the cultural value of broadcasting meant that the PBF was often left unchanged for significant periods of time, thus became undervalued by inflationary pressure, leading Dunleavy to describe the fee as “neglected by politicians, victim to inflation and lost purchasing power over time” (2011: 113). Paul Smith notes that in 1974 42 percent of revenue for public service broadcasting came from the license fee, with this figure reduced to 16 percent by 1985 (1996: 17).

Between 1989 and the abolition of the PBF in 1999, the revenue collected by the fee was channeled through the contestable funding organization New Zealand on Air (NZOA). Since 1999, NZOA has been funded directly from the
state coffers, but the amount remains subject to government discretion. As I discuss in Chapter Three, NZOA’s enabling legislation, the Broadcasting Act (1989) mandated NZOA as an all-encompassing local content provider. The Act listed a raft of programming aims fulfilling educational, representative and popular programming objectives. NZOA’s central objective to reflect New Zealand’s “cultural identity” (Dunleavy 2005: 232) is also open to considerable interpretation. Here media commentators have argued as to which genres and types of programming most effectively represent cultural identity. For example, NZOA’s own research into “threatened genres” (NZOA 2008: 74) such as local drama, documentary and children’s programming, suggests any local content constitutes public broadcasting by virtue of protecting an element of ‘localness’ within the international mediasphere (Easton 1997; Aukett 2002). This can be achieved through mainstream programming that also provides advertising revenue for the broadcaster6 and assists in the growth and development of the local industry. Therefore, the need to balance the projects made by major production houses with those of small independent companies is a further consideration of NZOA in funding decisions (Dunleavy, 2011: 198). However, another perspective advantages minority interest programming, especially Māori programming, as public service broadcasting, with this argument also being expressed in media commentary (Fox 1990; Stevens 2004). Whilst the cross-subsidization of minority-interest programmes with mainstream programming is a key element of NZOA’s operations, this system adds to the confusion over public service definitions and terminology. NZOA originated as

6 The requirement that producers attempt to maximize the audience for their programmes is a stipulation of NZOA.
part of the de-regulation process for New Zealand broadcasting and this is evident in funding being contestable and available for all New Zealand-accessible networks. As an attempt to return a specific public service mandate to the state broadcaster, the 1999-2008 Labour government introduced the TVNZ Charter in 2003. However, like NZOA, the implementation of the Charter’s objectives was hampered by an unclear mandate and underfunding by the government (Thompson 2004; 2005).

The introduction and eventual abolition of the TVNZ Charter illustrates how competing political ideologies impact on New Zealand broadcasting. In initiating the Charter, the 1999 Labour government sought to re-introduce public service ideals to the state broadcaster’s mandate. This came after a ten-year period when the focus for TVNZ, presided over by successive National governments, had been economic rather than cultural (Thompson, 2004: 3-4). Labour’s ideological objectives for state broadcasting notwithstanding, the Charter represents two contradictory features. Firstly, like NZOA, the public service elements comprise a subjective regime relating to notions of ‘quality’, extending across multiple genres. TVNZ described the objectives of the Charter to:

Strive always to maintain the highest standards of programme quality and editorial integrity; feature programming across the full range of genres that informs, entertains and educates New Zealand audiences; provides shared experiences that contribute to a sense of citizenship and national identity... (TVNZ, 2002, quoted in Thompson, 2004: 6)

Thompson suggests that this broad mandate reflects how much public service ideals had been neglected in previous TVNZ policy. Indeed as my brief
discussion of the history of public broadcasting in New Zealand shows, this is the case. I also add that the appeals to national identity and paternalistic notions of quality are too open to interpretation to be effective. The second contradictory feature relates to the “dual commercial/public service remit” (Thompson, 2005: 3) inherent in the initiative. TVNZ was thus required to fulfill the public service mandate of the Charter while also meeting the economic obligations present since the restructure of broadcasting as a state-owned enterprise in 1987.

Although TVNZ was granted some modest government subsidies intended to help TVNZ fulfill its Charter obligations, these have been rendered largely ineffective by the government’s continuing demands for dividends. Between 2003-2006, the Ministry for Culture [the government ministry that administered Charter funds for the broadcaster] provided TVNZ with $64.7 million towards the Charter, while Treasury received $70.5 million in dividends. Indeed 90% of TVNZ’s revenue continues to be derived from commercial sources. Consequently, TVNZ has struggled to make substantial revisions to its commercial schedule (Thompson, 2005: 2).

A fundamental cause of this paradoxical climate is the hybrid commercial model that, as Thompson notes, has become a significant source of revenue for the state. Occurring concurrently with the Charter, TVNZ also established a digital network in 2007 that included the commercial-free public service channel TVNZ 7 that launched in 2008. Although the model for TVNZ 7 differed from that of the Charter, the digital channel was subject to similar political and economic pressures and was dis-established by the National government in 2012 (see Preamble).

In conclusion, while the institutional structure of New Zealand state broadcasting has undergone a significant transition since the network was established 1936, a number of common elements remain. These elements,
including the economic pressure of the hybrid model and the conflation of local content and public service broadcasting, have, I suggest, contributed to the ongoing inadequacy of New Zealand broadcasting to fulfill meaningful public service objectives. The competing demands between the cultural value of broadcasting and the revenue-generating power of the state broadcasting may be negotiable if adequate policies could be implemented. But these objectives have been framed in opposition to one another because of the ideological differences between the two main political parties. Providing an adequate definition of public broadcasting, and its subsequent provision by the state, is problematic in the context of New Zealand broadcasting. Thus, as I discuss in Chapter Four, a new system where the primary gatekeeping functions are removed from state jurisdiction may, I contend, provide a workable alternative to the previous public/state broadcasting models.
Chapter One

Broadcasting culture in New Zealand: the influence of the settler colony on the mediated national narrative

The aim of this chapter is to examine the role played by state broadcasting in defining and perpetuating cultural narratives during the first half of the twentieth century. There are two principle objects of analysis: the institutional and infrastructure development of New Zealand broadcasting, and the influence of the colonial relationship between New Zealand and Great Britain on broadcasting content during the radio era (1936-1960). Drawing on Bauman’s analysis of global culture, I argue that between 1936 and 1960 New Zealand’s fledging national broadcasting network served to preserve the national culture at a “homeostatic stage” (Bauman: 11) whereby the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) functioned to promote a national narrative based around the ideological and cultural domination of the colonial settler society, and typifying what Eddy & Schreuder call the culture of “colonial nationalism” (1988: 3).

Using Bauman’s framework this chapter examines the relationship between concepts of national culture, the nation state and the developmental phase of mass media. I begin by examining how the articulation of culture became linked with individual national identity from the late nineteenth century and how this process was intensified by the establishment of national broadcasting networks in the first half of the twentieth century. Following that I
discuss public service broadcasting as a formative concept in broadcasting's initial developmental period. Whilst the guiding ideology and associated rhetoric of public service broadcasting differed considerably from that of political propaganda, both forms functioned to influence the attitudes and beliefs of the audience. Here I discuss the origins of national broadcasting in the United States of America and Great Britain before making a comparison with that of New Zealand. This includes the social, political and economic factors that define each state, including the relationship between state and private enterprise, articulations of class and relationships between colonial partners.

**Zygmunt Bauman’s two definitions of culture**

In *Culture in a Liquid Modern World* (2011) Bauman outlines two definitions for the term ‘culture’, both of which are relevant in the process of nation building. The first relates to concepts associated with the Enlightenment and is based on a hierarchical, adaptable and aspirational set of values, ideals and practices framed around European high culture and scientific rationality. Here the notion of ‘culture’ is singular and serves as the ideological basis for Europe’s colonializing endeavors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (alongside economic, political and military objectives). As Bauman points out:

> The name of ‘culture’ was accorded to a proselytizing mission planned and undertaken in the form of attempts to educate the masses and refine their customs, and through these to improve society and advance ‘the people’, that is to say, those from the ‘depths of society’, to those on its heights. (7)
The second definition is based on a categorizing logic: the differentiation between high and popular culture. Following Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis of the relationship between culture and class as outlined in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984), Bauman argues that cultural artifacts are symbols of class identity, and the implicit distinctions made via the concept of taste. Bauman writes:

> As Boudieu implies, there are benefits from beauty and a need for it. Although the benefits are not ‘disinterested’, and Kant suggested, they are benefits nonetheless, and while the need is not necessarily cultural, it is social; and its is very likely that both the benefits from and the need for telling beauty from ugliness, or subtlety from vulgarity, will last as long as there exists a need and desire to tell high society from low society, and the connoisseur of refined tastes from the tasteless vulgar masses, plebs and riff-raff (2011: 5).

This distinction of class positions artifacts and practices relegated to 'lower' cultural forms, ranging from folk traditions to popular culture, in association with socio-economic division, occupations and places of birth. Correspondingly, notions of high culture became the preserve of the upper and high middle classes, the perception of their value being perpetuated by the education system and later the media. “Culture manifests itself above all as a useful appliance, consciously intended to mark out class differences and to safeguard them: as a technology invented for the creation and protection of class divisions and social hierarchies” (Bourdieu, 1984, quoted in Bauman: 4). These definitions can be employed in different but complementary ways when examining the concept of nationhood. In addition, this concept of culture is subsequently affirmed and problematized by the changing ideals underlying public service broadcasting.
Modern broadcasting was a high-point in the “global, secular transition from Agraria to Industria” (Beissinger, 1998: 169) that began a with the Enlightenment 200 years before the advent of the broadcast media. As I have noted, the notion of a national culture being invested in the perception of scientific rationality and an evangelic self-belief fuelled the drive for colonial conquest by European powers. European cultural dominance would become influential in New Zealand’s national narrative as the nation developed its broadcasting identity into the twentieth century. The ascendency of a singular version of culture also informed the BBC’s early programming decisions. Historian W.H. Oliver’s claim that the BBC “inspired” (Oliver 1960: 142) the establishment of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service can, therefore, be read in reference to both the NZBS’s institutional structure that replicated the state-owned, monopoly institutional model and the broadcaster’s role to propagate a homogenous cultural narrative. The origin of the BBC, as a subsequent influence on New Zealand broadcasting, was a conglomeration of technological, industrial and political will that, for individuals such as Reith, became a vehicle for cultural change. Outlining these factors in more detail provides some background into the cultural landscape that informed New Zealand broadcasting.

*The industrial, legal and cultural origins of broadcasting in Britain*

The first experiments and major developments in broadcasting occurred within the climate of social, scientific and political change in the late industrial age. Describing the potential of mass broadcasting to democratize availability to information, radio pioneer Guglielmo Marconi wrote, “for the first time in the
history of the world, man is now able to appeal by means of direct speech to
millions of his fellows, and there is nothing to prevent an appeal made to fifty
million men and women at the same time” (quoted in Wasburn, 1992: xvii). The
potential of mass communication was of significant interest to state and
commercial entities in the early part of the twentieth century and participants
from both sectors were instrumental to the medium’s developmental stage.
Although operating in a context where the technological development of
broadcasting and the public uptake of radio usually preceded the passing of
legislative guidelines for a broadcasting industry, the experimental direction
taken during this period would have widespread consequences for the way
broadcasting has been used by its controlling entities, and the political and
cultural impact broadcasting has had on society. Media historian Anthony Smith
situates this formative period for broadcasting in the context of the scientific
advances and social change that began in the nineteenth century. He writes:

The invention of radio was to add a new medium to those which were
already well established in the tasks of entertaining and informing the new
urbanized audiences of the late nineteenth century. The presence of that
new audience expressed itself in the psychological and sociological which
developed from the Darwinian view of nature. The story of broadcasting, of
the development of a mass means of communication, rather than the
expansion of person-to-person technology, is the story of the interaction of
the new societal perceptions with technical invention. (1974: 17)

Smith notes that the developmental phases for broadcasting, telegraph and
telephone occurred concurrently and employed similar technological
infrastructure. The technologies, vital to the economic, political and cultural
development of the late industrial age would be significant in the realization of
notions of state paternalism. The way broadcasting was technologically and
politically formulated created a significant tool in the political and cultural
management of populations and unprecedented access to markets for providers of goods and services.

In 1869 the British government passed the Telegraph Act, the world’s first legislation pertaining to new communication technologies. The purpose of the Act was to confer power of the control of telegraph communications from private operators to the Postmaster General. The nationalization of broadcasting administration established the political culture that governed British broadcasting for much of the twentieth century and this relationship between the state and the broadcaster would be significant in the subsequent cultural value of the BBC. In 1904 the Wireless Telegraph Act again established a legislative precedent, as it was the first law passed by the British government relating to wireless broadcasting technology (Briggs, 1985: 10). Broadcasting in Britain thus began as a private sector industry, but was incorporated into the state in the early 1920s first through the establishment of the British Broadcasting Company in 1923 and later by the formation of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 1927 (Burns 1975: 27).

The formative period of the British system was framed through a regulatory and commercial device, and was forged through the mutual interest of General Post Office and the radio manufacture industry. This established a template of state involvement in the governance of British broadcasting (Scannell & Cardiff, 1991: 5). After World War One, the British government made another significant step towards a state monopoly system for national broadcasting by lobbying the various radio manufacturing companies to form a
single entity. This initiative was prompted by the British Post Office warning to “avoid the chaos that had arisen from unrestrained broadcasting in the United States” (5). The combination of an abundance of stations and limited spectrum space leading to what the British industry publication *Radio Broadcast* described as “a jumble of signals and a blasting and blanketing of rival programming” across the American airwaves (quoted in Briggs: 19). A collective entity of Britain’s radio manufacturers, under the title of the British Broadcasting Company, was established in 1922, representing a significant step towards formation of a state broadcasting monopoly.

The decision by British government officials to form a broadcasting corporation as a publicly funded entity governed by a legally defined Charter rather than a company charged with an economic mandate was motivated by the objective of protecting local radio manufacturing industry, regulating and controlling a burgeoning source of revenue and supplying a new form of entertainment to Britain’s increasingly urbanized population. As historian Tom Burns writes, the formation of the BBC was based on the dual influences of politically vested interests and commercial protectionism:

The creation of the BBC, the first 'Morrisonite’ nationalized industries, is visible as a superb example of accommodatory politics,

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7 This refers to government policies initiated under Labour politician Herbert Morrison who served as Minister of Transport in the short-lived 1923 Labour government. He also served in the wartime coalition under Winston Churchill and the post-war government led by Clement Atlee. The nationalization of the British Broadcasting Company (prior to its restructure as a corporation) occurred under Morrison’s role as the Chairman of the Committee on the Socialization of Industries. The BBC example would become a template for a widespread nationalization programme that extended into the 1950s (mostly under Morrison) and included the iron and steel industries, national transport services, civil aviation, gas, electricity and the Bank of England.
spreading satisfaction and dissatisfaction fairly evenly among the interest groups concerned (Burns, 1977: 9).

The nationalized BBC would however become a vehicle for social reform led by John Reith as the Corporation’s first director general. According to Briggs, Reith regarded his appointment to the BBC as akin to a religious calling (44) his mission to use this new effective means of mass communication to foster the cultural and spiritual wellbeing of the British public.

Reith’s vision for the BBC is analogous with Bauman’s definition of the Enlightenment concept of culture: “an agent for change rather than for preservation of the status quo” (6). In the context of the early twentieth century this change includes the erosion of class boundaries (and related discrepancies of knowledge and education) through the mass availability of previously unavailable cultural knowledge and artifacts. However, as Bauman notes, the role played by this version of culture in the process of nation building (and here I include Reith’s reformist vision for Britain) would ultimately serve to produce a contrasting result as the institutionalization of culture shut down its dynamic qualities. In the next section I examine the impetus towards social reform espoused by Reith, and inspired by Matthew Arnold, that was based on a fixed notion of what constituted culture. A similarly fixed cultural ideal later informs the NZBS and would subsequently be problematized by identity politics in the final quarter of the twentieth century.
Reith’s vision for the BBC

Reith’s vision for public broadcasting in Britain was guided by a particular philosophical tradition informed primarily by Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), notably Arnold’s belief in social reform through the effects of mass education and the adherence to a moral code. The significance of *Culture and Anarchy* lay in its blatant exclamation that a reformist agenda is possible. In ‘Sweetness and Light’ Arnold writes, “But now the iron force of adhesion to the old routine – social, political, religious – has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded” (Arnold, 1869: 31). But for Arnold there remained a belief that this break in the “old routines” must be carefully managed in order to avoid class conflict, resulting, as historian Patrick McCarthy (1964) notes, in a popular revolt that “would drench the nation in blood” (82).

Arnold’s reformist agenda was centered on a fundamental belief in the strength, authority and superiority of Britain’s social and educational institutions, a belief originating from Arnold’s experience as a school inspector in working class east London (McCarthy: 81). Steven Marcus also observes that both class and nationalism are influential factors in Arnold’s articulation of British superiority. Marcus contrasts this with ‘anarchy’: a socio-cultural element, Arnold relates to the American mode of democracy:

He perceives this anarchy as divided generally into two kinds: spiritual anarchy, which he associated largely with untrammeled middle class economic and social forms of laissez-faire and a
hyper-individualistic range of religions and intellectual actualities; and social anarchy, which he connected with what he recognized as the inevitable advent of modern democracy in a variety of manifestations (Marcus 1994: 166).

Arnold's ambition was to raise the intellectual and moral consciousness of British society and to shift the definition of culture, and those who consider themselves culturally literate, away from that “which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin” (Arnold: 29), to a set of universal ideals. For Arnold ‘culture’ refers to the promotion of a set of beliefs and practices that marry Christian values, the promotion of specific literary traditions and scientific rationality. The ascendancy of culture relies not on the self-motivation of those for whom he saw as needing this cultural education⁸, but on the application of these ideals to the public.

Arnold’s objective was to divorce culture from its connotations with class. As he writes: “to do away with classes; to make all live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, and use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely, to be nourished and not bound by them” (48). This project of replacing class hierarchies however produced a paternalistic cultural authority. The cultural reform envisaged by Arnold was not, therefore, a process of disseminating democracy or providing the provision for greater self-expression by the working class, but rather to provide Britain’s economically and socially disparate population equal

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⁸ Placing Culture and Anarchy it an historical context, Steven Marcus writes that the increase in enfranchisement of English workers in the 1860s (through the Reform Act) and the unbridled population and urban growth in the wake of industrialization was cause for concern for Arnold, perceiving the squalid living conditions and the newly acquired political influence a potential recipe for both “spiritual anarchy” or socio-political upheaval (166).
access to an accepted version of high culture. The regulation and control of those channels of culture was of paramount importance. The same impetus to paternalism present in Arnold’s writing is found in John Reith’s attitude towards the BBC. Reith viewed the Corporation as a “vehicle of national discipline” (Avery, 2006: 15) and he envisaged the mass media as a key mechanism for standardizing an acceptably high level of cultural knowledge throughout Britain’s disparate regional and class differences.

The programming and tone of the BBC during its first decades was heavily influenced by Reith’s personal vision, the basis of which lay in his own Scottish Calvinist background. As Giddings notes “the faith for him was not a matter of Sunday observances and regular thoughts of the afterlife, it was a matter of fulfilling divine purposes on earth, here and how” (Giddings, 1993: 154). Reith’s personal beliefs informed his paternalistic ambitions for the BBC, notably regarding keeping the Christian doctrine part of everyday life in Britain (Briggs: 54). Briggs adds that Reith situated himself as the ideal personality to lead the BBC, but described his own advanced moral fortitude as a “burden” (56), and, as he did in Broadcast Over Britain (his 1924 manifesto regarding the reforming capabilities of mass media), combined the BBC’s institutional responsibility to the nation with his own:

When it comes to questions of general policy – the fixing of standards and the setting up of ideals – to decisions as to what shall or shall not be broadcast, we are obviously on dangerous ground. There is no reference book, dogmatic or empirical, to which one may turn for guidance on things ethical. At the risk of being charged with posing as judge or educator, or with deciding matters outside our province, we must make the decision since ours is the responsibility for the conduct of the service. Anything in the nature of a dictatorship is the subject of much resentment in
these days. Well, somebody must make the decisions; it is always possible to replace those who give the wrong ones, or have not the courage to give any, by others in whom people will have greater confidence. The preservation of a high moral standard is obviously of paramount importance. Few would question the desirability of refraining from anything approaching vulgarity or directing attention to unsavoury subjects. (Reith 1925: 32-33)

There is, therefore, a convergence between Reith's own views concerning social betterment, and how it may be achieved, and the role of the BBC envisaged by the British government. But the BBC came about via a set of pragmatic decisions made by government and Post Office officials designed to consolidate the power of the mass media in the hands of the state and limit the power of private broadcasting companies.

In the early BBC model there is an alignment between the state's objectives, those of the Corporation's key personnel and the public's appetite for the new technology, with Reith providing the persona to develop the BBC as a national institution. Todd Avery frames his assessment of Reith's work through a Foucauldian lens, suggesting that Reith's vision of a nation united in its cultural and moral knowledge and outlook is a disciplinary technique functioning to suppress social disruption. Avery writes:

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9 Even in the free-market era of broadcasting in Britain, prior to the formation of the BBC, there were strict controls on the broadcast of political material. But as Briggs notes, the possibilities for the dissemination of a political message through the mass media was a significant issue in the debates surrounding the Corporation's establishment. Briggs cites a parliamentary debate in which Sir Henry Norman warned of the potential for disinformation being broadcast "When there are 100,000 listeners in the country, the Government may then speak with the knowledge that a million people will have learned its message within the hour..."; and voiced approval for broadcasting's possibilities, given the correct forms of control, "he envisaged parliamentary candidates using wireless at election time to great effect" (Briggs: 29).
Radio, as an agent of technocratic culture, was to be a means of effecting an even distribution of the British populace around a national social and moral norm, an agent in part for, in Michel Foucault's formulation, ‘repressing useless energies, the intensities of pleasures, and irregular modes of behavior’ – that is to say, energies, pleasures and behaviors potentially disruptive to the effective workings of the state” (15).

Other views of Reith's leadership are less inclined to perceive his objectives in terms of power. Robert Giddings maintains a connection between Reith's guidance of the BBC and the twin Victorian concepts of colonial expansion and reformism, arguing that the development of radio came at a serendipitous moment for Reith, described by Giddings as “a particular socio-political juncture in Britain” (154). Here the colonial zeal was turning towards reform of the British population and was combined with a desire on the part of the British government to build institutions particular to British national culture, as opposed to the American business model. Giddings argues that there is a disparity between Reith's own view of his role within the BBC, and the reality of his paternalistic impetus:

He claimed, and might well sincerely have believed, that he was reflecting Britain’s national character and its manifestation in the nation's culture – he actually achieved something of a coup d'etat over the nation's means of cultural production and distribution. Consequently he actually (and actively) engaged in the construction of the nation's culture at a particular juncture of the nation's history. This is the real importance of the Reithian imperial experience (24).

Giddings identifies Reith’s active engagement in the construction of culture as a means to improve society’s moral well-being, but there is less evidence that Reith was attempting to reflect the national cultures in the BBC's programming. The tone of Reith's version of the BBC did not reflect the cultures of regional Britain. Instead it was “a mixture of elementary schoolteacher, the social planner
and the psychologist” (Smith: 31) and was based on the idea that regional
culture equated to an ethnographically interesting but morally and aesthetically
inferior folk culture. Those aspects of Reith’s leadership style described by Smith
are indicative of the various aspects to his personality and his application of
personal principles to the task of governing the BBC. Although Reith held stock
with the notion of class as a legitimate form of social and cultural hierarchy
(Boyle 1972: 104), he was also interested in the influence the paternalistic
institution may have on the individual. Here Reith used the institutions of the
state because only the state had the resources to construct such institutions; but
his interest lay in the institution’s ability to psychologically influence individuals,
rather than the power of the state.

Analysis of the BBC programming under Reith reveals a paradoxical
representation of class. Through the influence of Arnold, and Arnold’s belief that
mass education may undermine traditional class hierarchies, alongside the crisis
of class that permeated European political and social life preceding and
following World War One, Reith sought to configure the BBC as a primary
mechanism to represent the mass democratization of culture. But this culture
was based on notions of high culture that Reith himself inherited from is own
background.


**Political upheaval and the shifting articulation of class after WW1**

The institutional configuration of the BBC established the state-monopoly model for broadcasting in Britain that would remain in place until the establishment of the rival ITV in 1955. But the significance of the BBC as a public service broadcaster lay in its broadcasting culture and style that reflected a social and political climate forged in the aftermath of World War One and the radical dismantling of traditional hierarchies in Europe. Historian David Cannedine suggests the revolutionary zeal with which political and social change was occurring in continental Europe was the cause of significant anxiety for the British establishment. Cannedine writes:

> The creators of these brave new worlds took pride in the fact they were a complete break with the regimes they replaced, and that they owed nothing to precedent, to tradition or to religion. But this widespread collapse of settled values and historic institutions caused inter-war traditionalists great anxiety, dismay and unease (1998: 127).

Thus, the objective of utilizing the power of broadcasting to build a common culture existed before the same technology could be harnessed to give voice to the socially and politically disaffected sectors of society. The public’s disillusionment with these ‘traditionalist' bodies regarded as responsible for the War, such as the military elite and the House of Lords, developed alongside a changing climate of class brought about through growth in the educated middle class (as a product of the rise of mercantile economy and reformist education policies) that led to the ascendency of bourgeois values throughout a number of state institutions including the Church of England and the House of Commons (Avery, 2006).
This notion that the state establish and govern a broadcasting network in order to maintain political neutrality in the national mediasphere would be echoed in the formative period of New Zealand broadcasting. For the New Zealand government during broadcasting’s establishment phase, the perpetuation of political neutrality translated into a culture of censorship including prohibition on political debate. Besides not providing the political opposition with a platform, this broadcasting culture also denied a place in the national mediasphere for other political interest groups. This included the Communist Party that maintained a low media profile in the interest of political expediency towards the Labour Party (Trotter, 2007: 77) and the business community that was situated in political opposition to the socialist Labour Party. However, as media historian R.J. Gregory argues, the censoring ethos governing editorial decisions was not protested by the public but rather was regarded as evidence of the state’s effective leadership. Gregory writes:

It was not political self-interest that was the main motivating force behind those regulations, however, but uncertainty over the possible impact of the new medium on society in general. Caution may have been politically expedient; in a strongly Calvinist society it was also popularly desired (1985:16).

As a democratizing medium, broadcasting in New Zealand encapsulated the shifting notions of class occurring in Britain during the 1920s. In examining the BBC’s programming style and content during its first years, historians Andrew Boyle (1972), Scannell & Cardiff (1991), and Todd Avery (2006) have emphasized the influence of John Reith and his personal vision for broadcasting as a means of mass education. While Reith had considerable impact on BBC
programming, the culture of programming for which he is widely attributed, was created by Britain’s changing social and political landscape. Under Reith’s leadership the BBC represented a changing articulation of class in Britain that was manifest in the discourse of social reform and betterment for the wider public that was inspired by earlier ideals of social reform. In taking inspiration from Matthew Arnold, Reith attempted to re-order the traditional relationship between class and access to culture. Bauman notes that Arnold’s vision of culture seeks to abolish classes, “to make the best that has been thought or known in the world current everywhere” (Bauman, 2011: 7). Thus, the potential of broadcasting as a vehicle for mass education is situated, in the Reithian mode, as part of a wider cultural and political retreat from class-based access to social and economic betterment. This re-ordering of traditional hierarchies is a socio-cultural precursor to the differentiated form of culture that Bauman articulates.

Notwithstanding the reformist agenda underpinning Reith’s tenure at the BBC, the singular notion of what constitutes culture would eventually serve to bring the original dynamism to a halt. If, as Bauman notes, the Enlightenment version of culture is a metaphor for the cultivation of land transformed into a productive field (7), then the subsequent role of broadcasting institutions is to cultivate, preserve and protect that ploughed field from any outside forces. It would not be until broadcasting reflected and represented culture as a multi-faceted and non-hierarchical set of practices and beliefs that the programming remit of state broadcasting institutions would change. In the New Zealand context, the role of the state broadcaster in creating and perpetuating a unique national identity has similarities to Reith’s objective for British society, insofar
as attempting to develop a singular set of beliefs and concepts regarding what constitutes a particular national ideal. Like’s Reith’s vision for the BBC, early state broadcasting in New Zealand claimed to be inclusive in the sense of being driven by an egalitarian objective that attempted to fashion a distinct cultural landscape for citizens. But this was based on the cultural assumptions of the settler culture. In the wider context of New Zealand culture and society, the programming from this early broadcasting period sought to establish a national identity that was differentiated from both Britain and Australia (as its two cultural cousins) whilst retaining political, cultural and economic ties with Britain.

Unlike Britain, where Reith’s vision was articulated and employed at the inception of the BBC (outlined in *Broadcast Over Britain*), much of the discussion surrounding the initial period of New Zealand broadcasting concerned the development of infrastructure. The focus on the physical construction of the broadcasting network is evident in the NZBS’s first annual reports that emphasize the establishment of this infrastructure (constructed across New Zealand’s mountainous terrain), with this focus functioning to affirm the industrial and political supremacy of the settler community. It marks a significant point in the process of forming a distinct New Zealand national identity.
The formative period: New Zealand broadcasting and national identity

The construction of communication infrastructure lends itself to a variety of implications in regards to the colonial nation state. This includes the conquest of modernity over the obstacles of nature and the subsequent supremacy of modern communication culture over all others, such as small-scale local publications and oral traditions (Consedine, 1989). In New Zealand, the development of the broadcasting network was part of a substantial industrial, cultural and political plan that began at the start of the nineteenth century when new European communities (initially whalers and sealers, later gold prospectors and then farmers) became socially organized. Various historical analyses have attributed a development sense of New Zealand cultural and national identity to a series of significant moments that occurred between the final decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century (see King, 1985; Phillips, 1987). These included the origins of the welfare state, the tenets of which were established by the Seddon Liberal government in the last decade of the nineteenth century and reached unprecedented universality with the policies of the Savage Labour government in 1935. In addition, sporting ties with Britain beginning in 1905 and New Zealand’s military involvement in, first, the South African War, and later World War One were viewed as important milestones in the development of a differentiated and specific sense of New Zealand national identity. Historian Ron Palenski however argues that the formation of a particular New Zealand national identity preceded these large-scale international events, evolving instead from New Zealand’s geographic
isolation, progressive social policies regarding the rights of women and Māori, and the political rejection of federation with Australia. As Palenski writes:

Perhaps the single most important overt manifestation of New Zealand identity was the decision not to follow the other antipodean colonies in forming the Australian federation. William Parker Morrell called it ‘another milestone on the road to national self-consciousness’. Had New Zealand lined up with the six other colonies there would be no such thing as a New Zealand national identity; there would be state parochialism, just as there is now in Australia as substrata in Australian life. In terms of the future of what was then the colony of New Zealand, the decision was a momentous, indeed portentous one. However the decision not to federate did not bring about a national identity; quite the reverse – it was an extant national identity that brought about the decision. It has been said that ‘we usually decide who we are by reference to who and what we are not’\textsuperscript{10}. New Zealanders decided they were not Australians (2012: 8-9).

This embrace of political isolation did not, however, encourage a ‘year zero’ approach to the establishment of state institutions as the colony (and later the dominion) retained political ties with Britain. In his mid-twentieth century examination of New Zealand colonial life, William Morrell notes that “first generation” Pākehā citizens may have been dislocated from Britain both geographically and culturally and did not identify their homeland as either Britain or New Zealand (Morrell, 1962: 212). But this distance instilled a romanticized and idealized vision of Britain within the settler community and an ambition to replicate its customs and institutions in the New Zealand context (212).

In contrast with Britain, where significant individuals such as Reith were drawing on high culture traditions in the development of the BBC's content and style, there was no overt cultural direction for New Zealand broadcasting. Instead, reasons for institutional and programming decisions were described in terms of economic and logistical necessity, notably in regards to the establishment of infrastructure and the administrative framework employed for national broadcasting. In the context of national identity, the establishment of a national broadcasting service represents a significant legitimizing act: it demonstrates the state's ability to both develop infrastructure and provide a mechanism to articulate a national narrative.

Broadcasting in New Zealand: 1920-1935

Between 1920 and 1935 governments in Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand all established national broadcasting services (Smith, 1976; Tracey, 1978). Decisions by states concerning the principles, operations and funding for each service were made in consideration of the political, cultural and geographic demands unique to their territory. In the case of New Zealand, Australia and Canada, the territories had several shared factors: sparsely populated terrain with a topology that made the development of infrastructure difficult; burgeoning land-based economies in which long distance communication could be beneficial; and a historical narrative based upon a colonial relationship to Britain. In these territories the establishment of broadcasting services represents the nationalization and institutionalization of a previously private enterprise into the sphere of public ownership and regulation.
(Jacka, 2001: 330). Conventional histories of national broadcasting depict this process of nationalization as a practical initiative to ‘protect’ the fledgling technology from the uncertainties associated with the competitive free market\textsuperscript{11}. This view underplays a significant ideological project that take place through the incorporation of broadcasting, with broadcasting becoming an effective means of disseminating a national narrative via a means of communication owned and controlled by the state (Price, 1995: 5).

The fostering of national identity and nationalism through broadcasting occurred through the overt promotion of a distinct voice, but one that is historically and culturally arbitrary except that it serves the interests of the political and economic elite. This process of building national identity functions via the normalization of values and beliefs that constitutes an ideal national subject, representing, therefore, the singular and superior version of culture framed by Enlightenment ideals and similar to that championed by Reith. Elizabeth Jacka writes that broadcasting became an element in the “improving mission” of the state in early twentieth century Australia. Both paternalistic and repressive (in regards to cultural, racial and gender differences), the role of national broadcasting was to align a particular set of ideological believes with notions of citizenship and national belonging (331-2). The institutionalization of broadcasting in New Zealand emulated that of Britain insofar its governance was set up as a state enterprise soon after the appropriate technology was developed and became available. However the ideological foundations of New Zealand

\textsuperscript{11} Ian McKay’s 1953 history *Broadcasting in New Zealand* represents a local version of this argument.
broadcasting were based on the development of a specific national identity, thus representing a different educative and cultural emphasis than that of its British counterpart. New Zealand historian, W.H. Oliver argues that the New Zealand state chose to replicate only those British institutions that would be necessary in the new colony, rather than an attempt to exactly replicate Britain’s governance systems (36). Media Scholar Alan Cocker concurs, writing that the Reithian BBC served as an “inspiration” to the architects of the New Zealand state broadcasting system, rather than a model to be directly replicated (Cocker 2005: 45). Oliver and Cocker’s analysis is predicated on the argument that the New Zealand broadcasting model was determined by pragmatic necessity for a communication network to service the sparsely populated colony. The local model was ideologically significant as a means of developing a colonial national culture, and the absence of any statutory separation between the state and the broadcaster served to make the state more influential in programming decisions.

*Establishing a national broadcasting infrastructure*

Media historian Monroe Price (whose work mainly concerns public broadcasting in Europe) argues that the building of communication networks marked a significant moment for the ascendancy of the centralized political nation state. Price observes that broadcasting infrastructure represents a modern, bureaucratic configuration of power that (at times contrasts with and at times compliments) political forms of regional power (Price, 1995: 5). The
practical and economic benefits to the state and the national economy by the availability of mass communication are significant: for the state it provided a direct means of mass political communication and a new commercial vehicle effectively bringing new customers to the nation’s business operators. Alongside the immediate political advantages provided by mass broadcasting, the development of the necessary infrastructure marks a significant intellectual event by the state. Smith writes: “what we conceive of as ‘broadcasting’ represents a set of interim technical, sociological and juridical responses to a series of intellectual contests” (1976: 8).

In the New Zealand context these “intellectual contests” included the challenge of building infrastructure and providing suitable content. Patrick Day writes that radio:

was a revolutionary means of communication that reached straight into the family home, previously a sanctuary from outside influence. Although radio is inherently a two-way medium, broadcasting was developed as a one-way form of communication: broadcasters spoke and audiences listened. While this was similar to earlier entertainment and public communication, broadcasting was seen as changing the nature of the experience (1994: 3).

The annual reports to parliament from the New Zealand Broadcasting Service indicate that during the 1930s the establishment of a national infrastructure was of equal significance to issues of programming content or quality. On announcing the establishment of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service, the government’s report on broadcasting notes.

The establishment of a modern transmitter of 10 kilowatt aerial energy at Highcliff, Dunedin, and the increase of two and a half to 10 kilowatts in the power of the transmitter at Gebbies Pass,
Christchurch, were the most important events of 1935 (Campbell, 1936).

Similar events are reported in subsequent reports especially through the 1930s. For example the upgrade of transmitter power at Titahi Bay in 1937 (Shelley, 1937) and development of outside broadcast capability reported in 1938 (Shelley, 1938). Unsurprisingly, the emphasis placed on infrastructure developments diminishes as the national network becomes more established (until the upgrades associated with the introduction of television become necessary in the late 1950s).

Figure 1.1: NZBS transmitter station circa 1945

The development of a national broadcasting network is significant in legitimizing the nation state, in fostering a sense of a collective and producing the “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991: 3) that defined the modern nation. The state network served to promote certain ideals that become national tropes: the pragmatism and power of the state over private enterprise; the subjugation of the natural world and, with that, the physical and ideological dominance of
the colonial worldview. Similar to that of infrastructure, the choice of programming content also functioned in the Reithian-era BBC in that it signified the attempted dismantling of class distinctions and the mass democratization of knowledge. Similar cultural values are is evident in New Zealand Broadcasting Service programming with the scheduling of high culture material serving to portray a specific form of New Zealand national identity that was both autonomous but part of a European cultural tradition.

**New Zealand’s institutional model for broadcasting**

Established in 1932, The New Zealand Broadcasting Board was the first state body charged with broadcasting administration. The Board’s primary mandate was to establish nationwide coverage for radio broadcasting, function as an administrative body, and develop the national network (McKay 1953: 32). The Board had replaced the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand (1925-1931) that operated radio stations in the four main centres: Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The Broadcasting Board was itself replaced by the NZBS in 1936. Unlike its short-lived predecessors, the NZBS lasted until 1962 when the recently established television network brought a new set of administrative demands. To administer the joint state television and radio service, the state established the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation in 1962, which was replaced in 1976 by the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand.

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12 The Broadcasting Board’s early name was the Coverage Commission reflecting its role to establish and maintain universal broadcasting coverage (MacKay, 1953: 41).
Zealand that administered Television New Zealand and Radio New Zealand until industry de-regulation in 1989.

Comparison between the New Zealand and British broadcasting systems has been a feature of New Zealand scholarship on media history (see McKay 1953; Boyd-Bell 1985). Although these comparisons usually cast the New Zealand model as editorially inferior to its British counterpart, both are portrayed as examples of public service broadcasting, albeit operating in different cultural, political and economic climates. The early BBC model represents an ideal version of a public broadcasting system, insofar as being constitutionally protected from government editorial interference, guided by a charter document and funded independent of commercial interests. These institutional factors were not replicated in New Zealand and the only similarity between the two systems was their status as state-owned monopoly broadcasters. The comparisons made between the two broadcasters are therefore based primarily on cultural factors, especially the perceived cultural connection between Britain and New Zealand. Despite the NZBS’s lack of institutional public service mechanisms, those governing the Service during its initial phase did attempt to install public service values into the programming material.

Programming on the New Zealand state network attempted to depict an idealized New Zealand citizen through the promotion and normalization of particular beliefs and morals. The development of radio broadcasting for example, created the technological and social means by which the voice of the
state could permeate the domestic sphere in ways unavailable to the print media or other forms of communication (Day, 1994: 3). In Britain and New Zealand the structural configuration of broadcasting provided an environment in which influential personalities could emerge and utilize the medium for particular cultural ends. In Britain inaugural director general of the BBC John Reith influenced programming to achieve his own vision for Britain's social and cultural betterment. In New Zealand, both Prime Minister (and inaugural Minister of Broadcasting) Michael Joseph Savage and James Shelley, the first director the NZBS, were to exert influence of programming content and style.

James Shelley and the formation of NZBS as 'Public Service'

The public service imperatives of the NZBS were produced primarily through the aspirations of the governing executives, especially Sir James Shelley, the Service's first director. Shelley was appointed by the Savage government and shared with John Reith “an enthusiasm and energy for cultural and educational improvement” for society (Day 1994: 220). In the perception of the press at the time, Shelley's appointment personalized the agenda of the NZBS, accentuating the concept of the national radio network as a vehicle for state paternalism. A profile in the Christchurch Press stated:

The appointment of professor James Shelley to be Director of Broadcasting can confidently be welcomed as the beginning of a new and better era in the development of broadcasting in New Zealand. In the four years\textsuperscript{13} that have elapsed since the national service was

\textsuperscript{13} This refers to the period between 1932 and 1936 when the New Zealand Broadcasting Board administered broadcasting. This piecemeal governance model attempted to regulate the multitude of private radio operators under one organization. Although the NZBB constitutes a significant moment in the
established, there have been great technical improvements and some improvements in the quality of programmes; but it is broadly true that the exploitation of the wireless as a means of social and political education has made little progress. In part this has been due to a timid dislike of controversy; to a much greater extent it has been due to the fact that the system has been under the effective control of men whose interests were technical rather than political and cultural. The appointment of Professor Shelley remedies that defect. Henceforth there will be less emphasis on the means of transmitting programmes and more on the programmes themselves (quoted in Hall 1980: 87)

Other daily newspapers shared the opinion that Shelley’s personality, occupation (Professor of Education at Canterbury University), and cultural knowledge would be able to realize the potential of radio as a vehicle for mass education. The Otago Daily Times reported “Professor Shelley may be expected to bring discernment and vision to the performance of his task” (Otago Daily Times 1936: 4). This viewpoint was reiterated in the Auckland Star that stated Shelley “could do a great deal to cultivate a desire for the best in music and literature, and to develop those higher standards which make informed criticism possible” (Auckland Star 1936: 6). Shelley himself also acknowledged the responsibility of being in charge of radio, telling the specialist publication Radio Record, “I regard radio as ‘the great’ modern instrument for securing a real cohesion of the citizens of the community, based on mutual understanding and sympathetic tolerance” (quoted in Hall: 88). These reports indicate close similarities between the cultural and social functions of the BBC and the NZBS at the time the latter was established. Despite the similarities, each broadcaster

dvelopment of New Zealand broadcasting, the focus of this thesis concerns the relationship between the state, broadcasting and culture. Hence the decision to make the formation of the national state network, that was governed by the New Zealand Broadcasting Service and operated as a monopoly, the temporal start-point of the thesis.
operated within a certain political and cultural context that determined the particular public service capabilities.

The NZBS and the appointment of Shelley as Director functioned as facsimiles rather than a true replica of the BBC model. The NZBS's commercial imperative, lack of a governing Charter and ministerial governance meant that it lacked the editorial independence of its British counterpart. Subsequently, Shelley's influence would always be subordinate to that of politicians who were able to influence editorial decisions. The notion that New Zealand state broadcasting\footnote{As I note in the Introduction, television broadcasting is the primary subject of this thesis. Analysis of radio broadcasting is limited the formative period of the state network and development of the fledging institutional model during the 1930s. In making the argument that public service broadcasting has only existed in New Zealand in a limited form, I am specifically discussing television. Radio New Zealand, in the current form of Radio New Zealand National, Radio New Zealand International and Radio New Zealand Concert do constitute public service broadcasting in a model similar that of the BBC (including universal access, non-commercial and with a charter document). But given the amount of information required, incorporating an analysis of radio alongside that of television would be too large for the scope of this thesis.} constitutes a public broadcasting model comparable to the BBC has its origins in two general factors: first New Zealand’s historic ties to Britain and the high esteem in which the BBC is held by media commentators; and second New Zealand’s state ownership model that operated as an effective monopoly for much of the period between 1935 and 1989. I argue that despite the comparisons, the two systems operate significantly differently to one another and are mandated to serve different purposes. The BBC’s mandate is outlined in its Charter document, however prior to the establishment of New Zealand on Air (NZOA), there was no statutory obligations governing programming content (specifically the provision for public service content) over
New Zealand broadcasting. Further the close alignment between the state and the governance body of New Zealand broadcasting, and its monopolization of the local mediasphere, has, I suggest, perpetuated the notion that the state broadcaster holds the same authority as a public service broadcaster.

In the absence of a Charter the wider editorial direction of the New Zealand state broadcaster took on the prevailing ideology of the state. As I discussed in the introduction, the administrative and institutional configuration of the national broadcaster has undergone various transformations that reflect cultural, political and economic aspects occurring during a given period. Between the establishment of the national network and the 1970s, when programming began to be influenced by identity politics and biculturalism (see Chapter Two), much of the output produced and programmed\(^{15}\) by the state broadcaster was ideologically aligned to the narrative of the settler colony and the formation of the nation state. I begin the next section by examining the

\(^{15}\) New Zealand broadcasting has always programmed a considerable amount of imported material. This is more apparent in television than radio as the high cost of television production has been prohibitive for the New Zealand state broadcaster, especially when compared to the relatively inexpensive imported programming (Horrocks, 1995; Easton, 1997).
relevant historical factors that contributed to this ideological acquiescence between broadcaster and the state before discussing the influence of the broadcasting’s institutional framework on its ideological position.

The advent of broadcasting technology and the particular political and economic environment of the 1930s gave the Labour government the ability and mandate to build a national broadcasting service around settler ideals. Those factors have already been examined in this chapter: Reith’s influence on the BBC, the formation of a colonial New Zealand national identity, and the economic and cultural significance of the development of broadcasting infrastructure, all contribute to an articulation of New Zealand culture that is shaped by the colonial relationship. The programming broadcast by the NZBS sought to affirm the variety of borrowed the state’s cultural project. New Zealand’s strong welfarist traditions combined with state ownership of industrial infrastructure (such as broadcasting) functioned to encourage the belief by the public in a paternalistic state (Gregory 1985: 17) and this sense was further exacerbated but the tight restrictions imposed by the government on NZBS coverage of political or ‘controversial’ affairs (18). The overt advantage given to the government by the state broadcaster diminished after World War II with greater public awareness of the power of propaganda and abilities of governments to control public opinion through the media. But advantaging state public broadcasting as an objective and education source has remained into the era of broadcasting de-regulation in the 1980s.
The programming broadcast by the NZBS differed in tone from the high culture paternalism of Reith’s BBC. Whilst Reith’s objective for the Corporation was an organization upholding principles similar to those espoused at the time by religion and education (Briggs 1985: 54), the NZBS strove to perpetuate the dominant cultural narrative, albeit via a version of Reithian-style paternalism. I argue the high point for this programming occurred between 1940, when the centenary celebrations for the Treaty of Waitangi encouraged various nationalist retrospective examinations across media, and 1960 when the establishment of a television service served as the catalyst for a new administrative model that included an editorially independent news service. This new administrative structure (that will be discussed in the following chapter) assisted in creating a new critical culture within broadcasting leading up to the 1970s and 1980s.

*New Zealand Centennial celebrations as a high point for colonial Culture*

The celebration of New Zealand’s Centennial in 1940 was a significant vehicle to perpetuate the settler national culture and served a political, economic and cultural purpose. In a recent online encyclopedia entry, NZHistory.net described the centennial celebrations as “a deliberate act of national self-definition by New Zealand’s first Labour government”, and “essentially a physical demonstration of the wonders of physical progress” (NZHistory, 2013). The state-sponsored discourse of socially and economically progressive nationalism that pervaded the Centennial compounded the dominance of colonial culture, considerably aided by the combined factors of
war-generated nationalism, economic prosperity and a demonstrable mastering of high culture.

Media discourse surrounding the 1940 Centennial was spearheaded by the National Film Unit-produced docu-drama *One Hundred Crowded Year*. The film articulates a particular colonial view that is separate from Britain but sympathetic to its position as colonial power. This was significantly intensified by the Centennial coinciding with World War Two in which the colonial relationship between New Zealand and Britain was directly manifested in the war effort. Regarding the War, Prime Minister Peter Fraser said, “the Centennial efforts themselves will be a most valuable aid to cementing the national spirit which is so valuable now” (quoted in Day, 1994: 255). The correlation between the war effort and the Centennial celebrations exacerbated the articulation of the settler culture, enriched with a colonialist fervor. The physical centerpiece of the Centenary celebrations was the Centennial Exhibition that ran for six months and occupied a 55-acre site in Wellington. The Exhibition attracted 2.6 million visitors across its duration with the NZBS (represented through the Wellington commercial station 5ZB) broadcasting constantly from the site. An additional contribution made by the NZBS to the celebrations was in music, notably the organization of the National Centennial Symphony Orchestra that toured the country accompanying the English pianist Anderson Tyrer. Unsurprisingly the Orchestra’s repertoire came from the European high culture tradition, with one piece – Tyrer’s symphonic interpretation of Christopher Marlowe’s *Dr Faustus* – being narrated by James Shelley (Day, 1994: 255).
The incorporation of high culture material into the NZBS programming served to promote a homogenous national culture in two ways. Firstly, high culture programming legitimated the comparison between the NZBS and the Reithian BBC; secondly the NZBS encouraged a local form of high culture through the commissioning of local works (within conventional high culture forms and genres), the sponsorship and broadcast of local versions of imported works and through the administration of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. In the NZBS report to government in 1947 Shelley argues that the active promotion of cultural endeavor is significant to the wider project of nation-building.

Creative expression is to a great degree the measure of a nation’s stature. It is considered that broadcasting should contribute to the

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16 The placing of responsibility for the new national orchestra under the jurisdiction of the Broadcasting Service caused some media debate at the time of establishment. An editorial in the *New Zealand Herald* suggested that the orchestra was only of benefit to concert goers (as radio listeners could have the same experience listening to a recording of the same piece of music), thus funding for the orchestra should come from alternative sources (see McKay, 1953: 16).
stimulation of such expression, especially, but not solely, in relation to musical, literary and dramatic arts (Shelley, 1947: 1).

The establishment of the national orchestra signaled a further extension of the Service’s paternalistic influence over the national audience and indicates the state’s objective of promoting certain cultural forms.

The role of the NZBS as a gatekeeping institution of state-sanctioned national culture established a precedent for subsequent New Zealand statutory bodies. Initially, the use of local artists was a practical necessity, given the logistical and financial constraints due to New Zealand’s geographic isolation. In the first year of the Broadcasting Service these artists included the Australian-born composer Percy Grainger, music hall singer Gladys Moncrieff, and the classical Spivakovsky-Kurtz Trio (Campbell, 1936). In bringing these artists to New Zealand, the Broadcasting Service fulfilled the state’s expectation that broadcasting should promote and deliver high culture to a mass audience. Alongside touring overseas artists, the Service broadcast original local works including composer Douglas Lilburn’s Aotearoa Allegro in 1940 and poet Allen Curnow’s ‘Landfall in Unknown Seas’ the following year. Both Lilburn and Curnow’s work is significant for utilizing New Zealand themes and motifs within a European high culture form. The airing of works such as those by Lilburn and Curnow demonstrate the NZBS’s objective to promote high culture forms, and represents the active formation of a new cultural identity. As Sinclair notes, since the mid-nineteenth century journalists, editors, authors and politicians had been attempting to identify a distinctive New Zealand national character (Sinclair, 1986: 79). This distinctive character was substantially based in the
logic of the settler colony, with its distinction informed by New Zealand’s relationship with Britain as colonial power and by the mentality of conquest emerging from the pioneer era, the New Zealand wars and New Zealand’s involvement in European wars. Thus forging a local high art culture served to reiterate colonial power and the settler ideals, perpetuating cultural, political and racial hegemony through the development of a specific local elitism.

The notion of ‘solid’ culture expressed by Bauman was transported in similar but differing forms around the colonized world. The significance of the differences, the national peculiarities, was a means by which diversity could be included and subsumed into the wider cultural narrative without radical collusion. This process would become much more advanced in the late twentieth century as the broadcasting industry became increasingly commercialized and competitive (see Chapter Three). During the radio era, the state broadcaster’s representation of Māori remained on the periphery of the national narrative but functioned to promote the dominant culture through reiterating the portrayal of social stability and harmony. The primary difference between the representation of Māori during the radio era and the representation that would occur from the 1970s onward (Chapter Two) lies in the modes of production and issues over who has power, and who is responsible, for representation. During the radio era, Māori were the subject of the European narrative. Thus their representation was controlled in order to promote the dominant European version of cultural identity. This occurred as a specific addition to national culture, or via assimilatory policies such as the incorporation of Māori in wartime rhetoric.
After the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 Māori were granted the status of British subjects and were thus afforded particular rights to inclusion in the process of colonial governance (Hayward, 2010: 142). This political inclusion, subsequent Māori-orientated social policies, and later inclusion in New Zealand’s military, all led to the affirmation of Māori as central to the national narrative from the mid-nineteenth century (Palenski, 2012: 9). As broadcasting became an increasingly significant cultural and political vehicle from the 1920s, the portrayal of Māori continued to be a defining symbol of New Zealand's unique national identity and became included in, first the aural, and later the visual, representation of cultural identity. But the place of Māori in the colonial narrative demands critical analysis as the question whether media representation constitutes meaningful inclusion into the social or cultural processes of the state, or functions in the service of the colonial status quo remains unsettled.

Analysis of cultural identity in this context requires a demarcation between the visual representation of the national narrative (and a critical analysis of its modes of production) and other political, social and cultural policies. The retention of cultural practice and the right to cultural expression are significant markers toward self-determination (Rewi, 2012: 56), but the appropriation of cultural practice (even if performed by indigenous communities) counteracts resistance by incorporating a benign version of indigenous culture into the colonial narrative, thus symbolizing acquiescence to
the dominant culture (Smith, 2006: 28). An alternative argument may be that visual representation equates to acknowledgement by the colonizing state of the indigenous community, and therefore may serve as an entry point to future political inclusion or cultural citizenship. This view is rejected by a number of scholars who claim that the benign but exotic representation of Māori in the early broadcasting narrative legitimized rather than problematized colonial rule (Walker 1990; Day 1994; Beatson 1996; Smith 2006).

Broadcasts of Māori during much of the radio era primarily featured cultural activities, notably haka, waiata and oratory. The fixation on the exotic and attractive cultural practice served to illustrate what was conceived as an archaic and disassociated culture in a preserved state. Such a depiction removed Māori from everyday reality of contemporary New Zealand life, thus symbolically erasing the violence endured through the colonializing project. Furthermore, the depiction of Māori solely in terms of tikanga reduced representation to that of a static culture. This had two consequences. Firstly, in light of the modernizing ideology driving the colonial project for most of the twentieth century, Māori culture was perceived as a relic of a pre-colonial period that would eventually disappear as Māori themselves naturally assimilated into the advancing western culture (Walker 1989: 89). Secondly, this static and isolated representation of Māori was incorporated with a perverse interpretation of Māori sovereignty and property rights to portray tikanga as an “empty signifier” and thus open to exploitation from market forces (Howard 2003: 182). These aspects of the colonial representation of Māori would become apparent with historical distance, especially in the wake of the 'Māori
Renascence’ of the 1970s and 1980s (see Chapter Two). The earliest radio broadcasts of Māori was subject to colonial manipulation of the narrative and use of Māori imagery in the creation of a unique New Zealand national narrative.

Pre-dating the NZBS, the New Zealand Radio Broadcasting Company (RBC)\(^{17}\) was the first governing body to portray national identity in terms of a unique set of cultural activities. This included a combination of European high art performed by local artists and Māori tikanga. Patrick Day observes:

> It would be a mistake to see the RBC as introducing any distinctive Māori broadcasting. Its programmes were not produced by and for Māori. They were designed to provide a New Zealand slant to its national programming. The few Māori programmes were exceptions rather than a continuing orientation. But by the standards of the time those new programmes were lavishly produced and regarded by the RBC as among its major broadcasts (1994: 124).

One of these “lavishly produced” productions was the RBC’s “One Thousand Years of Māori Life Portrayed in Speech, Song and Story” concert broadcast in February 1928 to commemorate the 88th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (The Radio Record 1928: 1). The concert, broadcast across all of New Zealand’s main centre networks, was described by the listings journal *The Radio Record*. In this way:

> Radio history was established for New Zealand by the outstandingly successful Māori pageant broadcast on Monday evening in commemoration of the eighty-eighth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. It was a brilliant idea to commemorate the occasion with a function that portrayed to the Pākehā population of New Zealand a kaleidoscopic view of the advent and life of the Māori race in the Dominion. That history is conveyed in six phases, the essence of each given with memorable items in speech, song and)

\(^{17}\) The Radio Broadcasting Company administered broadcasting from 1925 to 1931. After which it was succeeded by the New Zealand Broadcasting Board.
story. Congratulations of the heartiest nature can only be extended to
the management responsible for the conception, and to the
performers whose interpretation conveyed to the listeners, in most
picturesque and melodious fashion, the romantic history of the past
thousand years. (1)

The concert and accompanying story illustrate the overarching Pākehā influence
over the portrayal of tikanga. The concept of tikanga is situated in New Zealand
legal and cultural discourse as an encompassing term for cultural practice (see
King 1995: 34; Walker 1992: 14) primarily referring to symbolic acts relating to
instrumental and everyday activities such as the preparation and the rituals
associated with shared meals; meeting protocols; and the rituals surrounding
birth, funerals and other facets of life that have customary significance. In the
contemporary New Zealand legal system, elements of tikanga are incorporated
into legislation via the necessity for law to accommodate the principles of the
Treaty of Waitangi. Scholar Ani Mikaere notes that tikanga is based on the pre-
European legal system (Mikarere 2004: 12) and draws from Justice Taihakurei
Durie’s assessment that tikanga as a concept refers to specific customs that may
be adaptable over time, but exist within a wider Māori values system.

Prior to the more incorporation of bicultural issues into New Zealand law
in the 1970s, the concept of tikanga meant primarily the inclusion and visibility
of Māoritanga in cultural material as exemplified by the RBC’s programming.
The material in the Radio Record could be read as an example of cultural naivety,
given the early date in New Zealand’s broadcasting history. However an
introduction to the NZBS’s list of archived Māori music produced in 1958 further
attests to the incorporation and necessary adaption of tikanga to comply with the prevailing sensibilities of the colonial audience.

Few native people are endowed with a sense of music so active and so spontaneous; few are so naïve and so charming in their expression; few have voices so charged with sympathy and sweetness. Music has been the natural language of the Māoris (sic) since time immemorial, but their use of the mode to which white ears are accustom has only properly developed since the settlement of the British in New Zealand. (New Zealand Broadcasting Service 1958: 4)

This narrative is invested with dual inferences: the ‘naturalness’ of Māori and the civilizing influence of settler society. Subsequently the portrayal of Māori is infused with a subtle form of cultural violence that serves to infer a level of empowerment (for the indigenous Other) while remaining framed in the logic, and operating to the benefit, of the colonial subject. The notion of cultural violence denotes the willful erosion of subaltern or indigenous culture through a variety of means, especially in state policies such as education, health and welfare, but also through cultures of racism that lead to exclusion from employment opportunities and the ghettoization of housing. As Awatere identifies, cultural violence is often invisible until new forms of identity may emerge (Awatere 1984: 9). In this sense cultural violence is part of a normalizing colonial discourse that perpetuated itself by virtue of manifesting stability (Hall 1989:10). The stability perpetuated in colonial New Zealand was simultaneously inclusive and exploitative, the vision of benign representation serving to mark the erosion of valuable cultural and political involvement and, ultimately, self-determination.
Issues relating to music and cultural practice convey a benign countenance and are thus more readily accepted into the prevailing cultural narrative. But the misrepresentation of the Māori subject in the broadcasting (and related print) culture of the 1920s was more apparent when examining the Treaty of Waitangi. This coverage, again from The Radio Record in 1928 suggests colonial violence imparted on Māori by British rule is a product of Māori intelligence and nobility.

That piece of paper – the Treaty of Waitangi – is our New Zealand Māoris’ Magna Charta. But let it always be remembered that it was a purely voluntary act, this handing over of the superior mana of New Zealand to the British Queen. The Māoris did not take that step without careful deliberation. They weighed every word; some Ngapuhi were suspicious of the Pākehā’s intentions, and it was only through the efforts of two eminent men18 that they consented to accept the Queen’s Mana. (16)

The concert thus reiterates the aforementioned point that colonial representation of Māori eroded their validity to contemporary New Zealand life while also celebrating the inclusiveness of the Pākehā-centric national culture. The accompanying newspaper article situates Māori as empowered, with the signing of the Treaty being undertaken to provide mutual benefit for both parties. This contrasts with more contemporary analyses of the Treaty such as Donna Awatere’s 1984 work Māori Sovereignty, the thesis of which questioned the legitimacy of the Treaty, and Bradley Reed Howard’s argument that the Treaty was instigated as a means to economically advantage the New Zealand Company, “which preferred to colonialize New Zealand via a private enterprise

18 The article records these individuals as the Venerable Archdeacon Williams and Ngapuhi chief Tamati Waka Nene.
model” (182), and the Christian Missionary Society “which sought to preserve its position of influence and its land acquisitions” (182).

This non-critical appraisal of the colonial project had, as its basis, a desire to secure the inherent instability of settler societies (Smith: 29). In New Zealand this was a precarious activity as the objective of creating and incorporating an acquiescent and authentic Māori presence into the cultural narrative needed to be balanced with maintaining effective control. For example, from 1927 the RBC began presenting educational programming concerning the correct pronunciation of te reo. Despite the subject matter, Pākehā speech trainer J. F. Montague initially presented this programme (Day 1994: 124). The appointment of Māori educator Harry Stowell (Hare Hongi) in 1929 elevated the authenticity of the Māori voice, however this form of programming is a further example of cultural practices transformed from a site of resistance and subsequently serving to legitimate the colonial narrative.

The recruitment of Stowell to the RBC increased Māori representation on the state broadcaster that would continue until after World War Two. As Cody (1956) and Gardiner (1992) have argued, the involvement of Māori in World War Two represented an important milestone in both the development of New Zealand’s sense of cultural identity and the place of Māori within that identity.

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19 Stowell also discussed Māori place names and taught simple phrases.
20 Cody’s definitive overview of the Māori Battalion and Gardiner’s later history provide the accepted view as to the role of the Māori war effort in establishing New Zealand cultural identity. As I have already noted, this was somewhat refuted in 2012 by Ron Palenski who argued that political and cultural elements from the mid to late nineteenth century (primarily the decision against
In terms of developing an inclusive colonial narrative, Māori involvement in the war permitted the creation of an exclusive and celebrated demarcation for Māori on the global stage, while intensifying the process of assimilation of Māori into the colonial/British element of New Zealand identity. This is exemplified by Māori human rights campaigner Tama Te Kapua Poata who notes “there seemed to be a strong unity between Māori and Pākehā in the war years, and we felt a deep sense of camaraderie with the British Empire” (Poata 2012: 66). The heightened visibility for Māori in the wider New Zealand narrative during the 1940s was matched by an increased Māori presence on the state broadcasting network. The broadcasts during this period offered increased autonomy for the presenters regarding their subject and tone. Although, as Beatson notes, the primary role of Māori presenters during the war years was announcing the names and places of origin of those killed in action (77). This increased representation continued at the conclusion of the War and the availability of remote broadcasting technologies allowed for the recording of isolated Māori communities (77), enhancing the diversification of the state broadcasting programme.

In perpetuating the dominance of a homogenous settler national culture and in keeping with a colonial perspective of Māori as a decorative and ethnographically interesting addition to a British colony, the NZBS broadcast a series of lectures in 1953 by prominent industry leaders, academics and civil servants in commemoration of the New Zealand population passing three federation with Australia, welfare reforms of the 1890s, and the inclusion of Māori in the national discourse) were of significance in creating a unique national identity than New Zealand’s role in foreign wars.
million. Although the needs of Māori are largely absent from the content, one contributor, demographer G. E. F. Wood states:

There has been a big improvement in the Māori death rate in recent years – until there is now no great difference in the average rates for Māoris and Europeans. But there is still a heavy toll on Māori life, in the first year. Eighty three Māori babies died in 1952, for every thousand born – nearly four times the infant mortality among non-Māoris. This is a serious loss of valuable young lives. However it is much better than the record some years ago – and we can hope for further improvement. Despite these early losses, our Māori people are a virile race. They are increasing at 3.2 percent per year – a remarkable figure. By 1975, there will be 244,500 Māoris – double the present number. So, as we advance to the third million, our Māori people will continue to make an increasing contribution to our common welfare (Wood, 1953: 2).

Wood’s statement serves as a telling example of the place of Māori within the national narrative. Firstly, Wood provides paternalistic concern regarding the state of Māori health; secondly, he notes the “contribution to our common welfare” (2) suggesting the objective of including Māori into the dominant colonial narrative (as a privilege that, by implication, may be rescinded if certain standards are not met); thirdly, Wood’s perspective comes from an exterior/observer viewpoint and fails to add historical, economic or political perspectives to any social or medical disparity between Māori and Pākehā.

The establishment of a national radio network in New Zealand provided the state with an effective mechanism through which a specific narrative of cultural identity could be disseminated. The initial development of infrastructure, the institutional configuration as a state-owned semi-commercial monopoly and the programming produced and broadcast by the network all functioned as specific modes of control that served to promote the legitimacy of
the settler colony and the colonial ideology and disguise the racism of the colonial project. The narrative that arose from the unitary form of the single state broadcaster was, of course, medium-specific to radio. By the 1950s the cultural dominance of radio had given way to television in many territories around the world. In the following section I discuss the introduction of television to New Zealand and examine how the technological and reception aspects of television effected the perpetuation of cultural identity.

**Introduction of television**

The introduction of television in 1960 marked a significant change in media consumption and production in New Zealand. As I have discussed above, the infrastructure and programming of radio in New Zealand functioned to perpetuate the hierarchies of the settler colony. Television, however, would go on to reflect cultural struggle over the national narrative, especially during the 1970s and 1980s. The following section examines the introductory phase for television in New Zealand.

Television was established relatively late in New Zealand compared to other western nations and its cultural impact was exacerbated as it coinciding with a period of social, political and economic change occurring overseas, with local audiences bearing witness to significant international events with never-before-seen immediacy. The significance of television to New Zealand's transition from a singular, fixed notion of culture (Bauman's 'solid' culture) to a multi-faceted notion of culture, incorporating popular and high forms, is due to
two factors. Firstly, specific programming becomes a vehicle for, and representative of, social change; secondly, the administrative and policy structure of broadcasting became (albeit incrementally) less state centric with the establishment of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC) replacing the NZBS, with greater editorial autonomy and the establishment of an independent news service. By the 1970s the liberalized governance policies of the NZBC would be manifest in greater diversity of programming and the airing of new perspectives of New Zealand life and culture. However, the process towards the establishment of television during the 1950s was highly protracted and subject to a great deal of political maneuvering and debate.

*Television’s governance structure and the Sutch Report*

The New Zealand Broadcasting Service began promoting television to the general public in 1951, but due to a lack of political will regarding the introduction of the medium and a lack of consensus regarding the most appropriate form of governance the first television transmission to a public audience did not occur until 1960, considerably later than comparable western states\(^\text{21}\) (Boyd-Bell 1985: 61; Simmons 2004: 20). Although the National government, in power between 1951 and 1957, approved in principle of introducing television, there were significant ideological differences between members as to the proper ownership and governance model. These competing views were aired at the 1953 National Party conference with Deputy Leader Jack

\(^{21}\) The United States and Britain both had national television networks in place by the mid-1930s; Australia established a television service by 1954.
Marshall advocating a prominent role for private enterprise in the supply of programming and a highly commercialized structure. Opposing this view, former Broadcasting Minister Ronald Algie argued that direct government control was necessary given television's potential to influence public opinion and action (Gregory: 39). In 1960, by which time the National Party were in opposition, the Labour Party had formulated a compromise policy that proposed a state-owned model administered by a broadcasting commission that would be charged with contracting private companies to supply programming. This policy has similarities with Television New Zealand’s post-deregulation structure and the broadcaster's relationship with New Zealand on Air as the primary gatekeeping body (see Chapter Three). But it must be noted that despite the current National Party's advocacy of private enterprise in broadcasting, as of 2013 there remains a state-owned national broadcaster that is mandated with commercial imperatives.

The 1957 Labour government did not share National's struggle over issues of television governance, but were unified in the belief that broadcasting was “a public utility and that its development should be guided by objectives of public service rather than private profit” (Gregory 1985: 40). Alongside the issue of governance and ownership, Gregory also observes a division between the two parties regarding the relative political and cultural value of broadcasting. The governance system envisaged by Labour foregrounded public accountability with television’s primary objective being a public service, for National television was “largely a medium for popular entertainment” (40). The political debates concerning the introduction of television can be divided via party ideology, with
National’s interest being primarily fiscal and Labour’s primarily relating to the potential for public service broadcasting and the social value/cost of television.

As was the case during the 1930s, issues relating to cost and infrastructure would dominate the debate. Gregory notes that the narrow focus of the political discussion was out-of-step with a growing body of international research into the social and cultural aspects of broadcasting. “As one observer\textsuperscript{22} noted ‘at a time when other countries are seriously concerned over both the control and effects of television, New Zealand blithely enters the field counting little but the cost’” (41). But elsewhere, political leaders were voicing concerns about the potential social cost of television. These arguments did not fall as clearly along party or ideological lines, with individual members airing their concerns on behalf of their constituents. During a parliamentary debate in 1956 the National member for St Kilda James Barnes stated that the consensus about individuals he had canvassed concerning the introduction of television was that:

\begin{quote}
  television often broke down home life. Visits to neighbours resulted in many people sitting in semi-darkness, in silence, watching television. When children came home from school they rushed to the television sets, and many neglected their lessons and healthy outdoor exercise as a result. Parents could not exercise the same control over their children, and it was obvious television was not an unmixed blessing (1956: 2125).
\end{quote}

Barnes’s warning was refuted by other MPs including the Labour member for Petone, Michael Moohan who, after a visit to the United States claimed it was “an exaggeration to suggest that television was a menace in the United States of America and that children would not go to bed while programmes were being

\textsuperscript{22} Here Gregory has unattributed a quote from Keith Jackson’s essay ‘TV and Democracy’ published in the literary magazine \textit{Landfall} in September 1960 (Jackson, 1960: 13).
telecast” (Moohan, 1956: 2125). Perspectives similar to that of Barnes were limited and mentioned only sporadically in the House, but they were indicative of an underlying current of fear and misinformation about television present during the state’s period of research and reconnaissance in the 1950s. Notwithstanding the fearful apprehension voiced by Barnes, from the mid-1950s onward there was increasing public pressure on the government for the introduction of a television service as a means of demonstrating New Zealand’s status as a modern nation state and becomes more technologically and culturally connected with the wider world (Simmons 2004: 26).

After winning the 1957 election, Labour introduced first a regional, then a national service. During the 1950s, most of the government’s research activity concerned the cost and logistics of establishing the infrastructure necessary for a national television service. An area of primary concern for the government in relation to the introduction of television was that of standards of visual reception for broadcast material, as the standards in countries already with television services varied significantly. The late adoption of television in New Zealand was partly due to the findings of a 1953 report written by engineers working for the Postal and Telegraph department who, after a 1951 fact-finding tour of Britain, Europe and the United States, recommended that the

23 Regional broadcasting began in Auckland in 1960 and by 1962 broadcasting facilities opened in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. At first these stations broadcast 28 viewing hours per week, increasing to 35 hours per week by the end of 1962. The first live broadcasting was made in 1969 and the regional stations were combined into a national network in 1973.
implementation of a local service should be stalled to take advantage of technical developments occurring in broadcast engineering overseas (Day, 2000: 14).

Dr William Sutch, Secretary for the Department of Industries and Commerce, argued in his report, 'The Economics of Television', that any New Zealand television service can and should take advantage of overseas programming as its importation would be both cost effective and of better quality than could be produced locally (Sutch: 10). The arguments favouring imported programming for a local network is built on Sutch's view of television as a vehicle for mass education. His position is similar to the Reithian mode of public broadcasting and in this advocacy he argues that television could provide New Zealanders with access to international perspectives, suggesting that through television “our international relations could be improved. Fear and hatred are normally the product of ignorance, and television could do much to dispel this ignorance” (4).

When Sutch does advocate for locally produced material, he continues to argue for television’s educative potential:

A decision to make television programmes of our own should be a deliberate act of policy and not a course to be adopted only when public pressure demands it and to be set aside because such programmes will in most instances be costly to produce. Public interest in major sporting events will clearly demand wide television coverage of such events as international rugby, but may not demand good quality New Zealand educational films for use in schools, or programmes dealing with our social, economic or cultural activities which should enrich the lives of all of us. (22)

Sutch also reiterates the warnings previously aired by Barnes regarding the potential social damage of television:

Indeed television becomes part of family life and helps shape (or distort) patterns of thought and conduct. This is of course also true of radio, but television can compel attention in a way that
radio cannot. Many people are able to accept radio broadcasts as background noise which only sometimes compels attention. Television is moving pictures in the home with more light and more comfort. Seeing is believing for most of us and the majority are more deeply influenced by things seen that things read or heard. In these facts lies the great influence of television, an influence which can easily be abused or neglected. (2)

Sutch’s report echoes the prevailing state policy to retain the governance of broadcast media in the hands of the state. In acknowledging the prohibitive cost of television production the report signals the government’s intention that economic measures such as a semi-commercial model (as used in the state radio system) and the importation of overseas programming may be utilized in the provision of a television schedule. These measures represent the State’s dual concerns regarding national television broadcasting: the balance between economic cost and cultural value, a concern that would be re-iterated until the present day. But by examining the potential of television to bring global issues to New Zealand viewers, the report also signals the beginning of a cultural change to be reflected in the role of the broadcast media.

Figure 1.4: Dr William Sutch
The ‘Sutch Report’ is significant for de-emphasizing the potential role of television as a vehicle for the dissemination of a national culture, instead arguing that television should be used to deliver excellent programming material from New Zealand and overseas. The paternalistic overtones of Sutch’s advocacy notwithstanding, his argument should be examined in light of its specific historic and cultural moment during the 1960s. The Report is a statement on the future potential role played by television and advocates for New Zealand’s fledging television service to be global rather than local in its programming. The significance of the Sutch report is that it pre-empted the current era of a globalized form of media consumption and thus signaled the beginnings of a change in the articulation of media culture in New Zealand. In his advocacy for the importation of cultural material, Sutch was turning his back on those attempts at local high culture that typified the radio era. The 1960s were a period of social upheaval from which the politics of identity and the culture of struggle would emerge and be significant for New Zealand broadcasting through the 1970s.

*Establishment of New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation: beginning of a new cultural era for New Zealand*

The social, political and cultural changes that came to the fore with the ascendancy of identity politics globally in the 1970s (and in New Zealand in the culture and politics of the ‘Māori Renaissance’) occurred in a number of political and cultural spheres. The introduction of television in New Zealand is a resonating element incorporated within a wider process of cultural transition. In
Bauman’s thesis the transition of culture away from solid and singular version - the context of Enlightenment thinking - towards a de-centered and multi-faceted version, occurs via a shift in the global colonial order (a point I discuss more fully in the following chapter). This transition has manifested in a range of socio-cultural factors, including the political will towards self-determination of post-colonial or indigenous minorities and their occupancy and social role in former colonial nation states; the inverse culture of diaspora; and the re-defined notions of citizenship including the new logic of cultural citizenship. Television’s small but significant role in this transition was in broadening the programming focus away from the local and, for New Zealand, the culturally familiar (Great Britain). In part this was due to the economies of scale under which television functioned, with a full schedule of local programming being prohibitively expensive (Easton, 1997: 136). But more significantly the individualized and individualizing forms of reception encouraged by television and the democratizing impetus of both the self-recognizing lens and the everyday consumption of the exotic other (also possible through radio broadcasting but made more immediate and with greater by the inclusion of visuals) would go some way to re-ordering the accepted cultural order.

Between 1960 and 1968 each of New Zealand’s regional stations operated autonomously from each other with local presenters and schedules, however the sharing of programming (with reels transported between stations each week to be screened at different times) creating a shared national television experience. By 1968 some limited networking was in practice, especially for news services, with the national network established in 1973.
Changes in the audience culture as a reaction to television and the establishment of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation were the immediate responses to the new medium. News presenters and programme hosts were instantly transformed into public figures, and the mix of both regional and national coverage made television a facilitator of both community and national spirit. Patrick Day writes that between 1960 and 1962 when television and radio was administered by the NZBS, there was reluctance on the part of executives to encourage the figure of celebrity that came with television and instead trying to replicate the radio culture for television (Day, 2000: 63). The retention of the administrative, programming and stylistic status quo during television's introductory phase did not last long. By 1961 the National government passed the Broadcasting Corporation Act that set in place a new governance structure for television. The NZBC model removed direct power away from ministerial control, with governance issues instead being in the jurisdiction of a state-appointed corporation headed by a director-general. The effect of the new structure was to remove the government from day-to-day broadcasting decisions and place that responsibility in the hands of directors who, while remaining out of the political firing line, were state employees (Gregory: 43). Gregory adds that the decision to establish the NZBC was a “product of political compromise and administrative practicality” (39) as the new structure appeased National’s ideological rejection of state control of media, but preserved state monopoly. Furthermore, and in keeping with National's commercial ideals regarding broadcasting, the new structure invested the NZBC with the power to grant warrants for private stations (41). This however did not become a political
issue until the late 1970s, with the introduction of a private competitor to the state network eventually going to air in 1989.

Figure 1.5: New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation logo circa 1962

The political pragmatism that fuelled the establishment of the NZBC was the subject of discussion underlying the potential importance of television to New Zealand culture and society. Writing in the literary journal *Landfall* in 1960, at the time when the concept of a broadcasting corporation was being mooted by politicians, cultural commentator Keith Jackson voiced concern that the administrative structure of a culturally important medium should be decided in the backrooms of parliament.

TV is likely to play an important role in the life of the nation and its introduction is should be recognized as a big step in New Zealand’s development, yet if there is determination to avoid its deleterious effects, there is little evidence of appreciation of its positive virtues. Indeed with one experimental station already operating and others planned, no political organization appears to have considered seriously the implications of the new medium. On the contrary, until the election year of 1960, it was widely acknowledged that the introduction of TV was taking place in a ‘conspiracy of silence’ (Jackson 1960: 13).
Jackson’s is indicative of the transitional moment as the introduction of television served as both a significant material development and a central metaphor for the shift in popular opinion away from accepting a paternalistic state and a new era of critique. The tension Jackson alludes to is between the democratic potential offered by television as a medium and the NZBC as a structure, and the undemocratic process under which the negotiations towards the NZBC were taking place. With the establishment of the NZBC commentary was published suggesting the new structure may facilitate the airing of new social and political perspectives. In his 1962 analysis of the Broadcasting Corporation Act R. J. Harrison wrote of the democratic importance of broadcasting and the need to balance state and commercial influences. Furthermore the concluding sentences of Harrison’s essay foresee the significant cultural shift towards a multi-faceted national identity that would become more prominent in the following decade.

The advertisers want programmes with the broadest possible appeal – pop music, soap operas, quiz shows. *De gustibus non est disputandum*, but it is worth insisting that in this, as in other fields, the needs of minorities – minorities, incidentally, who may be found within the majorities – should be considered. An alternative to commercial television then, even though the latter is in the hands of the Corporation, should become the first priority (Harrison 1962: 188).

The public service ideals identified by Harrison would not materialize in local programming until the 1970s. Instead the availability of television became an identifying marker in the development of a distinct New Zealand cultural identity. For example, Gabrielle McLeod, writing one year after the arrival of
television in Auckland, uses the act of television consumption as a way to demarcate a particular New Zealand lifestyle that diverges, rather than replicates British life.

The drab war years and the even drabber demob-days cried out for the opium of television, especially popular even today in the industrial lower-class areas like the North of England... These conditions were duly noted in New Zealand before introducing television. At the same time the biggest blunder was committed in presuming that the same conditions would apply in the Antipodes. But the myth that New Zealand is a little England is not dead yet in the official annals, though it is being unceremoniously buried in individual hearts (McLeod: 14).

McLeod’s argument is significant in outlining a unique (and anti-British) notion of New Zealand national identity and to embrace television as a window to new cultural and political perspectives. A number of these perspectives would, in turn, become incorporated into the New Zealand national narrative.

The conscious depiction of a national identity has been an ongoing feature of the national state broadcaster since its inception. However, the influence of television that created a “secondary environment of images in which we all now have to live” (Smith 1995: 116) altered the audience perception of the world, especially in the socially and politically volatile 1960s. The wider causes of this shift in perception are various, but are related to a general de-centering of political and social structures that had been in progress since the end of World War II, described by Dick Hebdige as “the crisis of confidence in the old authorities” (1988: 225). This crisis gave rise to discourses that challenged traditional assumptions, most notably crucial social categories relating to race, class, and gender were challenged within the new academic and socio-political
discourses of feminist theory, post-colonialism and identity politics. The various events and movements resulting from these new political forms became, from the late 1960s, media subjects in both news coverage and popular culture texts.

In 1968, the NZBC established a networked news service and sought to strengthen relationships with international news organizations (McKinnon, 1969: 10). This expanded access to news material for New Zealanders coincided with a period of significant protest and upheaval across many parts of the globe including the Paris protests, escalation of the war in Vietnam (and ensuing protests in the US and Europe), the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr and Robert Kennedy, violent clashes outside the Democratic Party convention in Chicago and the Soviet crackdown on protesters in the streets of Prague. Alongside international media texts, news events, were beginning to demonstrate unconventional and anti-authoritarian perspectives that would eventually filter through to the New Zealand audience.

Events occurring around the world began to impinge on the consciousness of New Zealanders to an unprecedented degree and with dizzying speed. There was irreverence towards traditional authority figures, too, which came through in satire like *The Frost Report* and inspired situation comedies all contributed to a loosening and a slackening of the uptight little society New Zealand had become (Trotter 2004: 247).

The popularity of this broadly anti-authoritarian programming established a contradictory tone within the NZBC’s schedule during the late 1960s and early 1970s. While imported material sought to challenge traditional views and values, the NZBC, as the state-owned broadcaster, functioned to perpetuate the authority of the state. Yet the popularity of imported material and the new
media diet of immediate and global televised news set the tone for a paradigm shift in New Zealand media culture. The effect of television on national culture did not constitute a total erosion of the supremacy of the racist ideology of the settler nation (central to the broadcasting project during the radio era) but a growing awareness of alternative cultural existences, originating either internationally or within the parameters of the nation state. Access to television did not foster this change, but its establishment coincided with a general global shift in the perception of nation states, the role of colonial powers and the position and hierarchies of colonized, indigenous and migrant peoples. In describing the changing paradigm of culture from that framed in the logic of nation building to the era of globalization, Bauman notes a process of “weakening” of the illusion of territorial sovereignty that would ultimately lead to the end of “the tendency to endorse a nation-state according to the strength of its self-sufficient, self-reproducing and self-balancing system” (33). In New Zealand this process has occurred slowly and has never been completed. The logic of the settler colony still permeates the national narrative, lodged in the Pākehā-centric state institutions and the values they perpetuate. But the ascendancy of identity politics, and concurrent discourses of globalization and neoliberalism have, to use Bauman’s phase, weakened the primacy of the settler narrative to the point where it is now situated within a larger narrative of biculturalism.

The purpose of this chapter has been to demonstrate how the introduction of broadcasting infrastructure, governed by a state-centric set of policy devices resulted in the articulation of ‘solid’ culture. To use Bauman’s
description this was culture “as a declaration of intent; the name of a mission yet to be undertaken” (2011: 7). In this capacity, broadcasting served more as a means to develop national identity based on the ideology of the settler colony rather than to represent society. Broadcasting’s early role in the construction of society therefore functioned against the provision of a participatory civil society, despite the availability to the public of information, education and entertainment at a never-before-seen level. Mass broadcasting as it exists in the ‘solid’ phase of culture is predicated on producing homogenous collective. As I will discuss in Chapter Two, the ideological construction of this collective is susceptible to influence from political and other movements other than those of the state, for example identity politics. Furthermore, changes in the political and administration of broadcasting may also change the way cultural identity is articulated. Developments in broadcasting policy resulted in increased representation of diversity, but the fundamental tenets of the one-to-many broadcasting model still demands collective representation thus functions to de-individualize society.
Chapter 2

Biculturalism and the Culture of Struggle in New Zealand Broadcasting

The previous chapter examined the development of New Zealand's broadcasting network, in particular how the infrastructure, governance and content broadcast by the New Zealand Broadcasting Service contributed to the construction of a settler based national identity. Further to this I discussed the political and cultural forces surrounding the introduction of television and argued that television's modes of production and reception combined with transition in governance structure from the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) to the less ministerial-controlled New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC) had the potential to initiate a cultural shift for broadcasting. Although this cultural shift did eventually occur, primarily as a product of wider cultural forces that manifested at the end of the 1960s (Lealand & Martin 2001: 143), the first years of the NZBC were typified by a similar conservative approach to programming and governance that marked the NZBS.

This chapter examines how the New Zealand state broadcaster functioned as the vehicle for national identity during the transitional period from solid to liquid phases, a period I describe as the ‘culture of struggle’ over the New Zealand mediascape. In investigating this particular moment, this chapter examines the policy and institutional developments of New Zealand broadcasting and how these developments incorporated the bicultural agenda. Specifically I examine the political factors leading to the restructuring of broadcasting in the mid-1970s. This includes the establishment of the New
Zealand Broadcasting Authority in 1968 that allowed private competitors into the local radio market and later the findings of the 1972 Government Report into Broadcasting (known as the Adam Report) that advocated both institutional changes and was instrumental in establishing a new cultural outlook for broadcasting.

To elucidate the culture of struggle, this Chapter examines three moments significant to the development of bicultural media. The first is the government re-structuring of broadcasting in the early 1970s and the influence of the Adam Report on both the administration and content of the New Zealand state television network. Here I examine three television texts that exemplify the cultural and institutional environment of the period: the serial drama series *Pukemanu* (1971), the documentary series *Tāngata Whenua* (1974) and the historical drama *The Governor* (1977). The second factor is the te reo (Māori language) claim to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1986. Here the claimants argued that the state broadcaster constitutes the principle protector and primary distribution mechanism for te reo and Tikanga (two elements considered taonga24 under the Treaty of Waitangi). This represents a collision between

24 The te reo term ‘taonga’ is commonly translated as ‘treasure’ or ‘national treasure’ (see Best, 1909; Salmond, 1976: 37; Hay, 1996: 96). In synthesizing various scholarly definitions, Hay concludes that the concept of taonga “invokes a way in which artifacts belong to a person, or should be exchanged, that is profoundly different from the English legal and economic concepts regarding property” (95). As such a taonga is an object or entity agreed by the relevant parties as holding significant value but exists beyond the realm of economic exchange, nor is ownership permanent or inalienable. “Possession of a taonga is equivalent of holding the taonga in trust for the community, its ancestors and its successors” (96). As such, the concept of taonga has been problematic when subject to New Zealand’s British-influenced legal system.
biculturalism as a political force and the government’s ideological objectives of de-nationalizing state institutions (driven by the wider neoliberal agenda). The third factor is the establishment of the Māori Television Service (MTS) in 2004. Here the culture of struggle is extended beyond the limits of the state broadcaster, but in operating through the economic and technological frameworks of television, the MTS remains “a capital-intensive technology tied to generating audience share” (Smith 2006: 28). Thus the culture of struggle is transformed from the representation of historic ideologies to the struggle for meaningful cultural representation over a commodified version of representation.

As Day (2000) and Dunleavy (2011) note, there was little change between the day-to-day governance of the NZBS and the NZBC, despite their differing operational structure. “The NZBC was an inherently conservative, government department-styled organisation in which promotion was based on length of service and major operational decisions (including those governing such crucial areas as television’s income and production facilities) were state regulated” (Dunleavy 2011: 37). For much of the 1960s the conservative culture of the NZBC impacted on the types of content produced and screened. But by the end of the decade, and certainly by the beginning of the 1970s, the emergence of significant cultural, political and economic factors would impact on the way national identity was articulated via the state broadcaster. These factors can be divided into two distinct phenomena: the first, the development of identity politics, both as a set of new cultural ideals evolving overseas and representing the origins of grassroots biculturalism in New Zealand (Awatere 1984; Fleras &
Spoonley 1999; Purvis & Hunt 1999). The second was the beginning of the state’s re-structuring of its own institutions and the embryonic development of new economic and political perspectives that, by the 1980s, would transform into the political ascendancy of free-market economics (Larner 1998; Reardon & Gray 2007). In order to frame the development of a bicultural media agenda in New Zealand through these distinct institutional mechanisms and cultural products, I return to Bauman’s theory of the transition from solid to liquid culture. For Bauman, ‘liquid’ culture refers to cultural environment emerging in the wake of the political, economic and social upheavals associated with late capitalism: the aforementioned politics of identity and free-market economics.

Elements of ‘liquid’ culture comprise a variety of factors, notably the representation and institutionalization of biculturalism and multiculturalism, and problematizing the conventional differentiation of high and popular culture. Furthermore, liquid culture constitutes the erosion of power held by nationally based economic structures and the corresponding growing influence of global corporations. Liquid culture thus comprises a range of socio-political factors that disrupt the formally established hierarchies set around the edifice of the nation state. As I will go on to discuss in Chapter Three, the free-market economy created by neoliberal policies during the 1980s led to its own particular cultural distortions and hierarchies, but Bauman maintains that the transition to ‘liquid’ culture constitutes fundamentally a liberating moment.

Released from the obligations imposed on it by its creators and operators, obligations consequent upon their initially and later homeostatic role in society, culture is now able to focus on fulfilling individual needs, solving individual problems and struggles with the challenges and troubles of personal lives. (12)
There was however a significant gap between the burgeoning influences of liquid culture, in the sense of grassroots movements, and the institutionalization of new these new ideals in political and industrial frameworks.

‘Culture of Struggle’ and Bauman’s ‘liquid’ culture

The ‘culture of struggle’ represents the process whereby the burgeoning elements of “liquid modernity” (Bauman 16) gain cultural prominence, often prior to the corresponding institutional, political or legal frameworks adapting to this cultural change. Here the notion of ‘struggle’ carries with its several variations, including the struggle between cultural unity (universalism) versus pluralism; the struggle between colonial and post-colonial narratives and the (related) struggle between the nationalism as the central signifier of identity and alternative forms of cultural belonging. Writing on the influence of identity politics on issues of citizenship, Purvis & Hunt (1999) note:

The apparent proliferation of identities and the rise of identity politics has raised the thorny issue of how the singular identification of social subjects as ‘citizens’ competes with other identities thrown up by the profound structural and institutional changes characterized in terms of the ‘late’ or ‘post-modern’ condition. The fragmented political identities and conflicting political loyalties and obligations associated with this condition pose important challenges to the pretensions of universality associated with citizenship. (1999: 458)

Thus the culture of struggle represents the transition from a modern to a postmodern perspective insofar as within various spheres (cultural, social, political) individuals can legitimately hold multiple signifiers of identity. In New
Zealand, biculturalism as a political-historical-cultural complex is the most prominent example of this re-articulation of identity (Durie 1995: 179).

To frame this period of struggle in relation to Bauman's notion of 'liquid' culture it is necessary to examine the three separate concepts of culture employed in his argument. The first two are constituted in the twin concepts of culture that he claims are central to a modernist nation-centric worldview. The third is the individualized and global perspectives on culture and economics that is fundamental to expressions of identity and the functions of global capital since the mid-twentieth century. Bauman's choice of metaphor, 'solid' to 'liquid', is centered on the notion of novelty and adaptation and is situated in the logic of market capitalism (a notion I discuss at length in the following chapter). But the notion of 'liquid' culture also refers to post-colonial movements, as they represent a problematizing force against established hierarchies.

What makes modernity 'liquid' and thus justifies the choice of name, is its self-propelling, self-intensifying, compulsive and obsessive 'modernization', as a result of which, like liquid, none of the consecutive forms of social life is able to maintain its shape for long. (11)

This transition marks a retreat from the political and cultural dominance of the nation state, especially the notion of the state representing a culturally homogenous collective. For Bauman the transition from solid to liquid modernity equates to the shift between a cultural environment dominated by

25 As I discuss in Chapter One, Bauman begins his analysis of culture via the differentiation between two separate definitions of the term. The first is based on the 'Enlightenment project' notion of culture that functions as singular and educative force. The second, which is framed by Bauman in concepts derived from Bourdieu, articulates culture as having multiple elements but is hierarchical and operates to signify class difference.
colonial power to one dominated by economic power, that is often trans-national and individualizing. But the transitional period between these cultural phases was highly protracted and it was here that struggles over national narratives occurred.

In historizing the patterns of migration that created the modern world, Bauman describes the “second wave” of mass migration (the first being colonialism) that “turned the direction of the original migration by 180 degrees” (34). He observes that this period is marked by an extension of the colonialist domination of its subjects, but occurs in the new locus of the national – rather than colonial – space. This domination, enacted with “varying degrees of education and cultural sophistication” (34), takes the form of assimilation policies and manufacturing the concept of ‘minorities’. These groups are simultaneously incorporated and differentiated from the dominant cultural environment. Whilst Bauman states that this cultural phase was ‘followed’ by the era of late capitalism, represented by an increasingly de-nationalized cultural and economic terrain (35), he also acknowledges that, for many, the previous phase remains a material reality. “It's echoes still resound every now and then in public declarations of intent by politicians (though in the spirit of political correctness, they are more often than not passed off as demands for ‘civic education’ or ‘integration’)” (35). The problematic issue of periodization notwithstanding, the culture of struggle was born of the developing political and cultural relevance of ‘minorities’ and the claim to inclusion within national narratives. Such claims derive from the politicization of rights (universal human rights and later movements of political and cultural citizenship) and were
evident in the acknowledgement of diversity in government policy. In relation to New Zealand broadcasting this new recognition of cultural diversity is exemplified in the Broadcasting Act (1976, 1989) and the stipulations of New Zealand on Air and The TVNZ Charter, two public service mechanisms that are incorporated into the functions of the commercial mediascape.

Bauman's schema follows the argument that transitions in modes of identification are intertwined with the de-centralized and eventual post-national economic order. Here individuals may claim allegiance to multiple entities beyond that of the nation state, with this allegiance legitimated by national and international legal frameworks. Most commonly these include ethnic, tribal or religious affiliations, but may also include corporations, as many workers especially members of highly mobile trans-national workforces that typify the era of late capitalism, now share a rights-based relationship (analogous with that of citizenship) with the companies that hire them (Ong 1999: 215). As I will illustrate when discussing both the institutional and political responses to biculturalism in New Zealand, the transition towards liquid culture is driven partly by the cultural politics of “identity” (Hall 1997: 42), originating from individuals and groups and partly by the pragmatic response by states to accommodate cultural and ethnic diversity into their established economic and political model. This change in global economic order has had ramifications for the identity of particular minority groups, (and here were must keep in mind that Bauman's analysis concerns primarily those highly mobile communities living in western Europe). Although Bauman frequently discusses colonized peoples, I suggest that the political and cultural frameworks impacting on
migrant communities are not totally analogous with those of colonized indigenous peoples, many of which are governed via specific institutional mechanisms. In turn, the relationship between particular colonized peoples and the colonizing powers is specific to historical factors that demand investigation rather than the imposition of a blanket historical schema. The plight of indigenous communities constitutes something of a gap in Bauman’s thesis. His distinction between the national and post-national world misses the nuances of bicultural frameworks, such as the New Zealand example, that attempt to create a nation state serving heterogeneous society with some degree of political robustness.

As I discuss in the Introduction to this thesis, Bauman’s concept of the transition from solid to liquid culture does, at times, tend to de-problematize historic and class-based disparities in order to articulate the transformation from a national to a global worldview. The depiction of individual and increasingly multi-faceted choice for media consumers (also as producers) advanced by Bauman accurately summarizes the march towards globalization and offers a useful analysis of the transition away from nationally-based frameworks. But this model is essentially contextualized in a politically and economically neutral space and, when used to frame future possibilities for media production and reception may be perceived as representative of economic and technological determinism. Furthermore in the arguments

26 This is not to refute Bauman’s argument that indigenous peoples (even those, such as Māori, whose colonizing power have adopted some form of bicultural system) are not classified as ‘minorities’ and are subject to processes of assimilation and/or economic and cultural marginalization. But I do suggest that the inter-cultural relationship demands a nuanced investigation.
presented by Stenning (2005) and summarized by Atkinson (2008), the trajectory of liquid modernity tends to neglect those groups desirous of retaining a collective identity. In critiquing the concept of liquid modernity and its embrace of individualism, Atkinson writes:

Individualization has assumed a modified form: individuals continue to be disembedded and compelled to take their identity as a task rather than as a given, but no longer are there any firm beds waiting to accommodate their self-identification. Instead Individuals must remain chronically disembedded, on the move, searching out and choosing their flexible identities as they go from the vast array of options available, all the while feeling incomplete, insecure and unfulfilled. (6)

Given that the post-colonial discourse is inherently based on the retention of a differentiated identity, an argument can be made that the disseminating influence of liquid culture would, seemingly, represent a contradictory and/or hostile force against the politics of class or the representation of a collective identity. In his critique of Bauman Atkinson suggests that the stratifications inherent in Bauman’s work are organized around advantage and dis-advantage or the “freedom to consume and experiment with one’s identity versus exclusion as ‘flawed consumers’ and bearers of unshakable, stigmatizing identities” (7). This view, however, tends to suggest that prior to the onset of industrial and economic globalization, the legitimacy of collective identity was insured within national boundaries. This perspective clouds the issue ‘solid’ culture was often formulated around policies of monoculturalism and assimilation that, in the case of New Zealand, could be examined during changes in broadcasting policy and cultural forms and texts produced by those policy changes.
In New Zealand, the ‘culture of struggle’ developed simultaneously across both state and non-state sectors. For the purpose of this chapter this includes changes in broadcasting policy, and social and political activities initiated as part of a post-colonial movement. In examining broadcasting policy between 1962 and 1989, there is evidence of an emerging bicultural agenda. This agenda developed through the 1970s and 1980s as the discourse and action of Māori self-determination influenced the development of institutions, such as the Waitangi Tribunal and later the *Kohanga Reo* and *Kura Kaupapa Māori* movements, and would impact on the articulation of the national narrative (Fleras & Spoonley, 1995: 115). The passing of the New Zealand Broadcasting Authority Act (1968) and the establishment of the New Zealand Broadcasting Authority (mandated to issue licenses for private radio operators), and later the findings of the Adam Committee and the subsequent restructuring of broadcasting in 1974 represents a cultural shift away from a state-centric monopoly organization for broadcasting and towards a competitive system. The correlation between the restructuring of state institutions and the increasing diversity within the national narrative is highlighted by Bauman as a function of the transition to a liquid culture. Although he observes that such a correlation will ultimately be commodified – with the representation of difference becoming a marketable rather than a political signifier. In the following section I discuss, first, the changes in New Zealand’s broadcasting institutions: initially the

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27 Kohanga Reo (literally 'language nest') and Kura Kaupapa Māori are educational initiatives designed to facilitate the learning and use of *te reo Māori* (the Māori language) from pre-school level until secondary school. The initiative began as a response to a government-commissioned 1971 report into the health of the Māori language. However it would not be until the 1980s Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori facilities became established in New Zealand, with 500 Kohanga Reo opening between 1982 and 1985 (Sharp 1990: 189).
establishment of the New Zealand Broadcasting Authority then the findings of the Adam Report, before examining the political and cultural development of biculturalism and its ramifications for broadcasting.

*Television broadcasting and the NZBC*

The abolition of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service and the establishment of the NZBC represented something of a loosening of government control over the media. However in practice the NZBC's mode of governance was not progressive and tended towards the same conservative outlook as its predecessor.

Relative to the broadcasting institutions that would succeed it, the NZBC was an inherently conservative government department-styled organization in which promotion was based on length of service and major operational decisions (including those governing such crucial areas as television’s incomes and production facilities) were state regulated (Dunleavy, 2011: 37).

The NZBC environment represented an extension of the ‘solid’ homogenous nationalism that typified the radio era. Both the institutional structure of the NZBC (especially prior to the introduction of the Broadcasting Authority in 1968) and the programming content was indicative of the broadcasting climate immediately preceding the culture of struggle.

New Zealand television broadcasting and governance during the single channel era (1960-1974) represented a particular tension as the new possibilities provided by the medium’s modes of broadcast and reception were counteracted by the state-centric governance forms of the NZBC. Day (2000)
notes that “independence was the great promise for New Zealand broadcasting” (42) offered by the establishment of the NZBC and the transition from administration via a government department to administration via a state corporation. Although the establishment of an independent news service signaled a significant liberalization of editorial control for broadcasting, much of the programming aired by the NZBC was framed in the logic of the monocultural settler state. Like the first years of radio, the expansion of television infrastructure was an important aspect in the broadcasting discourse until the mid-1960s28. This reporting of infrastructure included the construction and upgrade of transmission towers, the increasing numbers of licenses being issued29 and revenue data. The presentation of this data continued throughout the NZBC era. But by 1968 the annual reports do not include numbers of issued licenses, presumably due to a marked slow-down as a result of market saturation.

Besides the development and reporting of infrastructure, the programming aired by the NZBC was also indicative of a colonial/paternalistic ethos reminiscent of radio content and was apparent in the network’s coverage of local and imported material. In the NZBC’s annual report for the 1964-5, the Corporation cited the state funeral of Winston Churchill, and documentaries about T.E. Lawrence and contemporary Africa (New Zealand Broadcasting

28 Reporting on infrastructure was significant due to the staggered rollout of television services across the main centers between 1960 and 1962.

29 Between 1963 and 1964 the number of licenses issued in New Zealand rose from 81,839 to 167,744 (an increase of 85,905) (see NZBC Annual Report, 1964: 6) and between 1965 and 1966 the figure rose from 313,920 to 434,877 (increase of 120,957) (see NZBC Annual Report, 1966: 10)
Report, 1965: 8-9) as particular highlights. The programming represented both a reverence to a British sovereignty and the colonial project that had been part of the New Zealand narrative since the establishment of the state network. Highlights of local material typically represented un-contentious fare that further extended the homogenous brief apparent in the radio era, that incorporates popular commercial material, public service material (in the form of documentaries and educational programming) and programming that perpetuates the cultural dominance of the colonial relationship. This included a film about Arthur’s Pass, the Recital series described as “musical interludes by leading artists in the serious music field” (9), and the pop music show Music Hall Parade.

In 1965 the NZBC established a Māori Programme section as a reflection of the “special responsibility which it has towards the provision of programmes for Māori listeners” (NZBC Annual Report, 1967: 23). The material produced by the Section was for radio and, as in the NZBS era, it replicated the colonial incorporation of Māoridom into the national narrative. This included the broadcast of benign cultural performances, such as the ‘NZBC Māori Song and Poi30 Tune Contest’, and more direct articulations of political and cultural assimilation including the Māori parliamentary committee's tour of the East Coast and Bay of Plenty Māori Blocks and the Governor General’s visit to the marae at Ruatoria (23). Also significant was the news in Māori that was established by the NZBC in 1942. However this was a direct translation of the

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30 Poi tunes and games refer to traditional Māori action songs.
NZBC bulletins into te reo rather than specialist news for Māori (Beatson 1996: 77).

The form of culture perpetuated by the NZBC and its predecessor created and maintained hierarchical systems that would be politically and culturally enhanced by the incorporation of Māori as a benign and subordinate addition to the colonial narrative. Although the inclusion of select Māori voices signifies the transition to a representative/inclusive form of public service broadcasting, such representation was more approximate to assimilation policies where the colonized culture is incorporated into the dominant colonial narrative, described by Donna Awatere as “the death machine” (Awatere, 1984: 10). The cultural significance of the broadcasting restructuring of the 1960s and 1970s was its disruption of the hierarchical formations that had formed the basis of New Zealand’s colonial narrative.

By situating the NZBC period in an historical framework, the operational similarities between that body and the NZBS can be seen as a transitional phase between two versions of cultural identity. The earlier period representing the dominance of colonial ideology; the latter part, articulated in the discussion on culture in the government-commissioned Adam Report (see following section), representing the burgeoning de-centering of cultural and economic elements that permitted the culture of struggle to flourish. The Adam Report was significant as it advanced the notion of both a bicultural national narrative and a competitive, market-led agenda for state services: factors that would become influential to New Zealand’s cultural, political and economic spheres during the
1980s. Although the Adam Report represents change in the state's perception of cultural identity (and the broadcaster's role in the dissemination of that cultural identity), the restrictions placed on broadcasting due to economic factors have ultimately served to limit the state broadcaster's capability to provide public service material because of the imposition of commercial objectives. This paradox would not be evident until the post-deregulation period. But the policy initiatives and political discussion held between 1968 and 1972 formed the ideological prototype for the free-market agenda of the 1980s.

**New Zealand Broadcasting Authority: The de-centering of responsibility**

The New Zealand Broadcasting Authority (NZBA) was established in 1968 via the New Zealand Broadcasting Authority Act. The Authority was the materialization of an election promise by the 1966 National government to disburse the administrative power of the NZBC (Day, 2000: 154) and to create a new stratum of governance independent of the state broadcaster. Although the mandate of the NZBA stressed political neutrality, the process of issuing licenses for private radio operators created political tension between the Authority and the NZBC. NZBC executives were open in their opinion that the NZBA was guided towards promoting private competition (Day, 2000) and thus undermining the cultural and economic base of the national broadcasting. For example, in 1970 the NZBC sought a writ of prohibition on the Authority’s hearing process in Auckland, Hamilton and Dunedin. The NZBC argued that the NZBA represented
the ideological interests of the government and thus held a political bias. The NZBC’s Annual Report to government stated:

It was the Corporation’s view that the Authority’s approach and procedure was not in accordance with the general law and with the Broadcasting Authority Act 1968. It was also considered that the statements issued by the Broadcasting Authority together with the form of advertisements calling for applications for warrants clearly indicated that the Authority had predetermined the issue and was proceeding on the basis that the need for further warrants could be assumed and the Authority’s function was to allot them to the most suitable applicant. (1970: 9)

The differing perspectives held between the two state broadcasting bodies, and the implications of the government’s ideological influence over broadcasting policy, would be an ongoing issue. The relationship between the NZBC and the NZBA is representative of the tension between retaining state control over cultural production and the objective of introducing competitive dynamism and increasing advertising revenue. The de-regulation of radio was less contentious than television as radio was primarily a local, commercial medium and was not as economically or culturally significant as television (Day: 160, 161). Although credible private competitors to the NZBC did make submissions to the NZBA, such as the Associated Network Ltd31, the need for political compromise meant that expansion of broadcasting services would remain a state operation during the early 1970s. The establishment and operation of the NZBA constituted one element in creating the institutional environment in which the culture of

31 The Associated Network Ltd was a consortium of four of New Zealand's highest profile private enterprises: J. Wattie Canneries, Kerridge Odeon Ltd, UEB Industries and Wright Stephenson Ltd). The company’s proposal was a national commercial radio network and four regional television stations to compete with the state broadcaster. Although the Associated Network Ltd proposal was considered credible by the Authority, political pressure from the NZBC saw the proposal ultimately rejected.
struggle would exist during the 1970s and 1980s: the de-centering of broadcasting governance and the subsequent emergence of new, independent voices. Alongside increasing public support\(^{32}\) for improved television services in the late 1960s, the period marked a coming together of economic and social objectives in relation to broadcasting that caught the developing acceptance of market principles (over state protectionism) that was building within political circles.

*The Adam Report: a new articulation of national identity*

Following the trajectory of culture mapped out in this thesis, the early 1970s marks a period when the culture of struggle was partly manifest through the political momentum towards institutional restructuring for broadcasting and the influence of new cultural movements overseas. The 1972 government-commissioned report into broadcasting operations, known as the Adam Report after Chair Professor Kenneth Adam, and published as *The Broadcasting Future of New Zealand* (1973) signified the combination of cultural, political and economic objectives. Following the mandate of the NZBA, the report sought to reform broadcasting’s institutional and cost structures (Adam: 1973: 4-6), including adding another television channel and subsequently transforming the existing state-centric mediasphere into an intra-network competitive environment. In what former chairman of TVNZ Ian Cross describes as a “competitive but complementary” (Cross 1988: 35) structure, the Report

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\(^{32}\) A public poll conducted in 1969 found that 75 percent of respondents supported a second television channel; and 66 percent wanted that channel to be operated by a private company (Day: 161)
advised the broadcaster be re-organized into two independently governed state-owned television channels, a separate radio network and a single administrative organization to function as an overall governance body. These recommendations would be taken up by the government, with the separation of television, the establishment of Radio New Zealand and the formation of the New Zealand Broadcasting Council all resulting from the Adam Report. Despite broadcasting remaining a state-centric entity, the re-structuring was undertaken as a means to increase cultural diversification of national identity.

The Report’s wording is explicit in correlating the institutional/economic structure of broadcasting with the cultural potential of the national media. This correlation represents the advancement of a possible future national narrative (in terms of economic government policy and national culture) and a rejection of the state protectionism that symbolized the previous broadcasting era.

By its design the structure is planned to extend independence from ministerial control and from indirect pressure exercised through close capital works supervision. In the individual corporations the structures outlined are shaped to promote creative independence by focusing the organization on those who produced the programmes in the studios and on the stations. Finally the structure pursues independence from the unitary, centralizing tendency, which gathers as much as it can into one place and one pyramid of power and resources, thus over-riding or neglecting the country’s spread of talent and its regional variety. (Adam 1973: 15)

Patrick Day observes that the Report’s recommendations signal that by the early 1970s a retreat from state control was now politically possible for the Labour Party as the organization grew more ideologically distant from the state-ism that had previously defined its policies. Although the committee and
public contributors made contributions to the findings, the Report represents
the economic ideology of then Minister of Broadcasting Roger Douglas\textsuperscript{33}.

He began a new system of broadcasting administration that attempted to introduce competition among broadcasters while retaining Labour’s refusal of private enterprise. Broadcasting was not a topic to which he paid concerted attention while a backbencher, focusing instead on industrial and financial matters, but as soon as he was given the portfolio he decided that competition was necessary for the second television channel and therefore, through his party required it to be publicly owned, that owner should not be the NZBC, an organization Douglas considered too big already. (Day, 2000: 179)

When the Report is examined in the context of Douglas’s future political endeavors there is a clear foreshadowing of the free-market policies of the 1980s. But whilst the commercialization that accompanied the broadcasting reforms of the late 1980s would make the provision of local content economically marginal (thus facilitating the need for an external mechanism in the form of New Zealand on Air), issues of cultural representation and diversity were part of the Report’s recommendations.

The recommendations set out in the Adam Report were adopted in the 1973 Broadcasting Act including the division of the NZBC television services into two channels (TV One and TV2) and for radio to exist as a separate entity (Smith: 2). The 1973 Act abolished the old NZBC structure and fostered an environment where some local programming was contracted to independent producers. This again echoes the Adam Report’s new expansive approach to both the economic and creative aspects of media production. The institutional

\textsuperscript{33} Douglas would go on to be Minister of Finance under the fourth Labour government and regarded as one of the principle architects of that government’s neoliberal reforms.
shift away from totally in-house production impacted on the NZBC’s cost structures by dis-establishing long-term training systems and, consequently, the overall number of people directly employed by the broadcaster (Day 2000: 78). Furthermore, the use of independent producers increased the availability of NZBC resources, thus permitting more production to take place. With regards to the creative aspects of production, the engagement of independent voices improved the diversity of viewpoints being expressed through the national broadcaster. As Duneavy notes, these new voices instigated a shift in the geocultural perspective of the national narrative through the promulgation of a post-colonial regional identity (2005: 208). Although the objective to broaden the diversity of the national narrative that was part of the re-structuring decision, in actuality the economic and knowledge systems inherent to television meant that broadcasting local production remained an intensely prohibitive practice. Thus this change in the institutional structure altered the environment in which media production occurred, but did not result in the availability of more production talent working in New Zealand at the time.

The significance of the Adam Report and the subsequent broadcasting reforms in the mid-1970s were foreshadowing the future changes in the cultural and economic direction of New Zealand. Writing in 1973 in the literary journal *Landfall*, Christine Cole Catley promoted the notion that broadcasting needed to be re-structured to ensure the medium can reach the potential of its overseas counterparts.

The NZBC has never had anyone in its top ranks with an informed and genuine passion for television drama. The hierarchy has appeared to regard drama as irrelevant. Individual producers in all
ranks have pressed gallantly but the essential pre-condition – a welcoming atmosphere – has been missing. The new broadcasting proposals, with two independent television corporations ‘competing for excellence’ seems likely to produce this climate and should certainly spur each other on. The immense technical difficulties will slowly be overcome but only time and both volume and variety of output will bring our drama to the stage where a double standard of criticism will no longer be necessary (Catley 1973: 44).

Catley’s position marks the transition from the era of ‘solid’ culture and its accompanied pre-occupation with the development of infrastructure (see Chapter One) to a period when the cultural value of broadcasting was becoming part of the national discourse. As noted above in relation to Roger Douglas’s advocacy of re-structuring, the processes of dismantling the state-centric and monopoly organizations was, in the early 1970s, a radical step. Whilst institutional change occurred through various re-structuring initiatives until the present, the changes made in the early 1970s were part of a wider cultural moment that produced significant texts invested with considerable cultural resonance.
Significant Texts to the Culture of Struggle: Pukemanu, Tangata Whenua, and The Governor

The two-channel era began in 1974 with further re-structuring the following year when TV2 was re-branded as South Pacific Television. The programming schedule of the new channel was targeted at a younger demographic than TV 1 (also re-branded as TVOne) in a bid to create a competitive but complimentary culture between the two channels (Cross 1980: 8; Smith 1996: 6). The new governance structure was successful in producing and screening local content, with TVOne's annual report for 1976 stating that 75 hours of local drama was produced in the first year since the broadcaster was restructured, more than the NZBC had produced since its establishment in 1962 (Dunleavy, 2005: 69).

The combination of the re-structured administrative system for broadcasting and the emerging post-colonial narrative garnered significant results in relation to programme content with Dunleavy describing the period 1975-77 as the “golden years for New Zealand drama” (66). The significance placed on television texts from the period, demonstrated by scholars such as Dunleavy, is due to their representation of the interim period between the state-centric era and prior to the institutionalization of a monetarist agenda in cultural production that occurred in the 1980s (Easton 1997: 55). The editorial freedom provided by this economic environment was utilized to examine New Zealand’s emerging post-colonial national identity in various ways. In the following section I examine three texts – the serial drama Pukemanu (1971-2),
the documentary series *Tangata Whenua* (1974) and the historic drama *The Governor* (1977) – with each text representing the culture of struggle that emerges from the changing institutional and cultural climate of the period.

**Pukemanu (1971-2)**

*Pukemanu* is celebrated in New Zealand’s broadcasting history as the NZBC’s first locally made continuing drama to examine contemporary social issues (Catley 1973: 43; Dunleavy 2005: 41-2). The two-series production revolved around the home and work lives of inhabitants of the fictional titular North Island logging town. Although *Pukemanu* was produced and screened prior to the 1973 re-structuring of broadcasting, the style and genre of the series, and the social commentary elicited by the programme’s narrative about the state of political and cultural affairs in New Zealand, situates *Pukemanu* at the establishing phase of a new period of cultural expression. *Pukemanu* straddles cultural phases as its cast and aspects of the narrative represent the burgeoning culture of struggle, but production of the series did come from the existing institutional channels. The favorable reception given to the series when it aired in the 1970s and its ongoing status as an example of ground-breaking bicultural local programming is, I argue, primarily a result of its novelty at the time in turning a representative eye on contemporary society.
Pukemanu was controversial at the pre-production stage as NZBC executives were concerned that a domestic drama in a local setting with its explicit local signifiers such as Māori place names, strong New Zealand accents and storylines that concerned contemporary issues (such as Māori land rights, urbanization and unemployment) would not be attractive to a New Zealand audience more familiar with imported British and American television (Boyd-Bell 1985: 29; Dunleavy 2005: 48; Horrocks 2004b: 15). However, the series was a critical and ratings34 success, with media commentators at the time noting that Pukemanu constituted a contemporary representation of the New Zealand condition. After the first season, television reviewer for the Auckland Star Jack Leigh noted that although Pukemanu’s production values were inferior to imported programmes, this was atoned by the sense of identification between the text and the national audience, writing “We know you’ve made mistakes, but all is forgiven. You’re ours. We need you. Kiwi sentiment is with you” (Leigh 1971: 14).

34 Ratings for Pukemanu indicate a demographic divide for the series’s audience. Catley notes that the episode ‘Charlie’s Rock’ (the final episode of the first series) was the fourth highest rating television programme in the Auckland region. However the same episode rated only 26th for the Dunedin audience. (Catley 1973: 43).
In 1973 Christine Catley reiterated Leigh’s view, commenting that the resonance 

*Pukemanu* had with the national audience was due to a nuanced narrative of 

contemporary recognition and residual nostalgia for the recent past.

We are not yet urban people. As we learn to live in cities we cling more tenaciously to a romantic, Crump-enhanced\(^{35}\) mythology. Nostalgia and recognition greeted *Pukemanu*. It is a place and people we know. The people of *Pukemanu* are ordinary people in an ordinary country town. They are inarticulate, often isolated one from another. Relationships are limited, voices muted. *Man Alone* is still the theme, intensified by their occasional coming together when nerve-ends are touched and the authentic New Zealand passion for social justice is aroused (Catley 1973: 43-44).

The significance of *Pukemanu* for media commentators and scholars relates to its genre and form for a New Zealand series. Catley maintains that the quick 

turnaround format encouraged less self-consciousness by the writers and actors, enhancing the naturalism of the performance.

It is possible that some of the strengths of *Pukemanu* in particular come from the circumstances in which it was made. Writers had little time to ponder their contribution they could make to New Zealand culture. They were required to do a quick, workmanlike job within strict confines of time, money and technical possibility, and with the emphasis on ordinary people. Amid a legion of weaknesses, a creative reflection of ourselves has emerged (44)

Following Catley’s argument, the production forms used for *Pukemanu* resulted in a hitherto unseen level of realism for a local drama. But, as she notes, the appeal to realism with which the series depicted contemporary New Zealand life

\(^{35}\) Catley’s description of “Crump-enhanced mythology” refers to the work and persona of Barry Crump, a bushman and author of several comic novels celebrating traits of self-reliance, manual labour and the outdoor existence. The most famous of these is *A Good Keen Man* (1963) that, like John Mulgan’s *Man Alone* (1939) presented in literature the archetype of colonial New Zealand masculinity.
was matched by its portrayal of a distinctively rural existence that reproduced the egalitarian spirit of the idealized colonial character.

The highlighting of Māori issues with the series was indicative of a shift towards biculturalism in the national narrative, echoing developments occurring political and activist movements at the time. Episodes such as ‘Vested Interest’ from series 1, concerning the sale of Māori land to business enterprises, sought to represent the political and cultural conditions for Māori at the time (Dunleavy 2011: 56). But over the course of the two series such storylines were secondary to the main narrative depicting generally harmonious bicultural existence, perpetuating what Bob Consedine describes as New Zealand’s “egalitarian myth” (Consedine 1989: 173) of relaxed race relations, where universal values of hard work and fair play are highly regarded values, as opposed to racial, class or economic factors. The praise for *Pukemanu* from Catley and Leigh, that the series offers both a realistic portrayal of New Zealand life and provokes certain nostalgic pleasures of a rural past, can only be justified when framed through a Pākehā-centric colonial lens. As Dunleavy observes, *Pukemanu* “constructs the kind of ‘small town’ New Zealand that was associated with a fondly-remembered post-war past” (56). What remained unresolved was the representation of the idealized past with Māori grievances of the present, especially when the narrative itself situates those grievances as being historic. In this capacity, *Pukemanu* represents a burgeoning consciousness of the culture of struggle insofar as it provides a context for reflection on the colonial cultural environment, even if that reflection is couched nostalgically, and constitutes a forum for contemporary discussion over race relations.
The significance of *Pukemanu* to the culture of struggle takes place across several fronts. Firstly, the conception and production of the series represented greater ambition from the NZBC than had been previously demonstrated. This relates to the long-form serial drama that required nuanced characters and complex and varied storylines, which placed new demands on the local writers and directors involved with the series. Secondly, the incorporation of Māori issues in the storylines signaled a developing awareness of biculturalism as part of the national narrative in popular culture. Furthermore, the series gave Māori actors and writers opportunities within the NZBC that had been previously unavailable. *Pukemanu* is rightly credited with breaking new ground for a New Zealand production especially regarding the incorporation of bicultural themes within the narrative; however, commentary of the series affirms the underlying appeal of the series to nostalgia based around New Zealand’s colonial past. In this respect, *Pukemanu* represents a contradictory text but one that deftly combines multiple narrative tropes in order to appeal to a mainstream audience.
The six-part documentary series *Tangata Whenua* originated directly through the emerging bicultural politics of the early 1970s and represents a significant moment in the development of the NZBC as a public service broadcaster. The series’ production was indicative of the NZBC’s new institutional character, with the initial idea and the primary individuals – historian Michael King and Māori film maker Barry Barclay36 – coming form outside of the NZBC. King was a Pākehā journalist and historian with an academic interest in Māori history and culture and was influential within both communities. In his role as a public intellectual he was a prominent advocate for the establishment of bicultural state institutions. For example, in a submission to the Statutes Revision Select Committee of the New Zealand government in 1971 on the Race Relations Bill (the enabling legislation of the office of the Race Relations Conciliator), King argued that the state should support the promotion of Māori culture as a separate but equal element in New Zealand, thus rejecting the concept of two races coming together that formed the theory of assimilation.

We reject the concept of assimilation (implying an absorption of minority cultures by the majority one) and integration (implying a combination of values and institutions of two or more cultures). We prefer the concept of multi-culturalism37, whereby cultures are

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36 Barry Barclay (1944-2008) was a celebrated New Zealand film maker of Māori dissent (his iwi affiliation being Ngati Apa). King notes that Barclay’s involvement with the Tangata Whenua project was due to his expertize as a film maker (he was an employee of Pacific Films) rather than his Māori ancestry (King 1985: 108).

37 In reference to New Zealand’s political and institutional structures the term ‘biculturalism’ is most commonly used. Here I biculturalism is understood as the
encouraged to exist alongside one another, retaining their differences and respecting one another. We see this concept as an inclusive rather than exclusive one, allowing voluntary movement among cultures. In the New Zealand context, this means in particular movement between Māori and Pākehā cultures (King 1985: 103-4)

Further, King wrote he believed that due to geographic separation between Māori and Pākehā, the two races knew little of each other’s culture and practices prior to the period of mass urbanization after World War II. Then, as the dominant culture, Pākehā remained “woefully (although perhaps not willfully) ignorant about Māori views and values” (104). Conversely, he observed a mistrust and anger by Māori towards Pākehā due to the ignorance and mistreatment by government agencies (this was prior to the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975). King thus sought to use the mass media (at the time still operating as a single-channel state monopoly) as a means to promote awareness of Māori culture and practice to a mainstream Pākehā audience. He wrote, prior the start of the series that, as a medium, television had the potential to effectively convey aspects of Māori culture to the national audience while retaining its significance to Māori.

How could one begin to express in words alone the information and emotional charge that accompanied the karanga, the tangi, the whaikōrero? Images and body language were such an integral

incorporation of Māori values and practices into state institutions through robust legislative means. Te Ara, the Encyclopedia of New Zealand attributes the first use of the term ‘bicultural’ to activist and politician Donna Awatere in 1981 (see http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/the-new-zealanders/page-12). The term ‘multiculturalism’ as it is used by King in 1971 relates to this definition of biculturalism. But as of 2014 the term ‘multiculturalism’ is less clearly defined in the New Zealand context and is often associated with universal rights afforded migrant communities and embedded in human rights legislation, than with the specific and multi-faceted legal frameworks associated with biculturalism. 38 ‘karanga’ translates to a ceremonial welcome; ‘tangi’ refers to the funeral ceremony and its related practices; ‘whaikōrero’ are the formal speeches that
part of Māori culture... The more I thought about it, the more film and television seemed potentially the most engaging, affecting and practical way of conveying the kinds of experiences I had in mind (104).

*Tangata Whenua* examined the culture and history of various North Island iwi.

Besides capturing on film practices and rituals, such as those associated with *tangi* (funeral), other episodes examined the process of Māori urbanization and the relationship between urban Māori and their traditional rural base *(Turangawaewae)*, and the link between historic and contemporary protest (*The Two Prophets*) there the objective of the filmmakers was to put across a uniquely Māori perspective on land and culture. Although the events and rituals showed in *Tāngata Whenua* provided audiences with a view of Māori life that was “rapidly disappearing” due to urbanization and cultural homogenization resulting from the dominance of colonial and imported culture (Stevens 2004: 108), these depictions also held contemporary political significance as the grassroots movement regarding the Crown’s redress for historic land confiscation was, at the time, beginning to gain momentum.

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often constitute marae protocol. It was these significant but everyday practices King wanted to demystify and explain.
Tāngata Whenua was produced by the independent production company Pacific Films with King as writer, on-screen presence, and narrator and host, with Barry Barclay as director. Each of the six episodes focused on events and practices conducted by a particular iwi. However King notes that the filmmakers’ objective was to examine the individuals rather than the events.

We were determined we would not make programmes about subjects; we would try instead to persuade people to make programmes about themselves – about their values, their preoccupation, their insights, the things that compelled them to call themselves ‘Māori’ rather than ‘New Zealanders’. Our role, we agreed, would be that of facilitators: we would encourage them to talk, and we would listen and record accurately. There would be no commentary from outside ‘experts’, no learned intermediaries, Māori or Pākehā, analyzing what was said (1985: 108)

If judged by King’s memoir Being Pakeha Now – Reflections and Recollections of a White Native (1999), Tāngata Whenua represents a commitment by its makers to bring the new tenets of biculturalism to the screen by portraying Māori Tikanga as a distinct and contemporary aspect of society. In this respect the
series marks a moment when the struggle over national identity was most overt as the role of the national broadcaster to provide a united narrative of a homogenous society had given way to the realization that such an narrative could be divided and contested and this could promote (rather than hinder) cultural progress. In this sense, the *Tangata Whenua* series is situated among various policy initiatives and scholarly research during the 1970s that sought to strengthen biculturalism as a contemporary political and cultural discourse. Among these was the government commissioned Hunn Report, subtitled ‘A measure of progress on aspects of Māori life’ (Kenworthy et al 1970), Ruth Ross’s influential translation of the Māori version of the Treaty of Waitangi (Ross 1972), the New Zealand Planning Council’s report on Māori perspectives on urban planning and local government (New Zealand Planning Council 1979).

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 2.4: Open sequence of the *Tangata Whenua* series**

Situated in an historical context, *Tangata Whenua* occupies a specific transitional period. For King the series “broke the monocultural mould of New Zealand television” (1999: 126) by representing Māori culture in a form other than the token decorative depictions that typified the colonial era. But rather
than marking a highpoint in biculturalism, I suggest *Tangata Whenua* represents that movement’s naïve origins. Following Smith (2011), issues of political balance in biculturalism is contested. She notes that the official impetus driving bicultural policies as a “path to social justice” (722), are counteracted by the opposing viewpoint. Citing work by Dominic O’Sullivan (2007) and Donna Matahaere (1995) Smith argues that biculturalism at once “naturalizes the cultural and ethnic differences between Māori and Pākehā” (722) and was created and exits as part of the Pākehā political framework. The significance of *Tangata Whenua* lies in situating the series in its historical context and, as such, the documentary portrayal of Māori culture and practice in a contemporary environment does contrast with earlier depictions that were framed within a consciously colonial ethnographic lens. Perhaps, more than any other series, *Tāngata Whenua* encapsulates both the paternalistic and educative potential of public broadcasting and the representative and inclusive attributes of the genre. But despite the production team’s agenda to promote the tenets of biculturalism the series remains an analysis of exclusive cultural practices. The series situates Māori practice and custom as outside of mainstream society and reaffirms the universal and invisible Pākehā hegemony. Further to this the description of *Tāngata Whenua* as a “window on the world of Māori” (Stevens: 108) denoting a clear differentiation between the normalized, Pākehā world (of which the industrial structure of the media and the implied speaking position of television are a central aspect) and that of Māori as a ‘valued’ but archaic and symbolic aspect of New Zealand culture.
Like Tāngata Whenua, the genesis of The Governor occurred during a period of transition and experimentation for the national broadcaster when executives from the recently-created independent networks wanted to promote ambitious programming as a means of demarcating their particular media territory (Dunleavy 2005: 95). The six-part series was ambitious in scope and narrative\(^\text{39}\). Covering the period 1840 to 1890 and based around the career of George Grey, New Zealand’s first colonial governor, the series courted controversy as it sought to provide a Māori perspective on New Zealand colonial politics. Created by independent producers Michael Noonan and Tony Issac and written by Keith Aberdein, the intention of the production team was to “challenging long-held myths through which New Zealand had been revered as an egalitarian society and dignified as ‘God’s Own Country’”(Dunleavy 2005: 97).

The Governor was produced for a mainstream audience but attempted to incorporate a counter-narrative to New Zealand’s colonial history and reflect the burgeoning bicultural movement occurring at the time of production. During this period, groups such as Ngā Tamatoa proposed that core educational texts such as Keith Sinclair’s 1959 History of New Zealand be re-written to include a Māori perspective (King 1985: 102). Furthermore a legal framework to examine historic breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi was created by the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975. Historian Andrew Sharpe writes that “one of the

\(^{39}\) The 1.3 million dollar final cost of the production, an extensive overrun of the original budget, was deemed excessive by the government and became a political issue.
most notably features of the Tribunal’s work was the art and sophistication with which it listened to and relayed a Māori version of history to a wider audience” (Sharp 1990: 4). In this environment *The Governor* provided a popular culture version of an emerging counter-narrative.

![Figure 2.5: English actor Corin Redgrave as Governor George Grey](image)

With the same political and cultural impetus driving the *Tāngata Whenua* series, the production team behind *The Governor* attempted to extend the post-colonial aspects of the series beyond that of the narrative alone, and established new research methods driven by post-colonial objectives. Here much of the source material for scripts came from Māori oral histories as it was from the conventional historical and literary canon. Producers enlisted Māori actor Don Selwyn to liaise with the various North Island tribes whose ancestors were portrayed in the series, with the various storylines being constructed from this oral research (Dunleavy 2005: 96-102). These findings offered a perspective of New Zealand history and society that had previously not been conveyed in the
media and gave voice to what Foucault describes as “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault 1982: 82): discourses that had become “disqualified as inadequate” due to the political or cultural dominance of, in this case, the colonial power.

![Image](image1.jpg)

**Figure 2.6: The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi re-enacted in The Governor**

During the 1970s the struggle for Māori self-determination was being undertaken in various forms. The most significant of these was the passing of the Treaty of Waitangi Act (1975) that established the Waitangi Tribunal through which the once-subjugated Māori perspective on New Zealand’s colonial history was incorporated into the official historical and legal record. Both Tāngata Whenua and The Governor attempted historical redress within the sphere of popular culture and sought to challenge the supremacy of the colonial perspective within the construction of New Zealand’s national identity. The production of these texts and the wider discussion within the media and in scholarly discourse associated with the production all constitute the development of a post-colonial counter-narrative in New Zealand. For example,
Ranginui Walker compared the portrayal of the nineteenth century conflict between Māori and British militia in *The Governor* with action taken by the New Zealand police in forcibly removing Māori protestors from Bastion Point40 (Walker, 1992).

In the New Zealand context only legislation relating to the upholding of Treaty of Waitangi obligations has provided any legal framework for the state broadcaster’s retention of public service elements, and, in doing so, continued the culture of struggle. In the remainder of this chapter I examine two significant moments in the culture of struggle in the post-deregulation period. The first relates to the 1986 ruling by the Waitangi Tribunal that the Māori language (te reo) constitutes a *taonga* (treasure) and, as such, its protection and promotion is a legal obligation of the Crown. The ruling impacted on broadcasting as the claimants argued that radio and television services represented the contemporary vehicles for the dissemination of te reo, thus the obligation to retain a public service element to broadcasting became a stipulation under the Treaty of Waitangi. The second aspect concerns the formation of the Māori Television Service (MTS) as a stand-alone digital network. The introduction of MTS in 2004 satisfies the Treaty obligations to promote te reo and the provision of a separate channels equates to greater representation than was ever possible with the technological limitations of conventional broadcasting.

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40 In 1976 Bastion Point north of Auckland (also known as Takaparawhau) was the site of a contested land claim between the local iwi Ngāti Whātua and the Crown, after the Crown (as then owners) planned to develop and sell the Point as private subdivisions. The protest led to a 506-day long occupation of Takaparawhau by the iwi and supporters that ended when the police at the orders of the government forcibly removed the protestors.
The Te Reo Claim

In the previous sections I have framed the culture of struggle in New Zealand broadcasting as being between the colonial narrative (represented in media texts but also in the institutional framework of the NZBC) and a burgeoning post-colonial perspective. Concurrent with this cultural struggle was the emergence of a neoliberal agenda by the state (Jesson 1999; Reardon & Gray 2007). In the context of broadcasting, the re-structuring implemented in the wake of the Adam Report (notably the transition to intra-network competition) signaled the beginning of wider changes that would be fully realized by the corporatizing of TVNZ in 1987 and the de-regulation of the mediascape in 1989 (this is discussed in further detail in Chapter Three). As Andrew Sharp (1990) observes, the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal facilitated a “radical reinterpretation” of New Zealand history that was articulated in the “contemporary moral and political sphere” of the nation. Whilst the struggle over national identity was developing into a robust bicultural political and social agenda, a new struggle over the economizing of culture was emerging.

During the 1980s New Zealand’s state broadcasting operations were regarded as a “natural target for market reformers” (Smith 1996: 32) given the monopoly structure and the potential of the mediasphere to be a dynamic and global market. Despite the David Lange-led government resisting implementing

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41 Here Sharp is quoting historian and former Waitangi Tribunal member Professor Keith Sorrenson (Sorrenson 1986)
legislative changes for broadcasting until its second term (1987-1990), political discussion surrounding its possible future structure eluded towards the government imposing more commercial demands, including the sale of TVNZ.

For example, the majority of findings produced through the 1986 Royal Commission of Inquiry into Broadcasting and Related Telecommunications in New Zealand (known as the Chapman Report after Commission Chair Professor Robert Chapman) concluded that the retention of state ownership and the development of a public service culture would be advantageous to the national culture. As stated in the Report’s summary of recommendations:

that adequate funding of public service broadcasting be maintained to ensure production of a wide a varied range of programmes reflecting New Zealand culture and identity (Chapman 1986: 433).

However, the single dissenting voice, presented in an addendum to the Report by Commission member Lawrence Cameron and arguing that the state broadcaster needed to be more fiscally focused, became the basis of the government’s broadcasting policy for the remainder of its term (Horrocks 2004b: 29). Cameron’s addendum (that comprises 17 pages of the 517-page document) argued that any activity undertaken by TVNZ must be considered primarily in relation to immediate and ongoing economic effects. While Cameron notes the cultural potential of broadcasting, however he argues that the economic function of TVNZ should not be tampered with in order to produce public service programming (Cameron 1986: 457-458).

The government did establish the Broadcasting Commission (New Zealand on Air) through the Broadcasting Act (1989), but the spirit of Cameron’s
argument pervaded broadcasting policy from the mid-1980s to the end of the 1990s. Roger Horrocks identifies a rhetorical transition during the period whereby the concept of ‘culture’ was essentially ghettoized from the discourse on broadcasting. “‘Culture’ was a word they seldom used, and in practice the only culture they promoted was that of commerce (see as a kind of super-culture that encompassed all other values an activities)” (Horrocks 2004: 29). He adds that the re-structuring policies were “widely assumed [by media scholars and commentators at the time] to be a method of preparing the network for sale, making it more attractive to potential buyers by demonstrating its profit-making ability” (29). Thus the government approach regarding the necessity for TVNZ to be fiscally viable, combined with the re-structuring in the later 1980s, constituted an implied threat of imminent sale of the broadcaster by the state (Smith 1996: 37). As of 2014, such a threat has never been carried out but the focus by successive governments on the economic aspects of broadcasting – and the lack of focus on cultural issues – is evidence that governments perceive broadcasting as an economic entity rather than as a public service42. Between 1984 and 1999 there was little, if any, political opposition to the ongoing corporatization of TVNZ. Whilst issues relating to national identity in broadcasting were being examined in the burgeoning academic disciplines of

42 Political rhetoric and some political action to the contrary occurred under the Helen Clark-led Labour governments between 1999 and 2009, including the TVNZ Charter and the establishment of TVNZ’s digital public service channels. I discuss this further in Chapters Three and Four. Following Thompson (2003, 2004, 2005) the political impetus behind these initiatives was severely weakened by not being framed in a robust constitutional form (such as a Royal Charter or similar legislation) and were easily dismantled by successive governments.
media and cultural studies, the Te Reo Māori Claim made to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1986 provided the only dissenting voice to the government’s free market agenda made by a legal or institutional entity.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 2.7: march in support of te reo circa 1980**

The Te Reo Māori Claim was instituted by the group nga Kaiwhakapumau i te reo (inc) and by Huirangi Waikerepuru, the group’s chair. The Claim was based on both an English and te reo (Māori language) interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi stipulating the Crown’s obligation to protect and preserve

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43 The development of media studies in New Zealand emerged from two different scholarly fields. The first, coming from the literary/film studies area of scholarship that, in New Zealand, was driven by the Arts departments at the University of Auckland (Horrocks 2007). The second originated from social science disciplines, with research conducted out of Massey University in the late 1970s and early 1980s providing an important impetus for media studies. Out of the Massey group came the New Zealand Cultural Studies Working Group, the newsletter of which (initially called the *NZCSWG Newsletter*, later re-named as *Sites*) was the first significant cultural/media studies journal investigating the field from a local perspective.

44 Nga Kaiwhakapumau i te reo translates to The Māori Language Board of Wellington, a collective of Māori educators and members of Māori interest groups.
“all the valued customs and possessions\textsuperscript{45} of the Tāngata Whenua, incorporating those “tangible and intangible” elements of culture (Te Reo Māori Claim 1986: 4.2.4). From this basis it was then necessary to determine i) if Māori language (te reo) constituted a valued custom or possession; ii) if and how the Crown had not fulfilled its Treaty obligations by failing to protect and promote te reo; and iii) what restitution the Crown may now provide in order to fulfill these obligations in the future. The Claimant’s primary objective was that te reo “be recognized as an official language throughout New Zealand, and for all purposes” (Te Reo Māori Claim: 3.1.1). Through this the Claim examined the significance and value of the language across three general spheres: education, broadcasting and official recognition.

The findings of Tribunal relating to the te reo Māori claim have had widespread consequences for the development of New Zealand’s bicultural agenda, but only had indirect influence on broadcasting policies, structures and governance. The principal finding of the Tribunal in this case was that te reo did constitute a ‘Taonga’ and was thus due protection under the Treaty of Waitangi.

It is plain that the language is an essential part of the culture and must be regarded as “a valued possession”. The claim itself illustrates that fact, and the wide representation from all corners of Māoridom

\textsuperscript{45} An additional significant term here is that of ‘toanga’ which is often translated as “treasured possession” (Easton 1990: 3.4). This can be a tangible artifact but often includes entities that are intangible (such as knowledge, skills and practices). Brian Easton, a Pākehā economist who conducted research on behalf of the claimants observed that the concept of toanga encompassed the concepts of property and resources, but could not be directly translated as either. Easton notes that in western economics ‘resources’ exists as such by virtue of their potential to become ‘property’ (the transition from potential to material use value), however such a formula is not applicable in Māori custom (Easton: 3.7-3.8).
This decision formed the basis of the Māori Language Act (1987) that advanced the status of te reo to that of an official language of New Zealand. This meant that all public proceedings (including legal proceedings, speeches in parliament and local government proceedings) could be conducted in te reo if requested. In addition, the Act led to the establishment of the Māori Language Commission (Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Māori) in 1991 through which numerous educational and broadcasting initiatives were undertaken, specifically the establishment of Te Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori. Despite the Tribunal’s assessment of te Reo as a Toanga, the members’ decision regarding the role of state broadcasting was qualified. Noting that their role was confined to investigating possible breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, Tribunal members stated that the Broadcasting Corporation existed under a separate legislative framework and thus making recommendations regarding production or programming content was outside if its jurisdiction (7.1.3). The Tribunal acknowledged that the state broadcaster’s executives were genuine in their desire to produce bicultural programming, but noted that policy frameworks were often applied in a disadvantageous way and could benefit from a government review.

Like the education system, there may be some breakdown between the topmost levels of policy making and the ultimate administration at the middle and lower levels of the broadcasting system. This leads us to suggest by way of assistance to the Corporation than an enquiry into the complaints raised before us would not be out of place. We leave the Corporation to govern its own affairs (7.3.8).

An additional factor for the Tribunal was the timing of the Te Reo Māori claim, occurring concurrently with the Royal Commission of Inquiry and the
Broadcasting Tribunal (hearing submissions by applicants to operate a possible third channel) with the procedures of both of these bodies potentially influencing Māori broadcasting in the future⁴⁶.

The Te Reo Māori Claim reaffirmed what I am calling the culture of struggle by re-incorporating non-economic issues into the discourse of state broadcasting. Whilst it could be argued that the rhetoric of property rights and ownership (through which the contemporary context of taonga was articulated) serves to draw non-material concepts into a capitalist logic, the Tribunal’s rulings provided a platform from which legal action could be raised if any government action was perceived as potentially damaging to te reo. For example, the re-structuring of TVNZ as a state-owned enterprise in 1987 prompted nga Kaiwhakapumau i te reo to file a case, first to the Court of Appeal in 1992, and in 1993 to the Privy Council in an attempt to reverse the decision. The group’s concern was that the corporatization of TVNZ would marginalize the network’s public service role and lead to the broadcaster neglecting its obligations to te reo. Although these appeals failed, they did prompt government action in the form of establishing the Māori broadcasting agency Te Manghai Paho (TMP) through the Broadcasting Amendment Act (1993). TMP attempted to disrupt the prevailing commercial operations of national broadcasting by demanding the provision of non-commercial material. But in its operations, TMP must function in accordance to the demands of the networks that carry its programmes. One could argue therefore that TMP is responsible for the

⁴⁶ In 1985 a consortium of Māori broadcasters under the name Aotearoa Broadcasting Trust applied unsuccessfully to the Broadcasting Tribunal for the right operate a separate Māori television channel.
production of Māori interest material, the commercial broadcasters are the ultimate gatekeepers. Prior to the establishment of the Māori Television Service in 2004, the programming funded through Te Te Manghai Paho all contributed to a cultural struggle that played out across New Zealand’s terrestrial free-to-air broadcasters. Although the provision of Māori programming was subject to some statutory protection through the Te Reo Māori Claim (as was the state’s obligation to retain TVNZ), the daily decision making process concerning production and screening was based on the logic of commerce rather than culture (Easton 1997).

Occurring contemporaneously with the Te Reo Māori claim and its associated debates was the discussion regarding whether Māori would be better served by a stand-alone channel, or through the incorporation of Māori material into the mainstream schedule. As Beatson (1996) has examined, lobbying towards establishing a separate Māori channel dates to the mid-1980s when a group of Māori broadcasters led by Derek Fox formed the Aotearoa Broadcasting Service (ABS) and made a submission to the Broadcasting Tribunal for the right to provide the third channel in the approaching de-regulated environment. The

47 Like the stipulations of New Zealand on Air, information to Te Manghai Paho’s prospective applicants advises that the organization will “not fund programmes that do not have a committment to broadcast from a national free-to-air broadcaster”( Te Manghai Paho, http://www.tmp.govt.nz/television.html, accessed December 2, 2013).

48 The Broadcasting Tribunal hearings of the mid-1980s represent a startpoint towards the establishment of the current Māori Television Service, however the debate as to the relative value of a dedicated network for Māori originates from discussions surrounding the Adam Report in the early 1970s and the stated recognition in the Report of the need for broadcasting to cater to cultural diversity, especially in Auckland.
Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand (the administrative body for TVNZ) initially agreed to support the ABS bid, but this support was revoked prior to submission to the Tribunal, a move described by Beaston as a “crushing blow to Māori broadcasting” (85). The state broadcaster’s lack of support for the ABS bid is indicative of a general embrace of a commercial future for New Zealand broadcasting, and, subsequently, a retreat from public service objectives. For Māori broadcasters the state’s action indicated that a stand alone channel would not occur under the current administrative framework; and during the 1990s the debate shifted to the relative advantages of a stand alone channel versus greater incorporation of Māori broadcasting into the mainstream schedule.

**Debates over Māori broadcasting**

The overtly commercial future for the broadcasting represents a significant moment in the culture of struggle. The Broadcasting Act (1989) signaled the state’s strongest commitment yet to the tenets of public service broadcasting through the establishment of the NZOA, but this provision was based in a ratings-driven framework of commercial broadcasting. As Bell (1995) suggests, in the logic that drives NZOA public service broadcasting is synonymous with representation of diversity. Subsequently, because this programing exists in a commercial environment this depiction is often tempered through a normalizing and idealized lens, underpinned by the ideology of mainstream society. Here I draw on criticism of multicultural representation as a form of what Angela Davis calls “diversity management” (1996: 41) to exemplify how the depiction of Māori may be influenced by the commercial
imperatives imposed by New Zealand’s gatekeeping systems. Stanley Fish (1997) argues that representation of diversity offers only qualified approval of minority cultures as their presence is predicated on the value it brings to mainstream society, and subsequently on the constant acquiescence of the minority to the mainstream. Describing the phenomena as “boutique multiculturalism”, Fish notes “boutique multiculturalism will always stop short of approving other cultures at a point where some value at their center generates an act that offends against the canons of civilized decency as they have either been declared or assumed” (378). In addition, Vijay Mishra observes that use of multiculturalism as an ideological device is also apparent in interventionist state initiatives. He suggests the representation of minority cultures through state funded broadcasting serves as an “anthropological diversion for the dominant group” (2005: 5). In New Zealand’s post-deregulation broadcasting environment, the question of Māori representation constitutes a dilemma between benefits of producing programming for mainstream consumption that may herald significant exposure equating, possibly to greater cultural acceptance. But conversely, agreement to the gatekeeping demands of mainstream broadcasting may also reduced Māori to the status of ‘boutique multiculturalism’ as articulated by Fish. Whilst the BCNZ’s failure to back the ABS bid for the third free-to-air channel emphasized the state’s lack of interest in developing a Māori channel under the TVNZ umbrella, the satellite and digital platforms established in the 1990s offered new possibilities for a stand-alone Māori channel.
What is at stake in the culture of struggle extends beyond issues of technology or infrastructure. The concession by Māori to not engage with the mainstream was viewed by a number of commentators as a gesture towards accepting a subordinate status. Lines for the debate were drawn between those voices advocating for a separate Māori broadcasting outlet where content and scheduling issues were in the domain of Māori executives; and those voices advocating for greater incorporation of bicultural programming within the mainstream mediasphere. Exemplifying the argument during the 1997 New Zealand Broadcasting School Seminar, Māori Language Commissioner Timoti Karetu argued in favour of a stand-alone Māori channel:

As I recall, on a weekly basis, assuming there is no cricket or any other event considered of much greater national moment, the time allocated to things Māori is approximately three hours, 15 minutes (I forgot about *Mai Time* so add that in there somewhere) – that is exclusive of repeats. Now I, as one of the worst mathematicians ever produced by the education system of this country, can deduce that this is now equity or equality. Is there not 168 hours per week? If my mathematics are correct then that equates to approximately two percent of time devoted to things Māori (Karetu 1996: 96).

Karetu argues that the promotion of a Māori media agenda must be conducted on the same cultural, economic and technological terms as Pākehā media. Calling on support from urbanized, savvy and politically aware Māori, Karetu claims that only through the establishment of a stand-alone channel can Māori gain control of the modes of media production and with that the mechanisms to set

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49 *Mai Time* was a successful youth-orientated magazine programme produced for TVNZ between 1993 and 1996. The programme served to promote a bicultural vision, including a prominent use of te reo, into a broad appeal mainstream production. “It is extremely well received by Māori and Pākehā youth who appreciate the simple program philosophy – that it is cool to be Māori” (Stevens 2004: 111).
the contemporary cultural and political agenda (99). Holding the contrasting perspective, television producer Tainui Stevens argued that the colonial hegemonic power of television could only be overcome through the mainstream acceptance of Māori culture and te reo. “What I want to do as far as mainstreaming programming is concerned, which is to present the Māori thing as normal” (Stevens 1996: 103). Stevens echoes arguments made by Ranginui Walker (1989), Sue Abel (1997) and Donna Beatson (1996), that a Māori presence in the mainstream media functions as an ideological balance to the dominant pro-Pākehā (anti-Māori) perspective. “There is much preoccupation with physical conflict, social oppression, or clash of identity. This is a two-dimensional view of the Māori world, and it is ultimately a dis-service” (Stevens 2004: 112-113). What problematizes the realization of this ideological balance is the commercial imperative placed on free-to-air broadcasters. This again alludes to Stanley Fish’s concept of ’boutique multiculturalism’ insofar as “normalizing a Māori perspective” (Stevens: 103) may result in a benign form of representation that serves similar ideological ends to that of assimilation policies of an earlier generation through the deliberate manufacture of an image of Māori that appeases a popular, non-contentious and fundamentally de-politicized version of identity that promotes representation of difference only to the limits of Pākehā acceptability. Although Stevens praises the youth show Mai Time, he also notes that the show has been criticized for its over-appropriation of imported culture (mostly African American hip hop) resulting in the incorporation of Māori youth culture into a version of a commodified international urban subculture dispossessed of geographic, historical or cultural origins.
The establishment of the Māori Television Service (MTS) in 2004 marks a significant milestone in the ongoing culture of struggle. The MTS was established via the Māori Television Service Act (2003), an initiative produced in part by the 1999-2008 Labour government’s encouragement of public service broadcasting that included the TVNZ Charter and the establishment of TVNZ’s digital public service channels. Establishment of the Service was part of a legacy of attempted Māori broadcasting services that dates back to the failed ABS bid in the mid-1980s and also includes the failed Aotearoa Television Network in 1997. Furthermore, the legislative basis of the MTS is also a direct legacy of the Te Reo Māori Claim, with that decision providing the framework for the MTS Act (Smith & Abel 2008: 2). The success of the MTS is due to the level of government investment in the project beginning with a NZ$176 million for its first four years of operation (Dunleavy 2008: 807).

Following analyses of Smith (2006, 2011), Smith & Abel (2008) and Abel (2013), I argue that the MTS has become a quasi-national public service broadcaster in the absence of any public service mandate for TVNZ. During its initial phase, programming produced by the MTS attempted to create a post-colonial public sphere by re-framing familiar television tropes and genres through a consciously Māori lens. However, in the decade following its establishment, the MTS has increasingly taken on the role as public service broadcaster, covering a range of issues and events including annual ANZAC Day commemorations and extensive coverage of the 2011 Rugby World Cup (Abel
As Smith (2006) notes, the mandate for the MTS at establishment was to “normalize a Māori worldview” (1) within the national narrative. Such a mandate is potentially problematic if the objective of normalization represents a transference of Pākehā symbols and values onto a Māori framework.

The benefits and potential pitfalls of MTS as a vehicle for political, cultural and economic equality and self-determination for Māori are multifaceted and complex. Smith, alongside Stevens (2004) celebrate the existence of the MTS as an administrative exercise, arguing that the media has for so long operated as marginalizing technology set to a mono-cultural and mono-linguistic default position. In this sense, the role of the MTS is to expand the presence of Māori in the New Zealand mediasphere beyond that of representation towards the creation of an indigenous public sphere (Smith 2006: 33; Prentice 2013: 183). To some extent this has occurred with the MTS applying particular cultural tropes to established television genre. Smith cites
the series *DIY Marae*, MTS’s take on the home makeover genre, as a particular example of Māori values of communalism being exported into a text typically more focused on individuals or nuclear families. Furthermore, additional focus on the history and culture of specific marae featured in the show represent the adoption of sensibilities and values not present in the western version of the genre.

In the case of the makeover of Te Pakira marae in Rotorua (screened 20/04/04), the opening sequence includes a map of the North Island and a signpost demarcating where Te Pakira is located. This episode includes archive footage of the marae (based as it is in one of the most widely photographed regions of Aotearoa) and commentary from kuia and children. This kind of attention to the location and identity of each *DIY* project emphasizes the diverse traditions within an iwi-based community, while the respect paid to kuia (some of whom receive a makeover as well) express the cultural norms or te ao Māori. *DIY* Marae thus offers a point of difference to the makeover genre that depicts, and accordingly normalizes, marae lifestyle on TV.

*DIY Marae* is thus representative of a struggle between cultural and economic values, rather than a particular colonial discourse. Programming such as *DIY Marae* is indicative of a developing biculturalism in the wider television production industry in New Zealand. Although the values expoused in *DIY Marae* go some way to counteracting the western capitalist ideology perpetuated in the dominant mass media, the MTS project does not fully represent an indigenous response to colonialism because the political and economic structure demands a

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50 A Marae is a communal area that is the setting for traditional Māori social life. Typically consisting of various structures each with a specific purpose (the holding if *hui* or meetings, eating, food preparation, and sleeping) the buildings and environment of a marae host a range of activities including debates and meetings, celebrations, and *tangi* (funerals). Protocol for marae varies between the *iwi* (tribe) or *hapu* (sub-tribe) who are affiliated to each marae.
semblence of assimilation into the dominant culture that constitutes a new phase in the culture of struggle.

The culture of struggle as it pertains to the MTS is underpinned by the network’s \(^{51}\) dual necessity to promote specific Māori culture and language alongside also attracting and maintaining a significant audience. From its stated ‘Vision’ and ‘Strategic Direction’ the objectives of the MTS can be interpreted as serving as a cultural bridge between Māori and Pākehā culture, rather than creating a particular indigenous public sphere. Although the MTS ‘vision’ stipulates the “re-vitalization of the Māori language” as a primary objective\(^{52}\) this is tempered by the subsequent demand to be “relevant, effective and widely

\(^{51}\) The MTS is considered a network rather than a channel after the establishment of the Te Reo Channel in 2008. The principal MTS channel is bilingual while the Te Reo channel provides programming exclusively in Māori.

\(^{52}\) See www.Māori television.com/about

Figure 2.9: Celebrating a finished project on MTS’s DIY Marae
accessible”. The Strategic Direction of the network extends this obligation of universality by investing the MTS with the obligation to build “a connection to Māori culture for all New Zealanders”. This stipulation represents a concession to a unified sense of nationhood that serves to ignore or erase colonial injustice and contemporary social, economic and political marginalization rather than expose and examine such action. Abel notes the concept of national identity is “largely a Pākehā construct” (Abel 2013: 204), however it has become a dominant feature of MTS programming. This perpetuation by the MTS of the central element in the colonial narrative of New Zealand is symptomatic of the state funding model and political and media hostility towards Māori media.

In their contentious criticism of the MTS, Smith (2006, 2011) and Abel (2013) observe that the representations of nationhood by the network is constructed to “please its funder, the state” (Abel 2013: 206). Despite being legitimated by various legislative devices (including Te Reo Māori Claim and the Māori Television Service Act) the MTS has been accused of being a “waste of taxpayers’ money” (3) from sectors in the mainstream media, especially during the late 1990s and early 2000s when two examples of financial mis-management concerning Māori broadcasting became significant media events. The accumulated effects of operating in this politically hostile environment, combined

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53 I describe this argument as contentious because Sonya Haggie, the general manager of sales, marketing and communication for MTS has previously refuted the view that the state has any influence over MTS editorial (Abel 2013: 214).

54 This includes a political storm of the private use of public funds by executives of the failed Aotearoa Television Network in 1997 (Burns 1997) and in 2002 the discovery that the first appointed CEO of the MTS was a convicted fraudster with falsified credentials (Smith 2006).
with the competitive broadcasting culture where the discourse of ratings holds currency (even for a state-funded channel such as MTS) is the perpetuation of a positive and unifying version of nationhood that, while stopping short of commodifiing Māori culture, tends to focus on fostering a singular (albeit bicultural) nationalism.

This version of nationalism, produced by a minority-interest broadcaster, is strongly apparent in MTS’s annual coverage of the ANZAC Day celebrations. In terms of creating a specific Māori public sphere this coverage is problematic for the network as it reinforces the acceptance of cultural unity, but its popularity with the mainstream audience serves to legitimize the MTS project in the logic of ratings. In her analysis of the audience reaction to the MTS’s annual coverage of ANZAC Day celebrations, Abel notes with unease the popular suggestion that such programming represents a “coming of age” for the channel (Abel 2013: 202). Such viewpoints are reminiscent of assimilation policies that seek to encourage minority groups to adopt dominant ideologies. As Abel contends, MTS coverage of ANZAC Day is underpinned by the perpetuated myth of the willing and active engagement by Māori in the first and second World Wars, a myth that ignores the history of non-participation by Māori in foreign wars (202). The MTS coverage of ANZAC Day can therefore be percieved as partly a return to the cultural assimilation of the colonial period; a process made more complex by being initiated through a Māori media body that was established as part of a post-colonial cultural and political legacy.
Drawing on the arguments presented by Smith & Abel (2008) and Abel (2013) I suggest the MTS occupies a problematic site in the culture of struggle. On one level, the network represents a significant step towards a post-colonial culture that extends beyond the representation of diversity to the realization of Māori being in control of the modes of media production. However, the economic and editorial decisions made by the MTS are largely determined by factors created by, and central to, a Pākehā-centric political and economic culture. This has resulted in a populist approach to programming that serves to undermine the radical post-colonial impetus of the network’s origins. Returning therefore to Bauman, the culture of struggle originated when the solid forces that perpetuated colonialism began to be eroded by new cultural, economic and political movements during the mid-twentieth century; notably the de-centering of the politics of identity and the legitimation (in law, politics and media cultures) of multiple forms of identity. At this moment culture ceased being the “homogenizing pressure of the general” (Bauman: 103) and instead could be articulated on a multitude of different terms. Although the shift from the solid to, what Bauman terms, a liquid form of culture, represents a moment of liberation, this moment is influenced as much by economic forces as by those of culture or politics. Part of the post-colonial impetus involves a realignment of economic sovereignty from monolithic state mechanisms to smaller, more adaptable entities (organized and controlled by minority groups). Alongside this process has been the corporatization and globalization of culture, also symbolic of the re-organization of governance systems in the post-state era. In the following chapter I examine the implications of monetarist policies and de-regulation on New Zealand’s mediascape. Here the fixed notions of solid culture have been
totally eroded, but rather than being re-imagined as a post-colonial culture, this liquid culture serves no ethos other than to find and maximize its audience and in doing so becomes commodified and infinitely adaptable.
Chapter Three

The Post-deregulation era: Liquid Culture

The central argument I am presenting in this thesis is that the transition from ‘solid’ to ‘liquid’ culture represents a re-configuration of the institutions of power influencing broadcasting. I contend that the development of bicultural broadcasting represented a struggle over the articulation of national identity as it is presented via state-owned broadcasting institutions. Furthermore the ascendancy of a commercialized media culture from the 1980s onwards has also impacted significantly on the representation of national identity and the construction and gatekeeping duties of the state’s public broadcasting mechanisms. This chapter extends the analysis of ‘liquid’ culture as I argue that New Zealand’s commercial broadcasting environment functions to commodify the representation of New Zealand national identity, even in programming produced ostensibly outside of the commercial framework.

Specifically this chapter investigates the transformation of New Zealand broadcasting’s institutional and governance system to a competitive, deregulated model. After discussing Bauman’s concept of ‘liquid’ culture, I provide background to the adoption of free-market policies to New Zealand in the 1980s, including the subsequent corporatizing of Television New Zealand (TVNZ) and de-regulation of broadcasting. I continue by examining the funding agency New Zealand on Air (NZOA) as an example of the tension between TVNZ’s commercial demands and non-commercial imperatives that remain as part of the state broadcaster’s obligations and expressed in the Broadcasting Act (1989).
contend that owing to the general tenets of the de-regulated mediasphere, the programming produced by NZOA serves to promote a benign narrative of cultural inclusion over the more critical analysis of New Zealand culture apparent during the ‘culture of struggle’. I describe the cultural forms produced by NZOA as exemplifying a new expression of Bauman’s ‘liquid’ culture insofar as it represents a commodified and inclusive iteration of what constitutes national identity. Although particular archetypal tropes associated with New Zealand nationhood remain: including the settler narrative, egalitarianism, pragmatism and individualism, these tropes become denuded of ideological and colonial resonance and instead are used to illustrate the commodified version of media culture designed to attract and appease audiences/markets, and as such must be infinitely adaptable. I conclude this chapter examining two television programmes: the one-hour documentary Inside Child Poverty (2011) and the documentary series This Town (2011-2012). The political fallout from the Inside Child Poverty documentary is evidence of the close association between NZOA and the government of the day and is indicative of the lack of political or institutional desire to develop a critical public broadcasting culture. Conversely, This Town exemplifies the commodifying of national identity. In this programme the economic and cultural disparities of New Zealand society are replaced by a lyrical and ideologically unproblematic representation of national culture. The representations normalizing a range of cultural and economic tropes that underpin the prevailing state ideology.
**Liquid culture**

The establishment of New Zealand’s bicultural institutions was fundamental to the ‘culture of struggle’ because through them New Zealand’s national identity is constituted as a contested, uneven and unresolved narrative. Now *culture* was no longer regarded as fixed entity, defined through an established set of criteria as was the case during the radio era when national identity was dominated by the colonial settler narrative. The rise of biculturalism introduced a new cultural logic to the national narrative that accepted a problematic history. Culture was conceived as in need of redress, as opposed to an idealized or hierarchical model (Hay 1996). Subsequently, the articulation of national identity has become a dynamic force open to interpretation and critique. Bauman thus describes culture as existing in a “constant state of becoming” echoing Stuart Hall’s (1997) analysis of a post-colonial identity that is in a state of becoming.

Identity is the ground of action. And we have in more recent times a psychological discourse of the self which is very similar: a notion of the continuous, self-sufficient, developmental, unfolding dialectic of selfhood, We are never quite there, but always on our way to it, and when we get there, we will at last know exactly who it is we are.” (Hall, 1997: 42)

Hall maintains that democratic and self-sufficient political and cultural objectives may be met in the future. Similarly, the concept of cultural struggle, assumes a movement of forward progression whereby the process of struggle will be ideologically and politically resolved through the legitimation of a post-colonial identity. The process of ‘becoming’ thus might be finite and eventually a post-colonial subject may emerge. On the contrary, Bauman posits the freedom a
subject may feel from the constraints of ‘solid’ modernity as being matched by the sense of fear of an undefined identity, “if we look at this conflict from another perspective: the fear of being different, and the fear of losing individuality” (20), but from this instability exists an inherent dynamism. The contrast between Bauman and Hall is the notion that, despite the turmoil of ascribing an identity, the objective is to some form of stability.

The logic of identity is the logic of something like a ‘true self’. And the language of identity has often been related to the search for a kind of authenticity to one’s experience, something that tells me where I come from. (Hall 1989: 10)

This is not to suggest that the “true self” is necessarily fixed in any material existence beyond a perception of belonging. As Hall asserts “identity is itself grounded in the huge unknowns of our psychic lives” (11), but the combined effects of this perception and the collective dynamic that drives cultural and political forces towards a post-colonial identity perhaps serve to provide the subject with a sense of protection and solidarity. Such a perspective contrasts with the plight of the individual subject in Bauman’s liquid modernity, where freedom also equates to loneliness (Franklin 2012: 18). Thus the transition towards individualism in society, driven by institutions that are invested in the ideology of neoliberalism, represents both freedom and loss. The conjecture regarding the use of participatory media to facilitate a collective voice discussed in Chapter Four is an attempt to alleviate somewhat this possible sense of loss. In this sense the intervention into the discussion surrounding public broadcasting functions as a metaphor for the wider cultural and psychological implications of neoliberalism; the policies and political agenda surrounding neoliberalism having a distinct genealogy in New Zealand.
In the context of New Zealand broadcasting the progressive trajectory intrinsic to the ‘culture of struggle’ flourished most markedly during the 1970s and 1980s when changes to the institutional structure allowed new voices to be heard over the national airwaves. But the state’s corporatizing agenda, which comprised the restructuring of broadcasting in the late 1980s, shifted the broadcaster’s obligations from cultural production to economic efficiency and productivity. Following McChesney (1999) and Van der Bulck (2001) the desire for broadcasting to provide an alternative space for national identity is altered when the primary impetus changes from issues of identity to issues of consumption, and the purpose of culture becomes the need to find and appease new markets.

For Bauman, the total transformation from ‘solid’ to ‘liquid’ modernity is represented in the commodification and globalization of culture. The dynamism apparent in the ‘culture of struggle’ still exists, but the drive towards a progressive future resolution is replaced by commercial objectives that thrive on open, uncertain and constantly changing demands. In the context of broadcasting, this means the objective to represent a de-centered cultural or political system is superseded by the need to maximize the audience regardless of the form of cultural product being offered. In this sense, the role of culture cannot be resolved through the processes inherent in the ‘culture of struggle’, but is instead an ever-changing entity to suit the dynamism of the market.

The culture of liquid modernity has no ‘populace’ to enlighten and ennoble; it does, however, have clients to seduce. Seduction, by contrast with enlightenment and ennoblement, is not a one-off, once
and for all task, but an open-ended activity. The function of culture is not to satisfy existing needs, but to create new ones – while simultaneously maintaining needs already entrenched or permanently unfulfilled. Its chief concern is to prevent a feeling of satisfaction in its former subjects and charges, now turned into clients, and in particular to counteract their perfect, complete and definitive gratification, which would leave no room for further, new and as yet unfulfilled needs and whims. (Bauman: 17)

Bauman’s argument suggests that this new cultural form is constituted as an unstable entity, forever changing in a bid to find new audiences. But using Bauman’s notion of “seduction” (17), I contend that the commodified version of national identity operates through the process of inclusion. Here national identity is drained of the problematic elements that characterized the ‘culture of struggle’ and replaced with an idealized form, where social diversity, multiculturalism and biculturalism are celebrated insofar as the fit into the wider tenets of liberal democracy and the free-market economy.

In this new cultural environment, the role of broadcasting is not to challenge the political or cultural status quo, but to appease and maximize the audience. Bauman writes:

Culture today consists of offers, not prohibitions; propositions not norms. Culture today is engaged in laying down temptations and setting up attractions, while luring and seducing, not with normative regulations; with PR rather than police supervision; with the production, sowing and planting of new needs and desires, rather than with duty. (13)

Bauman’s concept of ‘liquid modernity’ constitutes his appraisal of global culture in the era of, what Ernst Mandel describes as, “late capitalism” (see Jameson, 1991: xx). This can be further defined as the re-organization of the
roles of the state and the roles of market in the governance of a population, or as a various set of ideological, economic and policy initiatives collected under the rhetoric of neoliberalism, specifically the adoption of free-market policies by national governments and the ongoing process of economic and cultural globalization. Drawing from David Harvey’s historical overview of the concept, neoliberalism, encapsulates a set of political and economic ideals that advantage individual entrepreneurialism (often the preserve of the private sector) and retreats from collective action and the heavily state-ist model of industrial and economic infrastructure.

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that propose human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. (Harvey, 2007: 2)

Government policies following this broad economic set of practices vary considerably between various nation states and are dependent on particular historical and political contexts (Ong, 2006). The widespread economic reforms instituted by both Labour and National governments in New Zealand between 1984 and 1993, comprising the privatization and de-regulation of numerous previously state-owned operations, has been framed by historians and economists as a radical contrast with the state-centric and welfarist form of governance that had dominated political policy in New Zealand for much of the twentieth century (Larner 1998; Janiewski & Morris 2005). The trajectory of New Zealand state broadcasting, from its ‘solid’ manifestation that promoted the ideology of the settler colony, to later cultural manifestations constituting ‘liquid’ culture occurred in a parallel trajectory to economic policy, hence the
value of a brief historic overview of New Zealand governments’ adoption of free market policies.

*Neoliberalism in New Zealand*

The transition towards a free market economy varies between particular nation states however, and during the postwar period various global trends became factors in the neoliberal ‘turn’ by a number of national governments (Harvey 2007; Ong 2006; Greenhouse 2010). Andrew Belsey (1987), Norman Barry (1987) and David Harvey (2007) have discussed the transition made by western governments towards global free trade during the 1970s. They note that the combined effects of economic downturn, after a sustained period of postwar prosperity, and an ensuing climate of social and political unrest in some countries prompted investigations into new economic directions. In Britain the perception of economic mismanagement by the state, high taxation rates and a reduction in public services, combined with a growing anti-collective perspective fostered by public perception (perpetuated by the political ideology of the Conservative Party) of the negative effects unionized work forces were having on the national economy, established a political environment conducive to the adoption of new anti-collective and free-market orientated economic theory (Levitas 1987: 12). Norman Barry (1987) writes in his defense of neoliberalism that the authority of the state to manage a nation’s affairs should not be taken as absolute, nor should there be a prevailing view that the state is politically neutral:
There are two reasons, the liberals claim, why government action is likely to produce worse outcomes than those in less than perfect markets. The first is that there are sound economic reasons why even well-motivated governments may not improve on the automatically self-correcting processes of the market. The second is that we cannot assume that governments are ‘benevolent’: that is especially so in modern democracies where governments are always likely to be deflected away from the pursuit of some economic ‘optimum’ by the sectional demands of pressure groups and by the electorate timetable (Barry: 35).

In the British political context, questioning the managerial sovereignty of the state situated advocates of neoliberalism in opposition to the strong state-ist political culture that was dominant since the beginning of the twentieth century. This contrasted with the United States where values associated with entrepreneurship and non-interventionist government were part of the national corporate and cultural narrative. Thus in the post-1970s economic and political environment, advocates of the United States neoliberal model were able to situate their policy recommendations as a return to a more authentic form of governance style after several decades of state intervention. For example Edward Berkowitz (2006) writes that in the United States economic policy in the 1970s was controlled by the actions of the federal government implemented in the 1930s as part of the New Deal. There was no political will or economic necessity to examine these policies during World War II or the prosperous postwar decades. However like Europe, the United States suffered a marked economic decline during the 1970s with sharp rises in commodity prices, inflation and rising unemployment creating anxiety among the public, and with that a reaction by economists and political factions against the New Deal collectivism (Berkowitz 2006: 53).
A significant aspect of the shift towards free market economies in the early 1970s was the political desire to divest the industrial role of the state to private entrepreneurs. In this context, the free market theories of Frederick von Hayek and Milton Friedman were perceived by advisory groups as means to revitalize flagging economies. These groups include the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a collective of researchers and economists whose findings incorporating pro-market economic values with conservative social policy had long been influential to the Republican Party (Plant 2010: 126). In New Zealand the private sector lobby group the Business Roundtable gained prominence since 1984 after the economic reforms implemented by the fourth Labour government de-regulated the commercial sector (Jesson 1999; Larner 2000).

Questioning the state’s role in economic management is a defining factor in the neoliberal discourse, but this does not necessarily constitute a retreat by government in management issues to be replaced by private enterprise, but rather a new configuration of the role of the state: what Aihwa Ong calls “a new relationship between government and knowledge through which governing activities are re-cast as non-political and non-ideological problems that need technical solutions” (Ong 2006: 3). Where once government policy was formulated on ideological grounds (nominally divided between political parties and a left-right demarcation), now it is formulated through a neoliberal worldview that is focused on addressing an economic determinant where the defining demands of maximization of resources, the minimization of costs and the overriding goal of efficiency becomes the primary objective of governing bodies.
The notion that neoliberal policies transcend political ideology and represent non-political and pragmatic management of the economy was a reiterated in the prevailing political discourse during the 1980s (Douglas 1987). At that time the notion that a monetarists agenda was the only pragmatic solution to an economic crisis was rigorously perpetuated by both government and media; the effect of their enthusiasm for such policies being to stifle any opposing voices coming from community or political groups\textsuperscript{55}. Between 1984 and 1987 the Labour government implemented a raft of policy changes including the de-regulation of the financial markets, removal of exchange rate regulations, floating the currency, abolition of price and interest rate controls, relaxation of overseas borrowing; abolition of import licensing and reduction of trade barriers, abolition of industrial production controls, removal of

\textsuperscript{55} From 1984 a strong narrative has been perpetuated in academic and mainstream discourses citing the economic reforms initiated by the 1984 Labour government as being an immediate and necessary reaction to the crisis situation Labour inherited from the outgoing National administration. In their analysis of Labour's policies during the 1980s, political scientists John Reardon & Tim Gray reproduce the argument.

In 1984, the incoming Labour government was faced with such an acute and imminent economic crisis that it seemed to have little option but to introduce drastic economic reform measures. The economy was in virtual meltdown or free fall, in that the collapse of the exchange rate threatened national bankruptcy. This immediate economic crisis was the culmination of a long period of economic decline since the early 1970s following the UK entry into the European Community (EEC) in 1973 which ended New Zealand's favourable export terms to the UK market; the oil hikes in the early and late 1970s, which precepedated a global recession; and a declining agricultural sector, caused by the collapse of world prices of wool and other primary products. As a result, New Zealand had a chronic balance-of-payments deficit; its current account deficit rose to 15 percent of GDP by the mid-1970s; there was a growing public sector debt, a high inflation rate and a sharply rising level of unemployment. (Reardon & Gray, 2007: 447-448)
agricultural subsidies, implementation of a general sales tax, restriction of trade union activity, public sector reform that included the introduction of short-term contracts, performance management, and the use of private sector consultants in the civil service, and the privatization of state assets including New Zealand Steel, the national rail network and Telecom (Reardon & Gray 2007). The rhetoric of necessity fuelled the Lange government’s self-proclaimed mandate to implement widespread free market policies during the 1984-87 term despite growing public unrest over the social cost of such policies (Barry 1996; Trotter 2007). Critics of Labour’s reforms, including Collins & Keesing (1987) and Bruce Jesson (1999) maintained these policies were introduced via emergency or serendipitous circumstances, notably the aforementioned deficit crisis and the electorate’s dual reaction to the unpopular policies of the outgoing Muldoon government and its contrasted image with the incoming Labour caucus. The view that Labour’s policies and personalities represented a significant cultural and generational divide is echoed by Janiewski and Morris (2005) and Trotter (2007) who note that the 1984 caucus was made up of ‘baby boomers’, born after the end of World War II and as such their cultural and political consciousness was developed during an era of peace and prosperity. This was in contrast to the previous generation, who had grown up with the effects of the Great Depression and World War II. The hypothesis reached by a number of historians and political commentators is that the background of postwar

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56 Labour’s policies were in stark contrast to the protectionist ethos of the previous National government led by Robert Muldoon. Under Muldoon’s autocratic leadership, the government implemented a number of controversial policies designed to stabilize the economy, including a two-year wage and price freeze and several large-scale infrastructure projects.

57 Sir Robert Muldoon served in Italy and the Pacific in World War II.
prosperity, formative to the Labour caucus, resulted in the party’s embrace of new ideas and a willingness to experiment with the social and political order (Wood 1998; Larner 2000; Trotter 2007).

![Figure 3.1: Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas (foreground) celebrates Labour's victory in the 1987 general election with Prime Minister David Lange.](image)

The economic agenda established in the 1980s introduced the logic and language of the market to the political and social realm. The imperatives of efficiency, productivity and the maximization of value onto the general socio-cultural life of society established new regimes of governance that operated via a range of state and non-state institutions. Examples of this include the re-structuring of a range of state services in 1988 including the New Zealand post office, the meteorological service and Television New Zealand as state-owned enterprises resulting in the corporatization of their operations, so they remained state entities but were mandated to make a profit for the government. Elsewhere, funding models for health and education providers were
restructured to make economic efficiency central to the process of governance (Easton, 2002). However, the notion that Labour’s policies in 1984 were a cultural and pragmatic response to the prevailing conditions fails to take into account the state’s various investigations into economic reform that had been undertaken since the 1970s that situate neoliberalism as part of a transition in governance and culture rather than an immediate reaction to contemporary economic circumstances. From the early 1970s advocates of economic reform came both from the political parties and the offices of Treasury and the Reserve Bank and their support for a market-orientated direction for the national economy signaled a retreat from the centralised, interventionist and welfare-orientated policies that had typified the New Zealand state from the 1930s (McCann 1984). This change is signaled in the 1976 report by the government’s Taskforce on Economic and Social Planning published under the title New Zealand at the Turning Point that critiques the state’s interventionism as representing an ignorance of economic reality.

Here the emphasis has been on improving standards of living, preserving full employment, achieving a satisfactory rate of growth, stabilizing costs and prices, and avoiding the depletion of overseas reserves or excessive borrowing overseas.

Even if attention is confined to these goals, it should be noted that they are not necessarily consistent with one another. For example, a country like ours which has been spending excessively overseas, and then suffers a serious decline in the terms of trade, can suffer setbacks in employment, growth and living standards if it tries to, or has to, cut back imports rapidly to restore balance in its overseas accounts. (Taskforce on Economic and Social Planning, 1976: 31)

In 1980, opposition finance spokesman Roger Douglas published his ‘Alternative Budget’ where he states: “New Zealand is at an economic crossroads. Further
tinkering will be disastrous for our future. The time has come for bold innovations, for taking the tough options we have ducked for thirty years” (Douglas 1980: 2). The main focus of Douglas’s budget were changes to the tax system - remove tax incentives and industry subsidies - adopt a ‘user pays’ model for government services and de-value the New Zealand dollar to make exports more economically competitive (Douglas 1987: 3). Economist Conrad Blyth argues that the 1980s reforms signaled a shift in the way the country’s economic problems were perceived: “Mr Douglas has diagnosed New Zealand’s basic economic problem as one of slow growth or allocative efficiency, rather than the issues of unemployment and equity which had dominated the political diagnosis since the 1930s” (Blyth 1987: 2). This shift in priorities represents a rejection of Keynesian welfarism and the “post-war consensus about the role of government” (James 1992: 89), towards policies based facilitating market-led dynamics with the impetus being that a robust, competitive and unhindered private sector is the best environment to promote personal wellbeing and prosperity (Harvey, 2007).

The policies enacted by the Labour and National governments between 1984 and 1993 were undertaken to fulfill an economic agenda, but resulted in considerable cultural change. The transition from a state-centric political and economic environment to one where free-market policies underpinned by the logic of consumer choice introduced a new set of values and forms of language into the national narrative. In the post-deregulated environment broadcasting came to both exemplify the new corporate logic, as the institutional framework was transformed from a state monopoly model to commercialized and highly
competitive marketplace. Broadcasting however remained the primary vehicle for representing national identity, of which the ‘turn’ towards a free market economy, and with it, towards globalization, were significant components.

Examining developments in New Zealand broadcasting since the early 1970s uncovers a divide between the cultural benefits of encouraging a competitive environment and the perceived degradation of ‘quality’ programming resulting from the drive towards ratings. As I go on to discuss, the state attempted to resolve this tension through the provision of New Zealand on Air (NZOA) as a contestable public service mechanism. However, the operations of NZOA created a separate pressure between the objectives of a representative form of public service broadcasting and the commercialization of the media.

*Competition in New Zealand broadcasting*

The establishment of a competitive culture, created through the re-structuring of broadcasting in 1974, produced an additional struggle between commercial and non-commercial imperatives. Dunleavy (2008) notes that the introduction of twin-channel competition infused the local industry with a new sense of creative dynamism. She describes the period as “integral to New Zealand’s journey of self-discovery” (Dunleavy 2004: 209) suggesting that the transition in the national narrative towards a bicultural perspective reveals a more essential view of contemporary New Zealand. However the role of broadcasting to facilitate national identity was counteracted by economic pressures that were not apparent under the NZBC model.
Until 1975, it was possible to control public television’s commercial impulses by limiting the weekdays on which advertising could air. But it was difficult to maintain this control once the second channel (TV2) arrived, and with it the opportunity to expand local programming, for which additional revenue was needed. While another option would have been to increase the PBF to support the creation of a more ambitious array of local programmes, there was stiff political resistance to this. When local TV productions were perceived to have cost too much there was the additional problem of adverse media speculation about overspending by television, as was discovered in 1977, when the budget over-runs on an ambitious colonial drama production *The Governor* made front-page news (Dunleavy, 2008: 801).

The initial era of inter-channel competition was short-lived. After winning the 1975 general election, the Robert Muldoon-led National government began to reverse the broadcasting policy initiatives of the previous government. Under the Broadcasting Act (1976) the separate governance entities were once again merged and the office of the Minister of Broadcasting was re-established (Cocker 1994: 250). By 1980 broadcasting governance was carried out under the administrative umbrella of the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand (BCNZ)\(^5\) with the operational title of Television New Zealand (TVNZ). The 1980 restructuring of broadcasting is indicative of the historical interference by New Zealand governments in the administration of the state broadcaster. The formation of the BCNZ functioned to centralize broadcasting operations thus necessitating the once-independent voices to become incorporated into the institutional system. Alongside curtailing editorial freedom, the formation of the BCNZ resulted in less financial autonomy for the broadcaster. This issue was exacerbated by a hostile relationship between then Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Robert Muldoon and the broadcaster, with Muldoon refusing to

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adjust the universal Public Broadcasting Fee to keep up with inflation, effectively reducing the BCNZ’s working capital (Horrocks 2004: 25).

The reunification of broadcasting service lasted until 1988 when the state broadcaster became subject to the economic reform agenda of the fourth and fifth Labour administration (1984-7, 1987-90). During this period the BCNZ was abolished and TVNZ and Radio New Zealand became state-owned enterprises (SOEs). TVNZ remained a Crown entity but its executive operations needed to be undertaken within a corporate framework, including the statutory obligation to pay an annual dividend to the government as TVNZ’s sole shareholder. One year after the introduction of the SOE model, the passing of the Broadcasting Act (1989) enabled private competition into the local mediasphere (ending 53 years of the state’s broadcasting monopoly) and established the Broadcasting Commissioning (New Zealand on Air), thus introducing the most robust mechanism to date to deliver public service material. The funding channeled through New Zealand on Air (NZOA) came initially from the public broadcasting fee and was contestable and available to all networks broadcasting into New Zealand.

The adoption of a neoliberal agenda by New Zealand governments had considerable repercussions for the way national broadcasting was produced and administered. The corporatization of the media sphere resulted in greater emphasis placed on ratings and advertising revenue by both TVNZ and TV3 which launched in 1989. This new environment did facilitate the emergence of new voices and added to the diversity of representation on New Zealand
screens. However there was also concern that the ratings-driven environment would mean greater importation of low-cost overseas programming, thus being detrimental to the local broadcasting industry (Cocker & McChesney 1998). Although organizations such as NZOA introduced elements of public service broadcasting into the New Zealand media landscape, the notion that broadcasting is primarily an economic activity has become a widely recognized feature of the New Zealand broadcasting discourse (Lealand 1998). Prior to the passing of the Broadcasting Bill in 1988, and the subsequent creation of the Broadcasting Act (1989), political and media debates concerning broadcasting were divided into two broad categories: the necessity for broadcasting to become more representative of cultural and ethnic diversity; and concern over the commercialization of the mediasphere in the wake of de-regulation. As architects of the broadcasting reforms, Labour situated the Broadcasting Bill as achieving both cultural and economic objectives: de-regulation would provide greater scope for independent (meaning diverse) voices to be heard; and the SOE model would expand the government’s revenue. Speaking to the New Zealand Broadcasting School Conference in 1989, Minister of Broadcasting Jonathan Hunt focused on the need for broadcasting to reflect contemporary society, a society that, he argued, had changed considerably since the establishment of earlier institutional models. Citing the Waitangi Tribunal, Māori education initiatives and the passing of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill in 1987 as factors representative of a new cultural climate Hunt stated the need for “broadcasting to be a part of, and create, New Zealand culture. Not just show us what goes on in Britain and America”, (Hunt 1989: 76). Regarding the economic aspects of the reforms, broadcasting was implicated into the wider de-regulation
reforms and situated in a more general neoliberal agenda that had crystalized into a robust ideological position since the reform agenda began in 1984. From the mid-1980s the possibility of broadcasting de-regulation caused some debate amongst the mainstream media, with the concern being that competition and provision for corporate sponsorship of programming would adversely affect objectivity and journalistic integrity of broadcasting material (see Stirling 1987). By 1990 broadcasting, like other state sectors that had undergone de-regulation, had become corporatized. The establishment of NZOA created a mechanism for contestable funding and a set of guidelines for what was considered material that represented New Zealand culture and identity. But the organization was incorporated into an institutional environment invested in a commercial ideology that would have consequences in the funding and gatekeeping decision process.

NZOA: intervention or acquiescence to the commercial mediasphere?

NZOA was established to fund and promote public broadcasting and local commercially-focused programing. The stipulations guiding NZOA’s funding is dual-focused and emphasizes that both economic and cultural considerations must be taken into account in the decision-making process. The stipulation for programming to have some semblance towards ratings (and thus generate advertising revenue) is implicit in the NZOA’s broader directives. For example, “skillful investment” is listed as NZOA’s core values alongside “innovation” and “diversity” (NZOA, 2013). Furthermore, the necessity for all projects to be
backed with a commitment from a broadcaster\textsuperscript{59} situates NZOA programmes into a competitive paradigm even if the particular programming is made exclusive of commercial factors. Minority-interest programming (such as the Pacific Island communities magazine show \textit{Tangata Pasifika} or \textit{Attitude TV}, a magazine show for people living with disabilities) has traditionally been screened on Sunday mornings as the low commercial zone and are therefore situated to have as little economic impact as possible to the network. But, conversely these shows achieve poor audience figures as a result of the timeslot (Lealand 1998).

Figure 3.2: New Zealand on Air logo

Alongside the stipulations to support commercially-orientated projects, a broader mandate towards representative and culturally inclusive programming is outlined in the Broadcasting Act. Here the Act stipulates that NZOA must strive to:

\textsuperscript{59} See: www.NZOA/Funding/Television
(a) To reflect and develop New Zealand culture and identity by –
   (i) Promoting programmes about New Zealand and New Zealand interests; and
   (ii) Promoting Māori language and Māori culture; and

(b) To maintain and, where the Commission [NZOA] considers it appropriate, extend the coverage of television and sound radio broadcasting to New Zealand communities that would otherwise not receive a commercially viable signal; and

(c) To ensure that a range of broadcasts is available to provide for the interests of
   (i) Women; and
   (ii) Youth; and
   (iii) Children; and
   (iv) Persons with disabilities; and
   (v) Minorities in the community including ethnic minorities; and

(ca) to encourage a range of broadcasts that reflects the diverse religious and ethical beliefs of New Zealanders (Broadcasting Act, 1989: 35).

These guidelines illustrate the Act's objective for a funding agency to cater to a bicultural and multicultural audience and be inclusive of all other social and ethnic groups that may identify as being marginalized by commercial, ratings-driven broadcasting. The objectives of NZOA to be a provider of culturally inclusive public service programming while maintaining a commercial focus is regarded by some media scholars as representing an inherent tension between the organization's principle objectives. Roger Horrocks argues that the failings of NZOA to provide public service programming are due to the de-regulated environment, rather than those of the organization. "NZOA has successfully championed diversity in the mainstream programs it has funded, but its support for minority programs has been complicated by the reluctance of national networks to make time available" (Horrocks, 2004: 24). Alan Cocker (2005), meanwhile draws on the argument presented by McChesney (1999) that some form of critical public service broadcasting is a necessary element in the maintaining the balance between public and state interests in modern societies,
and that an effective public broadcasting service must operate beyond economic interests. “Public broadcasting’s provision of services can be viewed in the same manner as the provision of public libraries and art galleries: public goods that would not be provided, or would be under-provided in a pure market system” (Cocker 2005: 44). Cocker’s assessment of NZOA is, therefore, divided. The representation of local culture and identity, the provision of minority interest programming, and provision of universal access to broadcasting follows similar obligations that echo the British and Australian public service models. However, Cocker contends that NZOA is weak as a legislative device, with its objectives and priorities lacking clarity. Describing NZOA as a “makeshift construction” (44) at its establishment, he writes:

In addition to recognizing only a restricted number of social outcomes from broadcasting, the New Zealand legislation lacked clear direction as to its public policy goals. The types of local production that the legislation believe should be assisted were not specified, nor was there any guidance as to which signals should be accorded universal coverage. Further there was no indication as to which of the funding areas to be supported by the Commission [NZOA] were to have priority – public service broadcasting, local production or universal coverage (45).

Cocker contends that NZOA’s vague guidelines combined with uneven government funding⁶⁰ resulted in a risk-adverse programming culture with genres such as news and sport receiving the bulk of available funds at the expense of high cost and low return genres drama and documentary (52).

Dunleavy (2005) adds that despite the prevailing conditions in which NZOA

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⁶⁰ The funding model for NZOA changed in 1999 when the National government abolished the Public Broadcasting Fee and began funding NZOA from ministerial budget (initially the Ministry of Broadcasting, then the Ministry for Culture and Heritage). Under this model, the amount being funded annually was subject to change.
operates, local drama is still produced. But she, along with economist Brian Easton (1997) concur that the high cost of drama production combined with the commercial imperatives explicit in the corporate culture of New Zealand broadcasting and implicit in NZOA’s culture has quelled the spirit of experimentation identified with local drama in the 1970s and subsequently encouraged more editorial interference from network executives. “Nervous about devoting lucrative primetime slots to untested concepts, and responsible for ratings performance of new programmes in ‘their’ schedules, network programmers were far more likely to have input into key aspects of drama development” (Dunleavy: 223). The criticisms aimed at NZOA focuses on the structural failings of the model: for example Cocker describes NZOA’s structure as “simplistic and inadequate” (54), however the general objects of NZOA as a mechanism to fund and produce local content is generally endorsed among these commentators. Thus the perspective exists that a more structurally-sound gatekeeping model would provide an intervention into the commercial mediascape and that this model would serve a democratic function.

Arguments presented by Horrocks, Cocker, Dunleavy and Peter Thompson (2003) support the notion that mass public service broadcasting is intrinsically culturally significant and therefore should not be treated as a commodity. I contend however, that public broadcasting (as it exists in the mass broadcasting model) will always be ideologically compromised owing to the relationship between broadcasting and the state, the model of one-to-many broadcasting and, in the case of NZOA, the similar objectives between an inclusive/representative national culture and the fundamental elements of
neoliberal economics. The argument that markets are inherently corrupting influences on the media and, conversely, that the state represents a partisan alternative, is a commonly held position in media studies (Claassen, 2011: 66). However as the work of McChesney (1999) and O’Malley (1994) point out, issues of political interference and funding instability are common in all public broadcasting systems around the world. O’Malley observes that even in the case of the BBC model where editorial freedom and economic independence are guaranteed under a Royal Charter, the Corporation is still subject to political pressure, often exerted through funding decisions and ministerial reviews of broadcasting operations. A significant example being the findings of the Peacock Committee in 1986, the recommendations of which followed closely the monetarist agenda promoted by the then Conservative government (O’Malley 1994: 34; Tracey 1998: 114). I suggest therefore that political neutrality is non-existent in the production of culture. Through the employment of various measures (political pressure, the manipulation of administrative and/or funding models) media/broadcasting services will eventually acquiesce to the prevailing political ideology. Whilst the BBC example alludes to a degree of direct political coercion, the technological and institutional characteristics of mass broadcasting also contribute to its ideological function.

Following Anthony Smith (1973), mass broadcasting (in its conventional, ie non-digital, form) is a product of the industrial mass society. This relates to the technological apparatus and expertize required to developing the necessary equipment and infrastructure, but also the conducive cultural and political environment and its influence of the mass psychology of the newly
industrialized society. “While power came more and more to depend, or to the thought to depend, on the will of the mass public, the psychological distance between the government and the political elite grew greater” (Smith, 1973: 26-7). Smith’s argument is based on the single-channel system and the political influence of the one-to-many model. But all mass media systems are, to varying degrees, based on the logic of political expediency and will always function as an ideological apparatus (I take up this issue further in Chapter Four). As discussed in Chapter One, this accord between broadcasting culture and state ideology is readily identifiable when the single channel monopoly system is the object in question. This position was problematized during the 1970s and the ‘culture of struggle’ owing to that period’s cultural environment and the particular set of political and historical circumstances. But the deregulation of broadcasting resulting in the fragmentation of the mediasphere altered the institutional environment and with that the way culture was produced and disseminated.

**NZOA perpetuates ‘liquid’ culture**

In New Zealand, the process of deregulation and the subsequent emergence of multiple broadcasting outlets, combined with the establishment of NZOA mandated to produce culturally significant local material, has resulted in the commodification of national culture. As I have noted, NZOA is mandated to operate within the wider economic logic of the commercial mediasphere, even if this is at odds with the originating ethos of NZOA as an institution. This objective of reaching a broad audience combined with the stipulation to represent diversity means the raison d’etre of NZOA is to find and appease new audiences.
Returning to Bauman, the organizational method associated with NZOA exemplifies a stage of 'liquid' culture where hierarchical form is replaced with a readily adaptable and constantly changing version of cultural identity. Bauman applies the term “seduction” (16) to this cultural process, as he combines the drive towards constant adaptability to the logic of the market. What links the 'culture of seduction' with the 'culture of struggle' is the de-centering of colonial/cultural hierarchies. Therefore, converse to Stuart Hall’s point that identity politics constitutes a progressive movement forward towards the future goal of self-identification, as he says “we are always on our way to it, and when we get there, we will at last know exactly who it is we are.” (Hall, 1997: 42), there is no totalizing objective to 'liquid culture' except the desire to fulfill the needs of the market. But as in all commercial enterprises, this objective must never be permanent because to ultimately satisfy a market would signal its demise. Therefore, the market, like the product being sold, exists in a constant state of re-invention.

What makes modernity 'liquid', and thus justifies the choice of name, is its self-propelling, self-intensifying, compulsive and obsessive 'modernization', as a result of which, like liquid, none of the consecutive forms of social life is able to maintain it shape for long. 'Dissolving everything that is solid' has been the innate and defining characteristic of the modern form of life from the outset; but today, unlike yesterday, the dissolved forms are not to be replaced, and nor are they replaced, by other solid forms – deemed 'improved' in the sense of being even more solid and 'permanent' than those that came before them, and so even more resistant to melting. In the place of the melting, and so impermanent, forms come others, no less – if not more – susceptible to melting and therefore equally impermanent. (Bauman, 2011:11-12)
Here the notion of *culture*, in either the Enlightenment or Bourdieuean definition, is transformed from a set of practices based on a prescribed values to one based around the fulfillment of new and individual needs: a transition from culture being informed through the mechanisms of the state to those of the market and in doing so, create a sense of never-ending un-fulfillment.

The function of culture is not to satisfy existing needs, but to create new ones – while simultaneously maintaining needs already entrenched or permanently unfulfilled. It's chief concern is to prevent a feeling of satisfaction in its former subjects and charges, now turned into clients, and in particular to counteract their perfect, complete and definitive gratification, which would leave no room for further, new and as yet unfulfilled needs and whims. (17)

What is significant here is the impulse towards constant adaptability of the cultural production (that drives ‘liquid’ culture) does not equate to a lack of controls or limits on how culture is depicted. The forces that motivate culture have shifted from political and ideological power to commercial power. So, while the function of ‘liquid’ culture is to change to suit different markets, it is also commodified and packaged.

*The state and the commodification of national identity*

NZOA’s role in the commodification of New Zealand cultural identity occurs in two ways. Firstly, through the linkages made between the state’s operation and the production of culture. Secondly, a commercial and contestable funding system such as NZOA promotes a benign and attractive form of cultural representation that serves to erase/ignore social, economic and political problems in order to appease the mainstream audience. In this context the use
of the term ‘commodification’ refers to manipulating the representation of national identity in a bid to transform that representation into a marketable entity. This was exemplified in 2010 TVNZ ran a significant network promotion campaign coinciding with the 50th anniversary of local television transmission. The campaign labeled ‘50 years of NZTV’ (depicted in the same graphic style as TVNZ’s logo) consisted of clips from numerous programmes from previous decades and self-congratulatory comments from current and previous television stars and other public figures. Although the campaign ran for over two months, TVNZ produced only limited programming to commemorate the anniversary. The centerpiece of TVNZ commemorate campaign was a two-hour trivia game show called *Cheers for 50 Years* that screened on June 1, 2010. The programme received much criticism for trivializing what some regarded as a significant cultural moment for New Zealand (Gibson, 2010). The response from TVNZ spokesperson Andi Brotherston was indicative of the present corporate environment in which the network operated. She told the *New Zealand Herald* that while the network received mixed reviews of the programme what was important was the excellent ratings. “She said staff thought carefully about the format and decided a trivia show would be more entertaining than a chronological trawl through old clips – many of which were slow-paced by today’s standards. ‘If it was poor, people wouldn’t have stayed with it. People don’t stay watching terrible television’” (Gibson, 2010).

Situating this process in the context of Bauman’s theoretical framework, commodification of national identity follows the transition from ‘solid’ to ‘liquid’ culture by virtue of finally removing those ideologically problematic aspects of
cultural identity such the violence enacted on Māori through the process of colonialism, to be replaced with a surface veneer of a commodified national narrative. Similar perspectives on contemporary cultural production and consumption have been expressed by scholars of the postmodern, for example Fredric Jameson’s analysis of the degradation of the barriers between high and popular culture (functioning to remove the historical and cultural significance of high culture (Jameson, 1991: 4) facilitated by consumerism and the savvy practices of marketers. Although NZOA is part of a modern political tradition of state sponsorship of culture, the ongoing collusion between the local content, public broadcasting and national culture (all of which feature in the rhetoric surrounding NZOA) serve to camouflage NZOA’s role in promoting a commodified version of New Zealand national identity.

In taking his example from post-revolution France, Bauman obverses the role of state patronage and collating of cultural products in the promotion of dominant ideology and the process of nation building. “It was through an integrated cultural programme that the conglomeration of local traditions, customs, dialects and calendars inherited from feudal fragmentation was to be unified into a modern state” (Bauman: 98). The role of cultural production and the state’s support for certain cultural forms has been examined in key works about nation building and colonialism such as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1991) and Tony Bennett’s *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (1995). Bauman notes the shift from the politics and rhetoric of patronage, to that of colonial conquest and to representation and inclusion of diversity. Using the French state as his model, Bauman observes this third phase
in the state-culture relationship became part of the modern state machine in the 1950s when the de Gaulle government established a Ministry for Culture (98). This created an uneasy predicament for artists and purveyors of culture who aspire to critique their political environment. State sponsorship makes artists dependent on the state and the development of specific criteria – beginning with the establishment of ministries of culture, but refined further into a plethora of cultural policies and their associated objectives – subsequently becoming transformed into guidelines that all artists must comply with if they are to continue to be funded. Drawing on the notion of ‘culture industry’ examined by Adorno and Horkheimer in Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944) Bauman describes the paradoxical relationship between the creators of culture and their state administrators.

As Adorno suggests, administration’s innate suspiciousness towards the natural insubordination and unpredictability of art cannot but be a constant casus belli for artists; on the other hand, as he does not fail to add, creators of culture cannot get through without administration if, loyal to their vocation, and wishing to change the world (for the better if at all possible), they want to be heard and seen, and as far as possible, heard out and noticed. The creators of culture have no choice, says Adorno: they must live with this paradox on a daily basis (105-6).

The paradox that Adorno identifies and which Bauman takes up articulates the relationship the creation of culture and the state. This is useful to underscore the operations of public service broadcasting in the contemporary New Zealand environment.

The ideals established by public broadcasting pioneers such as Reith in the UK, Hans Bredow in Germany and James Shelley in New Zealand envisaged a
form of enlightening media existing beyond the reach of political or economic forces (Tracey 1998: 11). Contemporary commentary on the purpose of public service broadcasting note the role of role of critique as representative of a functional democracy (McChesney 1999: 226; Dunleavy & Thompson, 2012) and that this form of media must be editorially and economically independent in order to operate effectively. Despite the prevalence of these ideals, in New Zealand there is collusion between political and economic forces that has promoted a particular form of public broadcasting that diminishes the critical function in favour of a form of local broadcasting that represents social diversity.

Public broadcasting can be placed in the same category as Bauman’s reference to art, he maintains that a significant shift has occurred in the relationship between the state and the art community in the final third of the twentieth century.

Something has changed in the last few decades in the situation of art and its creators: first, the nature of managers and administrators currently in charge of art or aspiring to that position; secondly, the means they use to achieve it; third, the sense given by the new breed of managers to the notion of ‘functionality’ and ‘usefulness’ they expect of art and which they use to tempt it and/or make demands on it (108).

The reference here is towards the commercialization of the artistic realm. Bauman describes this process of categorization and subsequent commercialism as “ill-disposed to the natural non-functionality, unruly spontaneity and intractable independence of creation” (108), illustrating further the paradox that the state policy and funding that is keeping art alive is also altering its purpose.

It is important to note that broadcasting (unlike traditional artistic pursuits) is a
significant industry requiring large scale infrastructure and capital input.

Nonetheless, the usefulness of the analogy lies in identifying that the process of commodification also functions to erode any ideologically problematic messages from cultural material. What Bauman has observed in recent decades (a time period corresponding to the rise of neoliberal politics around the world) is a weakening of the antagonism between artists and administrators. Now the relationship between the artist, the administrator and the consumer has become seamless and the underlying economic imperative is an accepted aspect in the gatekeeping procedure. Responding to Andy Warhol’s quote that "making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art" (cited in Bauman: 109), Bauman writes:

The temptation offered by heads of operations of the consumer market – specialists, in other words, in increasing demand in step with supply – consists of a promise that under new management those two statements will no longer be contradictory: the new bosses will ensure that people feel the need to possess (and pay for) precisely what artist want to create, and that the practice of art will become ‘good business’. The coercion, on the other hand, consists of the fact that from now on the will of the new authorities will dictate which artistic creations there will be demand for and which kind of creativity will become ‘good business’, that best art of all – an art at which art marketing experts best masters of the brush or the chisel hands down (109).

Applying this argument to state broadcasting, programme makers now modify their objectives to suit the market and the state (represented in this context by NZOA), because the impetus of public broadcasting to examine and critique contemporary culture - that arguably reached a high point during the 'culture of struggle' - is no longer palatable to networks or viewers. In this capacity, much of the programming produced by NZOA serves an ideological purpose: to represent New Zealand society to itself in an attractive and politically
unproblematic way. However occasionally one element of this cycle becomes problematic and the ideological foundations on which this process is based are disrupted. In the case of the 2011 documentary *Inside Child Poverty*, reaction to the programme’s critical narrative served to highlight to coercive relationship between the government and NZOA.

**NZOA Programming: Inside Child Poverty vs This Town**

In 2011 the political neutrality of NZOA and the specter of political interference in state broadcasting was raised surrounding the airing of the documentary *Inside Child Poverty: A Special Report*. The one-hour documentary was produced by journalist Bryan Bruce with funding of NZ$105,400 from NZOA\(^6\) and screened on TV3 on Tuesday November 22 at 7.30pm, four days prior to the 2011 general election. Although Bruce described the documentary as “a-political” (Mullord: 2011: 1) the argument he presents, that free-market policies (a political agenda adhered to by the National government) are dominant factors in New Zealand’s poor child health record suggests otherwise. The publicity for the documentary states:

> Bruce begins his journey in East Porirua, just 15km from Parliament, it has the highest rate of rheumatic fever in the country - a disease of poverty. After interviewing teachers, parents and local doctors, Bruce discovers what the free market economy has done to the health of children living in lower income families. Skin infections and respiratory illnesses he found are rife.

> “And it’s not because their parents don’t care. They do. They’re just poor. Typically they can’t afford heating so they huddle together in

one room and in large families that’s how diseases such as tuberculosis, meningitis and rheumatic fever are spread,” he explains.

Bruce then travels to Sweden to find out why the Swedes are second for child health and New Zealand is third from the bottom.

“What I discovered is that they work smarter,” says Bruce. “They know that for every dollar they spend on prevention they save about $4 on cure. They have a completely free health care system for children up to the age of 18” (TV3, 2011).

In the week following the election (won by the incumbent right-of-center National Party) it became public that the NZOA board was critical of TV3 for airing the documentary so close to the general election. Media commentator Tom Frewen reported that NZOA board member Stephen McElrea (who is closely associated with the National Party through his role as electorate chairman of Prime Minister John Key’s Helensville electorate) questioned NZOA chief executive Jane Wrightson as to her knowledge of TV3’s scheduling decision (Frewen: 2012). Frewen reports that other board members and NZOA executives including Wrightson expressed disappointment at TV3 for screening the programme, arguing that documentary risked “damaging NZ on Air’s reputation and calls into question our political impartiality” (Frewen 2012). The notion of political neutrality here is problematic as the complaints generating from McElrea and other board members are also underpinned by a political motive. In this respect, public broadcasting as it has been institutionally configured cannot fully provide a critical or democratic service (I take up this issue in Chapter Four).

The discussion held in the wake of the Inside Child Poverty documentary is evidence that the forms of broadcasting encouraged by the NZOA model tend
towards the ideologically acquiescent depiction of New Zealand life and culture. Furthermore, the discourse surrounding the documentary highlights the problematic definition of public service broadcasting. The various maxims associated with public service broadcasting can be interpreted to include programming espousing social and political advocacy. Among these is the Riethian tenant to ‘educate and inform’, or, as Michael Tracey writes, the “public service broadcasting is broadcasting in the public interest in as many ways as the public may in effect demand” (1998: 21). But these stipulations only function by compliance of network executives and, ultimately, the state. Graham Murdock (cited in Dunleavy, 2008) adds that political and economic autonomy is a principle element in public service broadcasting “specifically broadcasting’s maintenance of an appropriate distance from both the state and commercial sector as major centers of institutional power” (Dunleavy: 797). Such a stipulation would have insulated TV3 and NZOA from the criticism of the Inside Child Poverty documentary. But this would also require the state’s approval to establish this type of legislation. The notion of an impartial public service broadcaster is therefore, problematic and made more so in New Zealand’s commercial mediascape. Although NZOA is the primary facilitator of the programme, Inside Child Poverty was a rare example of critical journalism being funded by the agency and can thus be viewed as an anomaly. The programme contrasted with much of the material funded by NZOA, such as the 2011-2012 documentary series This Town (screened on TVNZ in 2013) that provides a

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62 Frewen notes that most programming occupying the Inside Child Poverty timeslot (Tuesday, 7.30pm) had been dedicated to the ‘reality police’ genre including Drug Bust and the imported series Kalgoorlie Cops. (Frewen, 2011)
benign and ideologically unproblematic representation of New Zealand society and culture.

This Town is an eight-part series funded with NZ$748,456 by NZOA and screened by TVNZ on Saturday evenings at 7.30pm. The network describes the series as a:

Show that looks at small towns in Heartland New Zealand focusing mostly on the people that live in these towns. Each week will look at small towns in a different area of New Zealand (TVNZ/This Town).

Each episode focuses on the inhabitants of a particular small town and is surrounding region in New Zealand’s rural ‘heartland’. Among the areas featured include The Central Plateau (central North Island); Wairarapa;
Cambrian on the Maniototo Plain; the Chatham Islands; and central
Canterbury. The series style is lyrical and light-hearted with significant
cinematographic care brought to the documentary subject. The episodes
comprise interviews with the narrative theme being the quality of lifestyle each
town provides. *This Town* is one of several similarly themed NZOA-funded
series screened in the same timeslot, including *North* (2012), *South* (2011),
*Coasters* (2009/11), and *Hunger for the Wild* (2007/8), with each of these
programmes presenting New Zealand society and culture in an idealized
bucolic light. Whilst the highly affected and sympathetic portrayal of the New
Zealand society displayed in *This Town* does comply with the Broadcasting
Act’s stipulation for NZOA to “reflect and develop New Zealand identity and
culture by – (i) promoting programmes about New Zealand and New Zealand
interests” (Broadcasting Act, 1989: 33). On the other hand, the representation
of social and ethnic diversity portrayed in *This Town* does not engage with
numerous economic or social issues facing the sectors of society being
portrayed.

**This Town and the Idealized Construction of Rural New Zealand**

*This Town* constitutes a form of national representation that can be
situated within the aesthetic and cultural framework of ‘liquid’ culture. The
aesthetic quality of the series both represents and problematizes recent
economic and cultural conditions of rural New Zealand. For example, in the
episode featuring the small towns of the Central Plateau (Waiouru, Okakune
and Raetihi) in the central North Island, the narrative describes the area’s
economic degradation and the many government services that have been disestablished over the past two decades. Furthermore, the stories told by two of the town’s inhabitants, Duncan and Leonie, also overtly express a loss of prosperity. Duncan who describes himself as “grandfather of 31 and great-grandfather of a few”, discusses the services and businesses that have abandoned the town in recent years. His narrative is spoken over images of him riding a horse along broad deserted streets lined with empty shops or surrounded many his many young grandchildren. Duncan’s story intersects with that of Leonie who owns an art gallery and gift shop in Raetihi. Noting that her shop is one of the few businesses operating in the town, Leonie goes on to recount how she also uses the gallery as a space for free art classes for the town’s children given the lack of options available to them. The children who are shown coming into the gallery and using the art supplies gifted by Leonie are Duncan's grandchildren and they state how good it is to have something to do during the day. Thus the episode makes explicit the economic decline of the region, but also implies an element of social poverty represented by Duncan’s bored mokopuna (grandchildren) with respite from their boredom coming only through Leonie’s charity. Despite this narrative, the overall aesthetic qualities of the programme tend towards an idealized representation with significant cinematographic care taken over of the depiction of each place, with people and spaces filmed in an overly stylized manner to enhance and beautify the images. Furthermore, the narrative is also contradictory insofar as the

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64 This Town does not employ external narration or use a host. Instead various inhabitants of each town talk about their lives, sometimes directly to the camera or else as a voice over to other images. The subjects are identified by first name only.

65 See This Town: episode 7, series 1 – Central Plateau.
expression of economic poverty is situated against a competing narrative (voiced by most of the series’ interviewees) that argues that where they live offers a great deal of personal freedom and fulfillment. Although the perspectives are competing in the narrative, the overall tone of the series offers a highly favourable perspective on its subjects, depicting the towns as bucolic and rustic, and their inhabitants as the epitome of the self-reliant, good-natured ‘kiwi’ man or woman.

This Town exemplifies the ideological function of NZOA in terms of incorporating the state’s agenda into the cultural narrative of rural New Zealand. While the representative aspect of the series concurs with NZOA’s public service objective, but the overtly ideological depiction of rural communities constitutes a disingenuous reading of the New Zealand condition. Such a depiction – in a text celebrated by both the funding agency and the state broadcaster – exemplifies NZOA’s role to depict diversity of life in New Zealand. On one level this role complies with the typical mandate of a public service broadcaster (see the Broadcasting Research Unit’s guidelines in the Preamble of this thesis), but the comparison between only goes so far. The
commercial imperative and the related imperative to maximize the size of the audience for specific programmes, restricts the forms of programming that may be produced. Programming and only provides a space for minority voices (as stipulated in the BRU’s guidelines) within a particular ideological context. The diversity offered by texts such as *This Town* are arguably equitable to the cultural violence perpetuated on Māori in the colonial period, this is the violence of a benign and de-politicized inclusion that draws on a number of familiar and comfortable narrative tropes in order to encourage identification from a diverse audience.

Following Nick Perry (1994) *This Town* evokes a common narrative of ‘rural-ness’ that continues to be perpetuated in the mainstream formation of New Zealand cultural identity. On one level, the portrayal of a rustic and bucolic rural environment functions to disguise the economic marginalization suffered by rural communities as a consequence of successive governments’ free market policies since the 1980s (Jesson 1999; Janiewski & Morris 2005). Furthermore the constant incorporating rural tropes into the discourse of national identity reiterate New Zealand’s current and past economic policies (based primarily on land use), implicit in which is the legitimization of colonial

66 Among these include the removal of farming subsidies in 1985; the decision by the Labour government (1984-87) to re-structure the postal service leading to the closure of many rural post offices and corporate amalgamations in the banking sector in the 1980s leading to the closure of many rural bank branches. The effects of global consumer behavior, currency fluctuations, and demographic changes leading to the consolidation of the meat industry, once a significant source of employment in the rural sector. The restructuring of education services by successive governments resulting in the closure and consolidation of a number of rural schools, the ongoing effects of currency values on the export industry, and the marginalization of the rural sector in broadband services.
conquest. Writing specifically about the long-running primetime magazine programme *Country Calendar* (a text which occupies similar ideological territory as *This Town* and shares the same early Saturday evening timeslot) Perry writes:

The vernacular celebration and documentary form of the popular *Country Calendar* depends upon a construction of the rural which is a collage of British antecedents, media-specific conventions, local inflections, particular social interests and material constraints. This is in no way intended to detract from *Country Calendar*’s achievements; on the contrary, it is a testimonial to it (Perry 1994: 49).

*This Town* is more aesthetically lyrical than *Country Calendar* and when considering that over the ensuing two decades New Zealand has become a more urbanized society than it was even in the 1990s, *This Town* represents an intensification of the media’s ideological function identified by Perry earlier.

![Figure 3.5: Duncan and his mokopuna (grandchildren) from *This Town*](image)

The two NZOA-funded productions *Inside Child Poverty* and *This Town* portray their subject matter is markedly contrasting ways. Whilst each programmes conform to different generic and narrative conventions, they are
also linked by the similar thematic concern of the relationship between environment and the individual in a specific New Zealand context. *Inside New Zealand* is an example of critical and journalistic programme making that problematizes, rather than affirms, the dominant economic and cultural ideology and in this respect fulfills the requirement that public service broadcasting represent a diversity of viewpoints (Dunleavy & Thompson, 2012). The text is significant however because it was both exceptional in New Zealand’s broadcasting climate and because the subject matter and style was deemed politically contentious. In contrast, *This Town* is a contemporary example of a programming form common in New Zealand’s broadcasting history. The celebration of rural-ness derived from both the colonial mythology and the ongoing primacy of the rural sector to the national economy has long been the cornerstone of conventional national identity (Phillips 1987; Perry 1994) and this tradition is continued here. However as *This Town* also represents a separate sub-genre of rural lifestyle programming, the series has additional ideological consequences. Contrasting with feature documentaries examining similar political concerns, such as Alister Barry’s *In a Land of Plenty* (2002) and *Kaikohe Demolition* by Florian Habicht (2004) that explicitly articulate an anti-neoliberal narrative, *This Town* implies but ultimately dismisses any protest function in favour of affirming the cultural, political and economic status quo.

The rarity of *Inside Child Poverty* and the ubiquity of programming such as *This Town* serve to illustrate the programing favoured by the current institutional model, notably the influence of NZOA. As I argue, as a mechanism of successive free-market-orientated governments, NZOA complies, rather than
problematizes, the commercial imperatives driving the local mediscape. The necessity to take commercial elements into account is a fundamental element in NZOA’s gatekeeping criteria, but so to are issues of inclusion, representation and diversity. Programming such as *This Town* function to satisfy both aspects of NZOA’s agenda, but the resulting programming represents a commodified version of New Zealand national culture. For Bauman commodification constitutes an advanced step in the development of a ‘liquid’ modern culture, where the ideological constructs associated with colonialism, industrialization, urbanization, post-colonialism are subsumed into an un-contentious imaginary that posits as representation.

For Bauman, the transition from ‘solid’ to ‘liquid’ modernity relates to the relationship between culture and forms of governance and sovereignty. Bauman situates his own theory of ‘liquid’ culture within wider concept of postmodernism, notably the impact on cultural entities of the forces of late capitalism. Thus the cultural hierarchies that developed around the construction of a colonial nation state were eroded, firstly though the de-centering influence of identity politics, and later via the transition from national to trans-national forms of economic and cultural governance.

When situated through Bauman’s theory, the commodification of culture serves to transform national identity from something exclusive, finite and closed to interpretation (as is apparent in the ‘solid’ culture promoting the colonial ideology), to a narrative that is both inclusive and adaptable. For Bauman what defines ‘liquid’ culture is not its political structure but its resilience in the
market. Here the constructed narrative of New Zealand becomes a seductive object that adapts particular tropes (the colonial past, biculturalism, its industry and means of income, the perceived character traits of its inhabitants, or its geography) to appease the largest audience; a process that is at heart of 'liquid' culture. In this environment the ideologically problematic aspects of New Zealand's history and culture have been stripped from the national narrative. Whilst such programming is, in itself, legitimate as part of a commercial genre; NZOA's output could not be defined as providing public service material, despite public service objectives being part of NZOA's mandate. In conclusion, both the institutional forms of New Zealand broadcasting and the programming produced by those institutions can be perceived as part of 'liquid' culture (constituted via postmodern culture and a neoliberal economic agenda). Free-to-air broadcasting is therefore solely the provision of a commodifying logic. This situation is compounded by the lack of will demonstrated by successive governments towards establishing any separate public service channels (see the Preamble to this thesis). These conclusions, however, are framed through the paradigm of conventional broadcasting. The potential of digital broadcasting is to disrupt the economic and institutional constraints inherent in conventional systems, and in doing so the possible fragmentation of the national audience may change the articulation of the national collective.

In the following chapter I examine the potential of digital and internet-based technologies to provide a platform for public service media. In doing so, I change the theoretical model: from Bauman's notion of 'liquid' culture to an approach based on the Habermasian public sphere as this new theoretical
framework is, I suggest, more suited to examining the participatory potential of digital broadcasting. Central to my argument is that the institutional models employed in the provision of broadcasting in New Zealand have always been subject to various political forces. Whilst the representation of ethnic and cultural diversity may have increased through the transition from a ‘solid’ to ‘liquid’ culture, the conventional broadcasting model remains essentially an exclusive entity. These constraints are primarily technological, but the restrictions of technology have been intensified through successive political agendas and broadcasting policy. The participatory potential of digital broadcasting could radically alter the institutional and broadcast/reception paradigms of broadcasting. In examining this potential my objective is also to investigate ways to retain the sense of a national collective that is fundamental to public service broadcasting. In doing so I discuss the concept of “public commissioning” (Hind, 2010: 158) as a means of combining the novel industrial and economic approaches provided by digital technologies, the community ethos driving public service media and the communicative potential of internet technologies.
Chapter Four

Public broadcasting in the digital era.

Chapters One to Three of this thesis have examined how political, cultural and economic factors have influenced both New Zealand’s broadcasting policy and output of local programming since the beginning of the state-owned broadcasting model. Drawing from Bauman’s analysis of the relationship between the construction of culture and the dominant global economic and political agendas of the twentieth century, I have separated the development of New Zealand broadcasting into three cultural phases: the culture of the setter colony; the culture of struggle; and ‘liquid’ culture in the era of deregulation. Central to Bauman’s thesis is the transition from ‘solid’ culture, what he describes as “culture at the service of the status quo” (Bauman 2011: 11), to ‘liquid’ culture, described as “fashioned to fit individual freedom of choice and individual responsibility for that choice” (12). The pathway between these two forms has been shaped by the advancing politics and economics of globalization and neoliberalism where particular cultural practices have been commodified and exported.

The ‘liquid’ culture environment is evident in two ways: in broadcasting’s administrative model; and in the formation and articulation of national identity. The de-regulation of New Zealand’s broadcasting environment in 1989 resulted in a significant change of status for Television New Zealand (TVNZ) with the state broadcaster now one of several competing entities in a
commercial mediasphere. Furthermore, the number of competitors increased significantly when non-terrestrial broadcasting became more prevalent from the mid-1990s onward. In this environment the task of creating and promoting the national narrative is no longer the role of broadcaster per se but is under the jurisdiction of contestable, trans-channel funding bodies NZOA and Te Mangaii Paho. Despite being established through the Broadcasting Act as a mean of delivering public service programming, I have concluded that commercial, rather than public service, ideals underpin NZOA’s gatekeeping process. This is due to NZOA’s primary stipulations being to maximize its audience and make cost-effective programmes, combined with the external influence of operating in the prevailing commercial mediascape.

This programming philosophy is enhanced by the strategic vision adopted by the organization’s board members who “consciously developed a vision for contemporary and forward-looking New Zealand PSB that valued accessibility, important to which would be TV programmes with broad appeal, and catering to the full range of age groups” (Dunleavy 2011: 115). The relationship between the mediated representation of national identity and market forces situates NZOA’s operations as an element of ‘liquid’ culture, defined by Bauman as:

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67 As I discussed in Chapter Three, the TVNZ Charter, in operation between 2003 and 2011, is the exception.

68 NZOA’s website sites the organization’s values as “innovation, diversity and skillful investment” with the latter category being further defined as “Cost-effective content reaching intended audiences” (www.nzoa/about.html)
The overwhelming demand for constant change (although, as distinct from the phase of the enlightenment, change without direction, or in a direction not established in advance). One might say that it serves not so much the stratification and divisions of society, as the turnover-orientated consumer market” (Bauman 2011: 13).

The objectives of NZOA are aligned with the general commercial imperative of TVNZ. State broadcasting in New Zealand has therefore always operated as a commercial entity with any public service component being marginalized compared with the state broadcaster’s principle fiscal responsibilities.

The formative elements of New Zealand broadcasting already discussed in this thesis result from the production and reception paradigms of terrestrial broadcasting. Here, the limited availability of spectrum and the prohibitive costs associated with developing the necessary infrastructure has meant that broadcasting has traditionally demanded significant investments. In numerous territories around the world – including New Zealand – this investment has initially been undertaken by the state.

A significant reason for the failure of NZOA to function as a public service provider relates to the restrictions caused by the administrative and economic systems inherent in terrestrial broadcasting. Since the early 1990s the influence of non-terrestrial broadcasting has increasingly altered the prevailing technological, economic and cultural elements associated with broadcasting. The proliferation of new channels through satellite, cable and digital modes of reception and the significant reduction in the cost of broadcasting through digital broadcasting structures have the potential radically ease accessibility to
production and broadcasting technologies. The purpose of this chapter is to speculate a possible future for public service broadcasting beyond the sphere of conventional broadcasting structures. The purpose of applying a Habermasian theoretical model is to illuminate the discursive and participatory potential of a digitally-based public broadcasting system. In addition I will expand on this discussion by adapting the concept of "public commissioning" (Hind 2010: 153) as a possible interactive funding and gatekeeping system that would constitute a material realization of the Habermasian framework.

As an alternative framework for public broadcasting, a system developed around a participatory public sphere would diminish the need for state gatekeeping. I acknowledge that for pragmatic purposes the construction of a public sphere does require some level of intervention and external funding. In the public commissioning model:

   citizens would, collectively and equally, make decisions about the allocation of resources to journalists and researchers. Each of us would be able to provide a certain amount of material support for projects that we wanted to see funded according to an agreed formula" (Hind, 2012: 158).

The concept centers on the notion of gatekeeping being taken out of the hands of commissioning editors (especially if they are state employees) and instead becoming part of a public referenda process. This demands greater public engagement than that required by conventional public service media. But I suggest that in the previous two decades the increased interactivity between the
public and mainstream media, made possible through digital platforms\(^69\), and the phenomena of social media has meant that a sense of empowerment through individual participation has already become part of a citizen's engagement with the wider civic community (Valtysson 2010; Moe 2012). I maintain therefore that an initiative such as public commissioning would be a natural progression in a citizen's civic role (adopted in a similar way to the act of voting).

The engagement of new production/reception systems for broadcasting material represents a change in the way culture is perceived. The application of Habermasian and neo-Habermasian theory in this chapter is an attempt to examine alternative systems that have hitherto not been possible through conventional models. The periodization apparent in Bauman’s theory thus illustrates the trajectory of conventional broadcasting systems. The theoretical frameworks examined in this chapter are part of a broader field of scholarship investigating cultural production (and how cultural production maybe evaluated) alternative to the hegemonic capitalist and global order. Concepts such as public commissioning may contribute to a wider political and economic movement that re-frames notions of democratic representation and the relationship between social justice and the media. In this respect, the concept has parallels with Fraser’s analysis of justice in the globalized world (2005) and Carroll’s examination of hegemony and counter-hegemony in the global sphere (2007). Fraser’s thesis engages with the idea of the possibility for economic, culture and political justice is what she describes as the “post- Keynesian-

\(^{69}\) By digital platforms I mean the increasingly normalized and expected interaction between audience and studio (through telecommunications and social media) in news and entertainment programming.
Westphalian\textsuperscript{70} world and thus to introduce elements of stability to the inherently unstable world of globalized capital. For Fraser, wider socio-cultural spheres (other than the economic) must be re-framed into a global perspective, as increasingly the boundaries of nation states have become unsuitable forms of delineation. In relation to this thesis, Fraser's work represents the experimentation of new public theories based on global political arrangements and the departure from conventional modes of governance and the possibility that individual or collective decision making can be conducted outside of national (or trans-national) institutions. Primarily this scholarship into the re-framing of national order concerns the possibility that counter-hegemonic activity can occur without a revolutionary disruption of the capitalist order. This is not to suggest that the concept of capital needs be totally absent from any possible counter-hegemonic model. Current models such as crowd-sourcing sites and now established concepts such as micro-funding especially for projects in the developing world are evidence of counter-hegemonic capitalism on which an economic platform for a participatory media could be based.

Formulating a new approach for public service broadcasting requires analysis across three fronts: technological, cultural and institutional. In defining the technological and cultural elements I begin by discussing the development of non-terrestrial broadcasting in New Zealand, notably the short-lived digital public service channels introduced early in the new millennium. I go on to examine the concept of public service broadcasting in relation to the culture of

\textsuperscript{70} Fraser’s reference is to the Keynesian welfare state and the Westphalian system of sovereign autonomous states that have been the dominant political and cultural mode of identity in the modern era.
New Zealand broadcasting. Here, drawing on media researcher Rutger Claassen’s 2011 analysis of the influence of the state in national media, I discuss the propensity in local media scholarship to perceive the state model as superior to other funding and institutional configurations. I conclude this chapter positing the concept of public commissioning as the central element to a new discursive and participatory form of public broadcasting based on the individualized interactivity of social media made possible by digital technologies.

**Non-terrestrial broadcasting in New Zealand since 1990**

The deregulation of New Zealand broadcasting in 1989 created the regulatory environment where new media forms could be developed. The availability of UHF spectrum and the dismantling of the state monopoly provided the technological and legislated framework necessary for the emergence of multiple new voices in the New Zealand mediasphere. Between 1990 and 2012 various non-terrestrial channels and networks have been established in New Zealand across a variety of platforms including UHF, satellite and digital media. As of 2012, the most significant of these networks is subscriber-based Sky, owned by News Corporation Limited that utilizes satellite and digital modes of reception. Sky’s multichannel network spans television genre, with the network owing the rights to most major sporting codes and fixtures including All Black and Super 15 rugby and domestic and international cricket as well as owing the rights to major overseas-based competitions such as British Premier League Football, the Australian National Rugby League Competition and all the major world tennis tournaments. Sky entered the New
Zealand market in 1990 and as of 2012 49 percent of New Zealand households subscribe to Sky\textsuperscript{71} (Laugesen, 2012: 35). Sky's dominance of the commercial non-terrestrial market has meant that the other channels have tended towards a smaller, regional focus, screening minority-interest material. These include FaceTV in Auckland (formally Triangle TV), CTV in Christchurch, and Channel 39 in Dunedin. Although these channels are funded through advertising revenue, they do perform a public service function by delivering non-mainstream, community-interest programming. These channels were originally broadcast via UHF frequencies with a regional or urban range, but much of the content can now be accessed globally via the internet.

TVNZ has made several attempts at exploiting the extended UHF, and later, digital spectrum since the government de-regulated broadcasting in 1989. These initiatives, all of limited success, have primarily carried public service-style content while being operated as commercial enterprises. In 1995 TVNZ launched the Horizon Pacific network of local channels broadcasting out of the four main centres. Although the initiative began amid the discourse of public broadcasting, “a retreat from the strong commercial focus demonstrated by TVNZ since 1989” (Horrocks, 1995: 184). Paul Smith (1996) however suggests the network functioned as a political mechanism to ease public and political

\textsuperscript{71} Sky's percentage of subscribers of the national audience is far in advance of other leading subscriber networks operating in comparable territories. Writing for the \textit{New Zealand Listener} Ruth Laugesen notes that the leading subscriber-based network in the United States has 19.5 percent of the national market, in Australia this is 27 percent, in the United Kingdom the figure is 37 percent and in Canada it is 18 percent.
opinion over the possible sale of TVNZ’s terrestrial component (1996: 92).

Horizon Pacific did begin with an impetus towards developing a national network of autonomous local channels and included the state purchasing the previously privately owned CTV in Christchurch to be part of the network. However none of the regional channels were profitable and TVNZ abolished the Horizon Pacific network in 1997.

Since 2000, digital, internet and mobile phone technologies have become more significant elements in the public broadcasting discourse in New Zealand, mirroring similar developments overseas. Alongside the augmentation of TVNZ and TV3 content through online services, such as OnDemand programming and additional news content, the digital media environment was expanded in 2007 with the launch of TVNZ 6: TVNZ’s first foray into non-commercial broadcasting. The establishment and funding of TVNZ 6 represented, in part, the 1999-2008 Labour government’s commitment to public broadcasting that also comprised the TVNZ Charter initiative. TVNZ 6’s original programming mandate targeted children’s material and documentary. The network’s digital presence expanded in 2008 when TVNZ 7 was established to broadcast news and current affairs material. The digital initiative and the content and programming philosophy was generally welcomed by media commentators (Brown, 2007; Norris and Pauling, 2008) as representing another attempt by the state to incorporate public service broadcasting into the free-to-air environment.
As a government-led project and funded by a combination of public money and cross-subsidization from TVNZ’s commercial terrestrial network, the role, programming and future of the digital channels have been subject to considerable political debate (see Brown 2013 for an overview). Government funding for the network was due to cease in 2012, and while the 2008 National government publicly supported the continuation of a digital platform for TVNZ, Broadcasting Minister Jonathan Coleman also stated the necessity for the network to be commercially-driven and profitable\(^2\) (2011). This quest for profitability resulted in a significant re-branding for TVNZ 6 in 2011. The channel’s name was changed to Channel U, with the focus of programming shifting from children’s to the youth audience. During its existence TVNZ 7 was much heralded by as a forum for public cultural and political debate (Dunleavy & Thompson 2011). However, by 2012, the government announced that funding for the channel would not be extended beyond the June 2012 date (as stated in

\(^2\) Also see the National Party’s broadcasting policy (quoted in the preamble) for a reiteration of this viewpoint.
Labour’s original proposal for the TVNZ digital network). The government argued that the channel was not popular enough to warrant further spending. The decision prompted protest and widespread discussion: media commentator and host of the TVNZ 7 talk show Media 7 Russell Brown questioned the credibility of the relevant statistics being quoted by the government; Victoria University media studies scholars Peter Thompson and Trisha Dunleavy penned and circulated a letter of protest to the government that was signed by 70 New Zealand media studies academics; and throughout May and June of 2012 a petition and series of public meetings organized by film maker Myles Thomas and Labour broadcasting spokesperson Clare Curran attempted convince the government to reserve their decision regarding the network. Despite gaining considerably public attention at the time, the government continued their agenda for TVNZ 7 and the channel was abolished on July 1, 2012.

The debate concerning digital broadcasting in New Zealand, especially that pertaining to public service broadcasting has remained predominantly situated within discourse of governmental and party politics. Although the advocates of TVNZ 7 regard their argument as counter-acting the prevailing

73 In February 8, 2012, Russell Brown wrote in his Public Address blog that the Minister of Broadcasting had been quoting TVNZ 7’s weekly audience at 207,000 viewers, and this low number was evidence that the government could no longer justify the annual $15 million operating cost for the channel. Brown stated that the figure had been taken from an editorial in the New Zealand Herald and was incorrect. “The cited 207,000 was a mystery. TVNZ does not report such a measure. [Ratings company]Neilson does not compile such a measure. AC Neilson New Zealand associate director Caroline Atford told our researcher Sam Mulgrew that the figure was ‘rubbish’.” (Brown, 2012). Brown suggested the Herald reached this figure through an accidental misinterpretation of the ratings data, with the more accurate figure being closer to 600,000 viewers.
commercialism of the New Zealand mediascape, the economic and cultural dominance of the state remains central to the discussion. As I will go on to examine, digital technologies, especially interactive internet-based platforms, have the potential to radically subvert these prevailing forms of production, broadcast and reception.

As I discussed in Chapters One to Three, the current broadcasting model is a product of technological and infrastructure systems and the prevailing economic and political environment. These elements contribute to the way debates relating to broadcasting have been formed, notably in relation to the essentialist notion of what constitutes ‘quality’ programming and the state’s responsibility to provide this programming. This issue was fundamental to the debate over TVNZ 7, but hails a paternalistic perspective that has its origins in a Reithian concept of the state’s role in the lives of individuals. Whilst the current broadcasting paradigm functions to perpetuate state power, considerable advocacy for the state broadcasting model has come from local media scholarship, with this ongoing advocacy founded on the historically contingent factors that underpin conventional broadcasting.

As a reaction to its precarious state of public broadcasting in the conventional model, especially one driven by commercial imperatives, media scholars defend the theory and practice of public service programming what Rutger Claassen describes as the “standard argument” (66), the essence of which

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74 As I have discussed in Chapters One to Three, the perpetuation of state power by the broadcaster occurs in both the ‘solid’ and ‘liquid’ cultural configurations.
is acceptance of the inextricable relationship between the state and public service media. The reliance on state mechanisms to provide and administer public broadcasting is partly a result on New Zealand’s broadcasting history, notably the period between 1936 and 1989 when the state owned and controlled the majority of radio broadcasting and all television broadcasting. The perceived failure of the de-regulated system to supply and protect public service broadcasting has influenced a strongly state-centric perspective to emerge in local media studies.

**Public Service, media scholarship and perpetuation of the ‘standard argument’**

Establishing a new approach to public service broadcasting demands a transition from a representative system to one based around the tenets of participation. In this context *representative* indicates public service programming produced through the conventional one-to-many broadcasting paradigm: specifically programming that is sanctioned and funded through state gatekeeping systems and represents the dominant ideology. The representative system is thus a product of the technological, political and economic limits that govern conventional broadcasting. In this system individuals may have little or no access to the modes of production inherent in the national mediasphere, but their interests are represented and mediated through prescribed systems. In order to map a theoretical transition from a representative model towards a participatory form of public service media it is useful to examine briefly its
historical development and the way the subject of state media has been taken up in scholarly debates.

The primary demarcation between the two models is the role of the state in the production of media culture. The modernist concept of public service broadcasting was developed as a means of representing a certain cultural narrative to a general audience. As I note in Chapter One in relation to the British broadcasting model, this was initially driven by middle class paternalism, with the Reith-era BBC taking over a reformist agenda from Victorian scholars such as Matthew Arnold (Briggs, 1985; Scannell & Cardiff, 1991). In the early decades of New Zealand’s state broadcasting network this paternalism manifest in cultural narratives that promoted a singular national identity in line with the values and beliefs of the settler society. Subsequently, political, cultural and economic policies have been equally influential in the formation of New Zealand’s mediascape leading to the present situation when commercial interests dictate the operations of TVNZ and NZOA.

This state-centric logic has been highly influential in the way media scholarship has taken up the issue of public service broadcasting. Media studies emerged in New Zealand in the late 1970s, heavily influenced by work conducted at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, notably the Marxist/Gramscian analysis of the ideological construction of media texts (see Wood 1982; Maharey 1982). However, since the adoption of a monetarist agenda by successive governments, scholarly debates have shifted from the critique of ideology to a defense of public broadcasting as an
intervention into the commercial mediascape. In this critical environment issues of content were secondary to concerns regarding levels and retention of state funding as a means to foster and promote national culture (Cocker 1994, 1998; Atkinson 2000) and a pervasive reiteration of the accepted tenets of public service broadcasting. As an overall objective, public service media should deliver programming designated to provide “merit good” to society (Aukett, 2003: 676). This is programming intended to educate and include the audience and be delivered to the audience regardless of market forces. The combination of merit good material, universality of access and the treatment of audience as citizens rather than consumers comprise the link between representational public broadcasting and democracy. However, this logic is increasingly at odds with commercial agendas that have come to dominate numerous national mediaspheres. This tension between universally accessible, merit good programming, and commercial programming has informed the debate over public broadcasting and contributes to what Claassen calls the “standard argument” employed in media studies in defense of public broadcasting.

Following Sunstein (2000), McChesney (2004) and Armstrong (2005), Claassen describes these predominant assumptions and conclusions as the “standard argument” (66), defining it as the argument that:

consumer preference should not determine what substantive media content is available in a society. Instead a preference-independent

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75 Defining terms for public service broadcasting differ slightly between individual states. For the purposes of comprising a general list of public service ideals I am using those identified by media scholar Graham Murdock in 1997. These are: autonomy; universal availability; programme diversity; innovation; mainstreaming; access (quoted in Dunleavy, 2008: 797).
normative theory has to be adopted, which requires the media to deliver a specific kind of high quality content, roughly equal to serious journalism, conducive to the well-functioning democratic process. The second, empirical, premise of the standard argument is that market-based media will fail to deliver the normatively required kind of media content. The conclusion is that some form of market-independent media provision is required (66).

In this capacity, the standard argument is paternalistic and representative as it is founded on the basis that state agents know, and are best to deliver, quality programming. The “normative claim” (Claassen: 67) of the standard argument is that programming deemed to be of good merit is of benefit to society. But advocacy of this principle is not without ideological problems as the definition of good merit is subjective and unquantifiable in all but a rudimentary form. For example, representation of diversity features in the NZOA stipulations, in the TVNZ Charter and is a significant element in the development of a multicultural articulation of New Zealand national identity (Kothari et al 2004). But the measurement and value of this representation, and the objectives such representation is designed to achieve, are unclear within the relevant legislation. Although visual representation can be measured in a quantifiable way, representation in the production systems, audience response and forms of subject matter is less simple to examine. The “standard argument” is, therefore, based on the concept of paternalistic public service media, and the propensity amongst local media scholars to adopt its elements is a result of the contemporary, commercially orientated media environment and the general lack of political or corporate interest in the provision of public service media.
The Emergence of a Changing Mediascape

Appraising the standard argument and examining the wider aspects of the representation system reveals the flaws in New Zealand’s public service media system. For example, the government’s control over funding for public service media (demonstrated in 2012 with the National government disestablishing funding for TVNZ 7) and the scarcity of available commercial airtime dedicated to non-commercial programming are evidence that, far from being a universally accessible tool of the democratic process, public service media in New Zealand is a limited and exclusive entity, the availability of which is dependent on a number of factors. Whilst the availability of digital broadcasting outlets and services such as OnDemand have gone some way to altering the temporal restrictions of the broadcasting schedule, the ideological limits of the representative system remain. The public service media system I am advocating is not designed to wholly replace the existing paradigm, but rather add a new element. The failings I have identified in the existing system relate to the production, broadcast and reception of democratic content. I argue that the one-to-many structure (the representative system) subjugates difference through rationalizing subjectivities to suit the representative order. This criticism suggests a place for representative programming remains in the form of educational, informative or entertainment material, with mechanisms such as NZOA still performing a useful function in the local mediascape.
The failure of conventional broadcasting systems to provide participatory or interactive element negates a significant aspect of broadcasting’s democratic potential. But as I have stated, new broadcasting technologies may go some way in resolving these failings. In a bid to articulate this potential new broadcasting paradigm in terms relating to a media studies discourse, I turn to a Habermasian analysis and draw on recent scholarship from Europe, where non-terrestrial broadcasting has been an aspect of the mediascape for a longer period than in New Zealand. The catalyst for European research being a range of social, political and economic factors including the formation of new sovereign states following the breakup of the Soviet Union, the effects of mass migration, the liberalization of trading zones and the de-regulation of national and trans-continental markets. Papathanassopoulos (2002), Iosifidis (2007) and Jones (2009) discuss the necessity, since the 1990s, for public service broadcasters to incorporate interactive technologies into their existing platforms and the relationship between the adoption of technologies and the changing economic and social order among states. In examining the changing objectives of broadcasters, Jones uses the analogy of the bookstore, observing that where once public broadcasting provided a “diverse product range satisfying both high and low brow taste and popular and elitist themes” (188). Now the liberalization of broadcasting environments, accompanied by interactive technologies, has meant that the consumer/audience, rather than the broadcaster, is the principal figure in programming decisions. For Jones the significant aspect here is the influence of market reforms on broadcasting. But this fragmentation also

\[\text{76 Jones’s analysis concerns public service broadcasting in the British context, notably the cultural change that occurred in the wake of the Peacock Report in}\]
signals a new paradigm where – if the consumer is now “sovereign”(188) – the state’s gatekeeping role may be subject to change. Despite differences in population and political makeup, New Zealand shares with Europe a growing uptake of interactive media technologies among media users due to increasing availability of broadband services and the nationwide switch to digital television reception. The existing funding and gatekeeping infrastructure has made some limited concessions to new media forms, notably NZOA’s Digital Media Fund that provides finance for digital/internet-based creative endeavors such as web series, apps and game development. The availability and uptake of interactive media technologies represent the emergence of a new paradigm for broadcasting made possible by the de-centering of sites of production and a democratization of production and consumption practices. These new media forms have been incorporated into existing audience cultures that accept interactivity as part of the viewing experience. At the heart of this developing culture is the shift from a collective subjectivity (inherent in the representative system) to a de-centered and individualized subjectivity.

1986 that advocated a more market-driven agenda for the BBC.

77 New Zealand on Air’s Digital Media Strategy was established in 2008. Its major projects being the Digital Content Partnership Fund that provides monies for projects allocated into five categories: new audiovisual content; as an aggregator for existing content; additional web support for broadcasting; streamed content for specialist audiences; and gaming (see: http://www.nzonair.govt.nz/DigitalMedia/DigitalMediaStrategy.aspx ). NZOA’s digital strategy also funds the NZ on Screen website (www.nzonscreen.co.nz) carrying local television video archive and information and original video interviews.
The public sphere and the failure of conventional mass broadcasting

Habermas’s concept of a public sphere as “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (Habermas, 1964: 49) has been a seminal influence on the discussion of public service broadcasting. This includes scholarship concerning the political consequences of public broadcasting (Dahlgren, 1995; Thomas, 2010), and since 2000, a growing body of scholarship has examined the potential of digital broadcasting to meet Habermas’s ideal public sphere (Gripsrud, 2009; Trenz, 2009; Valtysson, 2010). This recent scholarship is significant for, firstly, elucidating the possibility of a public sphere that circumvents the class-designated elitism that typified Habermas’s notion of a ‘bourgeois public sphere’; and, secondly, for demonstrating how a similar elitist perspective is apparent in the way public broadcasting has operated through conventional broadcasting.

For Habermas, the public sphere was a product of a particular political and cultural context, developing in Western Europe during the period of mass democratizing at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Participation in public debate, combined with civic knowledge and the ability to circulate and consume information was infused with what Andrew Edgar describes as the “late bourgeois subjectivity” (42), where the material affluence of the bourgeois – made up of “doctors, pastors, officers, professors and scholars” (Habermas, 1962/1989: 23) – combined with civic duty and the historic novelty of being able to influence governance decisions through discussion and critique. Habermas notes that this concept of the bourgeois public sphere is the product
of political forces and specific to a particular time and place: a “category typical of an epoch” (xvii). Here Habermas situates the public sphere as an element of the Enlightenment and thus drawing from a Kantian perspective that describes the process of man’s intellectual emancipation from the shackles of authoritarian order. For Kant’s the Enlightenment marked “man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is his inability to use one’s understanding without guidance from another” (Kant 1784: 112). But this intellectual emergence demands a rational subjectivity centered on a normative approach to the moral and intellectual good. But in order to possess the qualities of intellect and rationality, the bourgeois subject was materially privileged as to avoid being influenced by “life’s necessities” (Habermas, 1962/1989: 160), meaning the subject must be of private means with their critical faculties not hindered by changes in the political or commercial realms. In the historical context, it was the changing social, economic and political order of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that signaled the end of the bourgeois public sphere. This included the growing influence of capitalism in the lives of individuals, through corporatization of companies, the expansion of the wage economy and the commercialization and commodification of the material world (154). Additionally, the development of the modern welfare state functioned to further integrate the state into peoples’ lives. Thus, the politically and economically autonomous subject disappeared in the capitalist-orientated welfare states that came to dominate Western Europe during the twentieth century.
Habermas argues that the development of the mass media in the twentieth century contributed to the decline of the bourgeois public sphere because it both commercialized the public forum; and (notably in the case of broadcasting) demanded considerable capital input that, in many cases, necessitated the economic involvement of the state that problematized the public sphere as a space for rational and autonomous critique (186-7). Conversely, the concept of an idealized rational subject that would be representative of a politically neutral mode of critique has become an important metaphor in the discussion surrounding public service broadcasting in the latter decades of the twentieth century. In much of the political debate concerning the funding and legislation of public service broadcasting, the notion of political neutrality has often been framed within the polemic of 'state versus private enterprise'. However to frame the public broadcasting argument in such a way incorporates those very factors that Habermas states contribute to an erosion of the democratic principles of the public sphere.

Applying a Habermasian model to the mass media has been problematic as the institutional and technological frameworks of conventional broadcasting were at odds with the participatory ideals of the public sphere. This primarily refers to the limitations of the one-to-many broadcasting model, but also relates to the commodification of information since the beginning of the twentieth century. Whilst the press developed alongside the growing mercantile culture that spawned the economic and cultural conditions of the bourgeois public sphere (Habermas: 15), the expansion of trade and manufacturing and civil bureaucratic society resulted in the press becoming a representative voice for
vested interests (18-19). At this juncture, the burgeoning mass media and the public sphere operated in co-existence. But “since the middle of the nineteenth century, the institutions that until then had ensured the coherence of the public as a critically debating entity have been weakened” (162). This began with changing dynamics within the family unit resulting from the development of mass education. “When the family lost its link with the world of letters, the bourgeois salon that had complemented and partly also replaced the reading societies of the eighteenth century also went out of fashion” (163). Culminating in the establishment of mass electronic media when all facets of critical debate had become subject to commercial interests (164). Claassen summarizes Habermas’s critique by noting that the expanded influence of the media (fuelled both by the growing economic potential of the media, and by the democratizing potential of electronic communications) meant that it could never replicate the dynamics of the public sphere.

The underlying mechanism that Habermas identifies is that the standards of debate are lowered so that a broad audience has access, but what is has access to in no way resembles the original ideal of a public sphere in which participants discussed social and political issues freely. The market not only gave the masses economic access to cultural goods but ‘it also facilitated access for broad strata psychologically’. As a consequence, ‘this expanded public sphere, however, lost its political character to the extent that the means of “psychological facilitation” could become an end in itself for a commercially fostered consumer attitude’. When explaining why the media would want to transform the public sphere in the way described, Habermas refers to the advent of the ‘advertising business’ that in the course of the nineteenth century came to dominate the internal organization of the media. (Claassen: 70, quoting Habermas: 166,169, 184-88).
Habermas, therefore, attributes the failure of conventional media to replicate the public sphere to the limits of technology and economics. Given the period in which *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was written he might be forgiven for considering the mass media to be the closest approximation to the public sphere we might achieve. The development of interactive technologies has begun to counteract the one-way information flows that typified conventional broadcasting and alongside uptake of the relevant technology and its transformation into consumer practices and culture, corresponding theoretical models are being established. The potential for interactive participation between producers and consumers of media products in the digital environment suggests a correlation between the technological and cultural environment and an extension of the public sphere envisaged by Habermas.

*Models of the Mediated Public Sphere*

Habermas’s analysis of the public sphere is an element of scholarship relating to governance and is associated with the work of classical theorists Rousseau, Locke and Mill, Enlightenment thinkers Hegel and Kant; and those twentieth century thinkers such as Warren Lippmann and John Dewey whose work was a direct influence on Habermas (Ferree et al, 2002; Gripsrud, 2009; Dinu, 2011). In their 2002 article ‘Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies’ Ferree et al identify the four traditions of the public sphere as *Representative Liberal, Participatory Liberal, Discursive* and *Constructionist*.
(290), with each of these models relating to particular political, national and cultural contexts.

In relation to the application of the public sphere model to public broadcasting the primary differentiation I am making is between the representative liberal model and the participatory model(s). The ‘representative-liberal model’ is based on principle that the public sphere can operate without the total engagement of an active citizenry as an effective and transparent system of representatives make collective decisions and critique forms of governance on behalf of the people. This model most closely resembles the conventional mediascape as it has operated in the age of mass communication where experts, journalists, and politicians from across the political spectrum are charged with representing the concerns of the public. Such a system is a product of a democratic culture, but the selection of representatives is not democratic and the relationship between the content of the public sphere and the citizenry is contingent on notions of universal rationality of the parties involved as there is little means of recourse if the public sphere does not operate as intended by the citizenry. The way the ‘representative liberal’ model operates contrasts with ‘participatory’ forms of the public sphere, the key feature of which is citizens’ active and direct access to channels of public communication and egalitarian forums for unfettered discussion.
The Representative Model

The representative model of governance is most directly applicable to the everyday operations of modern democracy. Ferree et al (2002) states that although this concept acknowledges the ultimate authority of the citizenry, they do not directly participate in the public discourse on policy issues and have devolved the process of discussion and decision making to elected representatives that possess necessary expertise. Described as the “realist” school of democracy (290), the representative model accepts that a well-functioning democratic system needs only minimal participation from citizens. “Hence, it is both natural and desirable for citizens to be passive, quiescent, and limited in their political participation in a well-functioning, party-led democracy” (291). In this model, the public sphere operates as a space for informed citizens to examine and comment on issues of governance, but the ability to make decisions is limited to the communication and influence individuals may have upon their representatives (Trenz, 2009: 35). This system operates through multi-dimensional forms that ensure an even distribution and transparency of power. This transparency is necessary to separate the role of elected officials (with overt political and ideological allegiances) from that of the experts and bureaucrats whose job it is to keep business of governance functioning. Ferree et al use the term “experts” to describe those individuals who are active in the process but are not stakeholders and are, therefore, not motivated by achieving their own political gain. In the representative public sphere model the media is part of this broad contingent of experts (292). The
media operates to interpret and deliver information to the public in a way that is ideologically and politically neutral.

The development of a representative space where layers of discussion, interpretation and mediation lie between the citizenry and those in power whose decision affect the citizenry is part of the declining bourgeois public sphere that began with the rise of the mass media and state welfarism at the end of the nineteenth century. This transformation of the public sphere from a participatory to a representative space can be viewed as incorporating a political and ideological influence as the voices and opinions of the citizenry are mediated through institutional frameworks; but the transformation is equally indicative of how the public sphere has become broader in scope and more inclusive of difference. The representative public sphere, therefore, is a necessary product of the democratizing global culture, the system of representation providing a practical response to the demands of egalitarian cultural politics, evident, for example in the contemporary obligation for public broadcasting systems to represent minority groups on screen as a means of cultural and social inclusion. Despite being grounded in the cultural logic of identity politics, a criticism of the representative public sphere is the propensity for aspects of representation that should ideally remain neutral to become ideological tools of the dominant culture. Here there are two inter-related factors that are significant concerning the operations of the representative public sphere: proportionality of representation and establishing the perimeters of content.
State-funded public broadcasting provides an effective realization of a representative public sphere insofar as aspects of public accountability, recourse to comment and the right to representation are fundamental to the broadcaster’s links with the democratic process. Furthermore, those aspects that of the representative public sphere that have been criticized for limiting participation or facilitating a particular ideological perspective can also be leveled at public service broadcasting. These include establishing limitations on content due to proportionality and, with that the potential for the favouring of vested interests (Dalgren 1995). The public's awareness of the power imbalance in favor of the producers and broadcasters in the one-to-many broadcasting model has established an environment where the citizenry accepts their distance from the means of representation\(^78\), even when the language and logic of state public broadcasting affirms the notion of public ownership of the media. In his detailed and comprehensive examination of public broadcasting and the public sphere in New Zealand’s de-regulated mediasphere, Peter Thompson\(^79\) concurs that the application of a Habermasian framework to the conventional notion of public service broadcasting is an imperfect fit due to the primary significance of representation (as opposed to direct engagement) to the function

\(^{78}\) For the representative system to operate effectively requires systemic transparency to be matched with an informed public (Ferree, 2002; Thomass, 2010). The lack of possible critical input in the representative model functioned to decrease in public interest and led to a less-informed citizenry.

\(^{79}\) The paper being referred is ‘Last Chance to See? Public Broadcasting Policy and the Public Sphere in New Zealand’, Peter Thompson’s keynote address to the Media, Democracy and Public Sphere Conference, held 17 September, 2010.
of civil society. “Habermas’ emphasis on the facilitation of active engagement of citizens in political life through rational dialogue among themselves is close to the participatory model than the professionally-driven public service model” (Thompson 2010: 5).

**Participatory and discursive theory of the public sphere**

The participatory and discursive theories of the public sphere revolve around the value of “popular inclusion” (Ferree et al: 306) where the central concept is an active engagement of individuals (whether they be autonomous or as self-organized grass roots collectives) in the public sphere. The objective of this model is to create both a political community and develop a means of consensus through the direct involvement of the individuals and in this way. It contrasts with the institutional barriers to participation and expression typical of the representative-liberal model. While the representative-liberal model replicates the function of the contemporary democratic system, the participatory and discursive models are based on an idealized version of the relationships between the citizenry and the state.

The participatory/discursive models share a theoretical objective of incorporating individual and unfettered discussion into the operations of governance. This advocacy of an open public sphere sits at odds with the representative model, where the decision making process is influenced by ideological perspectives and conducted by select individuals (either elected or non-elected). The participatory/discursive model encourages an environment
based on self-government by facilitating an informed and politically-active citizenry. This informed collective would make decisions based on the ideals of shared responsibility (Ferree et al; Dinu 2011) and in this sense, the participatory/discursive models differ from the individualistic approach of participatory governance (examined in the work of Ulrich Beck) based on the notion that self-interest is the prime factor in all individuals’ decision making and as such, mechanisms to cater to this motive should be incorporated into the public sphere. Instead the participatory/discursive model demands that citizens acknowledge the value of social and cultural diversity and must situate themselves in the “same moral community” (Ferree: 303) where the values systems are shared throughout the public sphere. The retention of the moral community becomes problematic when ethical and moral issues are debated but Ferree et al suggest that appeals to reason and the formulation of arguments over dictatorial decision making that occur throughout contemporary public life, constitutes a material version of the participatory-discursive public sphere.

The principle point of difference between the participatory and the discursive models lies in the objective of decision-making. The focus of the participatory model is to establish an open public sphere, the creation of which will, in turn, function to inform, mobilize and educate the citizenry. This model demands wide social inclusion and adopts the notion that the airing of diverse (including polemic) viewpoints is a significant element in fostering an effective

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80 Ferree et al cite the public debate over abortion as one where participants often do not consider each other as sharing the same moral community (303).
81 The benefits or otherwise of overly polemic speech to the participatory public sphere are open to conjecture. Randall Kennedy (1998) advocates the public
democratic environment. Here the focus is on the act of participation rather than any instrumental decision making, with the concept of closure being symbolic of an exclusive political system. "Writers in this tradition also tend to be suspicious of calls for closure, seeing in such demands a means of pushing enduring structural conflicts of interest off the political table" (Ferree et al 2002: 299).

The discursive model diverges from the participatory model by demanding closure and resolution of issues as a primary objective, and here the model shares common ground with the representative public sphere (306). Ferree et al suggest the discursive model is closest to the Habermasian version of the public sphere, where both public discourse and the decision-making process can occur in an environment unhindered by the systemic hierarchies that historically accompany parliamentary-style democracies. This is not to suggest that the discursive models rejects systems of institutional representation outright, but rather that decision making of significant social issues must include actors from the social periphery as well as the political centre. In this respect, there is an emphasis on consensus as a political ideal and that consensus can be achieved through the effective establishment of a shared moral community, also described as “civility” (306) that is the product of open discussion between parties.

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sphere as a space for totally open expression of ideas; conversely Benjamin Barber (1984) is more critical of polemic speech as a hindrance to full participation.
The notion that the interactivity of digital media may function as a reconstitution of Habermas’s participatory public sphere has been explored by a number of media researchers (Wessler et al., 2008; Moe, 2010; Valtyssson 2010). As has been suggested by Valtyssson, the significance of ever-growing digital media culture lies not in the technological enhancements per se, but with the cultural changes that accompany the few relatively modest software refinements that made mass interactivity a daily reality for web-users. In regards to the public sphere, this interactivity could signal a return to Habermas’s ‘bourgeois public sphere’ of open debate unhindered by the ideological or commercial considerations of democracy. In the sense that new or previously localized collectives based around a self-described commonality can organize a global audience. As a space for collectives to potentially organize and occupy positions outside conventional political or cultural hierarchies, digital media has been examined through the framework of identity politics with Moe (2010) suggesting that the collective and participatory qualities of digital technology are analogous with the pamphleteer culture of the eighteenth century that was central to Habermas’s public sphere. However any contemporary configuration of the public sphere must include a far broader range of ideas and cultural perspectives than Habermas’s historic ideal. In this respect a digital public sphere shares some attributes with the contemporary definition of public service broadcasting, however the political and democratic influence of the public sphere demands it remains separate from ideological influences of the state and other forms of representative power.
In the past two decades there have been radical changes in the production and consumption of media due to the influence of digital technologies. But whilst there is some incorporation of interactivity into mainstream media operations, the process of gatekeeping remains fundamentally an institutional operation. As I have discussed, New Zealand’s state media organizations have included digital production and broadcast as part of their programming strategy, but the gatekeeping role remains with a small government-appointed group and must fit a broad and subjective (but ultimately commercial) set of criteria. As a possible alternative to the status quo I propose a complimentary gatekeeping system based on Dan Hind's concept of public commissioning, and centered on the participatory capabilities of the internet.

*Interactivity, dialogue and public commissioning*

In advocating public commissioning my intention is to promote a practical administrative and revenue model for a new form of public service media. Public commissioning is a hybrid form, the gatekeeping process is governed by the public sphere ideals of interactivity and dialogue with the internet functioning as the forum in which this dialogue takes place. But programme production would, ideally, remain in the hands of media professionals. In *The Return of the Public* (2012) Hind examines economics and structural forms that underpin conventional media relationships, including
those between producers\textsuperscript{82}, commissioning editors and the relevant governing institutions, such as funding and gatekeeping bodies and broadcasters. His analysis, and the subsequent concept of public commissioning, is based on a critique of the conventional information networks. He argues that the critical function of the media is eroded due to the essentially reactionary relationship between commissioning editors and the institutions for whom they work.

Despite the ideals defining public service media, Hind argues that the public is disenfranchised from the process. Instead the media institutions – including state owned broadcasters private media corporations - are free to establish the general media agenda.

\begin{quote}
Information cannot reliably reach a general audience without passing through some kind of editorial filter. Such filtering remains, to a very large extent, beyond the reach of general scrutiny and impervious to revision or appeal, since the general population is rarely aware of the decisions of editors. Most of us depend on institutions that we do not understand in our attempt to understand the world (155).
\end{quote}

In leveling his critique at both state and private sector broadcasters, Hind’s argument contrasts with the advocacy of public service media evident in much media studies as outlined in Claassen’s ‘standard argument’. Furthermore, the alienation between the public and the broadcaster also exists between programme makers and the broadcasters they work for, as they are duty bound to conform to existing gatekeeping demands. Here, Hind claims that mainstream media outlets remain dominant in the global dissemination of information.

Therefore, even those producers working outside the mainstream system (for

\textsuperscript{82} Hind’s analysis focuses primarily on the production and broadcast of journalistic products. In my use of Hind’s concept I am expanding this model to public service media.)
example citizen journalists) must cooperate with mainstream outlets (and thus submit to the particular political economy) if their work is to reach a maximum audience (155). This argument ignores the influence of social media sites and YouTube as means to distribute non-mainstream programming. Given the volume of material being uploaded, viewed and downloaded through these non-mainstream channels, Hind is correct in assuming that this programming needs to be ultimately filtered through one or more of the recognized media brands if it is to illicit any mass collective response. Hind’s concept of public commissioning is thus designed to empower the public by establishing a gatekeeping model based on a system of direct referenda.

The principle mechanism associated with public commissioning is a citizen-led forum that would administer and lead commissioning decisions for related to public service media. Citizens would “collectively and equally, make decisions about the allocation of resources” (158) to programme makers, journalists and researchers through various physical and cyber forums. Debates at these forums would examine two related issues: i) individuals or groups would lobby for specific types of programming that believed would be beneficial to the audience; and ii) programme makers would lobby for their project to be considered. In Hind’s model, these debates would concentrate on subjects for investigative journalism: areas that delegates-participants believed were not being served by other media sources. I wish to suggest that the perimeters of this model can be broadened to include other media forms, such as minority interest magazine programmes, long/short form documentaries or children’s programming. Hind argues that public commissioning, as an example of citizen-
based public decision making, would address issues of inequality and ‘social distress’ (158) in three ways. Firstly, the public commissioning system would “widen the realm of civic equality” (158) away from more institutional vested interests such as the corporate or party political sectors. Such a mechanism would provide marginalized groups with a political and cultural voice (158-9). This objective is shared with the tenets of conventional public service broadcasting, but (as I have discussed above) has partly failed due to economic and institutional limitations of commercial broadcasting. Secondly, public commissioning grants the public access to the agenda setting process. Evoking John Dewey's notion of the “Great Community” (159), Hind argues that increased public influence the content and means of social debate will strengthen society by enacting channels of self-government. Hind's third aspect of public commissioning (which he considers the most important) is the notion that increased and unhindered access by the public to cultural, political and economic conditions constitutes “the only sure basis for political change” (159). Thus issues of (in)equality, (in)justice and matters in which their investigation may run counter to the interests of the state or private enterprise may be fully explored by well-funded and expert parties.

The relationship between the deliberative process of public commissioning and the public service objectives of that process are suited to a Habermasian reading, notably the emphasis on democratic public dialogue on which the concept is based. As I have noted above, Habermas attributed the financial and governance structures of the mass media as a primary reason for the public sphere’s failure to adapt beyond the perimeters of the salon,
specifically the influence of vested interests to marginalize public opinion and
democratic process in the dissemination of information. Further to their critique
of Hind shares with Habermas a belief that dialogue between parties is
necessary in the progress of democracy and equality.

The internet, the Public Sphere and public commissioning

Recent research by Moe (2008), Valtysson (2010) and van Dijck (2012),
interactive internet technologies would play a dual role in any new configuration
of public service media such as public commissioning. The first is the provision
of a virtual meeting space in which the forums that underpin public
commissioning can take place. The second is as a network for the distribution
(broadcast and narrowcast) of the completed media products. The second aspect
is not contentious and represents a continuation of the multi-platform media
environment that national and transnational audiences have grown accustom to
since the 1990s. However the ever-increasing number of outlets and new
platform configurations\textsuperscript{83} means novel articulations of the collective audience
need to be established to retain the sense of the ‘public’ within public service
media. Here, also, two issues come to the fore. Firstly whether forms of
programming need to change to suit new methods of media consumption. This is
unlikely, I believe, given the prosumer-savvy and interactive audience already

\textsuperscript{83} This ranges from contemporary technology, for example the expanded
performance and use of mobile devices to control a multitude of day-to-day
activities as well as consume a variety of media unencumbered by temporal or
spatial limitations, to integrated physical technologies, beginning with
innovations such as Google Glasses.
familiar with consuming media across a range of genres. The second issue is of greater consequence. Whether the formation of a meaningful, interactive collective capable of real-world decision making is possible given the historical and cultural proclivity towards individualized consumption. Since its massive acceptance into mainstream culture and commerce internet technologies have intensified this process of individualization, even if it occurs under the rubric of mass social interaction. In José van Dijick’s pessimistic analysis of social media’s potential to function as a mediated public sphere he reiterates Habermas’s own critical response to the internet as “the millions of fragmented chat rooms” (Habermas 2006 quoted in van Dijck 2012: 164). Van Dijck also argues that these spaces are not politically or economically neutral but instead are sites of commerce and surveillance that purposely encourage the individualization of users. This counteracts the possibility of the internet becoming a forum for an organized collective, the actions of which being capable of significant decision making and real-world consequences.

Despite the criticism of social media voiced by van Dijck, some iteration of an on-line interactive platform would be a necessary component to public commissioning. The primary difficulty in formulating such a mechanism is balancing the need for adequate and practical process with the equal need for reasoned and workable outcomes. Drawing from Habermas, Valtysson (2010) notes that a key element in the concept of the public sphere is the expectation of rationality (203). In the modern communication age, this expectation is a demand of a formulaic and outcome-driven process aimed at meeting certain stated objectives. This outcome-led approach contrasts with the network theory
as defined by Manuel Castells (2001, 2004), commonly applied to internet-based communications. Collectives and communications formed around these networks being “highly fluid constructions that can easily be reshaped, recombined and redistributed through the multiple nodes of the network society” (203). This fluidity is a much-celebrated aspect of new media and represents the possibility for mass trans-national dialogue (Bohman 2004).

However the objective for that dialogue to retain a singular focus or meet certain outcomes is not valued in the network system, thus ‘a decisive shift away from Habermas’ view on cultural public spheres is to acknowledge that they do not necessarily have to be rational, and they do not necessarily have to generate meaningful content’ (Valtysson: 204). As a material practice, public commissioning demands both content and a reliance of effective process. The creation of such forums demands a collective will from private citizens alongside the development of appropriate online (and/or physical) spaces. The realization of such spaces has not, as yet, been achieved and its potential remains an area of conjecture. Where particular events may encourage a singular collective response and discussion on social media\textsuperscript{84}, the idea of social media providing a permanent site of democratic participation where issues and examined and resolved has not yet been realized. Furthermore following the position taken by Walter Lippmann (1925) at the beginning of the mass media age, other scholars have voiced deep skepticism about the relationship between social media and

\textsuperscript{84} In recent year much scholarship has focused on the nexus between social media and citizen journalism in the context of political and military uprisings. For example the employment of communication technology by civilian forces during the so-called ‘Arab Spring’ (beginning in 2010) has been the basis of numerous scholarly works (see Howard et al. 2011; Khondker 2011; Salvatore 2013).
democracy. Peter Dahlgren (2012) draws on internet-skeptic Evgeny Morozov argument that “the idea has been seriously oversold, and that internet technology is not only failing to democratize the world, but is used by authorities regimes to control its citizens and suppress dissent” (159). The concept of public buy-in to an online collective does however exist in some forms. As Jenkins (2004) and Ouellette and Hay (2008) have examined, popular entertainment media has been widely embraced by the public with the expectation of dialogue and a democratically-rendered outcome now part of the accepted culture. The perceived frivolousness of interactive entertainment notwithstanding, I suggest the interactive culture encouraged by reality television formats serves as a possible template for the future of virtual democratic processes. Whilst the design of any public commissioning forum needs careful consideration, as do funding sources and programming criteria. I contend that an existing culture of mass participation does exist, with the potential to be modified to suit the issue of public service media.

**Flaws in the Public Commissioning Concept**

Public commissioning can be situated as a possible alternative to the gatekeeping systems of state-centric public broadcasting (outlined in Claassen’s ‘standard argument’). However as a practical and functional system several issues need to be addressed. These issues include funding, and two matters relating to the gatekeeping process: that of filtering all applicants and establishing guidelines. In *The Return of the Public* Hind offers a funding model for public commissioning based current UK statistics relating public revenue for
broadcasting. This includes the amount gathered annually by the state and how a percentage of that revenue could be ring-fenced to fund a public commissioning operation. The British example is feasible given the particular economies of scale operating in that territory. Hind states that the British government raises £3.4 billion through the universal broadcasting license fee. He proposes that £80 million (taken from monies allocated for the transition to digital broadcasting) could be used to fund programming once the public commissioning democratic gatekeeping process has run its course. This example may function well in Britain where public broadcasting in an ingrained aspect of the political culture and public expectation. But in New Zealand where tax revenues are significantly smaller and what public money is available must fund programming across numerous genre, the application of public commissioning may be more problematic. As I have already noted, Hind’s model is designed specifically to fund investigative journalism. As a comparison, New Zealand on Air is funded NZ$128 million for the 2012/2013\(^85\) year (approximately £67 million), however much of this funding was designated for high cost local drama as well as documentary, minority interest programming and a national radio network. The necessity to cater for a magnitude of genre would put considerable pressure on the gatekeeping and revenue management systems. But to ease this pressure would mean more intense governance of the public commissioning system that may result in a similar quasi-governmental system that currently exists. The final issue to addressed in relation to public commissioning is to ensure the democratic mechanisms within the system are regulated enough to

avoid being manipulated by extremist groups or become a space for only the
articulate and privileged (similar to that of the bourgeois public sphere in the
eighteenth century). Hind’s answers to these criticisms are somewhat lacking in
substance. Of the first point he suggests that institutional racism is already
established in the mainstream media and that public commissioning would be
an effective means by which marginalized groups may respond to the voice of
society’s dominant culture. ‘At present the media indulge in stereotype and
caricature more or less at will. Public commissioning would establish an
effective means by which targeted groups might respond and build links with
the wider society’ (167). On the second point, Hind is equally critical of the
current media hierarchies, noting that the existing system is ‘currently the sole
preserve of privileged and articulate elites’ (167). Public commissioning would
provide an alternative space that would ‘favour those who – like the retired or
long-term unemployed – might have the time to examine proposals in detail’
(167). I suggest that Hind’s arguments rely strongly on a belief in a form of
liberal humanism to become the default political position of the
audience/population given the appropriate democratic conditions. Thus
material deemed anti-social, such as hate speech, political or religious
extremism, would, according to Hind, be vetoed by the public vote. Such a view
may be naïve and ignores how political and cultural conditions may change
suddenly (for example the US political environment in the wake of September
11, 2001) causing a hitherto non-existent groundswell of popular nationalism or
fundamentalism amongst the population.
Hind’s concept of public commissioning demands an idealized view of public participation in the democratic process and relies on a central subjectivity that, one suspects, holds the same social and political position as the author. In summing up public commissioning, he writes ‘most of us would prefer to live in a just world than an unjust one, and we would all prefer to rely on accurate descriptions of the world that on fantastical ones’ (174). I suggest that evoking a universal subjectivity or an essential notion of truth is highly problematic in the fragmented mediascape. However, the significance of Hind’s concept lies in the attempt to combine the notion of public service broadcasting (that assumes a universal subjectivity and accepted notions of the public good) with the interactive potential of social media, whilst becoming removed from the institutional umbrella of the state. This re-imagining of the governance and delivery mechanisms for public service media constitutes one possible intervention to the current systems. Making public participation such an integral part of the process is a radical suggestion, but the time for such a system may be here if the demand for public service media is not met by either the commercial media environment or the un-regulated citizen journalist-led social media culture.

The issue of individualization of media forms needs to be carefully interrogated. There is a concern that any form of collective logic (on which public broadcasting is predicated) will be eroded if no effective platform can be developed or any worthwhile material objectives can be met. Fraser maintains that there now does not need to be a locus for collectives such as the nation state, however there does need to be some means of articulating demands and
objectives and measuring outcomes. In the case of notions of justice, trans-
national bodies may determine and govern the necessary outcomes (Fraser: 36).
But the issue of cultural preference may be more difficult to determine, not only
because of the inherent multiplicity of interests, but also because the issue of
culture cannot be defined in terms meeting standards (or, correspondingly,
sanctions for the failure to meet these standards). However if we are to envisage
future media environment where public broadcasting may be both based on
democratic decision making and be trans-national it may be that collective
culture needs to evolve. New media platforms provide the technologically-
facilitated opportunity for participatory culture, but if there is to be an effective
counter-hegemonic perspective emerge that rises above the level of street
protest and may offer a viable alternative means of existence, then external and
multi-faceted elements need to align. Following the analysis Habermas
conducted into the state’s construction of law (Habermas 1990), beyond access
to technology, the questions of legitimacy of the governing organization is
significant. This is not to suggest that the governing bodies become decision-
making enterprises and thus replicate existing state structures. But rather a
distinct entity through which collective action could be targeted and channeled.
Without such channels, and I suggest existing models such as the political
forums The Conversation or Pro-Publica may offer something of a small
prototype for the configuration between the individual view and the collective
voice.
Conclusion

The concept of public service broadcasting is a problematic one in the New Zealand context. In the period following the establishment of the state network in 1936 commentators and politicians drew parallels between the New Zealand model and the British Broadcasting Corporation. However, the structure of the NZBS and the ethos with which it was governed were considerably different from its British counterpart. The institution of the BBC was based on a Royal Charter that fostered a political culture and public expectation of objectivity and political non-interference. Furthermore, John Reith's ambitions for the Corporation were forged by paternalistic civic ambitions. In contrast, the NZBS operated without consequential programming objectives, especially nothing guaranteeing the tenets of public service broadcasting such as editorial independence or universality of access.

Despite the lack of similarities, the perception and expectation that New Zealand’s state broadcaster operated with public service objectives continued for much of the twentieth century, implicit in media commentary and later in much of scholarly debates concerning the broadcaster's role in the perpetuation of cultural identity. This perception originated via a variety of political and historically contingent factors, the predominant being the paternalistic policies of the first Labour government (1935-38). Here, the mass media was introduced into a political environment already informed by an ethos of censorship toward political information and debate (Gregory 1985: 20) resulting in the culture where state protectionism became conflated with public service. For cultural
theorist Bauman, such an environment constitutes a ‘solid’ culture: a period of cultural homeostasis following the years of colonial conquest when the newly established dominant culture needs to be maintained.

Between 1936 and 1989 New Zealand broadcasting existed as a state-owned monopoly. In this environment the state broadcaster was the principal disseminating mechanism for national identity. Furthermore, because the broadcaster operated without robust public service ideals, the influence of the state’s political, culture and economic agenda became synonymous with notions of cultural identity. In Chapters One and Two I examined the cultural transition that occurred in New Zealand between the late 1960s and the late 1980s. Using Bauman’s terminology, this transition was based on the shift from ‘solid’ culture, to the beginnings of ‘liquid’ culture where the burgeoning influence of identity politics (manifest in New Zealand as the origins of biculturalism) and the re-structuring of protectionist state policies formed the basis of a new cultural environment. Again the correction between the state agenda, notably the establishment of a bicultural political and cultural order, and the national narrative as represented both in media texts and broadcasting’s institutional framework, promulgated the notion that the state broadcaster held public service objectives. As Dunleavy (2011) observes:

It is often assumed that New Zealand’s public service TV enjoyed its ‘best’ years before 1989, precisely because this period was one in which public television was the only kind, during which audience eyeballs were focused on just two TV channels, and experimentation with local programming was not constrained by network anxieties about ratings competition in the ways that it would be later. But given some important limitations on ‘public service’ provisions
through what was also a formative phase for television, this perception can be regarded as more mythic than real (45).

It would not be until the monopoly structure had been dismantled through the de-regulation of broadcasting in 1989 that a provision for local public service broadcasting was established in the form of NZOA. But as I argue in Chapter Three, NZOA’s obligations are underpinned by commercial imperatives and it must operate in a commercial environment. In this context, NZOA is the primary mechanism for the representation of New Zealand culture and identity. But given that commercial imperatives drive both NZOA and the wider broadcasting culture, the representation of New Zealand fostered by these mechanisms constitutes a commodified object.

I conclude therefore that public service media in New Zealand complies with commercial rather than non-commercial ideals. By examining this form of representation through Bauman’s framework I maintain that the commodified version of New Zealand national identity marks the transformation to a ‘liquid’ culture in totality. This transformation is supported by a staunchly neoliberal ethos represented by the shift from a politically based culture to an economic one. Thus where once the national narrative was set in stone, informed by colonial ideals and established hierarchies, now national culture was be adaptable, malleable and in a state of constant change in order to suit new and growing markets. “The function of culture is not to satisfy existing needs, but to create new ones – while simultaneously maintaining needs already entrenched or permanently unfulfilled. It’s chief concern is to prevent a feeling of satisfaction in its former subjects and charges” (Bauman 2011: 17). In this
environment, even the mundane and unattractive aspects of national culture must be beatified in a bid to sell the national narrative.

In formulating a conclusion to this thesis two questions need to be addressed. Firstly, if the current models for the supply of public service programming operate only via the logic of commercialism and are thus deemed to not comply with previously accepted definitions of public service broadcasting, what is the detrimental effect on the cultural and democratic welfare of the nation? The protests held in relation to the closure of TVNZ7 (see Preamble) were based on the assumption that a commercial-free and independent public service broadcaster was necessary for a functioning democracy. However, as I have examined in Chapters One to Three, New Zealand’s state broadcasting service has never operated as a conventional public broadcaster for any sustained period of time, therefore the advocacy of such a system originates from an unknown speaking position. Furthermore, given the prevailing and pervasive commercialism inherent in New Zealand system and the instability of government broadcasting policy, the possibility of a conventional public service media channel being established in New Zealand is, I suggest, remote. Taking into account these factors, I concur with Claassen (2011) who argues that conventional public broadcasting is a normative influence.

The second question to be addressed is this: if New Zealand is without a history of conventional public broadcasting, is a solely commercial mediasphere the only possible future? As I discuss in Chapter Four, the digital media
environment provides the opportunity to subvert the institutional and economic frameworks of conventional media. I suggest however, that a sense of a national collective remains a desirable cultural structure through which a media community may be formed. My advocacy of public commissioning as a possible model for a participatory public broadcasting system utilizes the interactive and democratic potential of digital media but may also be configured into the discourse of national culture.
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