

The Irish Language and the Irish Nation: from mass production to individualism

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The connection between the Irish language and the Irish nation and between the Irish nation and the Irish state might appear to serve the interests of the Irish language, but I will argue that although it has some advantages it can also be counter-productive. The Irish language has been used to validate the Irish nation and justify an Irish nation-state. There are identifiable phases of the national project, in the context of which the landscape of Irish language can be understood, from the more explicit national project in the early years of the State, through the liberalising and minority-rights phase in the second half of the century to the more individualistic phase of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and perhaps a more cosmopolitan future.