Abstract

A feature in contemporary labour markets has been the growth of non-standard work. This has to be set within a context of evolving new organizational forms and the ways that large organizations control these forms. Based on a qualitative study of freelance work in television, we have witnessed considerable vertical-disintegration of the industry and a substantial growth of freelance working. Control over the network is maintained by employing former large broadcaster staff, and in turn their own preferred freelancers. This has significant implications for the nature of freelance work. While work is characterized as more insecure generally the degree varies. This is based, in part, on occupation but also on access to social capital. Freelancers also reported a positive attitude to work, but more negative findings on working hours, work intensification and on related benefits.

Key words

Neo bureaucratic organizational forms; Control; Technological change; Television; freelance Work.

Introduction

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A growth in contingent and non-standardised forms of work is now well-versed, traditionally associated with neo-liberal economies, but now spread across OECD economies (Lee and Kofman, 2012). There has been a growth of jobs associated with labour flexibility and flexible working time arrangements variously described as contingent, freelance and precarious (Appelbaum, 2012; Kalleberg, 2011; Standing, 2011), strongly associated with the transfer of risk from employer to employees (Lambert, 2008). This has been true of the UK television industry, with a move from a vertically-integrated industry based on a small number of broadcasters to a far more disintegrated structure, with considerable outsourcing of activities to independent producers and freelance workers.

This literature has, however, a number of gaps which this paper will address. First, freelance work is often de-contextualised. Working as a freelancer in TV has been portrayed as insecure and unstable (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012). We will argue, however, that the position that freelancers play is dependent upon the *project ecology* of this industry (Grabher, 2004). The rise of freelance and temporary work (and organizations) need to be set within a specific organizational context of the rise of the neo-bureaucratic form (Schorpf et al, 2017). Second, this has a number of implications for freelance work, particularly the locus of control over this form, how control is exercised, and its implications for freelance work. This has been characterized in the creative industries as dependent on occupation, thus those working in 'above the line' are in a better position to cope with the vagaries of the 'dark side' of freelance employment than occupations with a more generic skill base i.e. 'below the line

(Mayers, 2011). We would also argue, however, that individual access to social capital is used to control these polyarchic forms and thus access to social capital also shapes employment outcomes for freelance workers. Third, and relatedly, much of the research on contingent work has concentrated understandably upon unskilled work, but this study concentrates upon freelance skilled occupations (for exceptions, see Barley and Kunda, 2004, for software workers, and Dex et al, 2000, McKinlay 2000 and Townley et al, 2009, for television). This has implications for the motivation for individuals taking on freelance work, for ambivalent attitudes towards such work, and for the potential for freelance worker self–exploitation. These will be the research questions addressed in the paper, first, how is freelance work contextualized within an emerging neo-bureaucratic form; second, how is social capital used in this context to access work and third, what implications does this have for the types of work that freelance staff carry out. To do so, paper draws on data from forty-five interviews in the UK television industry (with broadcasters, independent companies and freelance workers)

The next section of the paper outlines the emergence of neo-bureaucratic forms in the industry, the issue of control within these forms and its implications for freelancers. The following section outlines the growth of such forms in the UK industry and the reasons for this. The empirical data is then presented, concentrating upon the working experiences of freelance workers in the industry. Conclusions are then drawn.

Neo-bureaucratic Forms, Control and Contingent Work: the Case of UK Television

From the 1990s onwards, a literature emerged which pointed to a post -bureaucratic form becoming hegemonic. Traditional organizing forms were no longer appropriate in a context of heightened competition and marked technological change (Castells, 2000; Morris et al, 2016). The new paradigm stressed the need for more flexible, flatter organizational structures and gained considerable academic and practitioner currency (Child and McGrath, 2001). Leaner, flatter, post-bureaucratic forms would emerge, predicated upon major organizational restructuring. This would include centralization of, and a concentration on core activities, and outsourcing of non-core ones and reduced hierarchical levels. However, empirical work on the post-bureaucratic form has been relatively limited (Reed, 2011) and points to a more complex pattern than that proposed by the post-bureaucratic paradigm, representative of evolutionary change and the emergence of hybrid, neo-bureaucratic, forms based upon 'centralized-decentralization' (Clegg et al., 2011; Hassard et al., 2009). This has implications for power and control within these forms, with more diffuse, polyarchic, control regimes are evident than in the 'command and control' regimes that typify bureaucratic structures (Reed, 2011). The neo-bureaucratic form is thus hybrid, including contrasting control logics of enhanced complexity and uncertainty, and the control technologies are fragmented and unstable, with more concertive modes of regulation. The form, therefore, retains centralized strategic control with 'softer' modes of cultural integration and corporate socialization that represents a break with bureaucracy, relying heavily on trust (Reed, 2011)

Temporary-based, organizational forms have been established as part of a wider neo-bureaucratic form, both in new emerging sectors and older reformed ones such as TV. TV has

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shifted from being an industry based on integrated, hierarchical forms to one based on a greater outsourcing and external labour markets, driven by flexibility and an attempt to reduce labour costs. They are reliant on a more diffuse set of soft controls based on trust, reciprocity and mutuality (Bechky, 2006) and through normative, culture-based control regimes (Townley et al 2009), particularly the case in a creative context where the control is of a different nature of a 'product' based on an inherent 'unknowability' (Hirsch, 2000). There are issues of control and coordination in industries such as TV which are, to an extent, focused on intermittent projects, often extremely short-term and taken up and dropped (Caves, 2000; Jones and Lichtenstein, 2008).

To maintain control, the broadcaster aims to minimize risk by relying heavily on the use of independent companies and freelancers, often staffed by former corporate 'insiders' and by stipulating preferred key professional freelancers to be used by independents (who in turn use their own preferred freelancers). Thus the industry manipulates social capital in the industry to exert a more diffuse form of control over the network (Morris et al., 2016; Schorpf, et al, 2017).There is a rich literature on the ways that creative freelance workers invest in building up their social capital to create networks and gain access to employment and careers (Tempest et al., 2004), portrayed as 'in and out' groups, with non-insiders finding difficulties in gaining work (Antcliffe et al., 2007; Ebbers and Windberg, 2009;Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Skilton, 2008). Little has been written, however, about how the large broadcasters and independent companies manipulate these forms by using known and trusted ex-insiders as freelancers with long-term contracts to control quality and reliability.

As is indicated in the introduction, this is a study of skilled employees who are prone to various degrees of job-insecurity dependent both on the nature of the skills involved, but also because of the ways that freelance and independent owners manipulate their social capital (see also McCleod et al 2009, on the advertising industry). Freelance employees make up a considerable minority of the TV workforce, some 24% in 2012 (Creative Skillset, 2012). This probably underestimates the size of the freelance workforce as it does not include the small one-and two people independent operators who act much as freelancers do. Moreover, certain occupations, typically those closest to production (editing, costume, wardrobe, make-up and hair, and camera and lighting) are dominated by freelance workers.

Such a move from the hierarchical form to a neo-bureaucratic one has significant implications for freelancers. They have had to adapt to a new entrepreneurial milieu (Storey et al., 2005) and access to work has heightened the importance of social capital (Blair, 2001; Ursell, 2000). Social capital fulfills a number of roles, including access of freelancers to work (see Blair, 2003; Blair et al, 2001;2003, for film), but it also ties in these freelancers into the system based on their reputational capital (Tempest et al., 2004). However, certain freelancers have been able to manipulate these networks, in part by 'hunting in packs' (Antciffe et al., 2007; Blair, 2001; 2009) and by relying on 'family and friends' connections to join these networks (McCleod et al., 2009).

The growth of freelance work has also brought about a considerable 'dark side' of employment (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011), include considerable job insecurity (Blair, 2000; Christopherson, 2009; Dex et al 2000), more problematic career progression (Tempest et al., 2004), stagnant or declining pay rates and informal recruitment methods (Ebbers and Winberg,

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2009) and long working hours, with a deleterious impact on work-life balance, particularly for those with child care responsibilities (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015). This has been made more difficult by freelancers feeling obliged to take work when it is offered (Blair, 2000) and a decline in trade union checks (McKinlay, 2009). Moreover, with the industry continuing to attract people wanting to join because of the so-called 'F rewards' (fame, fortune and fulfillment) this, together with job insecurity, lends itself to potential self-exploitation (Ursell, 2000).

These informal networks also tend to confer significant advantages for certain groups, specifically white middle-class males (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; McLeod et al., 2012). The transient nature of creative industries, the precarious nature of employment, informal recruitment methods and, increasingly, an expectation of low initial pay or non-paid internships have all exacerbated this situation (McCleod, et al., 2012; Percival and Hesmondhalgh, 2014; Randle et al., 2015; Seibert and Wilson, 2013). Relationship building, therefore, becomes more important (Baumann, 2002).

Enacting Neo-bureaucratic Forms in the UK TV Industry

The TV industry has undergone three major changes in technology, markets and regulation over the past three decades which have been permissive to the introduction of more flexible neo-bureaucratic structures. It is unusual in this regard in that it is not a new industry (such as software) or one which has had a long history of freelancers (construction). There have been a number of inter-related changes including deregulation and quasi-privatization, globalization and internationalization and technological change (both of hardware and software), a blurring

of the boundaries of media and considerable cost-cutting associated with the global economic downturn (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012).

First, we have witnessed considerable technological change in the industry, with transmission has shifted to digital, leading to channel proliferation, which has had an impact on internationalization and deregulation. Production has also undergone fundamental change with digitalization and computerization of equipment with considerable cost-reductions and digital production technologies (cameras and AVAD) and the internet have led to considerable cost-reductions and blurred the lines with new media (Batt et al., 2000).

Second, internationalization have occurred, closely related to technological change, deregulation and privatization. Internationalization has manifested itself at various levels, including programme providers (the main broadcasters) and in the emergent large international independent 'super-producers' (Windeler and Sydow, 2001). Decentralization of the industry has also led to the formation of multinational programme-makers, including large independent groups such as Endemol and the subsidiaries of US-media groups, in-part dependent upon the capture of Intellectual Property Rights (Baumann, 2002).

Finally, there has been considerable industry privatization and deregulation (Carter and McKinlay, 2013), fundamental to the introduction of neo-bureaucratic forms and has significant implications for industry structure and freelance work (McKinlay, 2009). The industry had formerly been dominated by a small number of large bureaucratic-integrated organizations pre-1980. Since the 1990s, however, a large number of independent companies emerged, in large part policy-driven, with government-led industry deregulation. Specifically, the 1990

Broadcasting Act required the two dominant producers, the BBC and ITV, to outsource at least 25% of programme making to the independent sector, the basis of a 'publisher-broadcaster' model whereby programme providers sub-contract productions from the independent sector (Carter and McKinlay 2013). Moreover, new entrant broadcasters (such as Channel 4) no longer produced programmes. This was the first piece of a series of de-regulatory legislation, including further production quotas out-sourced from all the three main providers (ITV, BBC and Channel 4) to the independent sector. The 2004 Broadcasting Act transferred intellectual property rights from the major distributors to independent programme-makers, leading to independent sector consolidation, as large companies could use their intellectual property rights to raise capital in financial markets, and a decline in the number of independents (Carter and McKinlay, 2013; PACT, 2014). Hesmondhalgh (2007) characterized this situation as one where the bigger organizations own the production and management rights over programmes and the micro organizations provide the 'creative R&D'.

The Empirical Data

Research Methods

The research reported on here is of freelance TV workers, within a wider context of a decentralized neo-bureaucratic organizational setting. The data reported on is comprised of two sources. The main data is comprised of 45 semi structured interviews with managers and professionals in the main UK broadcasters, independent TV providers and among freelance

providers. Semi-structured interviews were with a small number of key informants in the industry such as senior managers and commissioners, a small number of owners and key staff in the independents and a larger number of freelancers. The last group were drawn from a cross-section of industry professionals (producers, directors, presenters, location and floor managers, editors, camera operators, wardrobe and make-up and hair), a cross-section of ages (the youngest in their early twenties and the oldest in their sixties) and a mix of males and females (see Table 1). The independent company owners and managers had all, with one exception, previously worked for one of the large broadcasters and retained hands-on TV experience in executive producer/ director roles in productions, thus giving them strategic insights. The majority of freelancers had also formerly worked for one of the large broadcasters.

Two semi-structured interview schedules were devised, one for the commissioners, editors and industry experts and a second for freelance workers. The first included questions on the reasons for using independents and freelancers; the numbers of freelancers used; the terms and conditions of contracts between the large broadcasters, independents and freelancers; the number and types of pitches for work; rates of pay and so forth. The second schedule included questions on the reasons for freelancing ; the frequency of work; working conditions, hours and pay; the ways in which freelancers gained work; the time spent on not-directly productive work (meetings, networking etc.), the impact of new technology, and the impact of freelance work on careers. A variety of sampling methods were used including industry directories, personal contacts and snowball techniques, based on asking respondents who it would be worth talking to, and allowing for ideas to unfold (Starkey at al, 2000).The interviews lasted from one-to-two

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hours and were followed up by emails and telephone calls for clarifications to the answers. Forty interviews were undertaken in summer of 2014 and five took place with younger freelancers (under 30) in 2015 to diversify the sample, age-wise. The interviews predominantly took place in coffee bars, although a small number also took place in workplaces, homes, public houses or by Skype (Table 1).Certain themes were drawn from the data based on the interview schedules and the data was assessed and analysed on the basis of this.

---TABLE 1 HERE---

The Neo-bureaucratic Form in TV

The data will report essentially on what it is like to work in a deregulated, decentralized and temporary environment, and how access to social capital impacted on freelancers. This was voiced through the perceptions of the informants, which will be returned to in the next section. This needs to be set, however, within a context of the emergence of the neo-bureaucratic form in the industry and the dynamics of the relationship in these forms, specifically the structure of the form, where power and control is located and the impact of technological change (Reed, 2011). The industry evolved from one in the 1980s based on a hierarchy and vertical-integration, to one in the 2000s with a flexible structure, with a core concentrating on programme commissioning and a periphery on programme-making carried out by independent producing companies and an array of freelance workers.

Control of the form takes place through a variety of mechanisms, which are more diffuse and culture-based. The network is made up of a dense set of, sometimes, work-based relationships

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(Bechky, 2006; Jones and Lichtenstein, 2008). The independent owners, for example, were formerly employed in the large broadcasters, often in fairly senior positions. This offered them considerable leverage in winning contracts, but also offered the large broadcasters considerable control over the labour process in that they had considerable knowledge of, and trust in, these staff (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Tempest et al., 2004). One of our respondents was an ex-commissioner from one of the large producers and now owner of a one-man independent production company and had built up considerable social capital which thus gave him access to work. Obviously, this provided this independent company with a distinct advantage in terms of gaining commissions, but it also maintained a degree of control over the production (and labour) process for all the large providers which they, potentially, could have ceded given the fragmentation associated with these organizational forms.

This familiarity sometimes extended to close personal relations between commissioners, independent owners and freelancers, extending to familial ties (see also, McCleod et al., 2009 for advertising). One of our freelance interviewees (a female producer/director) had a mother who worked as a weather presenter for one of the large broadcasters and a brother who was a well-known sports commentator. In another case, two brothers were independent freelance floor managers who 'swapped' work with one another when it was available. This control, however, extended beyond personal and familial ties and the levels of trust associated with this (Tempest et al., 2004). 'Celebrity' broadcasting staff also worked freelance in TV, PR or corporate work to increase their income. Similarly, small independent owners occasionally 'moonlighted' as freelancers in order either to cross-subsidize less lucrative but otherwise

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rewarding activities or to earn extra income. For example, one independent company owner making niche horror films also freelanced as a producer-director, while another also freelanced as a camera operator 'to pay for my car'. These cases illustrate that the distinctions between broadcaster, independent and freelancer are not clear but 'messy', that these relationships all assist the broadcaster in maintaining control over the network, but that they also benefit certain freelancers through their access to social capital (Blair, 2001; Tempest et al., 2004; Ursell, 2000). These were exemplars of the 'strong ties' associated with 'communality' found in the Munich software industry by Grabher and Ibert (2006), but there were also looser 'spot market', conflictual 'weak ties' they associated with the advertising industry.

Other, structural, arrangements were put in place to control these fragmented forms. For high profile, peak-time productions, broadcasters insisted on the independent companies employing certain named key creative freelance staff, such as producers, directors, directors of photography (as a 'condition' of winning the commission).In turn these staff bring in their own 'go-to' freelance staff such as camera operators, which obviously has implications for freelance work. One of our interviewees, a freelance producer, was one of six 'go-to' producers in UK TV, who was much in demand for high profile peak-time dramas. He noted that he tended to use freelancers that he was familiar with, in a closed labour market situation which favours 'insiders' (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012), a choice based on trust. He argued:

You have to have ongoing relationships…it's about having people around you that you can trust (28)

A camera operator also noted that:

You get jobs by reputation, people you know, also a producer takes his crew with him. Steven Speilberg always uses one cameraman. So the producer or director will get the job and then favour people (35).

A floor manager, meanwhile, also worked as a production manager and producer-director. He had jobs where he was responsible for employing up to twenty freelancers:

…and I have respect for the people who have looked after me in the past and I will remember them (32)

Given the large budgets that such productions have and implications of a ratings 'flop', this is unsurprising, but it does indicate several features of this relationship. First, the way in which the large broadcasters keep control over this seemingly organizationally-fragmented group. Second, it illustrates the ways that freelancers use of their social capital to gain work. The paper now turns to the experience of freelance workers in this industry.

Working in the Temporary Milieu

A starting point would be to note that the workers are relatively well paid, and jobs are relatively highly skilled, craft professional ones. Union guidelines for pay rates, for example, vary from £313 per week for an art department assistant, to £717 for first assistant directors and camera operators, while for directors and jobs pay rates are negotiated, but significantly higher (BECTU, 2014). Furthermore, the vast majority the older freelance workers had chosen this employment status, rather than taking it up because they had been made redundant. One

of our respondents, a camera operator in his 60s had, for example, always worked freelance, despite repeated opportunities to be employed 'on-staff'. In other cases, however the distinction was tenuous as workers took redundancy from the major broadcasters and took on freelance status in the expectation that their jobs would be eventually outsourced as part of the move to disintegrated structures outlined earlier. Moreover, four of the five younger freelancers had always had this employment status, with potentially negative implications for their career prospects (Tempest et al., 2004). A number took voluntary redundancy for work and lifestyle reasons. One respondent, for example, argued that:

I wanted a change, if I'd stayed with the BBC I'd be miserable now, it keeps you on your feet (37)

Others argued that they freelanced for more varied career opportunities, while some argued that it was to help work-life balance (although the subsequent interviews suggested that working freelance led to long working-hours and a deleterious work-life balance (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015; Stoyanova and Grugulis, 2013). An editor noted:

I left because it gave me more opportunities and I wanted to spend more time with my kids (38)

However, the reality was now that the majority of occupations had, by the time of the interviews been 'outsourced' and 'freelanced' and so the 'choice' distinction had largely disappeared. Moreover, while many freelance employees were extremely positive about their jobs, TV workers have been subject to a series of worsening, working terms and conditions,

predicated upon cost-cutting, technological change, deregulation and a collapse in union strength (Ebbers and Winberg, 2009; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015). As a consequence the interviews with freelancers pointed to:

(i) longer working hours, anti-social hours and work-intensification, and multiskilling (or multi-tasking), in part a result of the introduction of new technologies;

(ii) a reduction in real, and sometimes actual , pay rates;

(iii) a deduction in the 'fringe benefits' associated with work;

(iv) greater insecurity of employment;

(v) reduced solidarity

(i) Working Hours, Work Intensification and Multiskilling and the introduction of New Technologies

While workers in the industry had been subject to long working hours, these had lengthened and, increasingly been at least partly unpaid, with a degree of self-exploitation noted in these neo-bureaucratic forms (Ursell, 2000). Moreover, job insecurity and reduced pay rates and benefits meant that freelancers were very reluctant to turn (or to be seen to turn) work down (see Blair, 2000; Randle et al, 2015; Ursell, 2000 for the film industry). This included both 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' freelancers. A camera operator, for example, noted:

I do 6 (o'clock) until 5, then another 3 or 4 hours in the evening. I work every weekend. Yesterday (a Sunday) I did a 12-hour day (31)

Freelancers often reported regularly working twelve hour days and also working anti-social hours, long shifts, or working away from home or on weekends. Working ten-to-twelve hour days (or longer) were the norm, particularly on dramas on location and outside broadcasters such as sporting events or festivals and shows, and sometimes without being paid for overtime work. A freelance make-up artist complained about having to start work on drama shoots at:

5.30 or 6 in the morning, working a 18 hour day with no overtime pay…I try not to do drama any more (6)

Moreover, freelancers were expected to travel (unpaid) to and from work (journeys of up to 5 hours). Working on films, dramas and outside broadcasts often involved working not only long hours, but anti-social ones, such as evenings and weekends, an issue for workers with young children. Furthermore, workers complained of a lack of a work-non work divide, for example having to accept work-related phone calls and emails late in the evening (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015)

In addition to long hours, freelancers were subject to work intensification, in other words working harder during actual working hours. This is being driven, overwhelmingly by significant cost reductions in programme-making, making programmes on smaller budgets and multi-skilling and tasking, and a collapse of trade union support for job demarcations (McKinlay, 2009). As one respondent, who wrote music scores for TV programmes, noted:

Its feast or famine…deadlines define. I can stay up all night with a can of Red Bull if needs be (23)

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Another respondent, a mid-aged successful male freelance producer-director, further noted how stressful this way of working was:

The workload is ridiculous, and lots of people are on short-term contracts…I'm 47 but I can't imagine doing this when I'm 60 (39)

Another concurred:

There is loads of work, but constant pressure. I work twice as hard as I did before. This is driven by time and money, it is far more industrialized (39)

Thus even when successful, freelancers were subject to long, and sometimes anti-social hours (McCleod et al, 2012; Percival and Hesmondhalgh, 2014; Randle et al, 2015; Seibert and Wilson, 2013). A significant contributor to work intensification was multi-skilling and multi-tasking, in large part a product of technological change and again a consequence of dramatic cost cutting. Previously, roles had been fairly clearly defined, into production, direction, camera, editing and so forth, set by industry custom and practice and prevailing technology, and strongly reinforced by trade unions (McKinlay, 2009). However, significant pressures to cut labour costs and the introduction of new technologies (particularly digital ones such as cameras and editing) meant that freelancers were expected to carry out a range of tasks (Townley et al, 2009). One independent company owner outlined the introduction of what he termed the 'predator' model, a joint role encompassing the producer, director and editor roles. Another freelance floor manager argued that you now needed to be:

A 'jack of all trades', you have to work as a director, floor manager, producer, production manager etc. (32)

This had significant implications for knowledge learning, work intensification, stress and programme quality. A camera man described how he kept up with technological developments, from:

Bullshit, mates and the internet! (40)

Another, younger, freelance camera operator noted that he kept up with technology by:

I try to keep up with it by using Twitter (41)

All of the respondents stressed the impact of multi-skilling. A director noted:

I do all my editing and camera and freelancers are getting squeezed and squeezed (9)

Another noted the competition from younger freelance staff:

A 25 year old will undercut you, will self-shoot, and a 5 day shoot budget is cut to 3…and I do extra camera work which I get don't get paid for (9)

While these trends are not confined to UK TV, stronger unionization in other countries has mitigated these trends to a certain extent. As a male independent producer/ director commented:

We used a three man crew to film *Programme X*. We asked Berlin TV to do it, but they refused with three people (17)

(ii)A Reduction in Real, and Sometimes, Actual, Pay Rates

In addition to the cuts to expenses, there were either cuts to pay rates, or at least long-term pay freezes (Ebbers and Winberg, 2009). All of the independents and freelancers reported either cuts in pay, often at rates set in 2008 (when budgets came under pressure due to the financial crisis). One freelance producer went further when he argued that daily rates had not gone up since the 1980s, while a freelance camera operator reported that he was only getting paid £9 more per day than he had fourteen years before. Similarly, a scriptwriter reported that he had formerly been paid £1000 per script, but that this had fallen to £500.

While pay cuts were obviously a particular concern for both independent and freelance workers, freelancers were also concerned with the amount of unpaid work that they were expected to carry out. A dresser noted that:

We work to rates, but everyone wants something for nothing, we are on the edge all the time (10)

 Freelancers also complained of the free 'taster' that they were expected to do as part of pitches, which were not paid for and might prove unsuccessful and seen as pernicious. A presenter complained of spending a week working on a pitch which was turned down and for which she didn't get paid. This could typically take two people one week to make. The freelancers also noted the time taken in non-paying activities, such as touting for work, meetings, networking, administration and the 'entrepreneurialism' associated with this (Storey et al., 2005). A technical designer, in extremis, calculated that:

80% of my time is spent on non-paying activities, talking, touting and meetings …I'm often up at 12 at night doing my accounts, invoices and making phone calls (34)

Typically freelancers spent 20 to 30% of their time on non-paying activities, with a presenter noting that 50% of her ideas were rejected. She further calculated that two-thirds of her time was spent on work, one third on 'ideas' and that she did her accounts 'at night'. Furthermore, there was an expectation that freelance workers would work on certain aspects for nothing. A female freelance make-up artist argued that she was obliged to carry out unpaid overtime as it was a case of 'take it or leave it'. In the same vein, a producer/ director noted that a twenty hour programme schedule typically took between 23 to 35 hours to complete, 'and I do everything, research, direct, produce and part-edit'.

(iii) A Reduction in Benefits

Freelance TV workers, and indeed all TV staff, have been subject to a cull in expenses and fringe benefits, which were substantial hitherto in the industry. They had been a particularly lucrative source of income for individuals in the industry in the 1980s. This was evidently no longer the case, indeed freelancers were now 'subsidizing' their work and hence their employers. In addition freelancers were also engaged in unpaid work. Two aspects were evident here. First, freelancers were no longer being paid for time spent travelling, and were being expected to pay for the costs of travel. When the freelancers had to travel to shoots, they no longer got paid for travel time. This was especially true of certain occupations, for example, wardrobe, make-up and camera, and for certain programmes, such as drama and outside broadcasts. As male freelance producer noted:

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On the London job, I started off at 5 in the morning, worked all day and the next and then drive back. I didn't get paid for this (39)

Similarly, a freelance floor manager described having to fly to Ireland to cover a sporting event for which they had previously been paid a day's travel, but this had cut to half-a-day as this was the time spent travelling, despite the fact that it would have been impossible to take on any other work that day. There were also not paid travelling expenses for use of their own vehicles for the first thirty miles travelled per journey, which on a five day shoot obviously amounted to up to 150 miles provided free to the broadcaster by the freelancer. This was on top of the loss of pensions when workers swapped from permanent to freelance work.

(iv) Greater insecurity of employment

Inevitably, the shift from permanent work to freelancing led to increased job insecurity as almost by definition, irrespective of the other positive and negative consequences of freelance working, jobs were more unstable (Blair, 2000, Christopher, 2009; Dex et al, 2000; Storey et al, 2005). For certain workers, however, there were long-term freelance jobs and guaranteed work. Freelance camera operators for the BBC were, for example, guaranteed a certain amount of work per year (over nine months) in order to ensure that the broadcaster had a supply of skilled labour. Elsewhere, a female freelance producer worked for six months a year on the same programme and was 'employed' by successive independent companies on the basis that her working on the programme was key to winning the commission. As a consequence, she had worked on the same programme (an outsourced religious music show) for fourteen years for four separate independent companies. This is, then, an indication of both the desire by large

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corporations to maintain control over production, but also freelancers using this social capital to access work (Tempest et al., 2004). However, at the other end of the spectrum, employment was often extremely insecure and freelancers often had to fight hard to gain enough work. Moreover, feelings of job insecurity were more typical, but were not necessarily related to how much work they received or how long projects were. One of the most successful freelancers was in constant demand, but noted that:

Reputation is everything, but it is a very precarious profession. I am up at the moment, but could be down and out next year. All you need is a couple of bum projects, I've seen it so many times (28)

Another respondent commented that:

I couldn't cope with it when I was younger, it breeds insecurity….there's loads of it in the media (27)

This was exacerbated by the informality of freelance work. This presenter noted that

We were freelancing on a regular basis, but we didn't know on a Thursday whether we would be working next Monday (27)

Similarly, several ex-schoolteachers working in the industry noted that they regularly thought at the end-of-year whether or not they should rejoin that profession because of insecurity, while others had diversified their portfolio into other forms of media in order to cope with the problems of insecurity and poor pay. These responses indicate the asymmetrical power relations pertaining in the industry. One of the respondents, a female freelance producer/

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director noted that as a consequence of not being available for one day she lost a six week block of work due to the 'god like power of commissioners, they kept me dangling over this'. Four (of the five) young freelance workers dealt with this uncertainty, in part, by living at home with their parents and saw little way out of this. However, despite the fairly negative tone of the responses to the consequences of freelance work in the industry, for both the freelancers and owners and workers in independent companies, many were still very positive about working in the media. There was also a strong notion, beyond commercial concerns, of a professional-craft ethos, which in part illustrates how the industry manages this freelance, temporary milieu (Townley et al, 2009). For example, a long serving older male freelance floor manager noted:

It has got a lot harder, but I still love it and if you don't you should get out of the industry (32)

His brother added:

Don't get me wrong, it is a great life, but would I want to be on the touch-line at 60 (33)

This respondent was one of a number who were reluctant to turn down work as a consequence of insecurity (Ursell, 2000). He described the complex juggling of work demands of working up to thirty clients and his typical working week was:

'To do a regular show in the week, followed by a kids show on a Saturday, followed by sport at the weekend' (33)

Further, a presenter noted:

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Every year we sit around and say that's it, I'm off…but I love the variety of the job. I'm extraordinarily busy but because of the variety is doesn't feel like it. But last year I worked too much (27)

Another producer/director had left the industry to work in local government in 2008 due to financial struggles, but had returned to TV as:

The pay was great but I was bored out of my skull (9)

However, as Reed (2011) notes, in relation to professional employees working in neo-bureaucratic organizations, this hints at self-exploitation as freelancers aim to carry out a 'professional job'.

(vi) Reduced (but continued) Solidarity

That the TV industry has been characterized by declining trade union influence is now well versed, in a context of an assault on unions in the UK from the 1980s onwards, together with broader labour market changes and the types of organizational changes outlined here (McKinlay, 2009). Perhaps predictably many of our freelance respondents retained their union membership (given their ages and employment history) but also reported feelings of relative impotence in the light of the changes to pay and work conditions outlined here. However, there were examples of solidarity amongst workers, notably among certain occupational groups such as camera operators, who had maintained certain day rates of pay, partly by 'hunting in packs' (Antcliffe et al, 2007). This varied from occupational group to group which to a certain extent was based on whether skills could easily be substituted, certainly at 'broadcast standard'. But

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this does not totally explain the occupational differences which may be due to occupational identities and solidarity. As an older male camera operator noted

Times have become more difficult, certain companies are taking advantage, extra hours, no extra pay, ignoring the European Working Directive, unpaid work etc. I charge a realistic rate and won't drop below this (15)

Conclusions

That there has been a substantial growth in freelance, temporary work is well reported. However, both the growth freelance work in the TV industry and the patterns of freelance work need to be set, and understood, in the context of the emergence of neo-bureaucratic forms, and the control structures which pertain in the industry, which answers the first research question identified. For example, the ways which the large broadcasters (and to an extent large independents) maintain control over quality regimes in the industry through their control of freelancers has significant implications for the shape of freelance work. The large broadcasters, for example, tend to use independent companies and freelancers who have formerly worked for the large broadcasters or will dictate that key creative staff to be 'employed' on certain commissions, and these key creative staff in turn will tend to 'employ' their own preferred staff. This is dictated, to a certain extent by technical or creative expertise, and the extent to which occupations are more creative ('above the line', producers, directors etc.) or generic ('below the line', camera, wardrobe etc., Mayers, 2011). However, it is also dependent on a set of nebulous soft skills, such as 'dependability' or whether they get on with the people involved, as the interview with the floor manager highlighted. This is understandable where there is a

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degree of uncertainty in the final 'product' and hence the need to limit the scope for failure, but is also indicative of the intense personal interactions associated with a 'shoot', programme or whatever, and highlights the need for individuals to 'get on'. In short, while individuals use their social capital to obtain work, careers etc, broadcast staff also manipulate these ties to maintain product quality and harmonious working relationships (Ebbers and Winberg, 2009; Tempest et al, 2004; Ursell, 2000). This, in part, answers the second research question. To return to Grabher's (2004) distinction between strong tie communality and conflictual weak ties project ecologies, the TV industry displays elements of both, with core freelance work and more peripheral freelancers (Grabher and Ibert, 2005). While the degree of 'certainty' of work and whether workers are in 'above or below the line' occupations are not unimportant, but at least as important is individuals degree of access to social capital. In this context, certain freelance staff were in constant demand and had permanent demand for their skills, sometimes with one or a few employers. This is evidently skills-based to an extent, as without these skills these freelance employees would simply not receive work orders. Certain skill sets are also more in demand, and less substitutable, than others. Programme-standard camera skills are one example of this, despite the growth of multiskilling. Slightly differently, the creative skills associated with certain jobs (directors/ producers) mark these freelance staff out. However, soft skills were also important. The freelance floor manager quoted in the paper clearly received work because in a male-dominated sports milieu he was regarded as a 'good lad', as a 'fixer' with good contacts and was clearly well liked. By contrast, the freelance interviews came up with anecdotes of other freelance staff who were not liked. Indeed, some reported that they

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struggled to receive work regular work offers despite being in more creative occupations and having a previous track record of success.

As a consequence of this, certain freelance staff received regular work, some claimed never to have to 'tout' for work or rarely to be unemployed, while others found it difficult either to get work or to get enough work to make a living (particularly, but not only, the younger freelancers), thus answering the third research question. In this sense it would be difficult to characterize this as totally precarious work, partly answering the third question. Nevertheless, working conditions were, in certain regards overwhelmingly negative, particularly on pay and working hours. However, the points of comparison were often industry norms (be it in the broadcasters or freelance work) ten or twenty years before (in the 'halcyon' days of working in TV). The interviews pointed to long working hours, part driven by technological change and partly by cost reductions (Townley et al, 2009). Moreover, all of the freelancers reported perceptions of varying degrees of job insecurity (Christopherson, 2011; Dex, 2000; Storey et al, 2005). While freelancers with greater social capital (such as the highly successful 'go-to' freelance staff) were evidently more secure than those who lacked it and thus struggled for work , all indicated perceptions of job insecurity (Christopherson, 2009; Dex et al., 2000; Storey et al., 2005). This was particularly acute among the younger freelancers where low pay (and unpaid internships) were the norm (see also, McCleod et al, 2012; Percival and Hesmondhalgh, 2014; Randle et al., 2015 for other creative occupations).There is, however, also a degree of job insecurity in the large broadcasters (particularly among the private sector ones) and a degree of short term contracts among these companies. Indeed there was sometimes a feeling of a

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greater degree of security among certain freelance workers than in working for the

broadcasters and independents in some cases. Nevertheless, the freelance interviews pointed

to longer working hours, intensified hours, to a certain extent driven by technology allowing

multi skilling and multi tasking, a degree of unpaid work and certainly unpaid for travel, with a

'take it or leave it' attitude on the part of the broadcasters. The interviews also indicated a

degree of ambivalence to work, with both a 'craft professionalism' ethos pervading and a 'love-

hate' attitude to work (Schorpf et al, 2017). There were also elements of self exploitation

apparent from this with freelancers willing to work over and above their hours to protect their

'product' (Ursell 2000), reminiscent of Reed's (2011) analysis of professional workers. As such

the study goes beyond those earlier ones such as Dex et al. (2000) in placing the control of

freelance work in a specific organizational context, which in turn partly explains why certain

freelancers are more successful in accessing work than others.

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Interview	Gender	Job Description/ Employer	Age	Interview Location
1.	Female	Job pitcher, Independent	M	Coffee Bar
2.	Male	Production manager, independent	M	Coffee Bar
3.	Male	Commissioning editor, BBC (ex-ITV)	O	Coffee Bar

4.	Male	Producer/ Director, independent	M	Coffee bar
5.	Male	Freelancer, producer (ex senior-BBC)	O	Coffee Bar
6.	Female	Freelancer, make-up	O	Coffee bar
7.	Male	Video maker	O	Coffee Bar
8.	Male	Freelance, special effects	O	Workplace
9.	Female	Freelance, producer/director	M	Coffee Bar
10.	Female	Freelance, wardrobe	O	Workplace
11.	Male	Freelance director	O	Coffee Bar
12	Male	Freelance editor	M	Coffee Bar
13.	Female	Freelance editor	M	Coffee Bar
14.	Male	Freelance director	O	Coffee bar
15.	Male	Freelance camera operator	O	Public House
16.	Male	Freelance editor	O	Workplace
17.	Male	Independent producer/director	O	Coffee bar
18.	Male	Freelance producer	M	Coffee Bar
19.	Male	Freelance producer/director	M	Coffee Bar
20.	Male	Independent producer	M	Coffee Bar
21.	Male	Independent marketing director	M	Coffee bar
22.	Male	Independent owner, producer/director	O	Workplace
23.	Male	Freelance, music	M	Coffee Bar
24.	Male	Freelance programme maker	M	Coffee Bar

25. Female   Freelance, make-up   O   Coffee Bar

26. Female   Freelance, presenter   M   Coffee Bar

27. Female   Freelance, producer and presenter   M   Coffee Bar

28. Male   Freelance, producer/director   M   Coffee bar

29. Male   COO, independent   M   Workplace

30. Female   Production location manager   O   Coffee Bar

31. Male Independent owner, freelance camera, editor O Coffee bar

32. Male   Freelance director, floor manager   O   Public house

33. Male   Freelance floor manager   M   Coffee Bar

34. Male   Ind. owner, editor and post-production   M   Coffee bar

35. Male   Freelance camera   M   Public House

36. Male   Independent post-production   O   Coffee Bar

37. Male   Independent owner, producer   O   Coffee bar

38. Male   Freelance editor, director   O   Coffee bar

39. Male   Freelance producer/director   O   Coffee Bar

40. Male   Freelance camera   M   Coffee bar

41. Female   Freelance camera   Y   Coffee Bar

42. Male   Freelance post-production   Y   Coffee Bar

43. Male   Freelance camera   Y   Coffee bar

44. Male   Freelance director/producer   Y   Home

45. Male   Freelance TV and video producer   Y   Skype

(Key: O=50+, M=30-50, Y=30-)