

Serendipity and the Silver
Screen: Career Entryways and
Worker Experiences in UK
Television

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Summary

Shifts in organisational change, propelled by advances in technology, as well as policy and legislative change motivated by global neo-liberal trends, has transitioned UK television from traditional, vertically integrated bureaucracies (such as the BBC and ITV) to a more fragmented organisational landscape in the past three decades. A proliferation of smaller, independent production houses have emerged to provide employment for an increasingly itinerant, freelance workforce, requiring a more nuanced form of organisational governance and control than those found in traditional, rational bureaucracies. There has been an increasing reliance on a combination of soft power and control mechanics, deployed by organisational 'hybrids', retaining elements of traditional bureaucratic control, but introducing softer forms of control as well.

The result is a sector dominated by short-term project work, with an increasingly freelance and individualised labour force negotiating employment contracts via personal contacts and professional networks. A few issues make themselves apparent. What are the gateways to the UK television industry? What are the processes of socialisation for new entrants to UK television? What are the responses of new entrants to the process of initiation into contemporary UK television production work? Adopting a subjectivist ontology and moderate constructionist epistemological perspective, this project presents findings of the responses of 44 workers in UK television, including 7 senior professionals, 33 recent entrants and 4 former workers, based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted throughout 2019.

This thesis argues that an increased reliance on hybridised forms of organisational power have contributed to shaping a workforce that feels lucky and grateful to have negotiated unclear entryways at all, a workforce that is under-trained and feeling out of their depth, but willing to self-exploit, and a workforce the deleterious result of a normative discourse that stresses the importance of commitment, paying your dues and going the extra mile.

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1. Introduction

The case of television production, the structures that surround it, and the people that pursue their careers within it, justifies constant examination. Ever in flux, portrayed in equal parts glamorous (Hesmondhalgh 2010b) and gruelling (Ursell 2000; McGuigan 2010), the industry in the UK – and indeed globally – remains entrenched in wider policy discussions about creative economies, knowledge work, economic growth and boundless creativity (Clegg and Burdon 2019). Additionally, in the UK, the sector is seemingly inseparable from long-standing discussions on class bias, ‘old boys’ networks’ and the domain of the privileged, particularly with regards to more traditional, major broadcasters like the BBC, as well as considerations of diversity and inclusivity (Eikhof 2020). A cursory glance at the evolution of workflows in UK television point to a fundamental change over the last quarter of a century, propelled by policy decisions, technological change and wider global neo-liberal, capitalistic interests to adopt new workflows, production and distribution channels via digital media, and changing organisational forms (Saundry et al. 2007). In addition, there has been a profound transition to a freelance workforce (Saundry 2001; Saundry et al. 2007; Brook 2016), with numbers of freelancers within the screen industry (32%) double the national average of the general population (15%) (Screenskills 2020).

Any discussion of UK television production, and the drastic organisational change apparent over the last 30 years, cannot ignore the influence of policy, legislation and the wider rhetoric of global neo-liberalism in shaping the organisational landscape in which television now finds itself. In turn, such shifts have forced the hand of organisational elites in deploying new methods in order to maintain control and preserve some semblance of power and legitimacy. Within the context of global capitalism, since the 1990s in the UK, multiple governments placed great faith in providing economic growth via expansion of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) (du Gay 2004; Flew 2012). As a result, many of the pressures exerted upon television in the past thirty years have been as a result of these factors.

And yet, the sector remains extremely appealing, offering the promise of fulfilling creative work (Hesmondhalgh 2010a), glamour, and the potential of great success and the remuneration and self-actualisation that such success brings. But, simultaneously, there appears to be a dark side. Issues including long hours, exploitative working practices, burnout and attrition (Dex et al. 2000; Paterson 2001; Valentine 2014) cast a shadow over the entryways to the industry, and the experiences of those attempting to take their first steps into a career in television production. Once one is compelled to consider the entryways in more detail, further questions present themselves, specifically what those entryways are, who they are available to, and who is aware of them? Whereas as in other fields, particularly in professions such as medicine, law and accounting, requirements for entry are made clear. A certain level of qualification of academic achievement is a pre-requisite for making your entry to such a sector, with television there appears to be none of this. Those are professions, of course, but the presence of apprenticeships, and the infrastructure to support them, appears to have also been fragmented and dismantled.

The impetus for this study, therefore initially stemmed from asking a simple question; how do people get into television in the UK? Who, or what, are acting as gatekeepers? In doing so, it opened up consideration of unclear entryways, and with it, unclear entry *requirements*, as well as issues relating to diversity, inclusivity, and social class. A review of the research already conducted on the industry revealed a context of substantial organisational change, of fragmentation (Antcliff et al. 2007; Morris et al. 2016), of pressures of cost-cutting and ever tightening deadlines (Ursell 2000; Christopherson 2008) and disappearing skills and training infrastructures (Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014). As a result, there appeared to be looming a shortfall in skills and training, and a potential for deleterious and concerning working conditions, rendering industry and policy expectations for longer-term economic growth within the CCIs as potentially unsustainable.

Considering UK television in terms of radical organisational change, it follows that there must also be a consideration on the impact those changes have had on the structures that operate within the industry, and particularly at the

boundaries. Specifically, what processes are at work at the boundaries of the industry, what values and normative discourse are they transmitting to new entrants during their negotiation of entry, and initiation into the world of television work? What is now necessary at the point of entry, from where are workers obtaining skills? Can the industry support a continued level of sufficiently skilled workers within the context of increasing organisational fragmentation and vertical disintegration that have effectively dismantled existing training infrastructures (Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014)? And what of the workers themselves? How have the changes listed impacted them, both in terms of workflows, opportunities and long-term career trajectories and prospects, but also in terms of their mental health, and personal responses to the pressures and demands of existing as a freelance television worker in the late 2010s, and into the 2020s.

Consequently, this study was conceived with exploring the links between the entryways to UK television, and the skills that are required at that point of entry, in the light of the fragmentation of the traditional major broadcasters, and the ongoing transition to more hybridised forms of organisational governance, project-based work governed by professional networks, and populated by an ever-increasing number of freelance workers. To that end, the study seeks to answer the following Research Questions:

1. What are the gateways to the UK television industry?
2. What are the processes of socialisation for new entrants to UK television?
3. What are the responses of new entrants to the process of initiation into contemporary UK television production work?

With these aims in mind, this study resolved to speak to those individuals directly. Adopting a subjectivist ontology and concerning itself with the manner in which individuals and groups make sense of their social world, this study includes the responses of 44 television workers in a variety of areas of UK television, both

departmentally and geographically, based on in-depth interviews conducted predominantly throughout 2019. Though sampling began in the regional production hub of South Wales, the data includes respondents currently based all over the world, including Manchester, London, Scotland and Australia, but all making their entry to the television production sector in the UK, within the last decade. Four of these respondents were not currently working in the industry at the time of their interview, three of the four with no plans to return. In addition, seven of the number above are more senior workers, in more advanced positions, and with decades of experience in the sector, including the owners of independent production companies, regional technology hubs and training initiatives.

A significant contribution of this thesis is the assessment and analysis of the ways in which hybridised forms of organisational governance, and their implementation of a variety of soft power mechanics, normative control (Barker 1993) and discursive elements impact upon freelancers, not only in terms of how they make their entry to the television production sector, but how they experience work within it. It is, therefore, the central argument of this study that, as a result of a variety of external pressures, including policy rhetoric, economic growth, and technological advance, UK television's transition to a fragmented industry, increasingly based on a freelance workforce, has simultaneously necessitated the shift away from the traditional, vertical bureaucracies that would traditionally characterise the BBC and ITV, and towards the adoption of hybrid forms of organisational governance; retaining and often disguising traditional bureaucratic elements of control, but combining these with softer power mechanics, including discursive elements designed on instilling commitment within temporary organisational forms, defined by short-term project work. In doing so, an over-reliance on these soft power mechanics has resulted in a workforce that are malleable, committed and willing to self-exploit to retain positions that they feel privileged – and lucky – to have at all, but simultaneously defined by feelings of stress, anxiety and the sense of being under-skilled, suggesting that such a reliance is insufficiently equipping new entrants for work they are now expected to do.

Considering UK television in terms of hybrid forms of organisational governance allows for an acknowledgement of the variety of ways in which modern television workers are controlled and motivated via a combination of hard and soft power mechanics. Traditional bureaucratic methods of control are insufficient to adequately exert authority over an increasingly flexible, itinerant and freelance workforce. Hybridised forms of organisational governance are able to instil high levels of commitment through discursive control elements that stress organisational identity through a culture of self-sacrifice (Reed 2011), through normative control elements that create a set of values stressing commitment derived from a value consensus between organisational members (Barker 1993; Sturdy and Fleming 2011), as well as neo-normative elements that promote investment and commitment through the integration of external identities and values into the world of work (Sturdy et al. 2010; Jenkins and Delbridge 2017). Though the focus of this study is on workers' experiences to the changes in the world of television production work, the influence of organisational structures cannot be ignored. Indeed, it is the influence of these structures that define and shape workers' experiences, and their responses to those lived experiences.

To that end, the rest of this thesis will adopt the following structure. The next chapter offers a review of the extant literature and present a holistic picture of the context for the changes that have occurred within UK television in the late 2010s and early 2020s, the rise of freelance work and the attendant professional networks that support them, illustrating the antecedents for change, and the emergence and characteristics of hybridised, organisational forms, combining elements of traditional bureaucracies with softer power mechanics (Reed 2011, 2012; Morris et al. 2016). Additionally, chapter two will offer some detail on policy decisions, education and the various responses of TV workers in terms of working conditions, diversity and social class. Chapter three attempts to understand the implications of these changes, considering the nature of traditional bureaucratic forms, and the nature of power more fully.

Chapters two and three combine to offer context and justification for the research aims of the study. Chapter four then provides a detailed overview of the

whole research design and methodology, including philosophical position, assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology) and how to find out about that reality (epistemology), as well as a detailed rationale for the above research questions. In addition, the methodology covers all other aspects of the research design, including sampling, data collection, data analysis, dissemination and presentation of findings and any ethical considerations arising from the aims of the study. The following three chapters (five, six and seven) present the findings of the study in the form of anonymised quotations from respondents, split into three major themes; chapter five addresses the nature of entryways. chapter six explores the processes of socialisation that govern the boundaries of UK television in 2021, and what values and ideals these socialisation processes are both encouraging and instilling in new cohorts of workers. Chapter seven focuses more directly on the responses of the workers themselves, considering how the hybridised forms of organisational governance are shaping a workforce of a certain kind. The final two chapters offer some further discussion on the findings, and how they inform and further our understanding of UK television. Chapter eight focuses on discusses the empirical contribution the study makes, chapter nine focuses on the conceptual contribution, and offers some overall conclusions.

Additionally, an acknowledgement of the impact of the 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic is vital, and including a selection of supplemental comments from respondents on the impact it is already having on the industry, offers a preliminary insight to the effects of such a seismic global interruption, and disruption, to television and film production. Though these events occurred towards the end of the duration of this study, and after the main data collection phase had concluded, it was impossible to omit entirely. The impact of COVID-19, on both industry and society, is likely to be unprecedented (Harper 2020), with considerable implications for diversity and inclusivity (Eikhof 2020) and though future research may take these events as its central focus, this study does attempt to make a contribution on the matter. The following chapter beings with the case of UK television, in terms of its history, antecedents for change and the profound impact of policy discourse and legislation in the emergence of hybridised forms of organisational governance.

2. The Case of UK Television

Introduction

The following chapter will explore the variety of antecedents and contextual factors that have been the foundational drivers for organisational change in both the UK television industry, and wider creative industries in general, over the last few decades. The aim is to present a picture of UK television; the pressures that have been exerted upon it, the sources of those pressures, and the responses that have developed. In doing so, this chapter introduces and contrasts the changing structures of power and control within UK television, structures that have a great deal of influence over organisational boundaries, and therefore the entryways to work within the industry. Both rational bureaucratic organisations (the old, vertically integrated form of organisational governance exemplified by the BBC in the period prior to the 1990s), as well as newer, more hybridised forms of organisational governance will be introduced.

A range of developments, including technological change, cost-cutting, policy, legislation as well as global neoliberal trends towards marketisation have pushed UK television production companies to adopt new, hybridised forms of organisational governance, in order to effectively control and manage an increasingly itinerant and freelance workforce. In tracing these changes, the intention is to paint an image of the working environments into which new entrants are now stepping, how they are different, and how such organisational change is acting as a contextual backdrop, onto which contemporary television career pathways are played out. To begin with, however, it is important to consider the nature of creative work itself, a crucial element of working with the CCIs, and a source of discussion and debate.

Defining 'Creative Work'

One of the most difficult issues in attempting to study the creative workforce is simply how to define what constitutes 'creative work' and 'creative industries', especially as definitions are fluid and malleable, with UK government policy actively shifting their terminology from 'cultural' to 'creative' with the 'New Labour' government of 1997 (Garnham 2005). In 2001, the Department for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) in the UK offered a definition for the 'creative industries' as:

"...those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (DCMS 2001, p.04)

There remains, however, a wealth of discussion around the nature of 'creative' work, and 'creative workers.' Banks and O'Connor (2009) identified a set of intellectual and cultural problems, including how to define and measure the CCIs, suggesting the issue is far from resolved. Bridgstock and Cunningham (2016), citing Ball et al. (2010), and Pollard (2013) in a survey of 3,500 art/media/craft/design graduates up to 8 years after graduation, suggested that 78% were in 'creative' work, which was defined very loosely, and included teaching (33%). Elsewhere, Coles (2016) defines the creative economy as an economy where the primary outputs are talent or skill. Talents may be familiar, but what is more important is an individual's creativity transforms them in novel ways (Howkins 2013), Caves and Jones (2001) argued that the creative industries could be defined as "goods and services" associated with "cultural, artistic or simply entertainment value."

Conditions of creative work have also been characterised by 'new labour'; and workers for whom work has become a source of self-actualisation, independence and even freedom (Hesmondhalgh 2010a). Modern television workers are self-identifying, either as individuals or collectives. They strive for meaning in their lifestyle and consumption choices, but increasingly in their work as well. Managing and governing these passions is the key challenge (Rose 1999).

McRobbie (2002) echoed Ursell (2000) in pointing to a utopian thread of 'trying to make work more like life', and how this can lead to young people feeling they can only really blame themselves when things go wrong. Aspirations to and expectations of autonomy can lead to disappointment, disillusion and self-blaming (Hesmondhalgh 2010b).

In Australia, Cunningham (2011) attempted to address the need to map and quantify the 'creative' sector with the application of a 'creative trident'; constituting 'Specialists' – core creative occupations in core creative industries, 'Embedded' – workers who engage in core creative activity outside the core creative industries, and 'Support' workers – business and support occupations that work within the core creative industries. This was at least partly in reaction to earlier, broad definitions of what can be defined as creative work, Florida (2002) corralled all no collar and white-collar work into what he called the 'creative class', which is excessive and misleading. Cunningham (2011) found that the mean income of the creative workforce (as he defined it) was below that of the general workforce, and in the period 1996-2006, the gap had widened further. In tandem with this, however, the creative industries in Australia had grown disproportionately in comparison to the wider economy. Simultaneously, 'learning-by-doing' apprenticeships had declined dramatically. An environment was developing where there was fierce competition for jobs that paid well below the average, in comparison to other sectors, meanwhile the opportunities to be sufficiently trained in the work environment are becoming more and more scarce.

McGuigan (2010) attempts to offer some clarification on the discourse surrounding the definitions of 'cultural' and 'creative' work, arguing that creative labour is a universal human attribute, whereas cultural work is a 'meaning making' practice. McGuigan argues this distinction has become blurred in the cultural policy rhetoric, in doing so considering Marx's theory of alienation, and the separation of conception and execution. There is, according to Marx, a conscious purpose in the act of making something. It is conceived ahead of time, imagined and created in the mind's eye. Such creativity social and facilitated by language (co-operative work).

Creative labour has become alienated under capitalism, and exploitation is a process that separates the worker from the labour; work becomes a necessary chore, rather than a freely chosen means of expression. While it is realistic to argue that many workers mindlessly manufacture products designed by a small creative elite (Braverman 1974), whether or not the possibility of non-alienated labour is possible for all seems to marginalise the issue of whether such production line work can be considered in the same terms as more traditionally 'artistic' processes of creativity is more contentious (Arneson 1987). Quite apart from its elusiveness, creative work brings with it high levels of personal investment and expectation on the part of those who engage in it.

Clearly, 'creative and cultural work' is a very broad and vaguely defined term, including many craft and technical roles, in addition to traditionally artistic pursuits such as acting, writing or directing. Academics have tended to privilege the role of creative artists, over craft professionals – a range of supplementary, non-artistic jobs (camera, set design, sound, lighting, editing etc.). An analysis of craft labour is necessary, not only to prevent over-estimation of contributions of the artists, but also because craft labour is itself significant in the context of the range of hidden tasks that form part of the CCIs (Banks 2010). Such broadness also serves to cloud and obscure the routes towards careers in the CCIs and what work is available. As the nature of creative work is contested, so too are the routes to creative careers.

It is evident that the difficulties in offering a definition of creative work only serves to further complicate the organisational landscape of Television in the UK. Contemporary TV production environments the product of a variety of factors and influences, as the rest of this chapter will explore, but additionally become involved in debates around the nature of the work that is undertaken within; offering the potential for high levels of emotional investment and potential for rewards, including but not limited to monetary remuneration. Throughout the forthcoming discussions, the nature of creative work must remain an important consideration. With that said, the following section offers an overview of the recent history television in the UK, charting the traces of

fragmentation, organisational change, and attendant shifts in organisational governance.

The Recent History of UK Television

Prior to the 1980s, the television industry in the UK could be characterised as a vertically integrated, bureaucratic system, revolving around a major publicly funded broadcaster (the BBC) on the one hand, and the heavily regulated public-sector franchises of ITV (funded via advertising revenue) on the other. Workers primarily gained entry via training schemes or apprenticeships, before working their way up within the organisational hierarchies (Farrell et al. 2016). The launch of Channel 4 in 1982 was an initial stimulus for the independent sector (Dex et al. 2000). Launching with a remit to publish rather than make programmes, Channel 4 opened the way for a variety of smaller scale, speciality-focused independent firms to start competing for commissions, marking the first step towards a fragmentation of the industry. Programme making was highly labour intensive at this time, and it was extremely difficult to cut production costs without cutting labour costs (Sparks 1994). From the 1980s onwards, and particularly from 1990, there has been an increasing reliance on freelance workers (Dex et al. 2000; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011).

In 1990, the Broadcasting Act accelerated the proliferation of independent and freelance workers, by stipulating that a minimum of 25% of the programming broadcast by the BBC had to be produced by independent, small firms (Broadcasting Act 1990). Carter and McKinlay (2013) locate the Broadcasting Act within a long-running challenge to the BBC's both broadcasting monopoly and ideological separation of creativity and budgeting, and its gradual evolution towards a form of marketisation. The intervention of American firm McKinsey from 1968-71 reflected a move on the part of the BBC to bow to political and financial pressures, and an attempt to demonstrate efficiency for the first time. In the 1986, the Peacock Committee was, argue Carter and McKinlay (2013), a neo-liberal attempt to produce the conditions necessary within the BBC to allow a marketized economy to emerge in the longer term. Peacock saw the BBC's monopoly on British broadcasting as thwarting the destiny of UK TV and radio as

an entrepreneurial sector, and the Reithian ideals from the inception of the BBC and its first Director as insulating BBC executives from public demand (Carter and McKinlay 2013).

The Broadcasting Act (1990) was a watershed moment in British broadcasting. It fragmented the industry (Dex et al. 2000; Saundry 2001; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011), and the sector has been (Skillset 2007), and is still dominated by small, independent production companies, and an ever-increasing proportion of freelance workers (DCMS 2016). In addition, many permanent employees were shifted to freelance positions in order to fulfil the stipulations of the new legislation, but remained the 'go to' personnel of the commissioners, recruited through informal channels (Morris et al. 2016). Work in television has always worked on a project-by-project basis, but an ever-increasing number of companies and freelance workers intensified this. Since the 1990s, freelance work has remained the dominant source of labour for the UK television industry (Hesmondhalgh 2010a; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011), and the number of workers registered as self-employed in TV, Film, radio and photography increased by 97% between 2011-2015 (DCMS 2016).

It is at this point that the shifts in practice within UK television begin to significantly impact the nature of organisational governance within the industry. Throughout the second half of the 20th century, major broadcasters could easily be characterised as traditional, rational bureaucratic organisations (RBO) (Saundry 2001). There was a focus on specialised working practices, highly-skilled workers operating within a hierarchical control structure, with power and control emanating from a central point (Saundry et al. 2007; McGuigan 2010). These traditional, vertically integrated bureaucracies met the needs of increasingly complex and larger organisations in the first half of the twentieth century (Crowther and Green 2004), as well as offering the *potential* for greater fairness, due process and transparency (du Gay 2000).

The changing industrial landscape since the turn of the 21st century has only accelerated the process of fragmentation and organisational change, and there have been a variety of reasons for this. There has been a mounting pressure on

producers to reduce labour costs (Christopherson 2008), solutions including a greater degree of flexibility expected of workers, longer workdays and deteriorating working conditions, as noted in the previous sections.

Christopherson (2008) argues that a period of cost reduction and controlled subcontracting has resulted in a dramatic expansion of low-end production. In addition, advances in digital production technologies have affected workflows and established working practices profoundly. Banks (2010) highlights the importance of the craft workshop environment, and whereas some see computerisation as a catalyst for the decline of craft practices (Lazzarato 1996; Hardt and Negri 2000), others argue that craft working practices have re-emerged in post-industrial environments, the cultural industries being a particularly visible example of this, what Sennett termed an 'archipelago of workshops' (Sennett 2007).

It is Banks' contestation that the craft workshop model has endured because it benefits both sides of the labour market; workers fought to retain it as it provides a sense of artistic freedom, whereas capital allow a certain degree of autonomy to the workers, via the medium of the workshop environment, as it fosters solidarity in the workforce, who are then more likely to accept more compromised working conditions (Caldwell 2008). The requirements of both capital and labour in Banks' (2010) analysis of the CCIs for the retention of craft labour practices means that it cannot be eliminated, but Banks echoes concerns elsewhere, in the need for versatile all-rounders in the face of ever decreasing production deadlines and budgets is likely to lead to a weakening of accumulated knowledge, and a decline in the specific quality of craft skills (Banks 2010).

The Impact of the Digital Revolution

As mentioned above, major mediator in the changing nature of skills requirements in television production is the impact of the rise in digital production. The increasing influence of digital production technologies since the mid-1980s has developed in parallel to the shift to a more vertically disintegrated, project-based work environment (McKinlay and Quinn 1999). The rise of more accessible digital technology has had a seismic effect on the skills

requirements sought by production gatekeepers for a couple of decades. Before the mid-1980s, camera equipment was complex, cumbersome and temperamental. Cameras required multiple skilled operators to use. Technical issues were numerous and were expected, to the extent that they were built into the time management considerations of production timelines. A highly regulated labour process was accepted (McKinlay and Quinn 1999). Camera crews operated on a strictly hierarchical basis, graduating through the ranks involved a long and gradual apprenticeship as younger, less experienced workers were allowed to take a more central role on easier shops, whilst still under the supervision of experienced technicians. In addition, the highly regulated labour process oversaw the introduction of newer technologies into the labour process, so as to minimise disruption to workflow and maintain the supremacy of mechanical skills.

In the 21st century the landscape has changed profoundly, yet Banks (2010) does not see the digitisation of the sector as resulting in the elimination of craft practices, but rather an absorbing of new technology into existing practices. Similarly, Caldwell (2011) identified the ways in which digital production technologies have contributed to the collapse of traditional workflow hierarchies. The old sense of identifiable, successive stages no longer applies. The ‘workshop’ is replaced with a ‘workstation’ (Caldwell 2008). Job descriptions are up for grabs for seasoned professionals as well (Caldwell 2011). Crucially, Caldwell makes the point that the shift to digital production:

“... doesn’t really save costs. It merely shifts most of the production budget away from human on-the-set workers into expensive digital technologies.”

(Caldwell 2011, p.296)

The proliferation of digital technology into the arena of television production has been extremely disruptive (Mansell 2004; Burgess 2011; Caldwell 2011). New technology that offers more flexibility, and allows multiple tasks to be performed by an individual, has caused management to re-evaluate the need for such large crews, created a radical restructuring of work processes (Noon 1993). Newer equipment is also a lot more straightforward to use, more reliable and requiring fewer specialised skills, with Gandy (1991) describing newer digital

video equipment as 'chimp cameras', suggesting that even a primate could operate it, as long ago as the 1990s. Digital technologies have only tightened their grip on all aspects of life in the intervening years. The implications of this include a fundamental shift in the identity of technicians, and as a result, a concurrent shift in the skills expected of, and required by, workers in these positions.

A Move Towards Hybrid Organisational Governance

As the world of work has modernised and adapted, so too have the organisations in which that work is conducted. Specialisation, standardisation and formalisation were seen to be replaced by collaboration, flexibility and spontaneity (Morris et al. 2016). As the 20th century transitioned into the 21st, RBOs reliance on strict structure and rules were seen to be unable to cope with the dynamism, uncertainty and complexity of modern working practices (Harrison and Smith 2003), especially those now based on considerations of social capital, project work and employment networks, such as television production. A number of factors have caused television work to change fundamentally in the last quarter of a century, including legislation, policy, cost-cutting and technological advances. Changes that have, in turn, exerted great stress on the traditionally established organisational structures. The following section considers the changing nature of work in more detail, and how these changes fuelled perceptions of a post-bureaucratic world of work.

In the latter part of the 20th century, the ubiquity of rational bureaucratic organisational forms became synonymous with ideas of efficiency, with cost-cutting elevated to the utmost import (du Gay 2000b; Clegg et al. 2006). In its inception, Weber saw bureaucracy as supporting the general interest, through a rational approach to all spheres of public life. Classical, liberal bureaucracy stood for an ethos of service to the public (Weber 1978; Clegg et al. 2006). This recalibration of the notion of efficiency in economic terms is emblematic of a wider consideration one must maintain when considering all bureaucratic organisational forms. Specifically, that all bureaucratic organisations exist within, and are subject to, political governance within that context in which they exist.

Bureaucratic domination is, fundamentally, domination through knowledge, more concerned with the efficiency of *control*, rather than economic efficiency (Benello 1969; Weber 1978). The value of knowledge is vitally important when considering the nature of entryways to the modern TV production environment.

A conceptualisation of UK television as a context for organisational hybrids accounts for the transition from an industry heavily centred around traditional, hierarchical organisations such as the BBC and ITV, to a more fragmented, project-based environment, but an environment where centralised control over diffuse production is maintained (Reed 2011). The reasons for this change are manifold, but are attributed chiefly to cutting costs (Farrell and Morris 2013; Morris et al. 2016) and technological change (Grimshaw et al. 2002; Clegg and Burdon 2019), as well as a shift to a reliance on freelance workers and short-term contracts (Morris et al. 2016) and the project-based working environment that results, with work now based on trust and last-minute arrangements (Ebbers and Wijnberg 2009).

The process of hybridisation has emerged as a response to changing working conditions, both as a result of technological and workflow changes, but also political rhetoric and legislation. Production workflows in contemporary UK television can be straightforwardly characterised as project work, heavily based around networks for recruitment (Saundry 2001; Antcliff et al. 2007; Lee 2011; Hodgson and Briand 2013). Modern television production work has changed drastically, and is fraught with problems. However, the nature of work within the creative sector, and television in particular, is very specific, and worthy of attention. Not only is the subject of defining what constitutes 'creative' work one of great contestation, as discussed above, the nature of work in the CCIs is glamorous, and heavily invested with the identity of those undertaking it, as well as dressed in policy rhetoric and political polemic. A more detailed consideration of the context and background of creative industry policy development in the UK follows in the next section.

Policy Development and Political Context

There needs to be a consideration of the wider political context in which these organisational changes have occurred. Profound shifts in television production workflows, and wider organisational change that have only served to intensify and accelerate the sector's reliance on professional networks, have occurred within the context of neo-liberalism and global informational capitalism (Castells 2000a; Reed 2011), and an increasing onus on entrepreneurship and enterprise (du Gay 2004). As a result, governmental and policy rhetoric has seen the creative industries and creative economy feature heavily since the late 1990s, as this section will now explore.

UK Policy rhetoric since the late 1990s have reflected wider global neo-liberalism in stressing the growth of the knowledge economy, an onus on Enterprise, and citing the creative industries as a potential focus for growth. In many ways, this attitude to policy has contributed to key shifts in workflows and organisation. Firstly, in a shift away from traditionally integrated bureaucratic structures to a more project-based world of work, governed by networks rather than formalised rules and bureaucratic control systems. Secondly, the very same shifts in the organisational structure have gutted the traditional formalised training structure that existed within the larger broadcasters, and particularly the BBC.

In taking a 'political economy' approach to the film and television industry, Garnham (2005) focuses on the shift in policy terminology in the UK around the time of the 'New Labour' government of 1997, from 'cultural industries' to 'creative industries', arguing this is a shorthand reference to the information society, characterised as the next stage in the development of capitalism, whether through the growth of human capital in the form of scientific knowledge (Bell 1973), technological innovations (Schumpeter 1934; 1939) or through the trading of information as a scarce resource (Arrow 1979; Machlup 1980-84). In many ways, this follows a similarly idealistic outlook on the potential of the new ICT based economy. The supposed pay-off of these changes, argues Garnham

(2005), is jobs and export earnings in a competitive global economy, rather than widened access and higher quality in the UK.

Bureaucracy and Beyond

There needs to be a consideration of the political and social context in which organisations grow and evolve. Bureaucracy has often been presented in opposition to 'Enterprise', the former a relic of the past, the latter a path to the future (Osborne and Gaebler 1992), a dualism du Gay (2004) argues is a political polemic, utilised by multiple forms of governance (including, but not limited to, New Labour in the UK at the turn of the 21st century). Indeed, du Gay (2004) suggests a key element of even Thatcherite and Majorite administrations before the Blair government in 1997 included a scepticism of government to steer from the centre, a scepticism which has transferred to organisations. Indeed, Hodgson (2004) posits Post-Bureaucratic Organisations (PBO) exist in many forms, in the guises of Knowledge Economy, Virtual Organisations, Network Organisations, Boundaryless Organisations as well as New Public Management. An expansion of the creative sector was a key element of New Labour's economic policy (McRobbie 2002; Christopherson 2004; Coles 2010).

As two of the major policy agendas pursued in the UK between 1997-2007 concerned the promotion of entrepreneurs, and the growth of the so called 'creative industries', the link between the two is somewhat unsurprising (Carey and Matlay 2007), but assuming that the high levels of self-employed at work already in the CCIs are all entrepreneurial is risky. A body of research is developing that relates the teaching of entrepreneurial skills to students in the creative disciplines, that not only reflects the government agenda of raising the profile of the CCIs, but also serves as an acknowledgement of the likely career destinations of the students in the cohort. This is a shift that needs to happen, and possessing entrepreneurial qualities will become ever more important as competition for work increases, and permanent, salaried employment positions at major broadcasters become more and more scarce.

Significantly, Enterprise requires *elements* of Rational Bureaucratic Organisations (RBO) – such as book-keeping, format standardisation and regulation – to flourish, and *new* forms of bureaucracy emerge to meet those needs (du Gay 2004). Using the example of New Project Management (NPM) within the IT sector as an example of a PBO form, Hodgson (2004) found what was essentially a bureaucratic method of control, based on accountability, predictability and visibility, operationalised through formalised procedure and written reporting mechanisms, but *presented* in the rhetoric of PBO discourse. Project networks are dependent on a variety of mechanisms to co-ordinate their work, some that RBO can provide, such as formalised roles and routines, but also require a relational flexibility in order to deal with temporary organisations that RBO cannot (DeFillippi and Sydow 2016).

However, critics including Hesmondhalgh (2010a), suggest that too many of the discussions concerning new media rely on characterising eras as ‘bygone.’ The industrial age was far more complicated than simply production and consumption. Hodgson argued that NPM was based on a process of *re-bureaucratisation*, rather than *de-bureaucratisation*. The intention of senior managers was to introduce a hybrid, that facilitated the sustainability of a balance between creativity and productivity, and autonomy and control.

A shifting organisational landscape, propelled by policy decisions as well as legislation, creates disruptive ripples in a variety of aligned sectors, including Higher Education (HE). This is not unique to the UK, either. In Australia, Bridgstock and Cunningham (2016) see cultural and HE policy intersecting over a concern over the supply of talent, its employability and sustainability. There has been debate over what contribution arts graduates can make to the creative industries (Oakley 2007) and the economy as a whole. Brook’s (2016) argument is that the current creative worker embodies a set of tacit work practices that suits the general labour market’s needs on a more general scale. HEIs have latched on to the narrative of the ‘entrepreneurial graduate’; equipped with innovation, creativity, collaboration and risk-taking (Herrmann et al. 2008). A Schumpeterian model (Mangematin et al. 2014) of innovation within the CCIs argues that the economic value of creative workers is not in their direct contribution to economic

growth, but rather that they act as a higher order system within the economic system, an exemplar of 'industrial entrepreneurship.' (Potts and Cunningham 2008). Creative and cultural knowledge and skills, when allied to new digital capabilities offer the potential for innovation in the economy as a whole, reaching beyond the CCIs themselves (Hearn et al. 2014).

Here, we encounter something of a paradox. As policy rhetoric continue to champion the CCIs as a central element of economic growth, cuts to arts and cultural budgets have heightened the awareness among policy bodies of the problems of 'exclusivity' and elitism in creative careers (Eikhof and Warhurst 2013), whereas on the other side of the fence, cuts to *production* budgets have forced creative companies to seek greater collaboration with the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) (Fisher 2012). In the UK, The Department for Culture, Media and Sport Creative Industries Mapping Document (DCMS 1998) highlighted the key role of creative industries to the UK economy over twenty years ago, and HEIs have since attempted to engage more fully with the CCI agenda, though struggled to define the specific role they can play (Gilmore and Comunian 2016).

Why is a consideration of UK Creative industries policy so important? Hybrid organisational forms can be difficult to analyse in political terms (Clegg et al. 2006). Clegg et al. suggesting it is problematic to consider RBOs as simply oligarchic, and PBOs as democratic in such absolute terms. Hybridisation is a result of organisational and a political instability and conflict, but foundations of organisations are resilient (Clegg et al. 2006). Those founded on the tenets of Weberian bureaucracy do not 'shed their skin' entirely, but instead absorb new mechanisms to distribute a form of bureaucratic control over a new, fragmented, fluid and ever-changing organizational landscape, propelled in no small part by the wider neo liberalistic interests of global capitalism. This rhetoric, argues du Gay, has infiltrated all aspects of society and had a huge impact on working practices globally (Pollitt 1995; du Gay 2000b). The challenges in trying to govern any organisation where power is centrally located but has to make allowances for entrepreneurship and flexibility ultimately begs the question, how do you manage a flexible and decentralised organisation? (Hill 1991; Courpasson 2000;

du Gay 2004). The answer, it appears, is to embrace a hybrid of the ideals of centralised control (the bureaucratic) and decentralised autonomy (the organic).

Shifting structures are not operating in a vacuum. Indeed, markets are *not* inevitable, they are not a given. They are constructs, and there has to be a consideration of the political decision makers that contribute to the existence of markets; namely states and state bureaucracies (du Gay 2004). There is an ideological belief that market forces are superior in allocating resources efficiently, a resultant trend towards marketisation and out-sourcing, causing vertical disintegration and a flattening of the hierarchy (Milne 1997; Farrell and Morris 2003). A pattern all too visible in UK television; partially through cost-cutting and technological change, but also legislation such as the Broadcasting Act (1990) stipulating that 25% of roles be populated by freelance labour. States don't just intervene, but actively constitute markets, indeed Callon (1998) goes as far as to argue that market economies are therefore 'hybridised' from their inception. The result of this conflict is not a pure RBO, or a totally free market, but something in between, and this is where we arrive at hybridised forms of organisations. There are contradictory methods of control operating within hybrids; rigid hierarchies are paired uneasily with softer power mechanisms, and these tensions are exacerbated within periods of socio-economic and political instability and uncertainty. To consider the effects on the UK's television sector in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008 and resultant global political upheaval is salient, and with the impact of the 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic emergency causing unprecedented disruption to the entire industry, the effects of which are likely to be unimaginable (Harper 2020).

The Landscape of Contemporary UK Television

At this point, it seems appropriate to offer an illustration of the makeup of the UK television industry, as we enter the 2020s. According to figures available from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS: 2016), as of 2015 the Film/TV and Radio sectors made up 9.3% of total 'creative economy.' 39% of TV and film sector of creative economy based in London, rising to 40% of the 'creative industries.' As noted above, there is much debate over what is included

in terms of either creative economy or creative industries (Garnham 2005), and a considerable discourse over how cultural work is defined (McRobbie 2002; O’Doherty and Willmott 2009; Cunningham 2011). 60% of those working in UK film and television have been educated to degree level or equivalent. The figures from DCMS also present a clear picture of the demographic of the industry as of 2015. The industry is 60/61% male, 92/93% white, 87/88% from NS-SEC 1-4 (The four highest classification of the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification), depending on whether one measures ‘creative industries’ or the broader definition of the ‘creative economy.’ Crucially, within the creative industries, 53% are self-employed. In the wider classification of the ‘creative economy’ that figure is 46%. Shifts to project-based work has had numerous implications for considerations of diversity and inclusivity, heavily impacting the routes into the industry.

‘Self-employed’ is not entirely analogous to ‘freelance’, of course, and offering an accurate picture of the number of freelancers within the television sector is notoriously difficult, varying from genre of programming, geographically and from time to time. Freelancers (considered as ‘self-employed’) account for 32% of the Screen Industry’s workforce, double the average of the general population (at 15%). This freelance workforce further subdivides into PAYE freelancers (37%), Soletraders (27%) and registered one person companies (36%). Of 676 freelancers surveyed, 322 worked in HETV, and 204 in unscripted TV (Screenskills 2020).

Figures published by Creative Skillset in 2016 aimed to address the notoriously difficult task of measuring the size and demographic of the freelance television, estimating the distribution of the workforce in 2015 to have been as follows:

- Terrestrial 19,350 (25% freelance)
- Cable/Satellite 12,000 (26% freelance)
- Independent 27,300 (52% freelance)

(Creative Skillset 2016)

The representation of women working as freelancers in terrestrial television is estimated to be at 50%, of which 39% hold senior or management

positions. This figure compares favourably to both the Cable and Satellite television – with only 32% of the freelance workforce represented, and only 24% in senior or management positions – and the independent sector (47% freelance representation, with 46% in senior roles). Representation of BAME is, and has historically been, low; only 9% of the freelancers in terrestrial, and only 4% in management. Satellite fares slightly better - 13% represented, and 9% in senior/management roles – and the independent sector the lowest of all; just 7% BAME representation in freelance employment, with 6% in senior or management roles. Freelancers make up at least a quarter of the workforce in each sector, 32% of the whole workforce (Screenskills 2020) and make up over half the independent sector (52%). As the independent sector continues to grow it is concerning to note that it also has the lowest representation of BAME, in terms of the overall workforce, in comparison to terrestrial and Cable/Satellite television.

O’Brien et al. (2016) looked at the composition of the CCIs in Britain in terms of the 2014 UK Labour Force Survey, concluding that the sector was increasingly dominated by the privileged. There is an under-representation of the working classes on the whole, although numbers vary from sector to sector. Women earn, on average, around £12k p.a. less than men from similar backgrounds in the CCIs, and £15k p.a. less in TV/film. They are younger on average, than men, and more likely to work in low pay occupations. In addition to gender inequality, O’Brien et al. (2016) contend that there is a ‘class origin pay gap’ in the CCIs, those from privileged backgrounds far more likely to advance to senior, well-paid positions than those from more underprivileged origins. O’Brien and Oakley (2016) argue this is the result of longstanding structural inequalities, including organisational issues, hiring practices and discriminatory pay gaps. It is not a pretty picture for a sector that was originally presented as a new meritocratic world of work (Howkins 2001; Florida 2002; Ross 2009).

Diversity and Inclusivity

The project-based, transitory work environments that have proliferated UK television for the last quarter of a century bring with them a number of

challenges and profound implications for work, career prospects and progression. Diversity, specifically in terms of issues of gender, ethnicity and social class, has attracted a great deal of discussion and attention, although there is debate on whether the current working environment combats or reinforces inequalities. The following section sets out some of the major debates over diversity in the CCIs, and television in particular, considering some of the possible consequences recent changes in technology and education, as well as the emergence of new platforms and channels, could have for the prospects and aspirations of those from a variety of backgrounds.

Off-screen Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) remains a huge challenge for the industry, and a growing topic within it. Survey data suggests in 2020/21, 68% of responding High-end Television (HETV) professionals encouraged Screenskills' investment in inclusion should be a 1st or 2nd priority, up 39% from 2019/20 (Screenskills 2021). In Standard B of the BFI's Diversity Standards (BFI 2020), defined as Creative leadership and Key Crew, there are mixed results. Of the productions who submitted for assessment in terms of the standards, 71% of 168 productions met standards with regards to Gender, indicating strides were being made in ensuring women are increasingly represented in key creative roles and senior positions. Though an improvement, there is still work to be done. In other criteria, however, the picture very quickly becomes more concerning.

With regards to Ethnicity, only 40% of 93 productions were meeting standards, illustrating an ongoing paucity of BAME workers in key crew positions. Considering LGBTQ that falls further, to only 25% of 58 productions meeting standards, and when considering those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, on 3% of productions populated senior positions with individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds, demonstrating a continuing and staggering dominance of the industry by the middle classes. An arguably more concerning pattern plays out with regards to Standard C - Access and Opportunities/Barriers to Entry (BFI 2020), with opportunities for women adjudged to be sufficient in barely half of productions, at 54%. Beyond that, opportunities for BAME were acceptable in just 27% of productions, and both those from lower Socio-

economic brackets and those from the LGBTQ communities failed to hit the BFI's standards in over 90% of the productions submitted for assessment.

Women from all backgrounds face an additional set of challenges and barriers to work, found to struggle to balance working increasingly demanding hours and increasing workloads with childcare and family obligations (Gill 2002; Banks and Milestone 2011). Women, and those from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, were found to earn less, be represented less in higher paid jobs, and less likely to advance in their career (Eikhof and Warhurst 2013). Division of work observed among interns was also seen to be split in relation to gender (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011). Males were given more hands-on and technical tasks, such as working in the edit room, whereas females were often consigned to secretarial and administrative work. Studies outside of the UK support this, Shade and Jacobsen's (2015) study of the experience of female interns in Canada and the US found that experiences reinforce the class-based privilege of the sector. Students of privilege tended to cluster together in unpaid internships that open doors, whereas the lower income students were required to work in retail or service sector to make ends meet (Thompson 2012).

Hesmondhalgh and Saha (2013) sought to develop an approach to cultural production that takes racism seriously. Cultural production is a diverse concept, that cannot be understood without consideration of race and ethnicity. Radical cultural theorists (Hooks 1995; Molina-Guzman 2006) argue the dominant culture often seeks to commodify and disseminate forms of culture from the margins of society (the mainstream appropriation of black music in the twentieth century is a good example of this). In television, traditionally has confined predominantly black cast or themed shows to the arenas of comedy and entertainment. Hesmondhalgh and Saha argue that the dynamics of race are bound up in antagonisms of the discourse surrounding migration, nationhood and religious considerations (Lentin and Titley 2011), a desperation to avoid the charge of 'racism', had led to a marginalisation and obscuration of the issue of ethnicity, to the extent there is the view that we live in a 'post-racial' age.

Hesmondhalgh and Saha (2013) suggest any suitable theory of cultural production needs to combine an appreciation of both micro and macro factors – grounding any analysis in an historical understanding of the differing variety of forms of cultural production that exists in different societies. In addition, there needs to be a recognition not only of the role of *structure* in the society in shaping processes and definitions of ethnicity and identity, but also of the individual agency of both producers and audiences. Finally, Hesmondhalgh and Saha suggest any analysis of cultural production and ethnicity needs to acknowledge the constantly evolving nature of cultural production, but also the continuity of certain underlying cultural features and histories. As Onscreen Representation (Standard A) continues to improve, with 86% of productions submitting meeting acceptable standards set by the BFI (BFI 2020), off-screen continues to lag behind. Overall, with regards to the representation of Standard B (Key crew) around 2/3 (67%) of productions submitting were found to have met standards with regards to the diversity and inclusivity of their Heads of Department and Senior positions.

Social Capital and Social Class

A key consideration within the network environment of television production is the issue of social class, and with it, access to social capital. In the form of professional and familial contacts, as well as in terms of knowledge regarding openings and opportunities. Lee (2011) conceptualises this issue in terms of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). Cultural capital can be derived from an individual's background, in terms of education, social class or even where they're from geographically. It, in turn, relates to the choices they make and access they have to education, their tastes and tacit knowledge. Parents contribute to the cultural capital of their children, those from more privileged backgrounds are able to instil values and norms of a certain culture. Cultural capital is vital for developing social capital, in the form of group memberships, professional relationships and access to networks of influence. All but two of Lee's participants considered themselves to be middle class, all but one was educated to degree level, and all of the participants under 30 entered

the industry through some form of work experience, often gained through some form of family contact.

The significance of such a class bias cannot be overstated, the middle-class mores and values are more likely to be shared by networks composed of similar people with similar backgrounds (Tilly 1998), Christopherson (2008) finding professional networks in US television production composed almost exclusively of white men. Bain (2005) posits the concept of the 'creative persona'; a selection of criteria that decision makers would judge applicants upon, including talent, creativity, credibility, peer recognition and artistic reputation. This artistic and cultural reputation, needed to present a credible 'creative persona' is more accessible to the white middle classes, and recruitment is more likely to be considered in terms of middle-class standards (Burke and McManus 2009; Allen and Hollingworth 2013; Banks 2017). Conversely, those who have to supplement creative work with another income lose time that could be used for networking and developing professional contacts or working to develop a portfolio (Eikhof and Warhurst 2013).

In the UK, it would appear that social class is key. In exploring the impact that social class and space has on the aspirations and opportunities for young people, Allen and Hollingworth (2013) considered young people in three areas of deprivation; Stoke-on-Trent, Nottingham and London through the concept of 'mobility.' Allen and Hollingworth argue that the aspirations of young people are shaped and structured by objective conditions of their environment, Bourdieu's (1984) *habitus*, as well as their opportunities for education (Havot and Davies 2010). They suggest that a more metropolitan, cosmopolitan *habitus* exists in areas where there are more prospects available, such as Nottingham and particularly London, in comparison to a deprived area without local opportunities in the CCIs, like Stoke-on-Trent. There are cosmopolitan winners and losers (Binne and Skeggs 2004), those who travel with substantial subcultural capital and those who cannot. The importance of an individual's place has influence in shaping their *habitus*, but their social class mediates how they inhabit that place; some are able to move and characterise their environment as dynamic, whereas

other feel 'stuck' by the area they exist within, and do not develop aspirations to move away from their area and seek opportunities elsewhere.

Allen and Hollingworth (2013) point to the responsibility that higher education institutions (HEIs) have in providing realistic training and advice for careers in the CCI:

“Raising young people’s aspirations without providing labour market opportunities to accommodate them is dangerous.”

(Allen and Hollingworth 2013, p.514)

Miles (2016) draws on the Great British Class Survey to attempt to draw a more holistic picture of the demographics of the film and television industry, suggesting that it is 76% male, 93% white and 60% degree educated. Critically, these figures do NOT include the figures of self-employed workers, and so a complete view is impossible. It is, however, indicative of the permanent employees of the major broadcasters, and therefore a picture of the backgrounds of those people who remain in charge of a large number of pivotal production and employment decisions (Morris et al. 2016). Ultimately, decision makers trust those who remind them of themselves (Wreyford 2015). Eikhof (2017) concludes that studies are needed that explore the factors that influence decision makers. In considering the ways in which UK television has changed, in terms of increased fragmentation and reliance on freelance work, is a concurrent increase in the importance of professional networks. Indeed, who gains access to such networks is exactly the kind of decision Eikhof refers to above, and it is to these networks that attention now turns.

Professional Networks

Early 21st century project-based work processes have been characterised as relying on a 'network sociality' Wittel (2001). These temporary projects are formed through predominantly informal contacts, working in small teams for short and intense periods of work, before disassembling and reassembling for different projects. Effective individuals quickly found success in forming groups to

work together repeatedly to reduce the inherent risks of constantly applying for work on a project-by-project basis. Networks have long been a part of television production, but the increasingly freelance workforce that has emerged in the last quarter of a century places further emphasis on the individual for finding and securing work.

Wittel argued it was particularly visible in the newly forming cultural and creative industries (CCIs), and distinguishing it from 'community' in terms of networks being more fleeting and transient in nature, based more on informal work bonds rather than bureaucracy, 'informational' rather than 'narrational' social relations (Wittel 2001, p.51). Individual workers value social interactions primarily for the information they can gain from peers and colleagues, and how this information may further their career aspirations. Sennett (1998) was particularly pessimistic when considering the changing nature of work, arguing short-term work environments (what Sennett called 'serial time', rather than 'linear time') have led to a loss of trust between colleagues, commitment to the task and loyalty to the organisation. Wittel does not share Sennett's pessimism, accusing him of ignoring the input of the middle classes in the changing nature of work, instead suggesting that the transformations of work are the result of a small elite. Blair (2001), seems to be of the same opinion, suggesting that a traditional dual labour market analysis obscures the mobility and coalescence of the project-based work.

As explored in the previous section, networks can have a massive effect on levels of inclusivity, and key among the debates on diversity in the CCIs is the issue of whether the network culture contributes to, or negates, inequalities within the sector. Though UK diversity policy hoped that the CCIs would provide employment for marginalised groups and offer equal access (Oakley 2006), it has fallen short (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015; Finkel et al. 2017). Many argue that the network culture, though seemingly open and egalitarian, actually negates diversity by privileging those who possess good contacts and social status (Lee 2011; Eikhof and Warhurst 2013; Allen and Hollingworth 2013):

“Contrary to optimistic accounts, data from industry surveys thus show no sign of a new meritocratic world of work. Women, ethnic minorities and the working class are failing to gain parity of entry to and outcome within creative industries, with white middle-class males fairing much better.”

(Eikhof and Warhurst 2013, p.502)

Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012) offer a similar analysis:

“...the insecurities of freelance employment as well as the preponderance of paid or unpaid ‘traineeships’ at entry stage mean the sector is effectively dominated by the children of the affluent middle classes...”

(Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012, p.1315)

Antcliff et al. (2007) explored the dual nature of networks within television, arguing they can simultaneously be used for cooperation and competition, and simultaneously ‘open’ and ‘closed.’ Closed project networks excluded those without high human and cultural capital, making opportunities for new entrants far from equal (Lee 2011). Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012) present a similar picture of network diversity in television, positing that social capital advantaged, middle-class white males, and by extension their norms, values and signals, became identifiable as the ideal qualities for many of the most sought-after jobs in television in the UK. Networks allow roles to be filled quickly, but can also be used to restrict member access. Those in the middle-classes are more likely to be able to sustain extended periods with little or no income, possess shared cultural norms and reference points with industry gatekeepers and have family contacts to initiate employment through informal channels. The following quote from Lee (2011) crystallises the challenges professional networks pose:

“Networking works for social elites in positions of authority and prestige, but present severe challenges and obstacles for those seeking to enter and progress within the industry. Indeed, it excludes many before they have a chance to prove themselves.”

(Lee D. 2011, p.562)

A more fragmented work environment has placed greater emphasis and importance on the reliance on networks, and building social capital. Social Capital is now a key resource, both for elites and for regular workers. Elite power struggles are now characterised by a series of complex interactions, based around designed structures to gain information about labour, commodities, and markets and take strategic advantage of them (McNeil 1978; Clegg et al. 2006). Farrell et al. (2017), in particular, draw attention to the ways in which employers manipulated social capital to maintain control over their workers, in addition to more established literature on how workers build their own individual social capital to gain work (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010; Siebert and Wilson 2013). This manipulation of social capital can be considered a part of the soft, informal control regimes present in hybrid, 'neo-bureaucratic' organisations, including TV productions, and serves to contribute to a rise in job precarity and reliance on low-paid and unpaid work for new entrants. Core organisations manage temporary, peripheral ones through a combination of hard and soft mechanics, and individuals use social capital to further their position (Morris et al. 2016). Young workers, entering into this organisational environment, have many concerns. Young freelancers in television face exploitation and intense workloads, from both the major broadcasters and smaller firms, facing extreme job precarity, insecurity, low-paid and unpaid work and little in terms of long-term career prospects (Stoyanova and Grugulis 2011; Sibert and Wilson 2013).

Many see the inequalities as endogenous to the network culture. Though networks are likely to be composed of similar people (Tilly 1998), they don't exist in a vacuum, and access to a particular network is reflective of the cultural resources of the individual. This is argued to perpetuate the white middle class and male dominance of the more sought-after jobs (Christopherson 2009; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). In addition, there are those who see employment in project-based production processes as inherently unstable (Gill 2002), not least because the proliferation of self-employed and freelance workers has transferred the responsibility of issues such as insurance and maternity pay onto the workforce. The cultural touchstones of a sector dominated by white, middle class male milieu was also found to lead to BAME and working-class workers feeling excluded from the network culture (Thanki and Jefferys 2006-2007). Randle et al.

(2007) suggest a similar picture, that the informal social capital surrounding the 'old boys networks' is very hard to access from those who exist outside the 'white middle-class monoculture.' Crucially, Lee (2011) argues that those who are most successful within the network environment cannot see the inherent social injustice within network employment, so the problem continues. It stands to reason that those most oblivious to network inequalities were those it was not affecting.

Taking a different approach, Eikhof (2017) proposes analysis of diversity and opportunity in the CCIs as the outcome of decisions, with three main foci; points at which decisions influence an individual's opportunities, individual workers as the outcome of decisions in terms of the likelihood of being considered in the decision-making process (and what they then present for decision makers to assess them on), and finally the decision-makers themselves, and the contexts in which they make their decisions. Key life decisions, where the opportunity for educational or professional advancement are available, are almost exclusively made by other people, such as entry into higher education, entry into employment (either paid or unpaid) and opportunities for promotion (Eikhof 2017). The short-term employment environment of the television industry means that these decisions are being made all the more frequently. Higher education experience and skills training lays the foundation for access to networks, but HEIs do not make explicit what their admission decisions are based upon (Burke and McManus 2009). Applicants who are part of the networks get information that those outside do not get. The final element of the puzzle of contemporary television entryways are the freelancers themselves.

Freelance Work

In the three decades since the 1990 Broadcasting Act, the industry has changed dramatically. It has fragmented the industry (Ursell 2000), and as a result, UK TV production has increasingly been undertaken via a project-based production process (Hodgson and Briand 2013). The vast majority of those working in the film and television industry get into work, and sustain it, via personal contacts and recommendations (Blair 2001). Linked to this change, the

proliferation of freelance workers has transferred many of the risks associated with TV production from the broadcasters to the workforce (Beck 1992). Individuals working in television were facing increasing uncertainty and precariousness in their work, unclear on where the next job was coming from and employing tactics to diversify income source and gather information. Some admitted considering leaving the industry altogether (Dex et al. 2000).

Whereas salaried, permanent employees within the 'ecosystem' of the major broadcasters may encounter no problems in routinely securing work, freelance workers in contemporary television are hugely dependent on maintaining relations with relevant professional networks, amidst a context of scant longer-term career prospects. As a result, those with less than stellar reputations fell away (Faulkner and Anderson 1987). Heads of department (lighting, sound, camera etc.) would appoint their own crews for their departments, meaning ex-colleagues are a primary source of information for ongoing work (Littler 1982; Blair 2001). Blair (2001) compares this to Littler's (1982) concept of 'gang labour'; members of established work groups will take certain work purely out of a fear of getting out of sync with their work group if they don't; aesthetic and personal career motivations are overruled. Additionally, such fragmented labour markets not only hinder training (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011), but also hurt harmonious relations between workers (Siebert and Wilson 2013).

Freelance work is precarious, uncertain, characterised by poor working conditions, scant remuneration and extreme competition for positions (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012; Hodgson and Briand 2013). Pressures from labour process and uncertainties of freelance work cause some workers to attach importance to continued relationships with a small number of individuals. Group members note that being part of a group prevents taking certain work out of fear of getting out of sync with the group. Those outside work groups get work through ongoing, individual contacts, due to financial and time pressures, there is a consistent pressure to perform consistently to a high level. The groups are also an informal apprenticeship, trainees are shown 'the way things are done' (Blair 2001). Freelance workers have become increasingly responsible for maintaining their own labour market (Ursell 2000). A status hierarchy is evident, with members of

teams selected via reputation and familiarity (Saundry et al. 2007; Eikhof 2017). Feelings of commitment, loyalty and trust are evident in the work teams that develop. However, there is a duality of purpose in these networks, workers are collegial but also in competition (Antcliff et al. 2007), and must discipline each other. Labour process extends beyond the formal labour market, and freelance labour market is an 'economy of favours' (Ursell 2000; p.813).

Freelance work also interacts with HEIs, and specifically with the graduates that an ever-increasing plethora of media courses are producing. There remains a certain degree of onus on employers to consider how 'ready' their graduates will be when they arrive (Tomlinson 2012), and to view human resourcing as a long-term investment, rather than short term and transactional. There is evidence of high attrition rates and burnout among the CCIs, and particularly in television production (Hesmondhalgh 2010a), and a large cohort of the first generation of freelance workers (forced into existence by the 1990 Broadcasting Act) are nearing retirement, with no clear heirs to their positions at the highest level of UK television production. The issue of graduates and education link to a key component in the negotiation of entryways to television production, that of social capital – informal contacts, relationships and tacit knowledge - and access to knowledge of opportunities and career pathways (McRobbie 2002; Lee 2011). Carey and Matlay (2007) correctly identify that teachers on many media HE courses are also industry practitioners, and it is through these contacts that young hopefuls have a greater chance of gaining knowledge about industry openings and opportunities. When considering those who have access to this knowledge, and who do not, it becomes clear that the education system contributes to privilege certain groups over others.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to present the context of UK television in 2021. Widespread organisational change has been driven by a combination of factors, chiefly technological advances and legislation (particularly the 1990 Broadcasting Act), but intensified as a result of marketisation, driven by policy rhetoric, as well as wider, neoliberal trends and pressures to cut costs. The results have been a

fragmentation of the major broadcasters, a shift to a largely freelance workforce, and the effective elimination of an industrial training infrastructure. Such developments have taken their toll on the organisational structures within UK TV broadcasters too, with the traditional, rational bureaucratic organisational governance struggling in the face of a flexible, increasingly freelance workforce, working on a project-to-project basis and managing their employment through professional networks. The industry's response has been to employ a more 'hybridised' form of organisational governance, mixing traditional bureaucratic elements of control with newer, softer forms of control.

Against this backdrop, it is now salient to consider the implications for prospective new entrants to UK television. What sort of workers are required? What are their entryways, and are they clearly visible to prospective entrants from a variety of backgrounds? What impact do the processes at the boundaries of the industry have on those negotiating their entry into the sector, and what sort of worker is being created as a result? The next chapter aims to expand on the context established here, the nature of power and control in hybridised organisations and offer some insight into the implications.

3. The Shift to Hybridisation

Introduction

The previous chapter has explored the contextual elements of UK television, providing a picture of the industry in the 2020s, and its origins. As a combination of policy rhetoric and legislation has moved the industry inexorably toward marketisation (du Gay 2004; Carter and McKinlay 2013), cost-cutting and fragmentation have been required in order to transition to a new way of working. In turn, hybrid organisations have emerged, and new forms of power and control have emerged in tandem to compensate for an eradication of traditional bureaucratic structures, and many of the traditional bureaucratic mechanisms that are ineffective in controlling an itinerant, short-term and increasingly freelance workforce.

It is now salient to consider the implications of these changes. This chapter will address the following. First, in considering the implications of fragmentation and shifts to project-based work on entryways to UK television. Specifically, how the increased reliance on professional networks and importance of social capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Lee 2011) may provide increased barriers to entry for those from lower socio-economic and/or BAME backgrounds, and further the dominance of the industry by the middle classes. Additionally, this chapter will consider the implications of organisational change on the nature of skills and training for new entrants, and abolition of a training infrastructure within the larger broadcasters, as a reticence to train freelance workers who could leave changes both the expectations and criteria for recruitment for a first position, and the processes through which those workers are introduced to the working environment.

Finally, this chapter considers the changing nature of bureaucratic control, and the more subtle and multi-faceted forms of soft control that have emerged in hybrid organisations within UK television, the novel ways new entrants are controlled, both upon their entry to the industry, and beyond. The

following section considers the nature of the implications of organisational change on the entryways to UK television in the 2020s.

Implications for Entryways

The range of organisational changes introduced in the previous chapter have had a profound impact on how work is secured and maintained, both at the point of entry and beyond. The following section considers the pivotal role of professional networks. Networks play a key role in the evolving world of bureaucracy and work and are a key part of modern television production, as established in the previous chapter. Production teams recruit via access to networks, and network teams often stay together through multiple projects in order to ensure mid-term job security (Ursell 2000; Eikhof and Warhurst 2013). The rise of networks and cost-cutting between members is suggested to be a key driver in organisational change (Mintzberg 1983; Josserand 2001; Josserand et al. 2006; DeFillippi and Sydow 2016). Network economies lead to fragmented organisations that necessitate new forms of control (Reed 2011). Restructuring does not necessarily entail a complete shift to a post-bureaucratic organisational context (PBO), but exists as part of a long-term rationalisation process, and the pressures associated with global capitalism (Thompson 2003; Ackroyd and Thompson 2005; McCann et al. 2008).

Antcliff et al. (2007) claim that post-Fordist employment analyses and accounts have oversimplified the concept of networks, and organisations have mirrored employment in becoming more fragmented, and less bureaucratic and hierarchical. Re-regulation has increased competition for work, but the inherently collaborative nature of TV production underlines the need for trust and co-operation in the face of intense work schedules and tight deadlines. What Antcliff et al. (2007) termed 'closed' networks are more akin to those described by Faulkner and Anderson (1987) and Blair (2001), which are composed of a far more homogenous membership, populated by members who know each other well. These closed groups are used for support, enhancing feelings of trust and belonging, as well as supporting an exchange of ideas, during creative work (Lange 2005). They are beneficial in that they offer an environment for 'amplified

reciprocity' (Gargiulo and Bennassi 2000); you do favours and supply information to colleague within this closed network with the expectation that they will then do a favour for you. Those who don't reciprocate quickly amass a bad reputation and find their employment opportunities limited.

Another consequence of closed networks, and indeed, one of the issues those networks' members sought to protect against, was an ever-increasing competition for places. Jones (2000) suggests that at the turn of the century, there were 60,000 freelance workers working in the television industry in the UK, with another 60,000 'ready' to take their place. There are also implications for those graduating from higher education. A surplus of reserve labour, including high numbers of creative and arts graduates willing to work for little or no fee in order to gain a foothold in the industry, has resulted in depressed wages across the sector (Willis and Dex 2003). As the industry becomes increasingly dependent on freelance labour and project-based working environments, entrepreneurial skills are becoming increasingly important skills to possess for television workers, as flexibility within the cultural workforce is, in reality, translating as doing 'whatever it takes' to get the job done and support commercial interests (Banks 2007).

Fundamentally, a shift to a reliance on freelance work and professional networks has made it extremely difficult for young and recent entrants to make their entrance to the sector. There are the implications for individuals to consider. The methods through which workers have to negotiate this working environment rely on leveraging social capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Lee 2011). Returning to the concept of power and control as a fluid, two-way exchange (Giddens 1984; Crozier 1963, 1964; Courpasson 2000), social capital is also leveraged by both employees and elites in NBOs. Those who attempt it report feelings of extreme job precarity, insecurity, low paid and often completely unpaid work and little notion of long-term career prospects (Stoyanova and Grugulis 2011; Siebert and Wilson 2013; Bridgstock and Cunningham 2016). Specifically, a shift to a hybridised, neo-bureaucratic organisational structure can mean longer working hours, a greater range and

intensity of work tasks, low morale, stress and deleterious career prospects (Farrell and Morris 2013).

In the previous chapter the intrinsically complex nature of the concept of 'creative work' was explored, and a significant factor in the desire to work in creative pursuits is their glamorous portrayal in a great deal of the media they produce. Creative work has long been characterised by highly individualised work and creative individuals, glamorised by the media as talented 'stars.' Individualisation means people have to become, increasingly, their own microstructure (becoming the 'structures' themselves) which requires high levels of self-monitoring and reflexivity (McRobbie 2002). Percival and Hesmondhalgh (2014) offer a similar picture of television as a highly glamorous, and attractive sector in which to work:

"Careers in film and television have been coveted for the rewards of putting together expressive and informative products, and the esteem involved in working in an industry with public renown, even acclaim and glamour."

(Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014, p.189)

That the creative sector, and television work in particular retains the perception of glamour and such attraction to a continuous flow of new labour is worthy of attention, and the cause of some concern, with implications for employers, education institutions and the individuals themselves (McGuigan 2010).

The idea of 'making it' in television or film may hold great degrees of influence in shaping the aspirations of young people, it is not a rational and likely outcome for the majority. Hesmondhalgh (2010b) makes the point that in the history of cultural production, very few people in any society have been cultural producers for financial rewards. Classical composers and successful playwrights were the beneficiaries of wealthy patrons, and even royalty. The vast majority of creativity was done for personal fulfilment, or entertaining small groups in the immediate community. Beyond such idealism, however, there is the more

practical matter of; what is suitable and reasonable remuneration for cultural and creative work?

If television work takes 16-18 hours of your day, maybe six or seven days a week, that constitutes a huge dedication of time and expertise. It certainly seems worthy of a living wage, and to expect such dedication from unpaid labour is very easy to characterise as exploitative. It would be difficult to argue any differently, regardless of what value and experience interns may have gained from their time (Shade and Jacobsen 2015). Percival and Hesmondhalgh (2014) compared the attitudes of workers in the television industry with that of film, and found a greater resistance to unpaid work in the former, arguing that television is *traditionally* seen as a more stable and dependable career (Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014).

Inclusivity and Entryways

A consideration of the diversity of the creative industries, including television, is important, not simply because it is of high priority in contemporary society to offer an equality of opportunity, but specifically because the creative and cultural industries were heralded as a new and meritocratic world of work (Howkins 2001; Friebe and Lobo 2008). That the CCIs are, as explored in the previous chapter, dominated by the white middle class males to such an extent is concerning, and due in no small part to the network culture and freelance employment that has pervaded the industry in the last 25 years. This has implications for education as well. There is no point offering courses and training schemes to promote opportunities for working class or BAME students and workers if the opportunities are not there for them once they graduate, or that all opportunities are clustered in cultural hubs such as London and Manchester (Bernick et al. 2017). Higher Education (HE) and Diversity initiatives do not exist in a vacuum however, as discussed in the preceding chapter, and are part of a wider structure of governance and policymaking, as both HE policy and considerations of Diversity and Inclusivity made at a central government level can have a profound effect on the experiences and opportunities for new entrants.

Though access to professional networks is vitally important for securing and maintaining work in the television network culture, but it's not simply a matter of being in any network; the quality of the network that your social capital provides access to also has a bearing on your opportunities and prospects. Networks composed entirely of working-class, black or ethnic minority (BAME) workers cannot seek to elevate the careers of any of their members because the network as a whole lacks the social capital, and the influence, to do so (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Batjargal 2003; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). Women, and workers from BAME backgrounds were found to be less likely to secure jobs and restricted in the jobs that they held (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). BAME and working-class workers were largely found to be consigned to technical specialists, who were former apprentices, or former employees of the terrestrial broadcasters. Those from BAME or working-class backgrounds were found to have to do more to be offered work, and their networks appeared to be more fragile.

The reliance on informal networking will also exclude those disinclined, or unable, to socialise after work. These closed networks are just one of a number of barriers that stand in the way of entry to the CCIs for new workers. In the television, music and magazine industries that they studied Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2009) summarise their impressions of the existence of younger workers in the CCIs:

“The high levels of casualization to be found in all three industries led to expressions of victimisation and anger on the part of many workers [...] long working hours were combined with a sense of responsibility for agreeing to take on such hours. [...] the great ‘army’ of freelancers sustaining the cultural industries have little access to the financial and psychological benefits accruing from strong union representation. Understandably, these conditions manifested themselves in considerable anxiety on the part of cultural workers.”

(Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009, p.17)

Those from privileged, middle-class backgrounds are more likely to have the professional or familial contacts necessary to negotiate the largely informal

relationships that allow access to the network culture. In the event that middle-class individuals do not have direct access to such relationships, they remain more likely to enter higher education environments where such contacts can be made. In addition, entry to the industry often requires extended periods of unpaid work, in the form of internships or as 'runners', and this requirement forms a barrier for those from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds, unable to survive such a period of working for no pay.

Attempts to combat these entrenched inequalities have not been successful. Targeting initiatives in training or recruitment toward individuals and networking events (Randle et al. 2007) fails to include 'widespread necessary cultural transformation' (Maxwell 2004), as it works to the model of production, argue Eikhof and Warhurst (2012). That many of the training schemes and initiatives are being closed off more and more (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012) is also serving to block off the few routes out of disadvantage. Eikhof and Warhurst (2012) suggest that, instead, research should look to other CCIs, that do better at equal opportunities than television, to see what lessons should be learned in terms of good practice.

A shift to project-based workflows, and the professional networks that support them, has had a profound impact on the nature of work in television in the UK, as well as the considerations of those attempting to make their entry to the sector. Piercing the boundaries of professional networks is vital, and also extremely difficult to anyone considered a 'stranger' to the members of that network. Additionally, there is the issue of skills. Fragmentation of the traditional bureaucratic organisations such as the BBC and ITV removed the foundations for industry training. Most independents are unable or unwilling to train individuals themselves, and so the question of who is providing skills development is centrally important.

The responses and experiences of those working in the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs) towards these networks are highly ambivalent, however. Workers reported feelings of anxiety, and isolation (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009), there was a profound sense of uncertainty that entered TV

production (Hesmondhalgh and Baker also looked at music and magazine sectors) in the 1990s (Paterson 2001). Competition for work maybe embraced by some, just as much as it will fill others with feelings of victimisation, anxiety and worry about being replaced (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009). As competition increases, it brings with it an increased focus on the individual (McRobbie 2002), and a gradual de-recognition of union regulations, and deteriorating working conditions (Gall 1997). Individual workers will negotiate rates individually, more established workers have a stronger base to negotiate from, newcomers are forced to undercut and be prepared to work on 'unliveable terms' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009).

The rise of professional networks within UK television has occurred as a direct response to the rise of freelance workers from the 1990s onwards. In doing so, such a reliance on networks – many of which are closed in nature – is having a deleterious effect on inclusivity, in an industry historically plagued by inequality and middle-class bias. It is into this environment that new entrants are stepping. Additionally, the changes outlined in the previous chapter – chiefly cost-cutting and a proliferation of freelancers - have resulted in an effective eradication of the existing training infrastructure. The implications of this are profound, where do new entrants get their skills? It is to the issue of training that attention now turns.

Skills and Training in Contemporary Television

Many of the issues and challenges facing labour in the UK television industry are inter-related. The repercussions of a shift to a project-based production process, with a greater reliance on freelance labour and professional networks, has had a profound impact on the nature of skills and training, as well as the transfer of skills for one cohort to the next. Changes and advances in technology have also influenced the nature of the skills required for new entrants, to the extent that it is worth questioning the exact nature of what skills are now required, whether the traditional skills possessed by senior professionals are being successfully transferred to new generations, or whether a new skillset has superseded them. The following section will seek to explore the nature of

skills development, the transfer of skills from one cohort to another, and training in more detail.

The issue for the future of skills and training here lies not only in the nature of skills that are now required, but also the degree to which new entrants have the resources and access to acquire them. Learning on the job, as noted by McKinlay and Quinn (1999), is a central part of the skills transfer in the production process (Blair 2001; Bechky 2006), but the changing landscape of television production and increasing barriers to the necessary networks means that the access novices have, to observe and learn from experienced professionals, is increasingly limited. Older workers are increasingly outsourced and employed on freelance contracts, creating an environment far less adept at supporting communities of practice than the vertically integrated bureaucratic industry that preceded it (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011).

The Broadcasting Act of 1990 accelerated the fragmentation of the television industry (Dex et al. 2000; Saundry 2001), and the short-term nature of projects means that transitory communities within projects have little opportunity for skills development and knowledge transfer. In their study of the experiences of young workers in television production, Grugulis and Stoyanova (2011) found that this segregation from experts' knowledge and advice was far more damaging than being given routine or mundane tasks as an intern. Not only do the novices lose from their lack of access to experts, but the relationships between mentors and apprentices was mutually beneficial, fostered by the assistance that apprentices could provide (Lave and Wenger 1991).

A short-term economy requires increasing levels of flexibility, skills are required to become more portable, the ability to quickly shift focus supersedes the accumulation of experience that was traditionally valued. As a result, Wittel argues, there is a rise of individualism, a shift to what Touraine (1988) called 'offensive identities'; individuals fighting for their own interests, but increasingly dependent on the awareness of working with others (Berking 1996). This notion of the dual identity of the project networks is supported by Antcliff et al. (2007) who posit workers in the CCIs use networks for fostering trust and co-operation,

but also for competition, and can be both 'open' and 'closed' in nature. 'Open' networks are characterised as composed of a heterogeneous membership, with members who don't necessarily know each other. They are used for getting ahead and gaining information about potential employment opportunities, and maximising access to information (Putman 2000).

The nature of skills development in television production in 2020 is in a state of flux. The major skills challenges facing the workforce in 2021 include a lack of crew, especially production managers, the problem of workers being promoted too quickly (2020 67% 'a serious issue' vs. 2019 79%), crew leaving productions before completion and budgeting issues resulting from increasing rates of pay too quickly (Screenskills 2021). The type of skills required for new entrants to television production have been influenced by the advance of digital production technologies, and problems of skills transfer from generation to generation remain entrenched in the network culture. Younger entrants, through a lack of contact with their predecessors, are not gaining the skills that traditionally were required for ascension to the most coveted positions, in addition to the professional contacts. The shift to freelance and contract employment has also required that television workers become adept in entrepreneurial and enterprising skills, in addition to any technical speciality they may require. One area where skills may be obtained is via Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); universities and colleges offer a myriad of media and television production courses, but experiences of those who have graduated from such courses are mixed.

The Higher Education Problem

UK universities have long been significant cultural players in their locales. Recently, there has been a growing emphasis on understanding the impact that HEIs have on the creative sectors, and the concept of 'knowledge transfer' has become increasingly important, as assessed by the exercises such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014). There is an increasing pressure on HEIs to show the importance of these dynamics, though most evidence is argued be largely anecdotal (Gilmore and Comunian 2016), the role of HEIs is increasingly

under scrutiny, and understood to be changing along with the landscape of the creative industries. Bridgstock and Cunningham argue that at least part of the responsibility must lie with the universities:

“...universities, through curriculum reform and rigorous, up-to-date, and research-informed information about creative careers, need to assume some degree of responsibility for the risk taken by their creative graduates.”

(Bridgstock and Cunningham 2016, p.21)

When it's considered that Rowley (2012) discovered digital sector university courses in Australia often only took curriculum reviews every five years, especially in an environment that is marching forward, relentlessly, it would suggest that the communication between the triumvirate of teacher, policymakers and practitioners needs to be more constant. HEI curricula need to be more agile, able to respond quickly to the changing demands of the industry it aims to provide skilled labour for, as there is a significant disjuncture between course content and industry requirements (Haukka 2011).

Others posit that the proliferation of arts and creative degree programmes has resulted in an oversupply of labour at the career entry points (Banks and Hesmondhalgh 2009; Throsby and Zednik 2010), the major implications being that individuals will work for little or no pay in order to get a foot in the door. Others are even more critical, Daly et al. (2015) suggesting that a degree in the creative arts 'is not a good financial decision for either men or women.' (Daly et al. 2015., p.32) As the proliferation of courses in creative disciplines creates an oversupply of labour, and other training initiatives and entry routes are closed off (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011; 2012), the relationship between graduates and free labour seems destined to continue to be strained. Ashton's graduate respondents voiced three major perspectives. Firstly, there was a widespread sentiment that those with degree education shouldn't have to start at the bottom. Second, there was the perspective that such unpaid work experience can and *should* be undertaken during the course of completing a degree. Finally, in reflecting on working conditions, the graduates in Ashton's

(2015) study felt that they had invested enough time and money to bypass the unpaid period of work and go straight to a paid position.

The graduates responding to Carey and Matlay's (2007) study were questioned as to how they felt they had been prepared for self-employment and enterprise by their courses at HEIs, and frequently identified an explicit component of the course content that focused on skills and career development, often characterised by visits from external speakers and practitioners. Carey and Matlay argue that, as the teachers of these courses were frequently also practitioners, with their own portfolio careers and industry experience, students were also subjected to an implicit component of enterprise training, through working with and being taught by such practitioners, as well as learning to work to a deadline through projects grounded in real life briefs, gaining experience in presentation through presenting work for critique and learning the value of networking and selling in an end of year 'degree show.'

There are very limited or non-existent employment relations (Ursell 2000). Rates are not for specified hours, but for a job to get done. Heavy workloads and tight deadlines are stress inducing and the solution, increasingly, has been to seek free labour from students and younger workers (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009). Students are willing to give weeks for free in the hope they will gain vitally important knowledge and skills, and that their sacrifice will be reciprocated/rewarded in future (Ursell 2000), what MacKenzie and McKinlay (2020) termed 'hope labour.' Many continue to do this in the same hope, beyond graduation. These low/unpaid newcomers add to a pool of reserve labour which pushes the balance of advantage strongly to the employers.

There are reports of many students suffer as periods of uncertainty in their identities as they move into the world of work (Buckham 1998; Nystrom 2009), with Matthews (2011) suggesting that moving from creative education into creative work requires a 'translation' rather than a 'transition'; graduates needing to re-contextualise what they've learned through their degrees (Bridgstock and Cunningham 2016). There remains a disconnect between what is

taught on course curricula at HEIs, and the ever changing and shifting requirements of the realities of television production work.

The Evolution of Bureaucracy

The implications to the changing nature of career entry, skills transfer and development as well as inclusivity, discussed in the first part of this chapter have attempted to build upon the contextual aspects discussed in the previous chapter, are designed to present a holistic picture of the context of contemporary work in UK television, and the variety of implications and challenges the industry is facing. Such implications are a result, to varying degrees, of a shift to more hybridised forms of organisational governance. The fallout of an industrial response to radical change. Such a shift also fundamentally impacts the forms of control and power that are at work in modern production organisations. Such structures form a backdrop to the organisational landscape within which individuals are making their career entryways, and such structures and mechanisms of control govern their experiences, their success and their failures, as well as the ways their view their work. Additionally, it is worth considering what an exploration of the changing methods of power and control can tell us about the priorities and aims of the gatekeepers to the industry. With that said, this chapter now turns its attention to a more complete exploration of the changing nature of organisational structures, the bureaucratic regimes at work within, and the variety of forms of control that are experienced at the entryways to UK television by workers.

Bureaucracies can be defined as institutionalised versions of the political efficiency of centralised authority, legitimised by the power of knowledge (Clegg et al. 2006). They comprise a set of rules, specialisation of roles within the organisation, the keeping of written records as well as authority emanating from a formal role within the organisation, rather than from the individual (Crowther and Green 2004). Bureaucratic structures have been argued to be the primary institutional characteristic of highly complex and differentiated societies (Landau 1972; Clegg et al. 2006), and have epitomised the modern era (Blau and Meyer 1972). Traditionally, organisations within television production can be

conceptualised as Weberian, rational bureaucracies; national broadcasting in the UK and elsewhere has, historically, been characterised by hierarchy and vertical integration in programme production (Clegg and Burdon 2019). In addition, the major broadcasters in the latter half of the 20th century were built around the specialisation, standardization and formalisation of work tasks (Reed 2011). With this in mind, this section introduces the concept of bureaucracies as methods of control, tracking the evolution of different bureaucratic forms, especially since the turn of the 21st century, as discussed in the previous chapter (Saundry 2001).

Traditional bureaucratic forms are characterised as 'Weberian', or 'rational' (du Gay 2000; Farrell and Morris 2003; Crowther and Green 2004; Delbridge and Ezzamel 2005; Clegg et al. 2006). In terms of ideal-type; Rational, Bureaucratic Organisations (RBO) are built around the specialisation of roles, the standardisation of work tasks, the formalization of roles and positions within the organisation, the centralization of authority and a depersonalization of the individual, in favour of a focus on the collective. In order to co-ordinate between these different structural elements, there is a necessity for an extended hierarchy of control, including discrete levels of strategic decision-making, a framework of rules, as well as a vocational culture that prioritises collective demands over those of the individual (Reed 2011). RBOs are an effective way of organising large numbers of people, and are capable of being extremely efficient. However, traditional bureaucratic structures do also exhibit a number of tendencies for inefficient operation; namely red tape, the potential for repetition and a lack of creativity (Weber 1978; Farrell and Morris 2003).

Edwards conceptualised three main forms of control; direct control from an individual's hierarchical superior (a foreman or supervisor), technical control in the forms of assembly lines and, more recently computing and ICT, and bureaucratic control, as outlined above. For Edwards, bureaucratic control was deeply embedded in the structural elements of the firm. Bureaucratic control, like technical control, emerges from the formal structure of the organisation, rather than simply emerging from personal relationships between workers and bosses (Edwards 1979). Bureaucratic rules and regulations allow control to be maintained via impersonal roles, and allow workers to remain detached from

those roles, a traditional bureaucratic rule structure exists to serve as an impersonal control technique (Edwards 1979).

As methods of control (Edwards 1979), there has also been a great deal of attention placed on the mechanisms through which bureaucratic organisational forms exercise this control, particularly in the ways in which domination is exercised by the elites over the workers, and the methods through which this domination is legitimised. From a Weberian point of view, therefore, organisations are simultaneously structures of control *and* legitimacy (Courpasson 2000). The essence of governance, according to Courpasson (2000), lies in creating a structure of legitimacy. Domination is a process through which existing authority seeks to legitimate itself, by incorporating these in conjunction with more traditional hierarchical and formal bureaucratic practices.

Institutional power, what Reed would term 'power as domination', can operate within more traditional, hierarchical organisational structures. In considering the concept of organisational domination, what Reed (2012) termed 'Institutional Power', David Courpasson argues that legitimate authority perpetuates itself through the incorporation of soft practices of control and articulating them within existing hierarchical and formal bureaucratic practices (Courpasson 2000). This conceptualisation of the legitimisation of power aligns with the hybridised nature of neo-bureaucratic organisations (NBO), in the sense that, from a Weberian point of view, organisations are simultaneously structures of domination, through which domination is exercised, but also structures of legitimacy, through which the continuation of elite dominance is ensured (Courpasson 2000; Reed 2012). Considering modern organisations in terms of an ideal type of either RBO or PBO is insufficient, and doing so fails to fully appreciate the nuanced and fluid ways in which organisational power has shifted locations, and the control regimes that have emerged to support this shift, not least be methods of control that employ elements of both forms are more complex (Reed 2011), making power relations more difficult to observe, negotiate and resist for workers.

The concept of power and control is centrally important to the consideration of bureaucratic organisational forms, and equally significant in examining the experiences of new entrants to a sector such as UK television production. There is an inherent contradiction in traditional bureaucratic control. Edwards argues many of the benefits that were offered to workers by capital through the framework of traditional bureaucratic control were designed to instil loyalty, and keep workers divided. However, in doing so, it has created the *conditions* for workplace democracy, and a growing discontent among workers. Even in the 1970s, Edwards suggested the bureaucratic structure threatened to tear itself apart (Edwards 1979). The variety of changes outlined in the previous chapter, including the formation of hybridised forms of governance, are causing the manipulation of power dynamics in novel and potentially dangerous ways.

The 'Control Revolution'

New forms of organisation require new forms of governance, and new forms of governance necessitate new modes of control. In other words, the emergence of network economies have led to fragmented organisations, and the requirement for new forms of control (Reed 2011). In predicting a 'control revolution', Castells (2000a) suggested the rise of network enterprise would be beyond the capabilities of traditional methods of RBO bureaucratic control, instead operating on logics that are driven by a 'market irrationality', and driven by what Castells viewed as extreme instability in global informational capitalism. It is here that the importance of considering the political and socio-economic context of organisational change, highlighted in the previous section, becomes clear. Reed (2011) largely agrees with Castells' pronouncement that states and corporations are no longer sovereign, running unopposed with structural power and hierarchical control, but suggest Castells gives little account to the agents that determine the rules, shaping what Castells termed 'variable geometry' of the emergent network enterprise (Castells 2000a).

There are a variety of forms of control at work in organisational hybrids, impacting workers in a variety of ways, and with myriad implications. Some control mechanisms are enabling, allow for a better mastery of work tasks and

skillsets, whereas others are more appropriately characterised as 'coercive', as attempts to force effort and compliance (Adler and Bons 1996). It is the more coercive elements of control in organisational hybrids that require most attention in this case, as it appears it is those that are relied upon most heavily. In conducting an ethnographic account of the transition away from traditional hierarchic control, Barker (1993) identified the development of a set of value-based normative rules to control members more completely. Far from being an emancipation of workers from traditional RBO control, such control was, in effect, a 'tightening' of Weber's 'Iron Cage', developing from a value consensus between members into a set of normative rules. Such 'normative control' was defined by Alvesson and Willmott as the requirement of employees to 'develop self-images and work orientations that are deemed congruent, with managerially defined objectives' (Alvesson and Willmott 2002. p.619).

Normative Control operates through the guiding of the feelings and thoughts that guide workers' actions (Kunda 1992), through distracting the attention of workers away from harder forms of control (Fleming and Sturdy 2011) and creating an environment that encourages the demonstration and cultivation of a working environment that encourages workers' commitment through their individual creativity and expression. In conjunction with the creative industries specifically, high levels of worker investment and self-actualisation inherent in creative work align closely with efforts to coerce workers to greater degrees. Smith and McKinlay (2009) explore the concept of control through contract within freelance creative work. In creative labour contracts, the reputation of the service provider serves to help ensure the contracted work is delivered. In other words, an individual's reputation is everything, and motivates them to continue to perform to the highest possible standard, and exhibit appropriate and desirable level of commitment. In CCIs, there is a strong identification on the part of both the labourer and the 'means of production' with regards to the quality of the product, meaning levels of self-motivation are particularly high (Smith and McKinlay 2009). As a result, the sector is very well-suited to normative elements of control to coerce workers into ever higher levels of commitment (Adler and Bons 1996).

More recent work has extended the concept of normative control further. Sturdy et al. (2010) and Jenkins and Delbridge (2017) spoke of neo-normative control; a hybrid in itself, where workers are not simply shaped by the organisation, but willingly bring elements of their identities *to* work. A corporate identity forms which is, at least in part, shaped by the external values and identities of the individuals working within that organisation.

The concept of a neo-bureaucratic organisational form better accounts for the presence of both traditional bureaucratic structural elements, and many of the more organic structures that characterise accounts of 'post-bureaucratic environments' (Josserand et al. 2006; Bolin and Härenstam 2008). Returning to Edwards' (1979) conceptualisation of bureaucratic control, neo-bureaucratic organisational forms retain centralised strategic control, technologically advanced workplace surveillance and performance targets from traditional, Weberian bureaucratic models. In contrast to a traditional, Weberian bureaucracy however, rules are less enforced by a conventional hierarchy, but by various regulatory agents (Harrison and Smith 2003). NBOs are not without shortcomings and faults, and Harrison and Smith (2003) argue that neo-bureaucratic governance shares many of the shortcomings of traditional bureaucracies, lacking the capacity to adapt and deal with a wide range of contingencies in fluid and changing work environments. Sturdy et al. (2015) suggest NBOs not only co-opt criticisms of rational bureaucracies, but the hybrid form reproduces them, and can even produce new organisational dilemmas and tensions. Organisations are messy, complex and fluid, and seldom fit an ideal type (Farrell and Morris 2013).

In an ideal type, Sturdy et al. (2015) suggest NBOs feature functional integration, managed improvisation, as well as structural organisational politics and a networked meritocracy. NBOs are characterised by relatively few levels of hierarchical control, lateral and insecure careers (Morris et al. 2008) and a self-disciplining enterprise culture. In discussing the 'ideal-type' of NBO control, Reed (2011) highlighted several characteristics. NBO control regimes have an emphasis on team performance, one is forced to demonstrate participation in the behavioural routines that characterise organisational membership. Knowledge is

embedded; tacit understandings underpin tasks and routines. These are key characteristics of modern television production work, and will be returned to throughout this study.

A move to more flexible, project-based work has made centralised, formalised and hierarchical methods of control fragile and unstable; hybridised governance regimes therefore emerge as a series of 'command situations' (Reed 2012) rather than one central point of authority; there is an integration of traditional elite domination and sub-elite participation, rather than simply power emanating from the top of an organisational hierarchy. Hybrid forms of control require a much greater variety of stakeholder interests and therefore values, as well as much higher degree of flexibility. As a result, controls are often based on contradictory principles, and much more loosely coupled integrating mechanisms (Reed 2012).

There has been an observed process of 'hollowing out.' Control still remains central at a macro level, but has become extremely decentralised at the micro level (Thompson 2003; Reed 2005, 2012). In other words, team leaders may be afforded greater flexibility to govern and direct the members of their individual teams, but remain beholden to a central authority. In the context of television production, the team leaders are heads of department, who have a degree of autonomy on a micro level, but ultimately macro-level decision making regarding commissions and programme making are in the hands of central elite authority figures.

A defining characteristic of NBOs is the persistence of certain elements of more traditional, rationalist elements of hierarchical bureaucratic control. Hierarchies still exist in television departments, and although there has been a period of 'flattening out' (Rhodes 1997; Farrell and Morris 2003), power still emanates from central points. In his overview of the transformation of workplaces in the 20th century, Richard Edwards suggests that bureaucratic structural mechanics, such as incentive schemes, were a means of encouraging workers to pursue their own self-interests, stifling the potential for collective bargaining. Using US photographic giant Polaroid as a case study, Edwards

suggested that workers were intentionally isolated from one another, both physically and structurally. Workers' responses to such elements of bureaucratic control, in the US, were primarily individual and small-group discontent, rather than more collective action (Edwards 1979).

An important point to note here is the nature of hierarchies. Farrell and Morris (2003) posit that Weber, in fact, argued traditional bureaucratic forms were *capable* of efficiency, rather than efficient *per se* (Weber 1978), arguing hierarchies are a characteristic of a bureaucratic organisation, rather than a bureaucracy in itself. The presence of a hierarchy of power is not evidence of a bureaucracy in and of itself, rather an element that developed within RBO structures as an efficient method of controlling the workforce. As will be explored in this chapter, old processes and structures are not easily eradicated or usurped, they endure. Hierarchies within departments in television remain, though those departments appear to wield a certain degree of autonomy and agency in their day-to-day operation, all departments are ultimately beholden to a centralised authority.

For example, within the production department, runners may be answerable to everyone, production assistant to production managers, and production to a production co-ordinator. All departments operate on a similar internal hierarchy, but the ultimate power on a given production is not fixed. For example, an auteur writer/director may operate with absolute creative authority on one project, whereas executive producers or producers may hold sway over directors on others as a result of being responsible for funding and financing from a commissioner. The above example is just one of a variety of ways in which project teams can be organised and governed, and as such, it is often difficult to identify and track power relations within them. In addition, these teams are temporary organisations, and since the 1990s, many of these roles are contracted out to freelance workers, dismantled at the end of a given production and re-assembled differently for the next project (Blair 2001; Morris et al. 2016). In such hybridised control regimes, Reed (2012) argues, elites are even prepared to devolve a degree, or even an *illusion*, of operational autonomy to decentralised areas, in order to retain a streamlined, centralised control.

It is vitally important to understand the nature of power in contemporary organisations, and its impact and influence in shaping and defining hybridised forms of organisational governance. Television production is now dominated by hybrid organisations; the larger broadcasters built on the foundations of traditional bureaucratic structure are struggling to control an increasingly itinerant and freelance workforce without the inclusion of more flexible and soft control mechanics. Reed (2012) argues that a complex interplay is at work between two distinct forms of power.

Concepts of power and control are inexorably linked, regimes of control are methods through which power dynamics can be exercised and sustained (Clegg et al. 2006; Reed 2011). This relates to the discussion around varying bureaucratic organisational forms, as bureaucracies are primarily defined in terms of methods of control, in which individuals are organised through impersonal rules and procedures (Edwards 1979). This section considers the changing nature of power and control in modern organisations, how these concepts relate to, and interact with, the changing working conditions and political context within which a process of hybridisation has occurred, as well as some of the implications for those working in television in a neo-bureaucratic context. It begins with considering the nature of power, before considering the specifics of control.

The other form of power identified by Reed (2012) is that of 'Interstitial Power'; power that is exercised through networks. It is here that elements of PBO working practices (project-work, network economies and temporary organisations) exert their influence and demand the emergence of new control regimes (Reed 2011). The interplay between institutional and interstitial power is a key antecedent in shaping the emergence of hybrid forms of governance (Reed 2012).

There are elaborate mechanisms at play through which a high-level of work performance is stimulated and rewarded, in other words; a stress on interpersonal competition as a key element of motivation, including at the point

of recruitment. There is an element of delegated autonomy; a degree of self-management with which team leaders can operate at their own discretion, but with an overall co-ordination and regulation of performance as a collective. Finally, members of the NBO share a cultural framework through linguistic understandings and discourse, but also symbolic values that serve to create a discursive identity (Reed 2011). This 'discursive identity is aimed at creating committed subjects, with regulation and control for members emanating from peer-group mechanisms designed to ensure an appropriate level of worker commitment that is sustained (Ezzamel and Willmott 1998; Sewell 2001; Sewell and Barker 2006).

There is a degree of delegated autonomy (Reed 2011); project leaders and heads of department are afforded some flexibility to approach a production in their own ways, but commissioning decisions and macro authority still emanate from the centralised point of the major broadcasters; the BBC and ITV. Digital technology has transformed not only how programmes are made (McKinlay and Quinn 1999) but also how they are viewed (Clegg and Burdon 2019). From the organisations, network, project-based working practices and technological change provide considerable disruption to the ways that broadcasters have traditionally made programming, Clegg and Burdon (2019) suggesting that although newer approaches are being explored for programme production, there is a danger that such approaches will dilute established inhouse competencies for designing and making programmes. In other words, there is a danger of deviations from well-established processes and procedures to have a seriously deleterious effect on the quality of output. Additionally, the implications for outsourcing creativity for the more traditional broadcasting bureaucracies is to continue the process of 'hollowing out' (Thompson 2003; Reed 2012), Clegg and Burdon suggesting that:

“Doing this could be extremely corrosive of inhouse capabilities for demanding drama productions and diminish the source of fecundity for the networks which the national broadcast anchors.”

(Clegg and Burdon 2019. Pg. 19)

Power is not a one-way street, Weber also saw domination not just as enslavement, but as a politics of producing efficiency, both for those in power and subordinates (Courpasson 2000). A consideration of power as fluid, changing hands between workers and elites, and the role of the bureaucratic structure in disguising and legitimising this domination is vitally important when considering the experiences for new entrants to such an environment. Giddens (1984) saw power as the capacity to achieve outcomes, Crozier (1963; 1964) conceptualised power as a resource, to be utilised by both elites and subordinates. Perrow (1986) saw the role of bureaucracy as centralising power, and then legitimising and even disguising this centralisation. Centralised power still exists but is disguised. This is significant, in ways that will become clear. Power, however, needs a method through which it can be exercised and utilised, and achieves this through methods of control.

This is linked to Crozier's (1963, 1964) conceptualisation of power as a 'resource', as such a reading of power assumes workers as being indefatigable in their defence of their autonomy (Courpasson 2000). The implications of a combination of traditional, hard power mechanics, combined with more obfuscated and informal soft control regimes, is potentially damaging to workers' abilities to organise collectively and challenge the authority of the elites. Such elements of traditional bureaucratic control are worth keeping in mind when considering UK TV as an NBO, as traditional hierarchical elements of Weberian bureaucratic control are still present. Mooney et al. (2018), in their study of public television in Australia, found that teams were repeatedly required to step outside existing standing bureaucracies, in order to disrupt with creativity.

Specifically, centralised power provides an over-arching structure of dominancy, but there is a detailed form of control, existing at the immediate level of work processes, in the form of monitoring, assessment, peer-enforced discursive identity and workplace discipline (Reed 2011). Looking only at the nature of centralised power, it is very difficult to gain a full understanding of the nature of power relations in modern, hybridised organisations (Thompson 1989). Zald and Lounsbury (2010) aimed to address what was seen as a neglect of the importance of hierarchical power and offering a focus on what they called an

'asteroid belt' of bureaucratic positions and personnel. Centralised power still provides the over-arching structures of dominance (Reed 2012), but organisational environments in general are becoming more complex and hybridised (Clegg et al. 2006; Courpasson and Clegg 2006; Reed 2010a, 2010b), and this applies to television as well. Zald and Lounsbury's 'field approach' offers a more flexible approach to understanding the nature of elite and expert power, as it becomes more complex and obfuscated; what have been termed 'polyarchic structures and systems.' (Clegg et al. 2006; Reed 2012; Clegg and Burdon 2019).

Conclusion

This chapter, in conjunction with the one before it, has presented a holistic picture of the ways in which UK television has changed, the factors that influenced and precipitated such change and the implications for the present, and future, world of work in the sector. Beginning in the 1990s, and principally with the Broadcasting Act (1990) legislation and policy rhetoric have steadily stimulated the marketisation of the industry, the CCIs in general as a source of economic growth and a concurrent encouragement of Enterprise, and an entrepreneurial workforce. In doing so, the industry has been increasingly fragmented, and forced to cut costs. Advances in digital technology have helped in this regard, allowing an increased flexibility in individual skillsets, but collapsing workflows and diverting attention away from the relationships and processes that provided traditional industry training.

In fragmenting, too, the industry has lost its traditional training infrastructure, not least as a result of a reticence to spend time and money training a workforce that is becoming ever more populated with freelance workers, on temporary contracts and liable to leave and even work for competitors. Additionally, such fragmentation increases the reliance on project work, and the professional networks that support them. The knock-on effect of such industrial change is an evolution of the organisational structures, and processes, that regulate and control them. As such the major broadcasters in the UK have changed considerably over the last three decades, abandoning their traditional hierarchical bureaucratic structures and adopting hybridised forms of

organisational governance in attempting to retain control over this changing workforce.

These changes are significant, in that they influence the nature and forms of power and control that are utilised. This is evident in the adoption of softer forms of power and control, including the use of normalised discourse that stresses commitment, the delegating of autonomy from the central point, as well as the diffusion of power that becomes more difficult to track. The nature of this organisational context acts as a backdrop, onto which the early acts of television careers are playing out. To understand the challenges facing new entrants, first one has to understand the processes and structures controlling the boundaries of the industry. And to do that, one must also consider the antecedents of that organisational change.

So, what *does* this mean for new freelancers in 2021? Firstly, entryways are difficult to define, professional networks become ever more important as short-term, project work becomes the norm, and become ever more difficult for new entrants to breach, as incumbents seek ways to preserve some longer-term sense of job security. Secondly, skills requirements are under scrutiny. As flexibility becomes ever more desirable, in comparison to specialised traditional skillsets, such a focus combines with the lack of a traditional industry training infrastructure to impact the nature of skills acquisition substantially.

With all that said, there are a few clear questions that require further scrutiny. What are the gateways to the UK television industry? What form do they take? Who are they open to? Secondly, what are the processes of socialisation for new entrants to UK television? How are workers prepared for work within the sector? Finally, what are the responses of new entrants to the process of initiation into contemporary UK television production work? The following chapter will elaborate on these questions, provide a clarification of the research aims of the study, as well as address all other elements of the research design.

4. Methodology

This chapter addresses all aspects of the design of the research project, in attempting to tackle the research areas deemed salient in the extant literature. In doing so, the methodology, and by extension the entire research project, has to be considered not as a series of parts, but as one interlinked whole (Bryman and Bell 2015). The aim of this chapter is to place the development of appropriate research questions (hereafter RQs) at the centre of methodological development (Kovalainen and Eriksson 2008), based on philosophical and ontological considerations about the nature of the social world, as well as epistemological issues regarding how we can find out about this world. In doing so, the appropriate research methods, including forms of sampling, sample sizes, data collection, data analysis as well as ethical considerations should be established (Tietze and Musson 2002). To that end, the chapter follows the following structure. Firstly, the research questions are set out in detail, based on the conclusions of reviewing the extant literature, and the theoretical foundations regarding bureaucratic organisations established in the preceding chapters. Secondly, the ontological and epistemological assumptions will be established, explicitly. With these in place, the micro details of the research design itself will be set out in a manner that aims to show them as appropriate, consistent and of sufficient rigour.

Research Questions

The Research Questions (RQs) of a study can be considered at the centre of the research design (Kovalainen and Eriksson 2008; Bryman and Bell 2015). A good set of RQs will be based on the findings and conclusions of the literature review and will link the philosophical and epistemological considerations and assumptions with what needs to be explored, and how best to explore it (Phillips and Hardy 2002). As a result, the RQs are an anchor to which all other aspects of the methodology can be tethered. Research questions provide a frame for making decisions about data collection, as well as analysis. They can provide an explanation for the motivations behind conducting the study, as well as guidance for the process of writing up (Phillips and Hardy 2002).

The literature examined in chapter two has noted that the changes in working environments in UK television has created a context in which workers are experiencing long working hours, precariousness, and self-exploitation (Hesmondhalgh 2010b). Workers' experiences differ from person to person, and the degree to which these conditions are deleterious are also subject to variation. As such, it is appropriate to be interested in the differing experiences of individuals and proceed from a subjectivist ontological position (May 2011). This ontology includes a consideration that the nature of facts and our understanding of the social world are, to some extent, socially mediated and constructed by the context in which individuals exist (Burrell and Morgan 1979; Newton et al. 2011), Narrative accounts are, therefore, of great value in understanding the lived experiences of those individuals, and so qualitative methods are the most appropriate approach, particularly as such methods offer insights, explanations and theories of social behaviour (Ritchie and Spencer 2002).

Ritchie and Spencer (2002) suggest that qualitative RQs can be broadly divided into four categories; Contextual – identifying the form and nature of what exists, Diagnostic – examining the reasons for what exists, Evaluative – Assessing the effectiveness of what exists, and Strategic – identifying new theories, policies or plans. A consideration of freelance television work raises questions over the origins of skills (Where do new entrants develop them? How do they gain access to the required knowledge?), as well as labour entryways, which are vague, ill-defined and based on possession of social capital (Dex et al. 2000; Ursell 2000). Contextual RQs are broadly interested in the experiences of those who exist and work in a given context, Evaluative RQs are fundamentally tasked with exploring the barriers that exist to systems' operation, and so both are appropriate forms to apply here. The reasons for the nature of modern television organisations have been broadly explored, suggesting that Diagnostic RQs are not essential for this study. The literature has established the reasons for organisational change, what is less clear are the implications for the future of work and skill and knowledge transfer, as well as the inclusivity and diversity of the workforce (O'Brien et al. 2016). Social capital is not a new finding, but how broadcasters manipulate it to control recruitment and working practices is (Farrell et al. 2016). It is therefore

valuable to understand how new and recent entrants made their initial entry in working in television, and crucially, what mechanism or individual acted as the gateway, prompting the RQ:

1. What are the gateways to the UK television industry?

Our understanding of the changes and contextual elements of UK television that have impacted the nature of the organisational boundaries are well established, as laid out in the preceding chapters, but the specificities of what exactly those boundaries are, and what form they take beyond 'it's who you know' and professional networks is worth further investigation. What roles, specifically are new entrants entrusted with, or consigned to? In combination with this, it is worth investigating the nature of the processes through which new entrants are initiated into the contemporary working environment of UK television production. On what criteria are recruitment decisions based? How does the presence of more hybridised organisational forms, and attendant soft power mechanics affect and influence the process of socialising new entrants into the culture of modern television work? As such, the second RQ of the study can be characterised as:

2. What are the processes of socialisation for new entrants to UK television?

A review of what is expected and what is required in order to be considered for an entry-level job in UK television is salient, based on the changes outlined above. Applying a theoretical lens of bureaucratic organisational forms, and specifically the informalisation of traditional control methods, also prompts examination of how individuals experience various diffuse methods of bureaucratic control (Edwards 1979). As a result, a consideration of the lived experiences and responses of recent entrants to UK television, and the reactions to changing workflows, forms the basis for the third and final RQ:

3. What are the responses of new entrants to the process of initiation into contemporary UK television production work?

These RQs are designed to offer insights into aspects of television production highlighted as salient by a review of the extant literature. They draw on moderate constructionist and critical theoretical considerations to understand the nature of social reality and its production, and utilise the theoretical lens of hybrid, neo-bureaucratic organisational forms to better understand the complexity of contemporary control mechanisms and power relations. In a context where organisational change, bureaucratic control and power mechanisms can be diffuse, informal and difficult to identify and define, it is salient to examine the channels through which individuals are recruited, the criteria on which individuals are recruited as well as the ways in which individuals respond to a working environment that has been characterised by collapsed workflows, an increasing focus on flexibility and an informalisation and abolition of traditional training infrastructure (Paterson 2001; Hodgson and Briand 2013).

The RQs established above cover the four elements suggested by Phillips and Hardy (2002), and can be identified as aligning with two of the four categories outlined by Ritchie and Spencer (2002). The following sections will consider the practical aspects of operationalising these RQs. First in addressing the philosophical and epistemological assumptions that underpin the study, before a consideration of the details of the research design itself, in terms of methods of data collection, data analysis, the presentation of findings and recommendations and research ethics (Tietze and Musson 2002).

Philosophical Position

The relationship between individuals and the contexts in which they exist is a fundamental ontological concern. Ontology and epistemology are inevitably and unavoidably linked in ways that have implications for the task of the researcher (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005). Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) suggest adopting a 'critical' form of ontology to better deal with the complexities inherent in what they call a 'double ontology of complexity'; the complexity of the object of inquiry, and their place in the world, as well as the nature of the social construction of human subjectivity, and the production of the human

'being.' An acknowledgement of the complexity of both wider social and organisational context, as well as the individuals that populate it, is appropriate when considering an industry such as television, with its myriad career pathways, skill specialisations and subjective and relational definitions of what constitutes a 'successful' career. Additionally, adopting a 'critical ontology' is necessary in attempting to question and analyse the established order of doing things, and attempt to offer alternatives that seek to offer improved conditions for marginalised groups (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015).

Ontological considerations are focused on establishing an interpretation of the nature of the social world, focusing fundamentally on the debate of the nature of how reality exists, either as universally observable facts (objectivist), or as socially and historically mediated meanings (subjectivist) (Crowther and Green 2004; Bryman and Bell 2015). This research project proceeds from an ontological position that can be characterised as 'subjectivist' (May 2011), from an ontology that views systems, structures and processes as, to some extent, 'socially constructed' (Berger and Luckman 1967) and mediated by those in a given society and/or organisational context, rather than existing in a universal, objective reality (Crowther and Green 2004). That is to not entirely eliminate the presence of external structures and mechanisms that act upon individuals, however, as will be explored below.

There has been debate and contestation over the validity of the social constructionist perspective, with realists questioning whether strict constructionists - with a position that maintains all representations of organizational life are ultimately ongoing disputes of the nature of social reality – are able to adequately account for the human experience of the natural world (Newton et al. 2011). Some realists have argued this has led to an over-socialised view of nature within constructionism (Soper 1995) which is culturally influenced. Much of the extant literature on bureaucratic organisational forms proceeds from these realist perspectives, prioritising the importance of structures and processes. However, in order to sufficiently locate the place of the individual within such structures, there needs to be a consideration of the perspectives and subjective experiences of those individuals.

Constructionist perspectives merely emphasise that reality is socially constructed, not fixed, and realist critiques fail to adequately delineate between strict, and more moderate, forms of constructionism, failing to acknowledge the complexity and diversity within the field, and ultimately ignoring that a ‘majority [of constructionist studies] employ a mild or contextual constructionism.’ (Bunningham and Cooper 1999, p.303). Constructionist approaches encourage the challenging of existing framings of a given context, rather than taking them at face value (Irwin, 2001). More moderate constructionist approaches, what Hosking (2011) recommends calling ‘relational’ constructionism, the adjective ‘social’ implying a presupposition of all the subjectivity/objectivity of aspects of life, can complement realism’s concern with the practices of elite groups. Specifically, their attempts to preserve their dominant structures (Scott 2008), with a concern for internal and normalised constraints that discursively fashion identities and subjectivities, and individuals’ conduct (Miller and Rose 2008). That power is retained and utilised is significant, particularly in the light of the move towards more hybridised forms of governance, and neo-bureaucratic organisational forms (Farrell and Morris 2003).

Taking Hosking’s terminology of ‘relational constructionism’, the value of such constructionist approaches is a consideration that people’s identities are also socially constructed and mediated, rather than being an essential core that is unaffected by external factors. As the research is focused heavily on the lived experiences of different individuals - young entrants to television in the UK – and, to an extent, their own subjective version of what constitutes ‘success’ or ‘failure’, of contentment or precarity, and what constitutes ‘reasonable’ working hours and conditions, a view of the social world that recognises that data and facts are constructions and interpretations of people, and can change from person to person, and from context, place and time is essential (Crowther and Green 2004).

Newton et al. (2011) suggest there needs to be a combination of social constructionist and realist assumptions to sufficiently analyse the complex discursive practices in modern organisational forms. In looking at the television

sector, it is clear that such an amalgamation of assumptions is essential in understanding the complexity of increasingly informal and hybridised forms of organisational governance, an appreciation of the complexity that has arisen from several decades of organisational change, legislation and the casualisation of working and employment practices (Ursell 2000). Employing a 'relational constructionist' (Hosking 2011) approach seeks to satisfy realist acknowledgement of the presence of structure, while maintaining a focus on the object of inquiry as being the individual, and that individual's perspective and lived experience.

The philosophical position established above characterises the nature of the world as created, largely, through shared human consciousness, which in turn informs and dictates how one can learn about the social world, in the sense that facts and reality are understood within a social context (McAuley et al. 2007). From a subjectivist (May 2011) philosophical position, the creation of social reality resides in the interpretations and discourse of those societies, the value of that discourse, in spoken and written accounts, become increasingly important in gaining an insight into how experiences and perspectives are mediated, and the relationship of the individual to their social world. As such, it can be argued that large-scale, statistical and quantitative data sets are of less value here, the rich, deep description of a variety of qualitative approaches more appropriate (Crowther and Green 2004; McAuley et al. 2007; Bryman and Bell 2015). The next section will establish some of the principles and debates surrounding the nature of qualitative research, specifically in-depth interviewing, and its appropriateness for approaching this particular project. Beyond that, the details of the research design itself – data collection, analysis, dissemination and ethical considerations – will also be considered in full.

Qualitative Research and Qualitative Data

Qualitative work meets different objectives to quantitative work, and provides a very distinct form of information (Ritchie and Spencer 2002). Cassell et al.(2006), in discussing the developing role of qualitative methods in management research, found evidence to suggest the definition of qualitative is open to multiple interpretations, arguing that, far from being detrimental, this variety of definitions can be considered a credit to the rich diversity of research that can be conducted. Whereas quantitative, statistical data can establish broad trends over time, and over a wide geographical and temporal range, qualitative accounts excel in generating rich, deep descriptions of a tightly focused context, and offer the opportunity to get closer to understanding the authentic lived experience of those entrenched in that context on a daily basis. The term 'qualitative research' typically refers to methodological approaches that use non-quantitative or non-statistical modes of data collection, and analysis (Prasad and Prasad, 2002; Cassell and Symon, 2006). Qualitative research can offer policy makers a picture grounded in the experiences of those most likely to be affected by any policy decisions (Walker 1985).

In addition to its importance to researchers in gaining insight that quantitative methods cannot, Walker (1985) illustrates the value of qualitative approaches to practitioners and policy makers in attempting to better understand the perspectives their decisions will affect, and in what ways. As such, just as a qualitative methodology fits the philosophical and epistemological assumptions and considerations outlined above, and also offer a practical approach in understanding the specificities of a context as complex and subject to change as UK television, presenting an appropriate approach to consider it from an effective critical perspective.

Among the myriad reasons of the adoption of qualitative methods in the last few decades have been an increased, and persistent, requirement to understand a complex set of behaviours, needs, cultures, and systems (Ritchie and Spencer 2002). The data generated is primarily spoken word or written accounts, but ethnographic research can also include video evidence,

photographs, audio recordings and even artefacts and symbols (Eisner 1981; Tilley 1991; 1999). As such, qualitative research, and by extension, the data it generates, is more relational, and subject to a variety of interpretations, than its quantitative counterpart (Bryman and Burgess 2002; Bryman and Bell 2015). The value of such unwieldy data sets has been debated, with Miles (1979) describing it as 'an attractive nuisance', and Turner (2002) suggesting researchers will need to vary their analytical approaches, since the most appropriate method will vary according to the nature of the data with which they are confronted.

Qualitative research and qualitative data can pose a number of challenges for the researcher, in terms of generation, collection and analysis, but it can offer a deep insight to a given context that is unobtainable through alternative means. It is vitally important in understanding the complexity inherent in a societal or organisational context, and in unpacking and gaining insight into the subjective experiences of individuals existing within those contexts. As such, it is an appropriate framework with which to consider the context of UK television. The lived experiences of those trying and succeeding in gaining entry in the sector lack definition in the paths they should take to begin their careers. Furthermore, the informal manner of recruitment in UK television requires a focus on the specifics of the criteria for selecting workers to join. It is unclear whether these decisions are made on the basis of specialised skillsets, soft skills and characteristics or socio-economic factors including social class backgrounds access to professional networks and contacts. Finally, and perhaps most salient to the application of a qualitative approach is the investigation of the lived experiences of those working in UK television in 2020. How those working in this new organisational environment, and how they rationalise their work in a context of long hours, tight deadlines, as well as a lack of long-term job security and career trajectory, is timely, and an element not widely explored in the wider literature.

Qualitative approaches also link well with a variety of the fundamental assumptions of critical thinking, including (but not limited to) the view that all thought is mediated by historically and socially constructed power relations, that facts can never be isolated from the domains of values and ideology, and that

language is central to the formation of subjectivity, both on a conscious and unconscious level (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997; Kincheloe and McLaren 2005). There are challenges and opportunities in the use of qualitative methods in organisational research, namely a thorough review of the literature, explicit stating of the goals of the research, and specification of the methodological processes that have led to the creation of a piece of work (Gephart and Rynes 2004). Rather than being restrictive, or exclusionary, it affords room for the range of perspectives and interpretations, and in turn, encourages innovation (Cassell et al. 2006). It requires a separation from the dominant perception in management research that quality is associated with quantification. A consideration of different philosophical positions, beyond a positivist quantitative core, can highlight the myriad contexts in which qualitative approaches can bring great depth and value to the field.

Qualitative methods have much to offer management researchers in enabling access to the subjective experiences of organisational life (Cassell et al. 2006). Qualitative enquiry has affirmed itself in management and organisational studies by addressing questions that positivistic, experimental or survey methodologies cannot adequately address. Such methods are subject to differing, yet comparable rigour as those used in conventional, empirical research, which can be subject to accusations of simplicity, ahistorical and decontextualized context and a lack of reflexivity (Prasad and Prasad 2002).

There remains a lack of detailed accounts of the experiences and perceptions of those who've recently made their entrance into the television industry in the UK. Not only do we know little about the specifics of entry to the labour market, beyond broad stereotypes of 'it's who you know' and a reliance on professional networks, the literature appears to lack a detailed exploration of the perceptions and aspirations of these workers. Therefore, it appears appropriate that a qualitative approach would be deemed most appropriate for this project. It makes allowances for the subjective nature of reality. It has, traditionally, been closely associated with the understanding of local meanings and everyday symbolic worlds (Prasad and Prasad 2002). As a result, it allows rich, deep insight into a given context at a given time and place, and it is strongly

concerned with the narratives and perspectives, as well as the lived experiences of the participants of that context.

Though effective in unpacking the complexities of social reality, the specifics of qualitative approaches remain subject to debates. Dyer and Wilkins (1991) suggest the central issue is whether the researcher is able to understand, and describe, the context governing the social dynamics of any given scene, in such a way that the reader is given a clear picture of that context, and to generate theory in relation to that context. The consideration of 'breadth' vs. 'depth' in qualitative data, both in terms of collection and analysis, is the subject of ongoing debate in the literature, Bryman and Burgess (2002) note that if frequency of something that is observed in the data is not fundamentally the determining feature in qualitative analysis, it remains to be determined exactly what is. Qualitative data analysis is challenging, and will be considered in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

The place of the researcher in the data generation and collection process is another general consideration of a qualitative research design that differentiates such approaches from more quantitative methods. The quest to be objective is a difficult, maybe impossible, one (Mick 1986). Hirschman (1986) suggests that even the decision to investigate a certain phenomenon or context is a decision based fundamentally on a value judgement. Arnold and Fischer (1995) describe what they call a 'context of tradition', defined as an accumulation of a shared cultural context between the researcher and the object being studied. It is difficult, nay impossible, for the researcher to investigate a context with sufficient depth and insight, while remaining entirely detached. What is important, however, is to ensure that the researcher's unavoidable and active impact on the data generated is acknowledged, and to avoid totalising theory or the presentation of findings as a universally accepted truth, rather than an interpretation, of which others may exist (Arnold and Fischer 1995).

The research design of this project adopts a philosophical position that can be characterised as moderate, or relational constructionism (Hosking 2011), recognising the nature of social reality as not fixed, heavily dependent on the

temporal and geographical context, as well as mediated by the interactions and shared culture of the actors existing within that context. However, such a moderate conceptualisation of constructionism also accommodates a consideration of the conduct of elite groups to preserve and consolidate the dominant structures that establish their control (Scott 2008; Reed 2011). Such an ontology is best suited to investigation via qualitative methods, in order to gain a holistic picture of the challenges and perspectives experienced by the individuals within those societal and organisational contexts. The following section addresses the specifics of data collection.

Data Collection

In order to answer the RQs established earlier in this chapter, an in-depth semi-structured interview protocol was designed, in order to explore the careers and life histories of new and recent entrants to the UK television industry. In doing so, it was expected that a greater understanding of the educational background, motivation and skills of those who successfully made it into television in the current climate would be achieved. Crucially, respondents were asked to clarify their personal point of entry, in an attempt to establish common patterns, and the individuals on the gateways to the industry that facilitated, or possibly even frustrated or prevented, that entrance. A copy of the interview protocol is available in the appendices (Appendix A). A protocol takes the place of a traditional questionnaire format by providing the researcher with broad categories and subjects to tackle, and prompts and probes to cover interesting and salient developments in more detail. The intent was to allow the conversation to develop organically, with the researcher occasionally steering discussion towards relevant topics, facilitating insights to become apparent from the participant. The researcher takes a largely reflexive approach (Phillips and Hardy 2002).

Specifically, as the aims of the project sought to understand patterns of labour market entry for young and new entrants, as well as the attendant issues of skills, two main groups were identified as possessing relevant experience and insights into the phenomena: experienced professionals in senior positions, and

those characterised as new and recent entrants. Experienced professionals offer a perspective of the historical context, and raft of organisational change within UK television, in a way speaking exclusively with recent entrants would not. In total, 7 conversations were had with more senior respondents, including heads of independent studios, Senior HR personnel at major broadcasters, leaders of training initiatives, and industrial strategists with Creative Industry government initiatives. Conversations covered a holistic view of the industry in its current state, issues of higher education, access to training, as well as problems and issues facing television production for new and inexperienced workers in the sector. An initial period of four in-depth interviews were conducted, allowing for a refinement of research aims and RQs, in combination with a review of the extant literature, resulting in the RQs outlined in the previous section, three more senior respondents formed part of the main data collection, taking advantages of opportunities and access when they arose.

Utilising some of the contacts gained from this initial data collection period, the main data collection phase was a purposive sample of workers who had gained entry to work in UK television within the last 10 years. This time frame was selected as appropriate, on the grounds that it allowed for the inclusion of participants who made their career entry into a contemporary industrial landscape, but also allowed for a wide enough inclusion criteria to find sufficient respondents. Though it is assumed that most new entrants are also young, this is not universally the case, and so it is important a distinction be made between 'young' and 'new' entrants, they are not necessarily one and the same. Though the selection criteria decided to be solely based on recent entry to the television production sector, the demographic characteristics of the participants selected were also noted, in order to give consideration to the implications for diversity and inclusivity of recent recruitment patterns. Respondents were asked to specifically comment on their background, their education, as well as how they viewed themselves, in terms of social class, ethnicity, gender identity or sexuality, where they deemed it salient and appropriate.

From an initial contact list of five, further participants were sampled through 'snowballing' (Bryman and Bell 2015) gaining further contacts from the initial

batch of participants. In total, 44 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of workers, affiliated with UK television. That total of 44 is broken down as follows. Seven respondents were senior television workers, with decades of experience. Four of the total number were former television workers; two of whom still harboured ambitions to work in the sector, whereas the other two had moved on to pursue other careers. The main sample is made up of 33 recent entrants to UK television. Of that 33, 16 participants identified as male, and 17 as female. One participant was aged 19, the remainder of the recent entrants were aged between 20-40 years old. Twenty of the recent participants were aged between 20 and 30, and twelve between 30-40 years old. Respondents were not explicitly asked about their sexuality, but one interviewee voluntarily identified as LGBTQ. Two of the respondents were BAME, both of whom were female. A full table of participants is available in the appendices (Appendix B).

The initial sample of participants were based in the South Wales area, an area with its own, well-developed film and television sector, but snowball sampling strategies included recent entrants working all over the UK, and even currently working abroad, such as Australia. What united all of the participants was that their initial entry-level role in television took place within the UK, and within the appropriate time-frame of within the last 10 years. It is important, when considering data collection, to assess not only what would be an ideal dataset, but what is feasible and practical, and crucially, available to the researcher (Phillips and Hardy 2002).

The initial data collection period, via four preliminary interviews, took place intermittently throughout 2018. The main data collection began in January 2019 and continued throughout the majority of that year. In 2020, a series of follow-up emails were sent to a selection of seven respondents of the main data collection, asking them for some written feedback on the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on their careers, and the industry as a whole. Though not part of the focus of this study, or included in the initial research design, it was decided that the COVID-19 pandemic was too significant to ignore. Four responded to this

follow-up query, and their responses are included as a concluding postscript to the discussion at the conclusion of this paper.

All interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed by the researcher, offering an opportunity to become immersed in the data set from the outset (Belk et al. 2013). In addition, full transcriptions are a necessary part of methodological rigour, and are required in order to enhance the 'trustworthiness' (Lincoln and Guba 1985) of the research findings. Interviews are historically, politically and contextually bound (Fontana and Frey 2005). As a result, interviews align well with a qualitative approach and a subjectivist ontology. It is worth considering that, contrary to the scientific image of the interview, it is not a neutral exchange (Fontana 2002), but a mutually created story (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). The interviewer is a socially situated person, and positivist views of interviews can underestimate the complexities of one-to-one human interactions (Scheurich 1995).

Though its scope can be measurement, interviews excel in gaining an understanding of an individual or group (Fontana and Frey 2005). As a result of such data collection methods, the focus is able to shift from simply understanding the 'what' of people's lived experiences, but also the 'how.' Unstructured interviews can provide greater breadth as a result of their qualitative nature (Fontana and Frey 2005). Silverman (1993) and Dingwall (1997) advocate a similar story-telling approach to Gubrium and Holstein (1998). It is through a social interaction between two human beings that people can divulge life accounts in response to inquiries.

As a result, interviews are extremely valuable in eliciting rich, descriptive data and understanding the lived experiences of groups or individuals, in this case the experience of recent entrants to an industry that is shrouded in uncertainty and unclear pathways. Fontana and Frey (2005) conclude that the very nature that makes interviewing undesirable from a traditional, positivistic scientific perspective is what lends the approach its value. We must remember that each individual has their own social history, and perspective of the world. To learn about people, we must treat them as people, and work with them to create

accounts of their lives. It is through this empathetic approach that interviewing was decided upon as the most appropriate method to elicit the necessary data and narrative accounts from the participants. Where possible, interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis, allowing for the nuances of how the story is told, in terms of gestures and context, to also become apparent, what Gubrium and Holstein (1998) termed 'analytic bracketing.' However, due to the nomadic nature of television work, and the small windows of opportunity to secure time with participants, nine of the interviews were conducted remotely, three over Skype, and six via phone calls.

Data Analysis

One of the defining characteristics of qualitative research is the interplay between data collection and analysis (Wiseman 1974). Analysis is not a distinct phase (Bryman and Burgess 2002), design, collection and analysis can overlap and interact with one another, as simultaneous and continuous processes (Burgess 1984a, 1984b). Some literature suggests that analysis should begin immediately upon entering the field (e.g. Geer 1964), whereas others recommend getting a complete data set before starting to analyse (e.g. Ritchie and Spencer 2002; Belk et al. 2013). What is vital is a willingness on the part of the researcher to be reflexive, and to reiterate and react as the data set informs future collection, and themes and concepts become apparent, keeping in mind that the data analysis is a continuous process (Bryman and Burgess 2002).

Once the interviews were recorded and transcribed, the first step in analysis was the process of coding (or indexing); organising the copious notes and documents into groups, and taking the first steps towards conceptualisation (Bryman and Burgess 2002). Coding requires extracting small elements from the dataset that retain their meaning and salience when lifted from their original context (Ely et al. 1997). One of the major goals, and strength of qualitative research is the generation of concepts from the data that can form the building blocks of theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). A further issue to consider with regards to the process of conceptualising the data was to acknowledge the extent

to which concepts emerged from the data itself, and which had existed *a priori* (Bryman and Burgess 2002).

Ritchie and Spencer (2002) put forward a Framework approach to analysing qualitative research that is comprised of five key stages. Firstly, the authors suggest immersion in the entire dataset, in the form of listening to audio recordings, reading and writing transcriptions and studying research notes. The complete transcription of the data by the researcher allowed for this period of immersion to occur as the data was collected. In addition, all interviews were conducted by the researcher, allowing for emergent themes and developments to be addressed as they occurred.

Once familiarised, Ritchie and Spencer argue a selection can be made that offers representative cases. The second phase of analysis is, as above, beginning the process of conceptualisation and bringing together what they describe as a 'thematic framework', identifying key issues and themes (those present in the literature and established *a priori*, those emerging from the respondents and those emerging from initial analysis) against which the data can be referenced. This ensures that the original RQs and aims were properly addressed. The process of applying this thematic framework to the data is referred to as 'indexing', and includes returning to the entire data set, not just those selected in the first stage of analysis. Immersion in the data set throughout, starting from the process of actually conducting the interview itself, through the transcription process, resulted in the researcher able to iteratively develop thematic links and identify concepts in an ongoing and reflexive manner. This allowed data analysis to not only take place continuously throughout data collection and analysis, but facilitated subtle amendments to the interview process as the dataset grew. The decision to adopt a semi-structured interview approach also enabled this process to be adopted successfully.

The fourth stage is to chart the data, lifting it from its original context, as Ely et al. (1997) also suggest, and allowing it to be applied to the appropriate thematic references. Finally, Ritchie and Spencer's (2002) Framework suggests the mapping and interpretation of the patterns and associations that have

become apparent in the initial indexing and charting phases of analysis. The characterisation of the analysis as an ongoing phase is clear here, each subsequent stage is dependent on the iteration before to provide the foundations for the next. It is through the rigour and structure of a process such as the Framework approach that can counteract the unwieldy data sets and complexities of qualitative research that have characterised it as an 'attractive nuisance' (Miles 1979).

The rationale for following the framework approach, was that it would achieve findings heavily influenced by the original accounts of participants, offering a dynamic process open to change and reiteration throughout, a full review of the material in the dataset that is easily accessible to others, and allow easy retrieval from the original data set and easily interpreted by others (Ritchie and Spencer 2002). The central concern is to adopt an analytical approach that allows the researcher to understand and describe the social dynamics to the reader in a way that is effective in conveying that context, and to facilitate the generation or development of theory (Dyer and Wilkins 1991).

Presentation of Findings and Research Ethics

The presentation of research findings, in the form of the relaying of narrative accounts and interview data, presents a number of challenges. The process of writing qualitative research is, in itself, a narrative act that inherently causes the blurring of boundaries between fact and fiction (Rhodes and Brown 2005). Once again, the place and position of the researcher becomes significant. In asking a participant to reveal something about themselves, it is impossible for the researcher to remain removed from any influence over the situation (Behar 1993). Rhodes and Brown (2005) echo Watson (1995) in calling for a promotion of accounts in social science research that incorporates an 'honest attempt to maintain scientific integrity.' (Watson 1995, p.302).

Such considerations of scientific integrity are intrinsically linked to the ethical approach with which the research has been conducted. The research design was subjected to multiple ethical reviews, at iterative stages of data

collection, to ensure the ethical and methodological coherence, and rigour, of the project was sufficiently high, and conformed to institutional regulations. To that end, all participants were informed ahead of time of the main aims of the study, in the form of a covering letter or email. Participants were made aware that their consent was voluntary, ongoing and was able to be retracted at any time, without giving a reason. Written consent was requested at the beginning of each interview in the form of signed Cardiff Business School consent forms. For those on long-distance calls, and unable to sign and return a consent form, the letter of consent was read to the participant at the beginning of the interview, and verbal consent was given at that time.

The key themes and findings are presented in following sections in the form of anonymised quotations. In addition, any significant individuals or organisations are also anonymised. Participants were assured that their identities would be anonymised, signed consent forms were kept in locked boxes and separately from the rest of the data, transcriptions were given pseudonyms and audio recordings were stored on encrypted USB drives or encrypted University hard drives. All data would be destroyed at the conclusion of the project. Participants were offered the opportunity to be sent a summary of the findings of the project. A copy of the consent form template (Appendix C), the covering letter (Appendix D), and a table of participants (with pseudonyms) (Appendix B) are all available in the appendices. Full copies of interview transcriptions are also available, on request.

Though the subject of the project itself was unlikely to cause any distress or provoke any sensitivity amongst the participants, it is vital that their anonymity is guaranteed throughout, and they are made aware of the ongoing nature of their consent to participate. This is particularly important with regard to younger entrants, who may be reticent to offer particular criticisms of working conditions or employers, as they risk future career opportunities. It is vital for researchers to acknowledge the possibility for the social sciences to reproduce social order by normalising established power dynamics (Foucault 1980; Rhodes and Brown 2005). As a result, participants were made aware that they were able to decline answering any questions at any time, without giving a reason. In addition, there is

a responsibility for the writer to take seriously the lives of those being studied, and engage in a rigorous attempt to recognise the multi-dimensionality and complexity of the lives being studied, and produce accounts that are rich in 'depth, detail, emotionality, nuance and coherence.' (Denzin 1997, p.283).

This chapter has outlined and justified the entirety of the research design of this project, beginning from the ontological and philosophical position of the researcher, the ways in which these philosophical assumptions inform the sort of data available and the object of study. The philosophical and epistemological considerations are combined with the findings from the extant literature and the theoretical lens of the project in order to develop salient and relevant research questions that assist in defining the research focus and aims, as well as the best way to achieve those aims. A qualitative approach, from a subjectivist philosophical position, utilising insights from bureaucratic literature to offer a context to better understand contemporary television production in the UK, informs a methodology based on in-depth interviews with recent entrants, to better understand skill formation and labour entryways in a neo-bureaucratic setting. In addition, a critical theoretical perspective aligns with subjectivist and social constructionist assumptions of the nature of social facts and their creation, as well as maintains a vital criticality throughout, suitable for a research project tasked with exploring the lived experiences of the relatively disempowered majority.

Placing the research questions (RQs) at the centre of the design ensures a coherence and consistency between the philosophical underpinnings and the practicalities of the methods used for data collection and analysis. The aim throughout was to offer a research design that was transparent, coherent and logical to the observer, as well as suitable for the research aims and practically achievable, whilst still meeting ethical expectations and requirements.

5. Findings: Entryways

The following chapter explores entryways to UK television production, as described by recent entrants to the sector. Initially, it will consider the pathways and routes that appeared more visible to prospective new entrants; namely runner positions, work experience and apprenticeships. The prime distinction between runner and work experience roles being that the latter is almost exclusively unpaid, though their duties and responsibilities are often very similar. Apprenticeships offer a longer-term and more structured experience, often including a taught component. The chapter will conclude by considering the importance of professional and family contacts in gaining, not only access to UK television jobs specifically, but also as gatekeepers to information about these entryways and opportunities.

Runners

Prior research has established that the entryways to television work in the UK are obscured, informal, varied and heavily reliant on interpersonal connections and professional networks (Antcliff et al. 2007; Allen and Hollingworth 2013). However, there are still some avenues that remain more visible and accessible. At the forefront of these is the runner position. Runners typically perform a variety of simple administrative and logistical tasks, and have a place in multiple departments, from production to costume, art, lighting etc. Runner duties are varied, and predominantly simple, lower-level tasks not requiring a specific skillset, beyond basic communication and inter-personal skills. Rebecca describes the sorts of tasks expected of production runners on a major drama:

Lots of office admin, you know, keeping databases up to date, running errands, buying things as and when needed. The big thing was always collecting the rushes, the camera rushes after lunch and at the end of the day, so going to location, collecting all the paperwork and the actual footage, bringing them back to the post-production facilities. And just – yeah – tidying, you know the lowest of the low sort of thing, ... lots of different things, but mainly office work.

(Rebecca, F, 30s, Production Co-ordinator)

The 'rushes' refers to raw, unedited camera footage at the end of each shoot. The name due to the speed with which they need to be prepared (Nevada Film Office 2018). The majority of production runner duties comprise of mainly office work and low-level administrative and logistical tasks. Eve, a Production Runner on a high-profile drama at a major broadcaster, suggests the runner position was the most talked about and visible route into the TV industry, and was actively encouraged to pursue it during her media course in Higher Education (HE):

I think the majority of people, from my experience, come out of uni ... and say, 'ok I'll be a runner.' Or 'I'll be a production runner.' Because they don't know what area to go into. And I think that, sometimes, you know it's such a competitive market, everyone comes out saying, 'I'm going to be a runner.' And so there's millions of people going for this runner job, when there's maybe a researcher role, or a camera trainee role, that people aren't necessarily going for because they're not really sure that they have the skillset to go in them [sic] avenues. Whereas, at uni, you're kind of taught that you need to be a runner to get into this industry, which isn't really, necessarily true. ... People use it quite a lot as a stepping-stone to get into what they want to do. But, because it's so competitive it can be really, really difficult to get those runner roles, I think.

(Eve, F, 20s, Production Runner)

HE and other educational avenues promote runner positions as the catch-all entry-level positions, and contribute to creating intensive competition around relatively few runner jobs in any given production, seldom more than one or two per department. Prospective entrants are encouraged towards runner positions, but other opportunities are available, but not clear to those outside. Eve's perspective has changed since getting into the industry herself, she now does not see the runner position as the only way to make your entry to television production. There are other opportunities, opportunities that make themselves visible once individuals have negotiated their entry.

And yet it appears the picture of the runner as ‘the starting point’ endures. David outlines the pathway from runner to editor in the post-production department, again alluding to the expectation that ‘you always start as a runner’:

Whether you end up being at a tech lead or a post supervisor or an editor or whatever job you do, you always start as a runner. You always start as the bottom rung. And a lot of doing that is learning on-the-job and you could learn to do any of these jobs without the education, I find. The education doesn't hurt in any way, shape or form. The education does help, but there's no matter how, where you go, you start at the bottom and you learn the processes as you do it.

(David, M, 20s, Editor)

The runner position is traditionally considered an introductory, or entry-level, role, a ‘stepping-stone.’ It provides invaluable contacts, knowledge about how the industry works that is not picked up elsewhere, as well as an opportunity to begin picking up skills, within the industry. There is an inconsistency with the runner’s relationship to HE. Skills are expected to be largely acquired on-the-job, something runner positions can facilitate, yet David is not alone in hesitating to completely dismiss the value of HE. That you ‘could do any of the jobs without the education’ hints at the value of the HE system in other ways for individuals, namely providing information and knowledge about opportunities and contact with professional networks. The importance of these contact will be considered in greater detail later in this chapter.

Runner positions can also occupy some different and unexpected places within the production hierarchy. James recounts discovering groups of ‘professional runners’ when looking for runner jobs made available through online Facebook groups:

What I found interesting is; a lot of people who are runners, have actually been running for a very long time, and they're very experienced runners. And that might be more a production thing, and I don't know much about production. I've never actually worked in production so, that might be one of those things where it's very difficult to get to the next step. But I always get the impression from the

group, that a lot of the members are what they would see as 'professional runners', in that is what they do and they're not really interested in going any higher than that. It's almost as if that's what they want to do, and personally that doesn't appeal to me at all, in the slightest.

(James, M, 20s, Post-production edit assistant)

That there are those who appear to choose not to move beyond the runner position is an interesting development, it has traditionally been characterised as an entry-level position existing primarily to provide experience, and as a springboard for more specific jobs. However, there is also evidence to suggest that others *can't* move beyond the runner position, as they offer too much in that role. Maria is a Producer currently working in Scotland, and she shares anecdotal evidence of a colleague experiencing exactly this issue:

I know a guy, he's a runner at the minute and he's known for being an excellent runner, but he's finding it hard to move up because of it. ... he's getting long runner contracts. Whereas he might be better off doing shorter runner contracts and holding out for a junior researcher role, but he's been a runner for about three years and he's like, how, 'how do I move up?'. ... He drives vans, which is very useful for a runner. So I think he's doing something like 'AuctionShow' or something at the minute. And it's a six-month contract, which is a huge contract for a runner. But it's also stopping him doing - to move up. ... I think to move up you need to tick as many boxes as you can as a runner and be a good all-round runner. But I think you get that from doing lots of short-term jobs rather than one job where you're just driving a van around for six months. That doesn't necessarily help you.

(Maria, F, 30s, Producer)

With the runner position widely encouraged and singled out as a main entryway to initial work in television production, a place to gain invaluable contacts and experience, it is potentially concerning to learn that excelling in that position could lead to the individual being unable to move beyond it. Maria's friend finds himself invaluable because of owning a van, hugely beneficial to a production runner, but not a skillset that prepares an individual for a more

specialised, creative role. There is also the question of whether long-term runners are where they are because they want to be, or because they are trapped, as well as the extent to which a runner position adequately prepares workers for advancing in their chosen role. Indeed, the notion of 'long-term' being used to describe a contract of just six months, is a significant illustration of the lack of sustainable, long term career prospects presenting themselves to early-career television workers.

Potential runners find out about runner positions in a variety of ways. Individuals can be made aware as a result of professional or potential contacts. James found out about the potential of the runner as a starting position through a friend, who had already made his entry into the sector, through the same route:

It was the general understanding, that a runner would be a good place to start because, that is the bottom of the chain, and you can work up from there...it is kind of drilled into you, from what you read online ... I'm a part of all sorts of different Facebook groups, for instance one of them is like for runners, and it's quite cut-throat, a lot of it.

(James, M, 20s, Edit assistant, Post-production)

It is significant that James feels that the necessity to start as runner was 'drilled' into him. Much of this information appears to be coming from HE, David and Eve above suggest the same things, as well as other professional contacts, either familial or professional. As suggested elsewhere, there are a variety of other potential avenues at the entry-level. Additionally, there are online portals that post runner opportunities on sites such as Facebook, allowing positions to be filled at very short notice. Below, Melissa explains how this benefits both those looking for opportunities and those looking to fill positions:

Facebook is surprisingly really, really good for this industry, because there's pages where people ... post jobs. ... I would say the main place to look for a job. That's the easiest way to get people because one, you can post your CV and be like, 'I'm available from this date.' And then someone could go in there and be like, 'right, I

need someone.' Or someone can post on there and be like, 'I need a runner next Friday.' And you know, for a fact that's going to reach 18,000 runners. I even know for a fact it's just going to ping up on someone's phone straight away, so you're going to get a really quick turnaround.

(Melissa, F, 20s, Production Assistant)

Individuals appear to get runner positions primarily through HE tutors, friends and family industry contacts. Though there are Facebook groups that routinely post information about opportunities they are not clearly advertised, and normally require direction from a contact with that industry knowledge.

There is a consistent theme, from the respondents, of a lack of clarity in how to start their careers. From a lack of perceived opportunities, what skills are required, whether higher education is valuable or how to find out about apprenticeships and other initiatives. Often, it appears that prospective entrants try whatever options they are made aware of, often told to apply for runner positions by professional or family contacts already working in the industry, or by lecturers and tutors in HE. The runner position can be filled quickly, demands little in the way of specialised skills and benefits both the recruiter and the prospective entrant by supplying a variety of on-the-job experience and professional contacts. There are other opportunities, but they do not seem to be made visible to those outside the industry. Additionally, there are issues apparent with employing runners purely for their suitability as a runner, and to what extent the position can adequately prepare an individual for a more creative role.

Work Experience

Though the runner position is considered one of the more identifiable routes into UK television by recent entrants, several participants also spoke of their first television work coming in the form of work experience placements. Work experience positions are similar in their duties and responsibilities to runners, but more often border the distinction between paid and unpaid work (Strauss 2005; Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014; Brook 2016), taking the form of very short-term, and almost exclusively unpaid, positions. Many of the

respondents reported working for expenses and accommodation, or even for nothing at all, as part of the first steps of their career entryway, through work experience. Jenny gives an overview of her early work experience:

So when I did work experience, all that was unpaid, so I made my own arrangements to go to mid-Wales and go to - you know the B&B was unpaid, the work I did there was all unpaid, you know I had to fork out for my own expenses, and the time I took up. The only thing I was paid for, was I did a little stint as a sort of 'helper out' with 'RadiointheRegion', which obviously doesn't exist anymore.

(Jenny, F, 30s, Broadcast Journalist)

The vast majority of Jenny's first opportunities within television were unpaid, even her accommodation was not covered. Work experience promises to provide many of the same benefits as runner positions; namely access to invaluable contacts, vital on-the-job experience and training. This is not a guarantee, however, those who take on unpaid work are doing so at great financial risk, with no assurance that it will give them what they seek, either in terms of skills acquisition, knowledge about opportunities or professional contacts. Those who gained access to work experience placements did so in a variety of ways. Some, like Lyndsey, were able to leverage an existing familial contacts to gain access to some vital experience at a young age:

I was quite lucky actually back when I was, doing my work experience as a 16-year-old. My mother knew someone who knew someone who owned the post-production company. So I did two weeks' work experience there, and then I went off to do my degree. And once I finished my degree, I got back in touch with them and said, 'I've finished my degree. Now I'm looking for a starting position. Have you got anything going?' And, luckily for me anyway, they had just lost their current runner/receptionist. There was a position available so I interviewed and managed to get that.

(Lyndsey, F, 30s, Editor)

Lyndsey was able to use the professional network and contact she had through her family, even after she returned from Higher Education. This poses issues with relation to access to unpaid work experience positions, and the socio-economic backgrounds of those who can undertake them, which will be addressed in more detail in a later section.

For those without a contact through friends and family, a common way to find out about work experience opportunities was via lecturers and course content at HE. Those who went to HE suggest that the expectation was impressed upon them by their tutors and lecturers, that unpaid work would be central to their early careers:

I'd been warned by my lecturers that it's incredibly difficult to find a crew that's willing to take on a 'newbie', basically. I thought there would be one or two, maybe three, unpaid work experience and I had to be quite firm and say, 'No, I'm done with them.' Which I have.

(Stephen, M, 20s, Art Director)

Stephen was warned to expect a period of doing work for no money, even after graduating from HE. It was impressed upon him to the extent that he felt it necessary to impose a limit upon himself as to how many unpaid positions he would take. However, the contradiction here is that crews do not take on inexperienced workers, but the individual is expected to put their own boundaries on how much unpaid work they are prepared to do. This excludes those who cannot afford to do so and swings the bias in the favour of the privileged. Elsewhere, Eve offers a similar account, but that her lecturers would put students forward for work experience placements that they were aware of, suggesting HE institutions and broadcasters are closely linked, and cultivating contacts within these broadcasters is extremely beneficial when looking for work after graduation, a key method of securing an entry-level position, particularly for those without familial or close friends acting as professional contacts:

... my lecturers would always put me forward for like experience and stuff like that. I was – in my first year, I joined the student TV station, and there I learned a

lot about making video and stuff for clients, and stuff like that. So when I graduated I was pestering loads of people, 'I'm still looking for work!' And, one of the women got me an assessment day on [a major soap]. So, I went there. I got a week's work experience from the assessment day, and from the work experience, they gave me some freelance work.

(Eve, F, 20s, Production Runner)

Though many HE courses seem to offer informal routes into work experience, via knowledge transfer between lecturers and students, there is also evidence of a more formal incorporation of work experience into the structure of some courses. Melissa, now a production assistant at a major broadcaster, describes one of the modules on her TV production course at the University of Gloucester:

So the module was called work experience. And to pass that module, technically you needed to get 90 hours of work experience placement. So that sounds like a lot, but in reality if you're doing 10 hours a day, like the TV industry is, you just need to do nine days somewhere or, you could chop it up, change it.

(Melissa, F, 20s, Production Assistant)

This approach, building a period of work experience into the structure of a HE media production course, is arguably more beneficial in that it places unpaid work in an environment where students are not necessarily expecting to get remuneration for any work experience they get, as opposed to expecting them to undertake it after they've graduated. However, it also serves to reinforce and normalise the expectation for new entrants that they will be expected to work for free, at least for a period of time. How long that period of time is, however, is crucial, and will be explored further, below. It is perhaps unsurprising that attitudes towards work experience are somewhat conflicted. Many of those who have successfully made their entrance into the TV production sector via the work experience route speak very highly of it. Elizabeth got her first entry to TV production via her lecturer on her HE course, a course she generally didn't find particularly beneficial, other than in providing her with that contact:

I came to Cardiff and got into media production [university course]. The course was not very good, it wasn't structured very well ... I had an email one morning, and it was from our lecturer, and he said, 'Do you want to apply for work experience in [major broadcaster]?' ... I got an email back saying 'you were successful.' ... and it just gives you a boost. When you get in you realise how important work experience really is. ... Work experience does work, you do find people with the specific skills ... So I kind of always push for work experience, and say to people, 'Please do as much work experience as you can!' because it pushes you in the right direction of using the skills that you've learned from uni.

(Elizabeth, F, 20s, Production Assistant)

Though the course on which she was enrolled was not necessarily meeting expectations, it was the contact, in the form of her HE lecturer, that made Elizabeth aware of work experience opportunities. When she was in the industry, the importance of such routes and gateways became more clear to her. Elizabeth believed in the value of work experience to the extent she would encourage more prospective entrants to pursue that avenue.

Work experience is not without its faults, however. The proliferation of unpaid work within the television industry, specifically, and creative industries in general (Siebert and Wilson 2013) is a cause for much concern, when considering exploitative work. What is salient here is that newer entrants are very much aware that the potential to be exploited via unpaid work exists, yet feel compelled, or even enforced to put up with it, in order to gain access to the industry (Straus 2005; Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014; Brook 2016). There is also the issue of who is getting excluded by the issue of working for free, and inevitably it is those from lower socio-economic backgrounds who lose out, unable to support themselves during a more prolonged period of working unpaid (Lee 2011; Eikhof 2017). The phenomenon of unpaid work experience seems built into the gateways of the industry. Michael exhibits an awareness of the potential barriers such mechanisms pose for those without the disposable income to support themselves (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012):

... there's the cost of studying, the impracticality of doing unpaid work experience, mostly in places like London, is generally where they are. That is changing, but that's still the overwhelming reality. Those are routes who favour people that afford it, that have that sort – have that as an aspiration.

(Michael, M, 20s, Broadcast journalist)

Closely linked to this is the issue of the duration of work that is unpaid. It seems that duration is key. Respondents offered differing attitudes with regards to unpaid work experience itself, but a common thread was an acknowledgement that a relatively short period (up to two weeks) of unpaid work was acceptable:

Like a couple of days here and there, wasn't ever necessarily a problem. When it kind of got to a week or more, I started getting a bit ... once you've taken that amount of time and you're not doing any work, you're not earning money, but you need to. A couple of days isn't too bad, but two weeks, or you're losing your evenings and weekends to it, it starts getting really frustrating. Yeah, a few days is fine, anything more than that, it starts grating.

(Anthony, M, 20s, Not currently in the industry)

Anthony is not currently working in the industry, despite having ambitions to do so, making his perspective extremely valuable. His experience highlights not only the difficulties in negotiating unpaid work as an entryway, but also illustrates the potential for self-exploitation amongst those eager to make entry into the UK television. Melissa offers a similar opinion, and suggests that, had she not been enforced to find unpaid work experience as part of her HE course, while still a student, she wouldn't have been able to fit that level of commitment in, had she been juggling a part-time job in another industry, or supporting herself without any income at all:

I think it depends like how long for, and kind of the situation. Like here, you're only allowed to do 10 days and then an hour beyond that, you're paid. And I think that is fine, if you're doing one day shadowing. Cause at the end of the day you know what you're entering into. You don't have to be forced to do it. But I think with this industry, like it's really rare for someone to just have a blank CV, for TV

and then someone be like, 'yeah come on board.' So I think you kind of do need it unfortunately, to kind of jump into the industry. But like my, my work experience was while I was at uni, so there's no way I probably could have done like a commitment where I could've worked. So I was just doing like odd days here, odd days there. And that kind of suited me. And I think if you're that passionate, you don't mind doing a couple of odd days unpaid.

(Melissa, F, 20s, Production Assistant)

There is inconsistency in Melissa suggesting you're not 'forced' into unpaid work, but 'you do kind of need it.' That there is an expectation that some degree of unpaid work is acceptable within the industry, blurs the lines between paid and unpaid work in dangerous ways. It is very easy for employers to push the boundaries of how much can be done for no remuneration, knowing that the new entrants are desperate, or 'passionate', to work in the sector. Lyndsey also talks in terms of 'passion', when talking about embarking on work for free:

I've done a couple of short films and web series and things like that unpaid. And especially starting out. I don't necessarily do it now, unless it's someone I know or a project that I feel passionate about.

(Lyndsey, F, 30s, Editor)

Additionally, there is the extent to which the expectation or the inevitability of unpaid work is structurally enforced and normalised by discourse within and around the industry. Lyndsey argues unpaid work is a common occurrence amongst her cohort, the justification again being the contacts one can only make by being in the production environment:

... I think everyone I know in the industry has worked for free at some stage. Which I don't necessarily agree with but, you know, sometimes that's the only way that you can make connections or get to do the work that you actually want to be doing, you know?

(Lyndsey, F, 30s, Editor)

Lyndsey is approaching ten years into her career and has maintained a steady stream of contracts and projects. Even so, she admits that she would consider working for free, even now, if it was a project for a friend, or something she was passionate about. This attitude is echoed by Isobel, an artist on a major drama. Isobel has not had to undertake any unpaid work herself so far, but is acutely aware of the expectation to do so:

...I'd been told many, many times, either in talks, in person, or again following these artists on the internet. They all say, 'you will be asked to do unpaid work, it's just a given. You will do the internship for free. And – but just pick and choose and try and trust your gut to know when it's right to do that. And when you should actually be putting your foot down and saying, this isn't fair.' But then they can turn around and say, 'Alright, we'll find someone else to do it.' So it's a bit of a Catch-22 sometimes. It's – because in theory I would do an unpaid internship for a limited amount of time, but how am I going to survive in that time? That's the only problem!

(Isobel, F, 20s, Artist)

The fear of a prolonged period without work is a constant for many in the early stages of a career in UK television production. There appears to be a combination of the normalised expectations of having to work for free (Siebert and Wilson 2013), and the intense competition and fear of missing out on opportunities. Isobel was in a paid position at a major broadcaster, but still considered the possibility of having to hypothetically work for free, with concerns about how she could support herself in that situation. Lyndsey echoes elements of both Stephen and Isobel's accounts, acknowledging the widespread expectation of having to embark on a period of unpaid work, while also drawing attention to the value for new entrants in gaining connections from their placements:

... I think there is almost an expectation in creative industries that you'll work for free for a bit, or work for exposure, you know, but exposure doesn't pay the bills! You know, I think people should be paid, if they're doing work, but I think you need to be able to navigate that. It's a bit of a minefield, you know, so you have to

judge what's worth doing it for. If it's making a new connection, that's a value in itself rather than monetary value.

(Lyndsey, F, 30s, Editor)

There's a great deal of conflict in Lyndsey's account, expressed in the quotes over the previous page. She admits she's undertaken unpaid work and she doesn't necessarily agree with the practice. And yet, she suggests she would still consider working for nothing, even now – several years into her career – if it was for someone or something that she feels passionate about. In addition, there is another, less obvious value attached to unpaid positions; namely the possibility of accruing vital contacts and furthering one's professional networks. The promise of potential contacts is invaluable, but it still costs. Lyndsey's account illustrates, not only the conflicted nature of work in television production, but also the 'minefield', as she calls it. Workers have to judge whether a position is worth accepting based not only on monetary remuneration, but also in terms of social capital, contacts and even creative fulfilment, if it is a project they are passionate about.

Periods of unpaid work experience have continued to play an important role in the entryways for new entrants to UK television, but attitudes towards it are ambivalent and complicated. Similar in terms of the administrative and low-level logistical duties entrusted to runners, work experience placements are almost exclusively unpaid. Though respondents generally express concern and resentment towards the prospect of working for nothing, there is also evidence to suggest that work experience does provide valuable on-the-job experience, and crucially, access and exposure to important professional contacts, and do result in paid positions. These unpaid positions pose considerable problems, however.

Primarily, they are open to exploitation, and many of the respondents suggest that a period of no longer than two weeks is reasonable, when working for nothing. The very same respondents who express concerns about the exploitative nature of unpaid work experience admit they would consider undertaking a period of unpaid work, because the end result is worth it.

Additionally, the issue of the discourse surrounding working for nothing seems to reinforce and normalise the expectation for new prospective entrants that they will have to undertake a period of unpaid work (Siebert and Wilson 2013). This discourse also serves to disadvantage those without the financial security to support themselves through a period of unpaid work, namely those workers from lower socio-economic backgrounds, favouring those from more privileged backgrounds, and contributing to a perpetuation of the class bias of the sector (Siebert and Wilson 2013; O'Brien et al. 2016). The issue of diversity and social class will be considered in more detail in an upcoming chapter. The following section will consider a third option for those attempting to 'break-in' to UK television production; the apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships occupy a middle ground between HE courses and more hands-on, practical entryways, such as runner positions and unpaid work experience. The main apprenticeship training provider in South Wales, referred to here as 'Wales Train', offers year-long, paid apprenticeships that involve a placement in a chosen department with a local production company (which in the past have included all the major broadcasters, as well as multiple independents) as well as a taught component that offers a qualification at the completion of the year; a Level 3 NVQ in Media. Louise, at the time of her interview, was right at the transitory point of finishing her apprenticeship and starting an entry-level job at a major broadcaster. She explains the form the apprenticeship took:

So it was 13 months long. it was kind of, like, ease you in, really nicely at the start. Not a massive workload, really, at all. As far as the job goes, itself, it was just a lot of learning, really. Shadowing – I did a bit of editing training, camera training, I shadowed a lot of people in programmes. I also shadowed a lot of people, who are production specialists, who work in the gallery and who direct or do sound, or do camera and things in the actual studio itself. but the Wales Train side of it is the 'hard work' part of it, if – yeah. So, they would, I think it was like every two months we would go to Wales Train for about a week, to three weeks. So, out of

the 13 months, 10 weeks of those had to be spent with Wales Train, doing assignment work.

(Louise, F, 20s, Production Assistant)

Apprenticeships such as those offered by Wales Train have a variety of advantages and disadvantages. In their favour, they offer a prolonged period of exposure to the UK television production environment, allowing the opportunity to cultivate professional relationships and become a familiar face to teams working in a variety of major, and super-indie broadcasters, and the avoidance of unpaid work. However, the format offered by Wales Train specifically is, by its nature, quite general, catering for apprentices in a variety of departments and disciplines. As a result, the roles themselves are often generic and lacking in specialised expertise, as the same framework has to provide camera operators as well as artists, costume designers and production staff. As Louise describes above, the Wales Train apprenticeship offers a reasonably generic on-the-job learning experience, coupled with an academic component.

For those who did apply for an apprenticeship, a major theme was an impression of competition, apprenticeships were very limited in number, especially in South Wales. The alternative was to try in London, where competition was expected to be even more fierce:

So I started looking at apprenticeships. The ones that I found were mainly based in London, but I did see one with the 'TVCorp', an art department apprentice, that someone actually sent me. And the spec just seemed to fit pretty well, so I applied, and I think there was a lot of people that applied for the same role. I think there was about 600-1,000 other applicants, and two of us got through to the art department apprentice, and it was split – 12 months on placement with 'MediDrama' and 'ValleyLife.'

(Helen, F, 20s, Art Director)

Helen also illustrates the behaviour and qualities that allowed her to stand out on the apprenticeship:

I was always keen to help out, I was there first and there last out, you know the basics sort of apprentice rules. I had three months left until my 'ValleyLife' stint was over and the apprenticeship was over, which would've given me a Level 3 Creative Digital Media NVQ, and I was offered Art directing, by the designer, to stay on with 'ValleyLife' for another 9 months, and that was pretty unheard of, because I was still 18, and a lot of the other art directors were in their 40s and 30s and whatever else.

(Helen, F, 20s, Art Director)

The above account is illuminating about the content of training and experience. Sweeping floors, making teas and coffees, as part of a designated training scheme is very similar to the duties entrusted to runners. Helen acknowledges the extreme sense of competition that she felt in the application process for the apprenticeship, whittling down hundreds of applications to just two. In addition, it is worth noting that she was then offered a job before the end of her apprenticeship, and regardless of the fact that she had not yet completed her qualification component. It was Helen's individual qualities and personality that got her this opportunity, not the qualification, as she had not completed it.

Kate supports the nature of the competition in apprenticeships, explaining that she applied multiple times, and was unsuccessful, echoing the theme of working extremely hard, and having to endure rejection and knockbacks, before finding success:

I worked really hard, and I applied for the apprenticeship at the end of A Levels, and I didn't get it. I had no real experience, apart from the film I'd made for my A Level, that was the main thing I'd done, because – but I also had got a job at an independent cinema. And that was towards the end of that time, but I don't think that was even in my application, because the application process takes so long. ... So the workshop day is where the company, called Wales Train who hire most of the apprentices. They're a media training facilitator, and I didn't get through that one either, but I had some good experience. So, what I spent the next year doing

is – cos I'd finished A Levels, at that point. So I spent a year just trying to get as much experience as possible.

(Kate, F, 20s, Researcher/Casting Apprentice)

Kate, in a similar manner to Helen, managed to get her first job as a result of the contacts that she had made through the apprenticeship placement, once she was finally successful. There is a strange inconsistency in Kate's story, however. She was required to gain experience in order to successfully get a place on an apprenticeship, calling into question, again, what the purpose of the apprenticeship is, if not for providing experience? While highlighting the competitive nature of apprenticeships, there is ambiguity in these accounts as to what the major benefit of embarking on an apprenticeship is. The academic component is viewed by all parties as being of little value:

... if I'm being honest [...] they ['Wales Train'] literally said to us, multiple times, 'We don't really care about the qualification. We are passionate about you guys having a job, and keeping your job. Or going on to being employed.' Which was what was great about it, I think. They would give us so much support, like anything. So, I mean – yeah I think it's good because I don't think I would've got that experience if I hadn't done the apprenticeship, and I wouldn't have been given that entryway, but at the same time, yeah I don't really care about the qualification!

(Louise, F, 20s, Production Assistant)

The value of the apprenticeship is not the qualification. If the industry gatekeepers, the individual and the training provider see little value in the academic aspect of the apprenticeship, then why does it continue to form a fundamental aspect of the training? If this is the case, then what is the benefit of being on the apprenticeship scheme? The Wales Train apprenticeships are not available to those with undergraduate degrees in media or 'related courses', they are primarily designed as a conduit to entry-level positions. However, there are courses available elsewhere that offer apprenticeships for individuals in more advanced roles, although these higher-level apprenticeships are primarily designed to address, and combat, issues of diversity within the industry:

I've met a couple of kind of entry-level people who are already interested in being editors, but it's so rare to see female as editors, the majority are male. So I think it just continues throughout your career. But again, there are training schemes that are helping to address that. And I think there's been like, uh, quite a few commissioner training schemes recently. Getting commissioners who have disabilities or, are BAME.

(Claire, F, 20s, Producer)

Evidence of these more advanced courses was only anecdotal from the participants interviewed, as none had been directly involved in any apprenticeships designed for more advanced roles, or catering specifically to addressing issues of diversity. The issue of diversity is centrally important to the discussion of entryways to careers in UK television, and as such will be addressed in sufficient detail in an upcoming chapter.

Apprenticeships are viewed, generally, favourably by those who have successfully completed them, however experiences are not universally positive. Chloe is not currently working in the industry, but spent some time as an apprentice, working in the costume department of a BBC production. She offers the following assessment of what she learned:

There wasn't a lot of learning, on the actual apprenticeship, on the physical, practical side of things. ... I think if I didn't have the knowledge that I had when I went in, they didn't ask if I didn't know how to do things. I literally just got given, almost a list, and that was what I needed to do that day. So if I didn't know the things I did already, I would've been stuck. ... before I went and did the apprenticeship, I thought my previous knowledge would've been expanded upon by the apprenticeship, but I was pretty much doing what I was doing already.

(Chloe, F, 20s, Former Costume Apprentice)

It is concerning to learn that some apprentices feel they were not taught anything new on their year-long period of what is billed as 'training.' In addition, Chloe's account links to questions being asked regarding the value of the taught and academic component of the Wales Train apprenticeship, and to what extent

such a structure is designed to equip new entrants with necessary skills, or quickly provide employers with workers to fill entry-level vacancies. Further evidence for this comes in the form of anecdotal evidence amongst cohorts of apprentices. Mark, at the time of his interview, was enjoying his apprenticeship in the marketing department of a major broadcaster, but is aware that the experiences of others in his cohort are less positive:

Even if we didn't communicate regularly, I would still communicate with them [fellow apprentices] when we meet up on the training blocks, on the three weeks that we're together. So, I know for a fact that some apprentices are having a really hard time, sort of working way over their hours. I'm lucky that I'm on a good pay – like wage, but some people are on hourly rates of £3,50-£4. And I know, if I was an apprentice, doing that, I just wouldn't.

(Mark, M, 20s, Marketing Apprentice)

Mark is quite adamant that he would not agree to work in the conditions some of his peers are enduring, but there is a question mark over the extent to which entrants have the agency to resist such terms.

There is also the issue of the relative value of an apprenticeship, in comparison to a similar HE course. Stan works as part of the Human Resources department of a major broadcaster, here he offers an industry gatekeeper perspective, of how graduates and apprentices are beginning to be viewed differently by the industry itself:

Now that we have apprenticeships, and graduate schemes, running side-by-side, we now find, after a few years of running them, that the apprentices are more malleable to filling any open vacancy that we have within the organisation, whereas the graduates stay with us, and they're very fixed as to what they want, and what they want to achieve.

(Stan, M, 40s, HR, Major Broadcaster)

It is telling that the industry appears to value this flexibility and malleability. The accounts of Louise and Helen above suggest that

apprenticeships take a fairly general and varied approach, not hugely different to the duties expected of runners. While the apprenticeship model does offer a taught component, it is debatable as to whether the qualification proposed is valued by the employee, the organisation or even the training provider. As such it remains the cultivation of professional networks and contacts, both within the training providers themselves and the organisation the apprentices are positioned within, that remains the greatest value to be taken away.

Apprenticeships offer a sustained period of time within the industry environment, with the potential to acquire a variety of skills via on-the-job learning, and crucially, develop and cultivate professional contacts and relationships. These contacts not only facilitate and assist in skills acquisition at the genesis of a career, but can provide the foundations for future work opportunities. However, as seen above, the experiences of those on apprenticeship schemes are highly variable. Some appear to provide a great deal of knowledge transfer and professional networking, others seem characterised much more as an exploitative labour practice, recruiting those already with the necessary skills, and not attempting to teach them anything further.

Contacts

A common thread through all of the potential entryways discussed so far is that they all, to some degree or another, ultimately rely on professional contacts. The value of professional contacts in gaining entry to initial roles in the UK television industry cannot be overstated, yet it is worth acknowledging the variety of ways in which these contacts can be acquired, utilised, and the range of benefits they provide. On a general level, several participants point to the huge impact of having engaged with an influential individual as a point of contact, in getting them initial opportunities and securing first jobs, primarily through informal recruitment channels. Gavin, a Production Management Assistant at a major broadcaster, offers a good account of the benefit of such an individual:

Yeah. I had a good relationship with [...], because he was the one who found me originally, through YouTube. We had a lot of email contact and loads of meetings,

because I was brought on board with the project before it launched, sort of thing.

So there were lots of meetings that we'd had, on contact that we'd have brainstorming meetings and stuff like that, so we built up a good relationship. So I think he had trust in me, which I think – if you're on the inside, if somebody came to me with their CV now, I would have to trust them a lot, to give somebody else their CV, and then put that against my name.

(Gavin, M, 20s, Production Management Assistant)

Gavin attributes considerable value in his relationship with this individual, who had brought him in to the broadcaster, in a digital media capacity, as a result of Gavin's own work on YouTube videos. Gavin assigns particular significance to his contact's trust in him, enough to offer his CV to other departments within the industry, speaking to the importance of reputation and personal recommendations in securing both initial positions, and subsequent work within the industry.

Making individual contacts and personal connections are a form of gateway to working in television in the UK. It is worth making a distinction here between 'making' contacts, and 'having' them already, as a result of family or friends. There are those who identify the importance of cultivating those contacts and seek them out intentionally. Elsewhere, those relationships occur more as the result of chance meetings. Matthew is a Finishing Assistant at a post-production house in Bristol. A chance meeting during a period of volunteering for unpaid work at a major broadcaster gained him an invaluable professional contact:

... the opportunity arose to do some volunteering at the 'TVCorp', through a link at uni. And I said, 'yeah I'd like to do it' ... I think that was probably a key determining factor, that I got this bit of experience. And, in fact, it then gets even more 'television' than that. On my second one, on the way back I was in a taxi, and the lady was the series producer, or the exec producer on 'NatureWeekly' and she said, 'We need a runner, in a month's time, for a month, are you available?'

(Matthew, M, 20s, Finishing Assistant, Post-production)

A chance meeting in a taxi secured an initial contact for runner work, and from there, Matthew was able to develop his entryway to working in television. This is an experience echoed by many of the participants interviewed in various ways. Jason is a freelance director and producer currently working on a contract at a major broadcaster, and recounts a similar event:

Then I actually got an opportunity in television because I was working at the Carphone Warehouse in Caerphilly, and somebody came in wearing a TVCorp lanyard. And asked him what he did. I asked him, was he a first assistant director? I'd been a first assistant director on a couple of short films. I thought that's what I wanted to do. He said, no, he was the line producer. I told him what I wanted to do and he said, 'Look, he said, send over your CV. I'll take a look at it, see if we've got anything coming up.'

(Jason, M, 30s, Producer/Director)

It's from this random encounter that Jason got his first position, working on a short film as a runner. These encounters are not something that can be planned for, or prepared for.

For all the discussion above on the most visible entryways available to prospective entrants, the manner through which individuals get jobs remains largely dependent on inter-personal relationships, and meeting the right person. On-set contact during work experience, runner work or apprenticeships, being referred or recommended within the company, particularly with the bigger broadcasters, and even chance encounters ultimately open doors, and provide opportunities more formal and traditional routes cannot.

A good example of this is the case of James. James is currently a post-production edit assistant, and his account of securing his first work within the industry, with an independent post-production house, provides a stark illustration of just how important these contacts are:

And I went through their recruitment process online. You literally just send a CV to a recruitment email address and that was that. And, I did a few times, didn't hear

anything back ... my friend ... he actually was the one who initially gave me the extra help to get in, with EditCo, because he had done a couple of weeks working there. And so he gave me a contact of someone, who I then emailed directly, and that's when that started happening, and I got a position as a runner there. Which I did for a few months until another job there came up, as a data assistant, which is more widely known as an edit assistant, and that's what I do to this day. I think [the most important factor] was making a personal connection with someone, at the company.

(James, M, 20s, Post-production, Edit assistant)

Traditional, advertised entryways can feel closed and unresponsive in comparison to attempting to negotiate the same entryway via an interpersonal contact. James' experience was at a small, indie post-production house, rather than a large, major broadcaster. James is acutely aware of how vitally important it was to have someone – in this case a friend – who was already 'inside' the industry, allowing him to bypass the official recruitment channels and connect with someone within the company on a personal level. Such recruitment serves to reinforce the undefined entryways of the UK television industry, serving to obscure the entry points and keep recruitment on an informal and inter-personal basis.

Eve is a Production Runner at a major broadcaster in South Wales, and attributes great importance to the contacts she made through her course in university, and that she would not have known about work in television without those contacts, because of her background and location:

Probably the contacts [was the most important], yeah that I made, 100%. I think if I – because I'm from a background where, I live in the middle of nowhere, there is no television around where I live. My parents are completely science-based people ... So if I hadn't have gone to university I wouldn't have met the people that got me where I am now.

(Eve, 20s, F, Production Runner)

HE serves much the same purpose as the other entry routes discussed in this chapter, namely providing those without the advantage of familial contacts and inherent social capital with a method of making contact with the individuals who can act as gatekeepers. The notion of rapport is central in beginning and developing these relationships, with experienced professionals, taking a 'shine' to a new entrant, and deciding to take them 'under their wing':

...with TV and media, it's all about who you know and if they like you enough, it was a lot of their approachability, and having worked before, and having a little creative interest, it was more like, 'ok would I be able to put you in an office, and you wouldn't get on anyone's nerves.' And you'd be able to help and use your creativeness and work ethic, I guess.

(Helen, F, 20s, Prop & Art Department)

Those in positions to recruit and promote also provide evidence to illustrate the importance of impressing on an individual level in television work; it can lead to promotions or future work. Maria now works as a producer in Scotland, she initially made her own entrance as a runner on huge talent show productions. In the quote below, she explains some of the characteristics that she looks for when making recruitment and promotion decisions, and crucially, how individuals can make an impression on her:

... if I come across a runner who has a great attitude, is switched on, who has initiative and 'gets it', if you know what I mean? I don't have to ask them to do something. They're kind of two steps ahead, and know what needs to be done. I will look after those runners and I will give them more work and I will call them back. And then, like I say, when I have a budget to make a runner a junior researcher. I will give them the step up and that's what people have done with me. So it's not so much cronyism, but, if you impress people and you do a good job for people, they will look out for you.

(Maria, F, 30s, Producer)

Maria's account offers insight into the other side of the contact relationship. Individuals hold a great deal of influence in directly affecting the

career trajectories of prospective and new entrants to television production. Maria also hints at the importance of having the ‘right attitude.’ What this can mean will be explored and discussed in an upcoming section. There is also evidence of the influence of family contacts on opening doors for respondents that they believe would have otherwise remained closed. The following quote from John illustrates the significance of the connections of a family member in creating opportunities:

I ended up, through someone my grandmother used to work with, working in London. She knew someone who was running a little advertising agency. ... I then spent about two years in London off the back of that, working in the advertising industry. So, while I would say, definitely, those connections got me in the buildings, ... It was certainly a lot of blood, sweat and tears, once I was in that room. But yeah, it would've been much harder if I was just sending in CVs and cold-calling. my grandmother is definitely in a different tax bracket to the rest of my family. ... and I'd definitely say that connection was key to me getting into the industry in London I was very lucky in that way.'

(John, M, 20s, Post-production, VFX)

There are a few things worth noting from John's account. Firstly, that his family contact was not in the television industry specifically, but his grandmother was entrenched in a social circle that opened opportunities in the advertising industry, opportunities that then allowed him to transition into television. Secondly, although he acknowledges that the contact certainly opened doors initially, it was largely due to his work ethic and tenacity that resulted in John maintaining a successful career once inside the industry. Finally, John acknowledges the importance of social class in relation to the family connections, suggesting his grandmother, although sharing the same working-class origins as the rest of John's family, now resides in ‘a different tax bracket’ and that social capital was key in gaining entry, even to a parallel industry.

Family contacts also provide their benefits in other ways. Andrew grew up in a small community on the island of Orkney, and started working as a

journalist at a very young age. He reveals that even this early start can be at least partially attributed to social connections to his family:

... I don't think I really realized, initially I don't think I realized what I was doing, I was just writing sports reports, for my brother and then, uh, you know, the local radio station and it really was as straight-forward as that. ... My parents happened to happen to know - sort of - the guy who was the boss. Mainly because he'd actually reported on some story about my family when I was baby. And so they met in that way. So it wasn't like a sort of family connection as much as they know them anyway. In Orkney, everyone knows everyone so it's not really a big deal.

(Andrew, M, 20s, Broadcast Journalist)

Contacts interact with the career pathways of new entrants to television in a variety of ways, and significantly, in ways that are idiosyncratic, informal and momentary. Stephanie's route into television was via a training scheme, but not because she was selected for the scheme itself:

So because, there was somebody from Wales Train in the interview, and the art director - who was the art director on 'TimeDrama' at the time. I don't know if he'd made that choice, as part of the interview, that they weren't going to give me the trainee scheme and giving me a job instead, or I just didn't get on the trainee scheme, and then he offered me a job because I didn't get on. But because he was the interviewer, he would have had control over that. But basically it was - Yeah. The usual way in of this industry is, you know, meeting the right person at the right time, basically.

(Stephanie, F, 30s, Art Director)

Stephanie acknowledges that it remains unclear how she negotiated her entry point, but points to the importance of a chance meeting, at an opportune moment. The theme of luck, fortune and the sense of the 'right place, right time' will be dealt with in detail in a later chapter.

Creative labour is based on who you know (Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). The combination of unclear entryways and reliance on social capital and networks at the point of entry in UK television is significant. Firstly, it prevents those who lack the required social capital from seeing these entryways (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). Secondly, it seems that a reliance on professional contacts for opportunities is built into the training and HE structure, and is highlighted as the most valuable element many took away from their university experience. Thirdly, and most salient to this study, is the manner in which those who do manage to negotiate the entryways to the industry experience and interpret their success. Many entrants, without a clear route they can explain, attribute their successful entry to serendipity, luck or being 'in the right place at the right time.'

Though the importance of professional networks to maintaining work within television production is undeniable, and not a recent phenomenon (Dex et al. 2000; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011; Allen and Hollingworth 2013), what is an interesting development within the responses of recent entrants is the ways in which they are made aware of this importance. Often this awareness originates from those mentors and experienced contacts. Professional contacts act as gatekeepers as much for information about potential entryways as the for work and opportunities. More often than not, the viability and visibility of the other entryways and initial jobs discussed in this chapter (runner, work experience and apprenticeships) are as a result of potential entrants being exposed to experienced industry professionals, either through familial ties or through higher education. What is problematic about this, is the lack of agency and control that new entrants themselves have in creating a reliable environment in which they can learn these things. As long as new entrants to television production are reliant on the experience, and generosity, of individual mentors, their individual experiences will differ hugely, dependant on the status and disposition of the professional contacts they manage to be put into contact with, or are already in contact with. In negotiating these entryways, entrants are being exposed to a variety of processes and discourse which socialise them into a very specific culture of work. The following chapter will consider this process of socialisation in more depth.

6. Findings: Skills and Socialisation

The previous chapter has identified the main routes that new and prospective entrants follow, when trying to make their initial entrance into UK television production, in the form of runners, work experience positions and apprenticeships. The industry is characterised by a reliance on informal recruitment decisions and very quick turnaround in personnel (McRobbie 2002; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009; Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). As a result of this reliance, there needs to be a consideration of the criteria on which recruitment decisions are based. The issue of what skills and characteristics are being looked for, in a potential recruitment decision requires attention. What is happening at the boundaries of the industry? What mechanisms and structures are operating in the process of *socialising* a new television worker?

This chapter begins by identifying the potential sources of training and skills acquisition that remain; Higher Education, On-the-job learning and Mentor/mentee relationships. Crucially, however, remains the importance of considering what values and normative discourse is being transmitted through these channels, in addition to any technical know-how. If a specialised skillset is not a high priority for recruitment to an entry-level position, it seems salient to address on what criteria the majority of recruitment decisions are based? When asked about skills, respondents often spoke in terms of soft skills, including having the right attitude, or having a strong work ethic, rather than in terms of a specific technical skillset. There is a heavy emphasis on possession of the 'right attitude.' This chapter concludes by defining exactly what that 'attitude' is, how it may be exhibited and manifested, and the significance of prioritising and encouraging such characteristics and values in

There are a variety of characteristics, soft skills and personality traits that recent entrants to UK television experienced as being central to their successful recruitment and entry into the industry. With entry-level positions requiring largely menial tasks, recruitment decisions for runners, apprentices and for work experience tend to eschew technical knowledge in favour of prioritising attitude and work ethic, which will be considered in detail at the end of this chapter.

However, specialised skillsets do remain centrally important to a successful career in television, and to those ascending to the more senior and sought-after jobs, the environment in which such skills are developed and transferred remains elusive. Higher Education, on-the-job learning and skills and knowledge transfer from experienced professionals were all cited as potential channels to acquire relevant skills, and the following sections will address each in turn, beginning with Higher Education.

Higher Education

Many of the participants had attended Higher Education (HE) in some capacity, prior to their successful entry to the television production sector. However, the responses and accounts to the various HE courses were varied. Jenny is a broadcast journalist, who graduated from the Cardiff Journalism School (now, the School of Media, Journalism and Culture, or JOMEC), through their prestigious broadcast journalism course, one of the more visible and clearly defined routes into TV and broadcasting from HE. Even so, Jenny was only made aware of the importance of this route through a careers advisor at university, despite having a long-standing interest and ambition to work in this field. When asked if her entryways were clearly defined, she responded:

Definitely not. That is definitely not the case and it wasn't until I'd had that kick up the backside from that careers' advisor in Swansea, who sort of said, 'Look I think you should be looking at CJS. But in order to get there, lovely girl, you've got to do X, Y and Z. If you don't do any of that, you won't have a hope in Hell.' ... And it was kind of taught there are no hard or fast rules, do whatever you enjoy, do a degree in something you enjoy, and take media side from there.

(Jenny, F, 30s, Broadcast Journalist)

Perhaps the most significant phrase from the above quote regards the lack of 'hard and fast rules.' Higher Education, on the whole, does not seem to be able to provide prospective entrants with a clear pathway. Kate, an apprentice at a major broadcaster at the time of her interview, provides a similar account when asked about the visibility of entryways. She attributes a good deal of importance

to a lecture she attended by chance, as part of a British Film Institute (BFI) course, rather than something built into a higher education course from the ground up:

The BFI [British Film Institute] was useful, because one of the lectures that I went to was a two-hour block where they talked about the different ways of getting in.

So, that was one of the most useful things because the only way I knew of was film school vs. apprenticeships. And there were other ways in too, but it still does seem to be two of the better ways. I feel like a lot is – even to get onto the apprenticeship, you need to have work experience and stuff, or something that really stands out. Umm, to be honest, I still don't know all the ways in, but it seems like for a lot of people was English Lit. degrees. It seems to be more popular than film degrees, from people I've met.

(Kate, F, 20s, Researcher/Casting Assistant)

In addition, her perception of the need for experience as a pre-requisite in being considered for an apprenticeship is also important. The lack of clarity and variability in the entry requirements, and the lack of a unified knowledge base for young and aspiring entrants to draw from can be significant, as well as the intense sense of competition felt by many at the point of entry. Such competition also acts an important component in the process of socialisation. Young and new entrants are inducted into a landscape that instantly stresses inter-personal competition between individuals, a set of norms that are then carried through careers, and perpetuated in being transferred from one generation to the next.

An emphasis on learning on-the-job appears to be, at least partially, driven by a general ambiguity towards the applicability and relevance of many media courses available at the Higher Education (HE) level. This attitude towards HE is presented by senior professionals – the gatekeepers – and is experienced and shared by those who've recently been through college or university media and television courses. Lewis suggests that there are other elements of HE that are regarded as more valuable to prospective entrants than focusing on media at that point in their education, particularly when it comes to factual programming:

I think, what's essential, is [in education] ... that, some kind of critical edge is given. Some kind of ability to reason about why we make media, not just we're going to make media because we can make media, because it's glamorous to make media, or that it's economically advantageous. Some kind of sense of why we're bothering to do this, and what its impact is on society. A typical degree course might be three years. Umm the industry changes in three years, so what you're doing probably three years before you started on it, is six years behind where the industry is at the end. ... I think generally there's a scepticism that there are too much, too many people doing media studies and the industry can't possibly absorb them all. ... I've got an even more radical question about should you be doing media studies at all? Really, shouldn't you be off studying French, or Arabic or something enables you to bring a perspective to your work.

(Lewis, M, 60s, Semi-retired, Consultant)

Lewis highlights two issues. Firstly, the issue of whether Media courses at HE are of any value at all, and that prospective entrants may gain greater use from studying more traditional academic subjects, or foreign languages, to help inform and enrich their creative work. Secondly, Lewis suggests that courses in HE that do attempt to teach Media are always lagging behind, and playing catch-up, to the industry itself. An outdated set of teaching parameters also belies that skills acquisition is not the primary focus of HE. The recent entrants also gave the impression that they are aware of this. Isobel works in the Art department of a major drama:

Yeah, it wouldn't be as much of a problem, if universities were being constantly 'topped-up' and refreshed, and if the know-how was about how it is right now, and not how it was 15 years ago. We had a past concept artist here, [CA] who taught us for a while in uni, and the stuff he was telling us was stuff we had never heard before. Just tips and advice on digital art, and what the industry is like now, and the kind of jobs he's had to do, to get where he is right now – we would never have learned that if he hadn't come in. And he's IN the industry right now, learning it, very much living it right now. He hasn't been out of it for 10plus years, it was really handy hearing that from him.

(Isobel, F, 20s, Artist)

Isobel not only addresses the issue of the nature of HE courses, but also the value of having access to professionals who are currently working in the industry, rather than those who have past-experience, as the industry moves forward at such a pace. Stephen's experience at university (and subsequently with access to those in the industry) was comparable:

I couldn't believe my luck. Because it turned out, with three years at university, they don't really train up on how the crew works. They just give you the skills – I think we did 5/6 weeks drawing. Or doing films, stuff like that, or 6 weeks doing computer animation, stuff like that. But they never really teach you to how approach the crew, how to deal with the politics, how to deal with cash, stuff like that. And that's what Jim on 'Family Movie' knew that I would need, and thought, 'I'll train him on that.'

(Stephen, M, 20s, Assistant Art Director)

Stephen suggests that there was a lack of information about working in a production environment, his HE course offered detailed training in technical drawing skills, but, he feels, failed to adequately prepare him for the day-to-day politics and logistics of working in production. Existing and operating effectively within a television production environment relies on a great deal of interpersonal and informal knowledge, as Stephen acknowledges, regarding dealing with other members of the crew, cash and the logistics of working in a team.

Knowledge and information are picked up via fleeting opportunities on-set, with access to experienced professionals, and are of greater value than what can be taught in an HE environment, as Sian illustrates:

That's not really taught I suppose. ... I think from that production manager that I mentioned, you know, she described everything to me, well whilst we were on-the-job, whilst it was happening, would always take time to just go, so this is how this works, this is what this person's doing. Um, she would describe every function of the different roles on the production. Whilst, you know, we were in the basement of the Albert Hall and the live show was going on. So I knew who

everyone was and what they were doing. So, I mean that there was probably more valuable than anything you could learn in a lecture theatre.

(Sian, F, 30s, Producer)

The lack of emphasis on traditional skills at the point of entry, places additional emphasis on informal knowledge transfer. Several of the new and recent entrants interviewed expressed that they feel self-reliant on seeking out and developing their own skills, and that those skills were not being learned sufficiently well:

That's why I started making YouTube videos, because I thought just, fun, you know, doing it with a friend, just something fun to do. So, they were like self-taught skills, I mean, they were bad skills, because obviously you didn't really know what you were editing, like how you were doing it.

(Tim, M, 20s, Editor)

The expectation of employers is that new entrants to television production in the UK will reach their point of entry with relatively few specialised skills, and that the majority of the skills development will take place on-the-job. The implication here is that HE courses, and any self-developed technical skills, will not be developed to a sufficient standard for the industry itself. For the most part, the greatest value obtained from attending HEIs in pursuit of TV industry entry is the promise of connecting with professional contacts, and industry professionals. In doing so, such practitioners are able to perpetuate and normalise the discourse around television work, as one of self-sacrifice, dedication and competition. On-the-job learning can take the form of simple observation and experience on-set, or more specific shadowing and learning from an experienced professional, which will be examined in the following section.

Learning On-the-Job

There is a lack of an expectation, on the part of employers, of the possession of a specialised skillset at the point of entry. This is linked to a general ambivalence with regards to Higher Education (HE) courses, and as established in the previous section and elsewhere (Allen and Hollingworth 2013), the absence of a formal structure to provide skills training outside of the industry, meaning skillsets are highly individualised, and contextual. The expectation from the industry is that skills will be informally transferred and developed once you have entered the labour market, allowing the industry greater control over the socialisation of new workers. However, the lack of a formalised skills requirement, or infrastructure to provide the necessary skills, leads to highly variable experiences within HE, apprenticeships and other avenues.

The level of specialised media or broadcasting skills required, or expected, at the point of industry entry is relatively low, and a secondary consideration to other factors. In many cases, skills are developed on-the-job, and through exposure to experienced professionals. If that access is not available, entrants may turn to other avenues, including social and digital media, to self-develop their skillset, albeit to a less than satisfactory standard. David works at an independent post-production house in Bristol, and says the following with regards to his employers' expectations:

So when I started, they expected, they expected me not to know anything. They just, you can turn up and you're going to, you'll get as far as you - as you kind of make of it in a way. A runner comes in and sits with different people and learns how to do it. Cause there's a lot of learning on-the-job and it's not really any learning outside of being in work. ... basically everyone who does well in the industry is moved on because, as a runner, they paid attention and they've learned how to do the next job before they start it or at least learn how to do an amount of it.

(David, M, 20s, Editor)

David highlights a few issues with regards to skills development. Firstly, that the industry has little expectation of a pre-existing skillset at the point of entry. By skillset, this is to be understood as specialised skills specific to the role, in this case, that of an editor. Importantly, David became aware of this, once he was in the industry himself. For those outside, these requirements remain more difficult to observe and define. Secondly, that the potential is there to excel in, and progress from, an initial runner position into a more specialised role as a result of on-the-job learning. Progression within the hierarchies of television production departments seems conflicted between providing inexperienced workers with the knowledge and skillset they require to advance, and a sense of ensuring everyone 'pays their dues', as part of the socialisation process, for an entry-level position.

The applicability of on-the-job skills transfer seems to differ significantly from department to department. Stephanie has worked in the Art Department on major drama productions for nearly ten years, and offers an example of the informal tips and tricks – the insider information – transferred between colleagues in art and construction, as and when they are relevant:

I feel like I've learned so, so many things, like a ridiculous amount of things. ... And that all of those things I've learned on-the-job. Like as a trainee, they would say, 'Oh, can you, can you do these graphics?' It's like, well, 'I don't know how to use Photoshop, but they want me to make this graphic phone, I'm gonna learn it now and I'm going to produce this graphic.' Or, 'can you use the spray paint?' It's like, 'well, I've never used spray paint before, but they need me to do this thing, so I'll go and learn how to use spray paint.' You know, it's that, that kind of thing.

(Stephanie, F, 30s, Construction/Art Dept)

Helen offers a concurrent account of her work in the Art and Costume department, suggesting that such informal skills transfer may be an appropriate way to sufficiently equip workers with the necessary skillset within this particular department:

... there's so many old people in TV it's – people who know everything and know how things work. I learned about fishing wire, how to make something look like it's hanging, and to tie something, so it doesn't look like it's being tied, you tie in fishing wire, because it's invisible on the camera. And that's something that another designer just said, off-the-cuff, and you just remember it. ... I don't think you could learn because it's on the day, it's as and when, it's when you see it. You have to be around them.

(Helen, F, 20s, Prop & Art Department)

Skills in television production are contextual, as well as individualised. Often, accounts highlight the importance of a specific solution to a specific problem, that enables the transfer of knowledge. As Helen states above, 'it's as and when.' Andy offers an account of learning informally in post-production:

...a lot of editing is putting something into load and then waiting. And then, you know, checking things when they come through. And what that means is, for some of the roles, they do double up the work. So, the data manager was – who was one of my friends actually. Basically, I'd say, 'Shall I go and do this so we finish before midnight?' and then just said, 'just show me how to put it into the system.' So it was very informal, just showing me how to do it. And I'd been doing just basic sort of loading things up all year, and you know creating file paths and taking on like a data management role.

(Andy, M, 30s, Former Runner, Editor and Camera Technician)

The accounts above shed light on the contextual and often ephemeral nature of on-the-job skills acquisition in UK television. Opportunities present themselves in specific contexts, and between specific individuals, that require the transfer of skills and knowledge. There are a huge variety of job roles within the umbrella term of 'UK television' that operate in very different ways, and require the transference of hugely different skillsets in order to succeed. In addition, the obscure, unclear and informal entryways that operate at the borders of the industry result in the skills requirements of new entrants remaining vague. Crucially, the most visible and popular entryways explored in the preceding

chapter (Runners, Apprentices and Work Experience) all require the focus to be placed in menial, simple tasks including driving and filing.

This appears to be at least partially the result of a systematic distrust on the part of the industry in the ability of HE and other external training structures to adequately equip potential entrants with the specialised skills they require, it is unnecessary to prioritise specialised skills when recruiting for positions that do not specifically require them. Additionally, there appears to be a focus away from specialised skillsets, and towards the process of socialising new workers to be a certain way, and be accommodating of a certain way of work. It is arguably more beneficial to look, instead, for personalities that will be prepared to endure the menial experience of these job roles, with the promise of a coveted career in a glamorous industry, as the eventual reward. However, the issue of how specialised skills are transferred and learned remains. The next section addresses one aspect that provides skills acquisition for new entrants to television, specifically professional contacts, acting as mentors.

Mentors

In the previous chapter, the importance of professional contacts in not only securing initial jobs and opportunities, but also in providing information about those opportunities, was explored. In addition to helping new entrants in securing their entryways, and providing them with their first job roles, professional contacts can provide a great deal of support in cultivating and developing skills during the first months of work within the industry. Sian, a Producer currently working in Australia, cites an early relationship with an experienced professional as the most important factor in helping her break into the industry in the UK:

I think it was a production manager that had interviewed me for my, for my first job and took me under her wing completely was probably the biggest influence that really ... So she, um, so the person who interviewed me for my first job, we just got on really, really well and obviously I, she was my line manager, so I worked for her and I worked with her for three years and she was the one that

kind of advocated for me to do different courses and things. And she basically taught me everything she knew and she was very generous with sharing her skills.

(Sian, F, 30s, Producer)

Sian is not alone in attributing a great deal of credit to the influence of a single individual, in creating opportunities, and providing information, but also in developing skills, in this case as a researcher. Additionally, Sian highlights the importance of the ‘rapport’ she developed with the person who was to be her mentor. Getting on with that person, and having them like you is, perhaps unsurprisingly, crucial to a successful mentor/mentee relationship. Similarly, Helen is an Art Director who speaks in glowing terms about the impact of her original ‘mentor’, who provided her with a first job, as well believing in her early on in her career, equipping her with the knowledge, skills and promoting her to a more senior position very quickly:

He was the series designer, yeah, and he just does everything, [mentor name], because ‘ValleyLife’ is quite a small art department. It’s just the designer, prop-master, buyer three art directors and two standbys, which is really small compared to ‘MediDrama’ and other things. But, yeah, [mentor name] gave me my first job, and yeah he’s really lovely, and he’s given people who’ve done really well, and gone on to do all of these crazy, mad films that you see in the cinemas, [mentor name] given them their first job, before. So, it’s quite a little badge of honour to have worked with [mentor name].

(Helen, F, 20s, Prop & Art Department)

Professional mentors open doors to opportunities, they provide a huge amount of knowledge transfer and skills development, as well as providing confidence and feedback. One of the ways these skills get transferred is through access to more senior professionals, making personal relationships, connections and the right social capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) even more important. If this form of mentoring relationship is not available, it can become more difficult to develop one’s skillset, as Claire explains:

I had a bit of information about how you would start, you know, newspapers or magazines, which you know is equally as hard probably as the TV industry, but no one could really pinpoint for you how you get in. It's just a basic kind of, you need to approach people. You need to, you need to schmooze, you know, to get in with individuals. But it's very much a case of you're on your own. If you want to get in you need to research companies, find out what they're doing, what productions they're making next, contact them, see if there's any space for your skills, any jobs that are going. But yeah, I really had no information at all about getting in, and people who've approached me about information since, I feel have the same experience really.

(Claire, F, 20s, Producer)

Claire illustrates how difficult finding a mentor can be if one does not possess the necessary contacts initially. Such a relationship is very difficult to engineer, or aim for specifically, instead arising as the result of chance meetings and personal introductions, and very much dependent on the attitude and demeanour of the individual in question; those who are generous and open about sharing their skillset will provide multiple new entrants with training and knowledge, those who do not wish to share their expertise will have the opposite effect.

The importance of a mentor for the early stages of entrants' career development in TV production extends beyond just opportunities and training. Mentors can act as both brokers of information, and trainers. The encouragement of an industry professional, an instillation of confidence and belief in what a prospective entrant is doing, can be extremely valuable too. Neal offers an example of such a relationship, indicating that one of his lecturers at university, an individual who was currently working in the television industry at a major broadcaster, was hugely beneficial in encouraging Neal to make projects he was passionate about:

And the teacher ... was a filmmaker working at [a major broadcaster] was really supportive. He was like, 'this isn't what you do. Make something that you really enjoy doing.' So at the end of that first year, I started doing films about witchcraft

and about individuals who went to cults in the middle of the woods and things like that. I started to find things that I find interesting. And when you kind of did, when I started becoming myself, that's when I kind of started thinking, 'okay, I'm enjoying filmmaking but I'm making better films now', you know? Because I almost felt like I was given permission to do the films that I found interesting.

(Neal, M, 30s, Freelance Producer/Director)

Such contacts can also open doors to opportunities elsewhere geographically, as illustrated Terry's account below:

... I took a punt and got a day job on a film that was passing through Cardiff at the time. ... A film with like a 70-million-pound budget, because the first AD is quite a famous first AD ... So I blagged an interview with him just for two weeks work while they're in South Wales, and he took a shine to me and said, 'you're not going anywhere.' took me around the country with him. And then eventually, the job finished. He said, what are you doing? I said, 'going back to Wales to try and find a job.' And he went, 'No, you're staying in London. I've got more work for you.' And then he, uh, hooked me up a load of other people. And ever since I've been working on some pretty big feature films in London, luckily. All sorts of sizes, but luckily managed to on some of the biggest, which has been a real treat, you know, to see. And that's all been seven years now.

(Terry, M, 30s, Assistant Director/Camera Operator)

A chance meeting and personal rapport with an influential individual opened the door for Terry to relocate to London from South Wales, and gave him the opportunity to work on high value productions in the film industry. Fitting into the existing team dynamic is important. Do people like you? Will you get on anyone's nerves? Finding a mentor and developing a rapport is viewed as central to early career success, in television, as well as film. Even when not creating and engineering opportunities specifically, professional contacts and mentor relationships can provide invaluable advice in early career pathways and skills development:

My mentor at the time was the editor of the 'Nightly News' and we'd help out, seeing how it was shot and have to produce a news package. ... My mentor was absolutely amazing and I found her really inspiring. I think we'd had a chat about what kind of things I was interested in, and I was really interested in things like Panorama and Dispatches. It was the kind of programmes that I liked watching. Umm, and she suggested I come in and do a couple of weeks' work experience on 'NewsTalk', which I did.

(Claire, F, 20s, Producer)

However, what is significant here again, is the huge amount of variety in the influence a mentor can provide. For Claire, her mentor held a hugely influential position in editing the nightly news for a major broadcaster. In addition, she was open and receptive to helping Claire develop her career, and to provide her with advice on where to go to start. With career paths so fragmented, and long-term precarity such an issue in television production (Stoyanova and Grugulis 2011), access to a mentor can also offer a means to overcome stagnation and obscurity in terms of career development. If the contact was someone with less influence, or less inclined to offer assistance and advice, Claire's experience may have been very different.

The influence of professional contacts in gaining access to information and knowledge about the existence of certain entryways, and how to approach them, was explored in the previous chapter. The power of experienced professionals extends far beyond that, however, with professional mentors offering a huge potential for knowledge transfer and skills development for newer entrants. In addition to that, mentors can perform an inspirational or motivational role, reinforcing an individual's personal skills development, or giving the knowhow and confidence to pursue an appropriate career path. Ultimately, however, these relationships are dependent on rapport between mentor and mentee, and on the disposition and generosity of the senior professional to share their skillset.

This chapter has, so far, addressed the sources of skills that exist at the boundaries of UK television. However, it has become apparent that, although there remains a huge amount of importance in developing technical and specialised skillsets, it is not the focus at the point of entry. That focus, instead, is

on socialising workers into an environment, through a combination of normative discourse and peer regulation, that promotes commitment and sacrifice.

Attention now must turn to consider this process of socialisation in more detail.

Work Ethic

The majority of participants were quick to mention either soft skills, in terms of interpersonal skills and communication, being able to integrate into a team quickly, or raise considerations that largely ignored, or side-lined, traditional specialised skills training:

I think emotional, soft power, kind of stuff is really important in TV. Not just in terms of getting – in working, but in getting work as well – in managing a team – because I can't film or edit, I need to manage people ... and a lot of the emotional skills are really important, and that's something I don't think can be taught, necessarily, you just have to learn from experience and watch how other people do it.

(Mick, M, 30s, Producer)

...working in television is a team thing, I suppose you need to have a level of trust with everybody in your team, so bringing in somebody that you don't know, and you don't know anything about, into a team where you all kind of need to work in unison together. And, because there's no money anymore, there's no room for mistakes, and there's not room to go back and film things again.

(Gavin, M, 20s, Production Management Assistant)

So the skills that got me into running, I think, it just comes down to being – I want to say being a good actor, but that makes me sound bad, like, just being able to bite my tongue and swallow it and say yes, and smile. it's all the typical stuff that goes on your CV when you're applying for a job that you have no experience in; flexibility, responsibility, good at following instructions – I think you just, I just had to show that I could do that, umm but I really feel like the battle is won if you turn up and smile.

(Matthew, M, 20s, Finishing Assistant)

So I think the type of people in the blog their way into jobs are the ones who are actually willing to give that time. But it doesn't mean they necessarily have the skills. It just means that they were willing to go the extra mile.

(Sian, F, 30s, Producer)

Additionally, there was the sentiment that the possession of specialised skill sets is not a guarantee of success, if it is not also combined with a sufficient work ethic:

I know people that are very skilled with the camera, and that are very skilled writers, but they're either - they don't have a kind of entrepreneurial mindset, or they don't have the work ethic, and they don't work in the film industry.

(Jason, M, 30s, Producer/Director)

There is a heavy reliance on a work ethic in television production, and this is particularly stressed in new entrants. It appears this expectation is industry-wide, and systematic. There is an understanding that to be a success will require a great deal of sacrifice, as well as a great deal of effort. Maria is a Producer in Scotland, and here she illustrates the sacrifices she has made, and expects to make, in order to maintain what she considers a successful career in the television industry:

I think the people who rise the top are the ones who eat, sleep and breathe television. They love the industry that they're in. They don't care that it's short term contracts. They don't care that, I mean I've, I've had issues like within relationships, even someone saying, 'well you can you come to my sister's wedding next May?' And I've been like, 'well in theory I can', but if you're a freelance and someone's offering you an eight-week job, but you're filming in another country and you can't fly home for one wedding. That's, that's very difficult for people outside of the industry to understand. But I wouldn't change my job for anything. And I have missed out on weddings, I have missed out things like that. But I think I'm so privileged to be doing a job that I love and I genuinely

enjoy every day. ... Not a lot of people can say that. Um, I think the people who rise to the top are the people like me who will make the sacrifices.... I see friends of mine who are a similar age and you can tell they're bored by it. They're done with it, whereas I still actually love it and I can't see myself doing anything else.

(Maria, F, 30s, Producer)

This image of the successful TV worker is one reliant on self-sacrifice, and closely connected to the theme of presenting the 'right attitude.' Additionally, the perception among television workers of the necessity to forgo significant parts of their personal lives in favour of dedication to their work sets such experiences against the background of increasing job precarity within an increasing freelance labour force. The 'ideal' television worker would be prepared to give up crucially important demands from their family and personal life in order to devote themselves fully to a career they see as being so 'privileged' to have in the first place. The 'skill' here is the preparedness to give up other elements of your life in order to progress and succeed in this industry. The discourse around the boundaries of the industry is serving to contribute to this by socialising new entrants through this form of normalising discourse, transferring a set of values from one cohort to the next. Those who make it in TV, make it because of their dedication to TV, over everything else in their lives. And so, to make it in TV, that is the way you have to be. This pattern is self-fulfilling, though poses the question; from where do entrants develop their attitudes towards work? Many respondents attributed their diligent work ethic to their upbringing and background, introduced to the importance of working hard by their parents:

I guess it's just working-class background really. I guess it's just, you know, I might not have all the qualifications in the world, but you turn up early and you leave last and they'll always remember that, you know? I think something that my Dad would always say is, 'you've gotta just outwork them, outwork everyone and you'll always be there.' So, that's just something that was drilled in, I think, from pretty young.

(Helen, F, 20s, Prop & Art Dept)

In a similar manner to Helen, Neal explains how his father attempted to teach him the value of working hard, and being able to appreciate the fruits of one's labour.

...when I was eight years old, I got a paper round where I was like paid one pound per paper around and I'd have to deliver like 30. And I was on my like really rubbish skates, that kind of thing. Um, but then as soon as I turned 10 over the summer, my dad wanted me to learn about sort of hard work. So he would take me on to building sites where I'd, um, sort of organize bricks or something like that, you know, safe work. But he wanted me to, um, learn what it means to do, to do hard work, actually to pick things up and look back and admire something that you've built as opposed to just pen on paper, that kind of thing really. And I really feel that that set me off for knowing that feeling like you've done a hard day's work, like where your hands are aching and your bones are tired. You know, that sort of feeling resonated with me so much that I kind of knew, okay, that is what hard work is. That is what I'm going to set my default setting.

(Neal, M, 30s, Producer/Director)

It is worth noting in the above quotes, a focus on work ethic seems particularly prevalent amongst those entrants from working-class, or lower socio-economic backgrounds. Work ethic can be seen as a potential method for circumventing the traditional middle-class bias exhibited in UK television (Banks 2017; Eikhof 2017). Mark, also from a working-class background in Newport in South Wales, is similarly proud of the effort he put into getting a place on an apprenticeship with a major broadcaster:

I give myself a lot of credit, cos I worked really hard, but there's no one I could say, 'oh this person helped me get there.' But, since I have got here, I've had loads of people helping me, but getting there was primarily me.

(Mark, M, 20s, Marketing Apprentice)

This sentiment of working hard appears built into the industry, and seems to also result in those individuals who value such attributes, looking for

the same elements in the people they chose to recruit and train. New entrants are being taught what to 'be':

So there's, this girl that works for me at this moment in time, that's working for me this week. There's a period when she was living with her sister in Barry, and she was studying at university of Gloucestershire. And she was driving back and forth there three days a week whilst working there, four days a week in a mobile phone shop and then doing work for me whenever she would fit that in. So she would train from Merthyr to Cheltenham. So train to Cardiff, and then Cardiff across to Newport or Bristol and then up to Cheltenham. Three days a week, as well as working on a mobile phone shop, as well as working for me. That's the sort of person I want working for me. Cause that's the sort of person that doesn't complain. Doesn't moan, gets on with it. Knows what she has to do, does what she has to do, not what she wants to do.

(Jason, M, 30s, Producer/Director)

Jason's account of an employee of his illustrates the prominence attributed to work ethic, sacrifice and diligence, when the very same qualities are so important to those making a decision on recruitment. Jason attributes his success in an initial runner position to presenting the right attitude and work ethic, in the same manner:

I was told to go around and see who wanted a drink. So asked, the producer, director and most of the crew, if they want to drink. I wrote down all their names. I wrote down what they wanted and then half an hour, 40 minutes later, I made another round of drinks like tea, coffee, I mean milk, sugar, whatever they wanted. I went around again. So rather than waiting to be asked to make another round, I thought, 'It's been half hour, 40 minutes, I'm thirsty. They're probably, thirsty. I'll go around and you'd give them all.' So some people were like, 'Brilliant. Thank you.' Others are like, 'Oh, I'm all right at the moment.' So I put it on the side, and said, 'If you go for it and it's cold, give me a shout, I'll make another one.' But that kind of mindset, and then that they kind of went, 'do you want to come back tomorrow? You wanna come back and do another couple of days?'

(Jason, M, 30s, Producer/Director)

Working hard and showing initiative is the primary way to stand out and make an impression when in an entry-level role in television. Either as a runner, apprentice or on work experience, the most efficient way to elevate yourself above the others in the same position is to present a strong work ethic, completing the menial tasks you are given in an enthusiastic and diligent manner.

Such a focus is not universally accepted and appreciated, however. Although there are many respondents who engage with the idea of working hard, mythologising the qualities of others who exhibit the same characteristics they themselves hold in such high regard (Jason above is a good example of this), there are others to whom the expectations are deemed to be somewhat excessive:

There is there is an expectation to go the extra mile. I think everyone does feel that across the industry, regardless of whether you are an editor, an edit producer or whether you are a runner or a PM [Production Manager] or camera operator or something. Basically I just, I think there is an element of expectation and probably because it's a creative industry, which I don't necessarily agree with. I think sometimes it can be - expectation can be a little bit unfair.

(David, M, 20s, Post-Production Editor)

There is a danger in creating a culture of work centred around extreme commitment to work, and an expectation of self-sacrifice and anti-social working patterns. What becomes clear in respondents' accounts is, not only is the issue of specialised skills (camera skills, editing skills etc.) a secondary consideration in terms of criteria for entry, but also that the concept of a good 'work ethic' is just a part of a larger, more all-encompassing question, regarding the possession of 'the right attitude.' The following section will examine what that attitude is, and how it can be demonstrated, in more detail.

Attitude

The concept of having ‘the right attitude’ was abundant, both in the experiences of recent entrants and the expectations of experienced gatekeepers. Crucially, this discussion isn’t about skills, more around a process of socialisation. Participants were often quick to talk about the importance of attitude. Repeatedly, the importance of having the right personality, the right attitude, and appropriate expectations of what work in UK television was like, was regarded with more value than any particular specialised skillset, an extension of the sentiments expressed in the previous section, regarding work ethic. Expressed here in the accounts of those in more senior positions:

For me then, and again, I always say this, it’s about aptitude and attitude. So, as long as they’re happy to learn, and ready to learn, whatever it is, they’ll get on. And, as long as their attitude is not, ‘I’ve come out of uni for four years and I’m going to be a director tomorrow’ ... then they’re going to be fine ... but if that IS their attitude, then they’re not gonna get anywhere.

(Catherine, F, 60s, Training Provider)

It’s kind of all about the attitude, everything else you can kind of learn, as long as they’re up for it, you know, whether they start as an office runner or a just a costume apprentice over there! As long as they’ve got the attitude to say, ‘I’m willing to do whatever’, people are willing to teach them.

(Rebecca, F, 30s, Production Co-ordinator)

The importance of having ‘the right attitude’ is also apparent in the experiences of those who’ve entered the industry recently. What is this ‘right attitude’, and how is it defined? Matthew suggests that it is based on interpersonal communication, and showing compliance and eagerness to complete tasks in good time:

– the most important thing that I’ve done, the whole time, I think is being nice to people. And, that gets you so far in tv – just being nice, and even if they’re not nice, just being nice and be known as being nice. If you can talk to people, and you

*don't huff when someone asks you to do something that might not be so good,
then they're going to want you to work again.*

(Matthew, M, 20s, Finishing Assistant)

Elsewhere, the importance of attitude appears built into the recruitment process, with apprenticeships being at pains to express the importance of being the 'right kind of person':

The interview process for the apprenticeship was a really bizarre sort of team-building workshop thing, where your knowledge was secondary to your attitude. And that was impressed on us very much, I think they used the phrase ... they wanted people with the right attitude.

(John, M, 20s, Post-production VFX)

So, what is the 'right attitude'?

My ability to get my head down and graft, and get on with stuff and not – not complain about workloads, not complain about lack of ability but just get on with it. ... just the ability to sit down and graft, and get on with it and not question it.

(Isobel, F, 20s, Artist)

I think, one of the most important attitudes that I've had while I've been working is to always go the extra mile, essentially. And just work, you've got to work your hardest and not like act like anything's sort of below you. Really. ...

(David, M, 20s, Post-Production Editor)

The 'right attitude' involves working hard, not questioning decisions and crucially, not complaining. This is something that appears to be built into the selection process for apprenticeships (as per John's account on the previous page), and is rewarded with successful entry and progression in the sector. And David suggests that the same onus on this kind of attitude is intrinsic to runner positions as well:

I feel like a runner position is sometimes a bit of a test of character, more than it is the skill of the job. Cause it's not, it's not a fun job. ... I think most of the people that come out the other side doing well are the people who go in with a good attitude every day towards it, rather than going in with a bit of a, 'this is below me' attitude. So I think that's, that's really strong attitude to take into... well any industry really, but especially into this industry.

(David, M, 20s, Post-Production Editor)

David's account and perception of the role of the runner position is significant. Such a position is one of the more visible entryways to UK television, but to consider it more a test of character, and a barometer to test the limits of what workers can put up with, as well as a process to select appropriate candidates. It a process that is significant and potentially concerning.

This chapter has explored the process at work at the entry-level of UK television production. This chapter has not been about *skills*, in the sense of traditional technical skillsets, but instead focuses on the process of socialising new workers into a particular culture of work, with a particular kind of worker. When asked about skills, respondents repeatedly gravitated towards talking about 'soft skills'; specifically in terms of communication and working within teams, building rapport and relationships with professional mentors, and exhibiting the right attitude and work ethic when working in entry-level positions. Entrants cultivate these relationships in order to differentiate themselves from others in those positions and navigate the competitive environment of television labour market entry.

It is therefore salient to consider why a conversation about skills amongst recent entrants to UK television has gravitated in such a way. There are a variety of issues to consider here. Firstly, the lack of a universal training structure, especially beyond the major broadcasters, prevents a discussion of skills requirements for entry-points to television in universal terms. Secondly, the relationship between HE and the industry is ambivalent at best. The majority of HE media courses are viewed as outdated and insufficient by the industry itself, a sentiment that shows evidence of being passed on to new and prospective

entrants as well. For most respondents, the most valuable element of their HE experience was in making contacts via lecturers or those with industry experience, resulting in an entry-level position, in the forms of runners, apprenticeship and work experience positions. Thirdly, these entry-level positions themselves, are by their nature, low-skilled and often consisting of menial tasks, filing, driving, delivering messages, making tea and coffees etc., and so a specialised skillset is not a primary consideration, in comparison to ensuring that individual is enthusiastic, and fits in with the dynamic of the existing team.

Placing prospective entrants in these roles arguably ensures they find alternative ways of standing out, beyond technical ability. Skills transfer is also often contextual and situational, opportunities for mentors and experienced professionals to impart knowledge come up 'as-and-when', on the day, in a manner respondents suggest cannot be taught in any other way. The nature of soft skills is socially determined, what is deemed to be a required or desirable set of 'soft skills' is much more difficult to universally define, in comparison to the more traditional technical skills required for more advanced jobs. It appears, overall, the source of these more traditional technical skills remain elusive, for those looking to learn to operate cameras, for example, there is no hard and fast method for getting equipped with the required skills. In addition, possessing some form of technical ability may not be enough, if that individual does not also possess a suitably diligent work ethic and displays the right attitude, namely doing what they're told with a smile on their face and not complaining about their working conditions.

So, what are the implications of this? Firstly, there is evidence to suggest that such practices are beginning to cause a skills shortage in certain areas of the industry, a lack of a uniform training structure and the reliance on individual recruitment decisions is struggling to meet the needs of the industry, particularly in areas in periods of boom, such as South Wales. In addition, there remains the issue of 'the right attitude.' It now seems more salient than ever to investigate the ways in which new entrants themselves experience their work in UK television production. The ways in which the intangibility, undefined nature of informal entryways and specific skillsets, coupled with the emphasis on being the

right kind of worker, with the right sort of attitude, will be explored in further detail in the following chapter.

7. Findings: Shaping the Workforce

The previous chapters have built upon one another in presenting an illustration of the impact a raft of organisational changes have had on UK television. Chapter 5 explored the nature of the entryways, highlighting the prominence of the runner position, work experience placements and apprenticeships as the primary introductory roles to the industry. Building on that, the previous chapter considered how these entryways were operating in socialising new entrants into being a certain kind of worker. There was a stress on attitudinal characteristics, soft skills and personalities, normative control mechanics that are showing workers what to be, but not what to do.

And so, we arrive at considering the impact and implications of this process of socialisation. How has it impacted workers, entering UK television in the 2020s? What do these workers do to cope? How do they progress and thrive? What causes them to struggle and fail? The individual responses and experiences of recent entrants to television production in the UK offer stark examples of the manner in which the negotiation of the gateways and the navigation of the early stages of the career, are having a profound and potentially deleterious effect on the workforce in the sector. This chapter addresses a variety of ways in which new and recent entrants to UK TV production experience their work, specifically with regards to issues of barriers to entry in relation to demographic considerations, particularly ethnicity and social class. Additionally, there is a sense of feeling 'lucky' to be in the job, and of individuals feeling out of their depth, experiences of stress and exploitation, with repercussions for mental health and burnout.

Ultimately, the accounts below point to serious implications; many television workers feel in a position as a result of pure good fortune, rather than any sort of merit. This is closely linked to the unclear manner in which they enter the industry, the vague and ill-defined characteristics on which they are recruited, and the heavy reliance on simply knowing the right contact. Additionally, the stress on the 'right attitude', apparent in recruiting for entry-level positions is perpetuating a culture of workers with normalised attitudes to

extreme work (Burrow, 2015; Granter et al. 2015; Peticca-Harris 2015), and a lack of a formalised training structure means many feel ill-equipped to cope with the combination of long hours, tight deadlines and extreme working practices. This section explores the responses to this environment, beginning with issues concerning barriers to entry, as they are experienced, in terms of gender, ethnicity and social class.

Race and Ethnicity

For many of the respondents, the path into work in UK television production was unclear. There are a variety of factors that contribute to this lack of clarity, chief among them being the issue of social capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Lee 2011). Social capital is a currency through which technical knowledge, skills and information about openings and opportunities can be transferred. Conversely, a lack of the right form of social capital can manifest itself in the perception of numerous barriers to entry. Specifically, the required social capital in UK television is the preserve of the middle-classes, and the industry has traditionally been dominated by white, middle-class males. As a result, groups who do not fit this demographic find their opportunities and experiences difficult. It is to these groups that attention now turns, beginning with race and ethnicity.

That the UK television production sector has traditionally been dominated by middle-class white males is well-established (Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanovna 2012; Eikhof and Warhurst 2013; Eikhof 2017). Respondents' accounts showed an awareness of this, but also provide insight to an industry that is aware of the imbalance. Different departments were also dominated by different groups, for example, the lighting and camera departments are traditionally dominated by males, more so than perhaps anywhere else in the industry. Terry is an Assistant Director with 10 years' experience, and acknowledges that the industry is trying to redress a balance it is responsible for itself:

If you say we want more people of, specific like gender or ethnic backgrounds, in a, in a job, but then you don't already have that pool of people to draw on, because you've accidentally been training up white men for years, right? So all of a sudden you're like, 'shit, where are all the like, uh, women of colour? That we need to draw upon?' And they don't exist, because they haven't had that training yet. So you're in a catch-22, where you need to make positions for them where they have to fill. So then you have a pool of people with the skills to do it. Cause it's all well and good saying like, 'Oh, you know, we'll, we'd like more runners who are female. Or more runners who, uh, have, uh, you know, ethnically diverse backgrounds on this job.' But if there's no runners out there with those skills, then you can't hire them. So instead, you've then got to make a concerted effort to hire more women, and more people from ethnically diverse backgrounds. I get that. That's, that makes perfect sense. But then that in turn means then like other people miss out. So it's like a jog to the other side. But then I kind of clearly understand why it's there. And I'm kind of really lucky I was on one side of it.

(Terry, M, 30s, Assistant Director/Camera Operator)

Terry alludes to an awareness of the issue of imbalance when it comes to diversity, particularly with regards to race. Specifically, suggesting the industry has placed itself in something of a 'Catch-22', pulling from an insufficiently diverse pool of skilled workers necessitates the recruitment of individuals solely on the grounds of demographic considerations. Elsewhere in the same organisation, Elizabeth, provides evidence that it is a wide-ranging concern:

So I think [my employer] does give very good opportunities now, and that was down to our production exec, because she's brought in money to get diverse people in. But I think it is getting more diverse as we're growing. Because most job applications now, you have to be diverse, so ... you've got to be from a poor background, black, gay, that sort of thing, I think. That's what people say now, they tick all the boxes.

(Elizabeth, F, 20s, Production Assistant)

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the data with regards to diversity was that of 'box-ticking', and the variety of ambivalent or even hostile

attitudes towards it. Gavin suggests that his employer, one of the major broadcasters, are approaching the problem in the wrong way:

Diversity as in race-wise, and ethnicity sort of thing is, not so great, and I feel like people are looking at it from the wrong point of view. So, I feel like they're trying to tick boxes rather than hiring people because they're good at their jobs which is ... yeah I don't, I don't know. Because, all productions always have somebody of diversity on their production but if I was in their production, I wouldn't want to be there because I was ticking a box, I want to be there because I can do my job.

(Gavin, M, 20s, Production Management Assistant)

There is a strong sense from respondents, as communicated by Gavin, above, that individuals want to feel they have been recruited on merit, rather than to fill any specific identity or diversity quota. As a response to barriers at the entryways, ambivalence towards diversity initiatives and accusations of 'box-ticking' not only betray a threat to those who may lose out on such opportunities, but also serve to intensify competition amongst new entrants, both at an individual level, as well as between different groups. However, there are a couple of caveats to add to this sentiment. Firstly, of the nearly fifty respondents interviewed in this study, only two were non-white, both of mixed-race heritage, and both identified as female. Neither of those two participants, when asked about diversity, intimated that they felt they had been given any opportunities as a result of their *ethnicity*, rather than their ability. This is a difficult issue to interpret with any certainty, as to whether this is truly how they feel, or a denial due to a desire to wanting to believe they had been recruited on merit and not to tick a box. Ultimately, it is another example of a process at work at the boundaries of the industry, that places considerable stress on workers, for a variety of reasons.

In smaller, independent companies, there is evidence of the same push towards being seen to, at least address the issue of diversity. Matthew suggests that efforts at his post-production company are more concerned with appearances than addressing the root of the issue:

...my workplace they try to just tick boxes with diversity. I feel like they look for ways to look good and look diverse, which kind of overshadows whether someone's qualified to do the job or not. ... I wouldn't want to say definitely have, but sometimes it has been a little obvious that that person's just not qualified for the job at all, but it actually does tick a box for them, and they love that, you know, 'look at this person that we've got.' Which I don't agree with. ... We had a photoshoot, someone came round to take photos of our workplace, because we were a [REDACTED LOCATION] business. And they asked for volunteers, I was asked if I'd do it and I said, 'fine, alright, I'll do it', because no one else was going to do it. So, me and this guy went up and said, 'we're here to volunteer for the photo thing.' And the lady who had organised it at our workplace said – she said, 'That's great.' And then turned to someone else and said, 'Doesn't [Employee name REDACTED] want to do it?' and [Employee name] is of African descent.

(Matthew, M, 20s, Finishing Assistant)

Matthew is not alone in offering an ambivalent response to what appears to be a somewhat superficial attempt within the industry to address issues of diversity and inclusivity. The attitudes towards attempts to tackle issues of diversity were met with conflicting responses from recent entrants to the television industry. Some accepted the need for such initiatives, but admitted they found being excluded from schemes and opportunities designed to increase diversity within the industry frustrating, this ambivalence potentially a response to an internal conflict, inclusivity needs to improve and initiatives are the right thing to do, but for those not eligible, their opportunities will suffer as a result:

But this is the first time I've noticed them go out of their way to hire people of that diverse category. ... When I first started out, and I was applying for jobs in my third year, it was quite frustrating, because pretty much everything that I was seeing was – you know – for BAME people, disabled people blah blah blah. And I was just like, I can't apply for this because I'm not from there, you know, my parents are fairly well-off, in terms of like – don't know – not well-off, but you know what I mean. Like I'm not from a poor background. So there was, things that were advertised on BBC, ITV, Channel 4 that stuff do tend to say, 'We're really interested to hear from people from diverse backgrounds' They have a

quota to fill at the end of the day. And, so that was quite frustrating, but I do understand why they do it as well, because everyone's got to have the opportunity for it.

(Eve, F, 20s, Production Runner)

Whereas others expressed more overt frustration at feeling excluded from funding opportunities, and that the diversity imbalance in the industry stems more from issues of social class, rather than anything else, suggesting there is a middle-class privilege very much still at work, in providing opportunities and individuals from similar backgrounds:

I think there's very few opportunities for people who don't tick a box. I am white, working class, straight, without a disability, so I don't tick many boxes. So I have had zero funding. ... I've got some really good projects that I put forward, and we've got slim chance of getting funding from certain pots of funds, because none of us tick a box. ... I think in terms of the industry, there's a lot of middle-class white people, that have got into the industry through their network and through their connections or through or having money or access to money. ... I think there's a lot of doors into the industry, and people talk about those doors being open to anyone. But I think in reality people, a lot of those people that hold the key to those doors are working with people they want to work with, and are opening those doors for certain people. And I think there's tick box exercises to try and increase, um, diversity in the industry. But I think a lot of those opportunities are still going to the middle-class people, more privileged backgrounds. There needs to be more opportunities for working class people, because it tends to be the working-class people are more diverse.

(Jason, M, 30s, Producer/Director, Freelance)

Jason's account knits together two main issues. Firstly, the sense of frustration and injustice felt by those who do not meet the criteria for existing diversity initiatives. Secondly, Jason offers a perspective from those from white, working-class backgrounds that find themselves facing numerous barriers to entry. It is to the issue of social class and background that attention now turns.

Social Class

When asked about diversity, many participants responded in terms of social class, communicating a widespread awareness, concurrent with Terry's account at the top of the previous section, as well as Jason on the previous page, that the industry is dominated by the privileged and affluent middle-classes. What is evident from the responses, is an ongoing reaction of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds to the stark middle-class dominance of the industry. Andy is no longer a part of the industry, but spent several years as a runner and camera technician before leaving for a different career. Below he mentions his perception of television as a 'middle-class industry':

Umm, class, in terms of class: Very much a lack of diversity, I'd say that's probably the one that I struggled with the most. I grew up in a very working-class atmosphere, I'm quite working-class. Umm, and I felt like it was a very middle-class industry.

(Andy, M, 30s, Former Runner/Camera Technician)

Social class was a prominent consideration in a number of the respondents' accounts. Social class can manifest itself in a number of observable ways; accent or education, for example. Respondents were asked explicitly whether they felt their 'background' had affected their career in any way. Many addressed issues of social class that was lacking, in the industry contexts to which they had been exposed. For those who identified as coming from a working-class background, the issue of class in the industry was a central concern:

Whereas we're actually crying out for more people from working class backgrounds in television rather than more people who might be of an ethnic minority, but went to a private school. Television is notoriously middle-class and while I fully welcome the efforts to include more ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, I think we should actually be focusing more on class.

(Maria, F, 30s, Producer)

The working classes are not entirely excluded from the industry, but tended to be strongly represented in certain departments. Below, Terry communicates not only how the industry tends to be distributed, with regards to demographics, but also that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to advance:

You will see people from different social backgrounds, in different departments of all sorts. But they do run along certain lines. Like the trades, like I said. The grips, the sparks, riggers, um, chippies all the kind of trades you see in a building site, they're all working class people. Then like the hair makeup, costume, ADs, camera tend to be middle class. You will get people bleeding through from working class. Uh, but they tend to be. And especially when you get to HoDs, man. Very few like working class heads of department that aren't sparks or grips.

(Terry, M, 30s, Assistant Director)

Personal backgrounds, perhaps unsurprisingly, have a huge influence on the experience of respondents. There was evidence of any characteristic that marks you as an 'other'; that is deviating from the middle-class white norm of the industry, was a source of insecurity and self-consciousness:

*The amount of posh, English public schoolboys I work for. F**king hilarious. Being Welsh as well man. I'm like, I'm not even kidding you, come to London doing my, like the only. I'd put my hand up and say I'm probably the only Welsh person of my rank on the film I worked with, doing what I do. I'm 'the Welsh guy.'*

(Terry, M, 30s, Assistant Director)

I think being Welsh wasn't always helpful. My accent has certainly changed over the years, which I know is probably not the best thing to say, to someone who's Welsh, writing in a paper. But that's true. When I worked at the Royal Albert Hall, I did adopt a certain 'BBC voice', which, you know, would I be proud of doing that?

No. But was it more effective to getting the job done? Yeah, probably was because you didn't have that judgment of being from a certain class or social background and I just adopted the more neutral accent. And you know, when you're working with people who are divas and very famous performers, from

America or wherever, you know, you adopt, you make some changes, I suppose, to go with the job. So in some ways, yeah, being Welsh didn't always help. ... I probably mask the Welsh accent and sometimes. ... I mean Royal Holloway's quite a posh university, and I was from Newport, from a school that didn't have a great record, but I managed to work hard and get, you know, results enough to get into Royal Holloway.

(Sian, F, 30s, Producer)

A coping mechanism for those from working class backgrounds is to modify your behaviour and even change your accent to conform to the middle-class norms of the industry. Social class is a vital component in negotiating entry to UK television. Possession of the correct social capital, that of the middle-classes, can facilitate entry into professional networks, and respondents show an awareness that lacking these norms and social mores can hamper an individual's career progression, and lead to feelings of alienation in being 'different' to those around them. There are also technical advantages to coming from a privileged background. Specifically, it affords the time and money to self-develop skills before entry. Andy speculates on how financial barriers to entry perpetuate this middle-class dominance:

Also, the entry requirements into the industry, if you do want to do those, maybe more skilled jobs, - like if you want to be a director, if you harbour dreams of being a director, you've got to direct, and make your own short films. So, where do you find the time, the equipment, the money, the exposure? How do you get everything? And, I mean people have done it, because you see people do it, but usually, if you look at their Wikipedia article you'll find; 'They went to this private school', or their dad is this person. It's very difficult, I think, and that seems to be different to how it used to be, where - and I mean you read things, I think Kathy Burke has mentioned this, quite a lot, about how much more difficult it is for somebody who's working class to get work, nowadays. Because the working-class roles, will go to middle class people and - I don't think it's anything conscious that's happening, I just think ... one ... you know, you often try - you need money to survive, and you can't do that making short films! (laughs) you know? So without any sort of financial backing from a parent, or a wealthy benefactor, you

need to work, and that just gets in the way of you having this dream. So, you might have gone to university and studied it, but then when reality hits, if you can't afford it, it makes it difficult.

(Andy, M, 30s, Former Runner/Camera Technician)

Andy's account speaks to an awareness among potential entrants of the variety of barriers that enforce and perpetuate class bias within UK television.

The middle-classes, and those from more affluent backgrounds, continue to thrive. Those interviewed from more affluent backgrounds were aware of the benefits they potentially had, in preparing them for entry to television work, in exactly the manner outlined by Andy, above:

... I suppose, being from a sort of wealthy background benefitted me in the way that I could buy myself – or I could have a camera, and I was able to learn by just messing around, sort of thing. Whereas, if you didn't have that opportunity, I suppose, you'd have to use somebody else's or you'd have to borrow kit from a university or college or that sort of thing. And then it would be more difficult for you to pick things up because you only have a limited time with things like that. So, in that sense, things have benefitted me.

(Gavin, M, 20s, Production Management Assistant)

The industry, and the structures surrounding it, governing its entryways and recruitment, also serve to perpetuate issues of class bias, and the dominance of middle-class ideals. Significantly, this perception of the industry, also serves to contribute to the obfuscation of entryways and opportunities for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Respondents often characterised nepotism in terms of a perk they did not possess:

...in a lot of cases I've noticed in film, it's nepotism that allows that to go through. Namely someone's dad or uncle worked in the business for years and all that stuff. So for me, not having a film family and seeing that kind of glass ceiling and speaking to some of the first ADs there as well who started in TV like I did just

said, 'go back to TV, get your higher stripes there, and come back and show us you've done.

(Terry, M, 30s, Assistant Director)

As well as acting as a barrier to getting work and opportunities:

*After years of trying to get f**king work and jobs and not getting anything and seeing other people getting jobs! and thinking, 'How the f**k have they got that? How have they got that job, how have they got that opportunity?!' I'm working my bollocks off here, and creating things from nothing. I've started my own company. How have they got it? And it's, they've got in because, because it tends to be they're middle class. They've come from a good school. They got that good school on their CV. They're bilingual, Welsh and English. They know people that are in that media industry, or family members know somebody in that media industry and those opportunities have come about. I think, I think a lot of the jobs at the BBC go to people who went to good schools, good universities and have connections in that world. I went to a comprehensive school in Newport, like I had none of that and it's now 10 years later that I realize that when I was doing my film degree, I should have been out there trying to get work experience.*

(Jason, M, 30s, Producer/Director)

There is also evidence that industry is aware of the prevalence of nepotism, and though nepotistic practices are problematic for those outside the relevant professional networks, they are necessary for those *within* the networks to continue to operate sustainably within the context of a short-term project-based working environment:

If I really shoot from the hip on this, that you mentioned nepotism earlier, that very much exists, because people haven't got time to go out and find their new person to replace them. They're always 'firefighting' on film and TV shoots. So that's the nature of the industry, and that hopefully will change, but at the moment that's what really happens.

(Darren, M, 40s, Former Producer, Industrial Strategist)

There are numerous barriers to entry in UK television, and chief amongst them is the issue of social capital, and who possesses it. In the context of network-based project work, social capital is a key resource in negotiating and piercing professional networks. In terms of simply finding out about opportunities, or approaching industry gatekeepers in the manner most likely to get a response, any contact within the industry itself is of great advantage to those hopefuls at the periphery. There endures, however, a strong middle-class bias within UK television. Either through nepotism, or possession of shared norms and values, those from privileged backgrounds have a huge advantage in getting work in television production, particularly in the areas such as directing, writing, art and production departments. In addition, the same benefits offer far greater prospects in advancement.

Those without the required social capital, and this is evident with regards to ethnicity *and* social class, find instead a number of barriers to entry. Specifically, a lack of social capital results in a lack of knowledge of opportunities, a paucity of professional contacts, and a lack of time and resources to build specialist skills. What we have seen in this section are a variety of responses of those who do not have the traditional social capital that facilitates entry to the television industry. You adapt your accent, you tolerate inequality, you blame structural inequalities and biases for your lack of opportunities, you put yourself in competition with those among your contemporaries that you perceive as receiving preferential treatment. This is significant, as when these groups do indeed find a way into the industry, their experiences are shaped by this social capital dynamic. In other words, without a clear way of explaining their negotiation of a variety of unclear entryways, those from non-white and lower socio-economic backgrounds are forced to find alternative ways of rationalising and explaining their career pathways.

Serendipity

In terms of responses to the process of socialisation, no theme was more prominent than being lucky. The concept of 'serendipity', of being in the 'right place at the right time' was used in reference to a range of elements of an

individual's career pathway, and the narratives the respondents have constructed around their own routes into working in television production. Some viewed their entry to the industry as the result of pure fortune:

I think I got this purely by luck. I think I was so lucky, to find it and to get it, really. And if I hadn't, I don't know what I'd be doing. It would be – I would be really sad, I think, because my mental health was awful before I got this job.

(Louise, F, 20s, Production assistant)

The importance Louise attaches to her work is illustrated in her linking an improvement in her mental health, to finding herself in a job she wanted to do. Others expressed feeling lucky in finding an opportunity quickly after finishing HE:

I can't stress enough how lucky I've been! (laughs) Through my various choices I've made! Umm, just meeting the right people. But, this particular person, my mentor, he was just completely invaluable, and then him offering me a job in their company, straight away after I'd finished my dissertation.

(Rebecca, F, 30s, Production Co-Ordinator)

David expressed his sense of feeling lucky in being able to quickly transition from a running position to an edit assistant, due to another employee leaving that post:

I got in as a runner on that and I was just generally very lucky. I was probably only running for three months, moved into an edit assistant position and um, did this programme ran around in circles and really honed a lot of skills while I was doing that. I was very lucky in that, while I was a runner, someone left their position as an edit assistant. So that became vacant as I was there. So even though I hadn't been doing it very long, I'd be, I'd been working very hard to learn how to do it.

(David, M, 20s, Editor, Post-production)

Luck is used in a variety of ways to rationalise and explain the career paths and advances taken by entrants to UK television production, in the absence of

clearly defined routes and entry requirements, as established in Chapter 5. Others assign importance to the good fortune in having an experienced professional offer them guidance and support, a link to the contacts and professional mentors explored in previous chapters:

I got kind of lucky, like I got really super lucky, though mate, to be honest with you. So I've got to say it because ... The key floor runner is the person you lean on the most, like the most experienced runner, we were all pretty much in a green situation, in that TV series and that's what the first AD said was he couldn't get his key floor runner. So he kept me uncharacteristically close to him for that job. ... That was kind of like a lucky break for me really. It was really, really, really lucky. If I'd started off in [major broadcaster] traineeships, I probably would have got bored.

(Terry, M, 30s, Assistant Director/Camera Operator)

And I think I got lucky with [Mentor] as well because she's such a lovely woman. Um, and I know that she mentors, um, on quite a few different schemes, not just the ITV one.

(Claire, F, 20s, Producer)

Others see their good fortune in being able to avoid the trappings of doing unpaid work in the industry and avoiding being exploited as free labour. This was particularly prominent when respondents were not equipped with a contact network, in an industry based so heavily around contacts:

I've been very lucky I think, because there's the two-week work experience, is definitely a worthwhile thing. I think it's a law, that you can't have people for more two weeks for free ... I have heard of productions, that basically get people in like that as free labour, instead. And they have them doing actual things towards the production, that somebody doing a paid role would be doing. It was definitely taken advantage of, which, when the only way in is because you know people, and you have to make contacts. ... I feel like some people feel like they have to do, and a lot of people will say to you have to do it, to get into the industry, but I'm probably one of the lucky few who hasn't had to work for free.

(Stephanie, F, 30s, Construction, Art Dept)

I do feel seriously lucky, because I had no unpaid internship, I didn't have to do the unpaid work experience, I didn't have to move a vast distance just to get a little bit of experience, and then come home, and then apply somewhere else.

(Isobel, F, 20s, Artist)

Luck, or serendipity, is a powerful concept to allow recent entrants to make sense of how they've managed to secure a position within an industry they view as highly competitive, but with no clear criteria to separate them from anyone else attempting to enter via the same route. Luck overcomes issues of class, of privilege for those who do not possess that privilege. It provides an opening, a 'hope', but it comes at a price, in the form of gratitude, and the propensity to be exploited, and even to self-exploit. In addition, those who view themselves as being from more working-class, or from a lower socio-economic background, use the concept of good fortune as an explanation for how they've managed to gain entry to an industry they perceive as being dominated by the white middle-classes:

I am sat here, someone who's been very lucky, and I know I've been very fortunate. So I'm sat here as one of the lucky ones, who somehow managed to wiggle this system, and this environment we've got. I mean, there were lots of different people who were posh, and had been through Oxbridge on my CIS course. ... I'm very lucky that I've had a job I wanted, essentially. I'm in the environment I wanted to work in, so I'm very fortunate but I am aware that I managed to wangle it somehow and get to this point, and there's probably thousands of others out there, who probably had the same passion as me, but they've come up against brick walls.

(Jenny, F, 30s, Broadcast Journalist, Presenter)

It was significant to note that this sense of being lucky to work in the television was also shared by those who had entered in the past. Virginia is now retired, but she expresses a similar sentiment to those who've entered more recently:

I've always felt very lucky to be in media, really lucky. And I think a lot of people do, but then again, you've still got unions -and I'm not saying that's a bad thing, at all – I'm just saying that – it's, it's really difficult to get in, and it's really difficult – it's difficult to get in, and it's really difficult to get into the [MAJOR BROADCASTER]. And I think, more and more at the [MAJOR BROADCASTER], and maybe with the big indies and all of that, it's what you've done beforehand, so you've just got to build up your CV as much as you can, even if it's only volunteering.

(Virginia, F, 60s, Retired, Former Scheduler)

It is worth drawing attention to this, not only as it demonstrates that entrants' experiences are complex and difficult to define, in terms of getting in and staying in, but that such sentiments are not a new phenomenon. And as such, it speaks to the notion that the mechanics of the industry have, in fact, not changed very much at all.

Though concept of luck was a prominent theme in the data, it was not universal:

I don't think you have to work that way, but you're relying more on luck. I don't rely on luck. I don't believe in luck. I make my own luck. I make my own opportunities. It's in my hands then if I do that. But my mindset is: if it takes you 2000 days of work to build a career, if you work five days a week and I work seven days a week, I'll get there quicker than you. I'm impatient.

(Jason, M, 30s, Producer/Director)

Jason was unique in the data in being the only respondent to explicitly address the concept of luck in terms of it *not* being a factor, though there were several other respondents who spoke in terms of valuing their hard work in getting them to where they are. What remains salient, is the frequency with which luck is used as a way of explaining or rationalising an individual's account of their career trajectory, to which they cannot assign a clear pathway or reason. Additionally, those who feel fortunate or privileged to be in the position they are

in, and are unable to rationalise and explain their career entry in any other ways are more likely to put up with exploitative and extreme working conditions. It is this indeterminacy that has a variety of wide-ranging and potentially concerning implications for the future of work in UK television, in addition to the potential shortage of entrants able to develop the sufficient skillset. Some of the results of these conditions are, perhaps unsurprisingly, a variety of negative and deleterious experiences for the respondents, as the next section will explore.

Workers' Reactions

Organisational change has brought with it the advent of hybridised forms of organisational governance. Such governance brings with it a variety of soft forms of power, and normative (Fleming and Sturdy 2011) and neo-normative (Jenkins and Delbridge 2017) forms of control. This, in turn, provides a context in which workers are socialised into behaving a certain way. This following section addresses what these workers then do in response. How do they survive? How do they thrive? And what causes them to fail? The concept of luck, or serendipity, highlighted in the previous section is a method through which recent entrants to UK television can make sense of a number of elements, including unclear entryways, undefined skills requirements and a heavy reliance on interpersonal contacts and professional networking.

In addition, it appears that many workers who deviate from the white, middle-class norm of traditional television recruitment (those from lower socio-economic or BAME backgrounds for example), also choose to cite luck as a central element of their successful entry to an industry they feel they have no right to inhabit. This is significant. A sense of feeling privileged to be in an industry at all has serious implications for the working conditions of that worker, and their preparedness to accept overtime, extreme work (Burrow 2015; Granter 2015) and acquiesce to those in positions of power and control. As a result, it is salient to consider workers' responses to contemporary TV work, wherein is found multiple accounts of feeling out of their depth, insufficiently skilled or supported, reports of stress, extreme working environments and burnout.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, such patterns in recruitment have had a considerable impact on respondents' perception of their skill levels, workers expressed feelings of being under-prepared for their roles and asked to take on a lot of tasks or responsibility very quickly. The expectation within television production in the UK is very much that the majority of relevant skills, professional contacts and knowledge about opportunities will be picked up on-the-job, once the individual has negotiated one of the entryways into the industry. Although there is evidence to suggest that on-the-job learning provides a suitable framework in which to pick up day-to-day skills (particularly in the office environment of the production department), there are also multiple accounts of workers feeling out of their depth, or insufficiently skilled for the role they have been asked to do (Blair 2001; Bechky 2006). Jason gives quite a stark account of the environment he found himself working in the early stages of his career, on a small independent documentary web series, working for a small, independent, online broadcaster:

*I was like f**king hell, I've never used this camera before, and I've never used this editing software. And he was like, 'well you need to figure that out. Ring someone, look at a YouTube. This person knows how to do it, you need to ring them.' I was like, 'I've got no idea what I'm doing here.' And they were like trying to talk me through it. And boss was like, 'if you want to do this f**king job, you've got to figure out how to do it, otherwise I'll get someone else to do it.' I'll learn it, it's fine. I'll figure it out.*

(Jason, M, 30s, Producer/Director)

The theme of being thrown 'in at the deep-end' is echoed by several other respondents, and in a variety of departments and roles. Stephen speaks of being promoted to Art Director on a major drama:

On the [Drama] I was listed as an art director, and that was the first job where I had to deal, properly, with construction, material, cost, budgeting – I was thrown in at the deep end, on that one.

(Stephen, M, 20s, Art Department)

And Andrew offers a similar account of when he was given a surprising amount of responsibility at a very young age, when working as a local reporter in a small community in the Orkney Islands, where he grew up:

That's the thing, you were properly thrown in at the deep end. And I don't know whether it was a Scottish attitude and whether it was just the attitude of the editors like, 'he's a, he's a plucky kid, let's see - let's put him in a situation and see how he performs.' Because for them there was no risk really, for them. ... when you start young, you just fly, when you start so young because no one expects you to be able to do anything.

(Andrew, M, 20s, Broadcast Journalist)

There is no formal level of qualification or experience that defines a television worker as ready to enter a production environment. As a result, many opportunities are given to individuals who will either 'sink or swim.' Workers survive through 'paying their dues', adopting the same level of commitment and self-sacrifice as their predecessors, and so the cycle is perpetuated. With network working practices, there is a lack of a training framework to adequately equip individuals with any sort of skillset before they are given a position of real responsibility. In conjunction to fill positions quickly and cost-efficiently within project work affords little opportunity to either cast a net sufficiently wide to include a diverse range of applicants – if they even exist – or spend time training. In many cases, they had to figure it out for themselves. Additionally, there is a pressure to learn quickly, and to be good straight away; the informal nature of recruitment also created multiple environments rife with exploitative practices.

Exploitation

Many of the respondents express that their early work in television was governed by feelings of being exploited, or being expected to self-exploit. Below, John recounts one of his first experiences working on a media project. He and a friend were drafted in, while they were both still in school, to work on a project, but the relationship broke down amid allegations of exploitation:

It was so much work to learn, at the same time as we were working it just became us 10/12 hours a day, 5/6 days a week, there. And really slaving, it got us really down – I was commuting into Port Talbot from Llantwit as well. And so, someone sent, an anonymous letter, saying that ‘your staff are feeling exploited, and you’re exploiting these kids’, essentially. I’m still – I mean I wouldn’t be where I am, I guess – but there was definitely a lot of bitterness. And the employer’s response was to – he was furious that that impression had been given about his company, and he was putting it on us, and gave us this disciplinary meeting, and it essentially soured most of the relationship.

(John, M, 20s, Post-production VFX)

John claims that he still doesn’t know who sent the anonymous letter. The employer’s reaction, to feel aggrieved by the accusations and to take a disciplinary attitude towards school students that were being asked to work 10/12-hour days for part-time wages, is concerning. Significant, as well, is despite the exploitative nature of the situation, John still suggests he wouldn’t ‘be where he is’ (currently working at a major broadcaster) without this experience. Indeed, John states that despite this situation, he went on to work for that employer subsequent times, suggesting the value of contacts that can act as a gatekeeper is worth enduring extreme, exploitative working conditions.

And John expresses the difficulty in knowing that they were being exploited, but not wanting to jeopardise what they thought was ‘their chance’:

I felt a conflict between not wanting spoil my chance, but at the same time feeling very exploited. So I felt like the rug was pulled out from under me, because then I had to argue against my own well-being in order to keep my job.

(John, M, 20s, Post-production VFX)

It is here that the themes of exploitation and fortune intersect. John’s experience was such that he felt he was being treated unfairly, and if the account above is accurate, he certainly was. Workers survive through a culture of self-sacrifice. Additionally, he expresses concern that he is ‘lucky’ to be even in this exploitative, situation with an employer he sees as an invaluable ‘in’ to an

industry he covets immensely. It is within the context of this conflict that many extreme working practices (Burrow 2015; Peticca-Harris et al. 2015) appear to develop.

There are stark illustrations of the extreme lengths people are expected to go to be a part of the production, and the very real dangers such working practises can pose to mental and physical health. Christopher gives a vivid account of the demands placed on him as a runner, and the resultant problems:

I was staying with friends. It was like an hour commute either way. If I had to be there earlier to rig, that was that. And if I had to stay an hour, two hours, three hours after to derig if we had a particularly big shoot that was that, as well. ... So if you finish late and it's like well you're on the night bus, which might take twice as long to get back. So sometimes you're operating on like three, four hours sleep. And you're working 16-hour days. And you might do that - the way that they schedule some who of these small budget films is they'll do - I think the longest stint I did was probably about 11 days straight. The turnaround day went from day to night or night to day, whichever way round it is, I can't quite remember. So basically you go from shooting daytime hours to night-time hours. So what that might mean is your turnaround day, might even just be half a day, because you have to be on set at like, 10 o'clock at night to work through the night. So yeah, it was like the, the schedule was, were mental, at times.

(Christopher, M, 30s, Former lighting Assistant)

Christopher was working extreme hours, and for sustained periods of time. As part of the lighting department, he was often one of the first to arrive, and the last to leave. However long days may be for other departments, they can be that much longer for the lighting and make-up departments. Later in his account, Christopher illustrated the result of his extreme working schedule:

I was waking up at half three in the morning to get up at four to drive from Stafford to Stoke, to pick up some other runners. Take them to the production office. By that point, go and pick up the cast from the hotel they were staying in, do a few cast runs, go park my car somewhere. Get back on the set, do like a full

day as a lighting trainee. About half an hour before the day was out, go back and get my car, swing back around and pick up the cast, take them back. And it became a long ass day. And then one day, um, after probably about four or five days in a row that happening, um, I was driving up to Stoke again from Stafford and I fell asleep behind the wheel of my car. And, um, luckily I didn't flip it or anything, but I mounted the curb, but like as soon as I did like, like jolted me awake and I was like, driving down a verge! So yeah, it was, it was tough. You know, it was like that the, the pressure that you put yourself under, just because you think, you know, you need to succeed.

(Christopher, M, 30s, Former lighting Assistant)

Christopher had got to that point in his career (and still only as a trainee) though putting pressure on himself to push his limits, in order to get to where he thought he wanted to be, what was required to survive in the early stages of television production work. Ultimately, life in the lighting department was not all Christopher had envisioned it to be, and the enchantment which had driven him to self-exploit to an extreme degree was broken, resulting in him leaving the industry and pursuing a career in graphic design, with no intention of returning. It is significant to see this as a manifestation of the reinforcement of what is the right 'attitude', something that is heavily featured in the discourse around all of the entryways experienced by participants in this study, and can have potentially disastrous and dangerous consequences, as hopeful workers attempt to prove their worth.

Attitude and Competition

The intense competition over relatively few entry-level positions also manifested itself in self-exploitative patterns, with deleterious consequences. New, and prospective, workers are not given a clear indication of where, and when, opportunities may present themselves. Routes are unclear, and so, without a vital contact or professional network, workers are required to spend more and more of their own time in the workplace, on the off chance that an opportunity may present itself. A 'fear of missing out' contributes to a culture of self-exploitation, in this way:

... that you have to be there for the opportunity to hit you. Which means that, really, you're expected to be working more and more and more, just in case that opportunity happens again. You know, if you do your normal working hours, what you're contracted to do, you're gonna get a fear of missing out.

(Anthony, M, 20s, Not currently in the industry)

Neal believes that it is a very much an attitude and personality that is purposefully sought out and encouraged, by those acting as gatekeepers, and what is required to thrive in UK television:

They're looking for a person that they can take advantage of. Um, and that happens a lot. It's sometimes being keen and being eager can backfire, because it could be a person where if you're like, 'Oh, I don't mind staying another two hours, I don't mind doing this,' you then become that person that gets all that work because, Oh, you're the keen go-getter, let's give you the more work. Let's, um, you know, let's ask you to stay on two hours longer. And it can sometimes do you a disservice, you know? It's like don't spread yourself too thin, you know, because it, people can take advantage and it's difficult to know who you can trust and who you can't trust, you know?

(Neal, M, 30s, Freelance Producer/Director)

From the accounts of the respondents, what appears significant with regards to this theme of exploitation within television work is the extent to which the industry itself appears to cultivate and perpetuate an environment where these experiences can persist. Either through the obfuscation of entryways and entry requirements, a reliance on informal and inter-personal recruitment methods, and the relegation of specialist skillsets in favour of an emphasis on attitudinal and personality traits. Respondents report feeling a need to push themselves to their limits (and beyond), endangering themselves and others in order to make inroads into the industry, as well as being prepared to self-exploit, or put up with exploitative working conditions. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that there is also evidence of a severe impact on workers' own mental health and well-being.

Mental Health, Stress and Burnout

Participants drew attention to the deleterious impact such working practices have had on their mental health. John now works at a major broadcaster, but his work history in the industry appears to be one characterised by stress and poor mental health:

Basically, how I got into the industry is all just through people taking me under their wing. And, for the first few years working for very little money, essentially. Just living with family, and just scraping by. And after two or three years in London, decided to go to film school, because I didn't really have any friends of colleagues in the industry, and I felt like I didn't have a skillset to lean back on. And I ended up being put into positions I wasn't really qualified for, and finding that immensely stressful ... So I ended up having a bit of a nervous episode, after that.

(John, M, 20s, Post-production VFX)

Similarly, Louise expresses a conflict between the elation at securing a job within the industry she has coveted for some time, and the realities of the demands that position has placed upon her:

It's [my mental health] actually really not great at the moment! (laughs) Umm, cos – I don't know, it was such an excitement to get the job, and I never thought that I would, I really, really didn't. Umm, so when it came up it was, 'Oh my God, I can actually stay here, I could actually be earning a decent wage for once, and maybe be enjoying it.' And then, yeah these shoots especially – I was ok in the office, because it was – when you came home, you came home and then you didn't have to do anything, you just forget about it. But then, with these shoots, there's been one every week of September, next week is the last one. It's been pretty intense and I'm quite an emotionally reliant person on my family, and my boyfriend. So, to be away from them was/is quite hard, and something that I didn't realise I'd have to do, either.

(Louise, F, 20s, Production assistant)

One element Louise highlights is that much of the stress in her current position is as a result of the requirements and expectations of that role not being made clear. It is again an expression of conflict, of wanting a position within the industry, but accepting that their schedule is taking its toll.

The early stages of John's career path were characterised by repeated instances of exploitation and extreme work (Burrow 2015; Granter et al. 2015; Peticca-Harris et al. 2015). Later, on an independent film project in London, he found himself in a similarly exploitative position, which severely adversely affected his mental health:

And I didn't even know basic things, like what resolution a DVD needs to be put together, but I just kept saying yes because I was afraid to say, 'no, I don't know what I was doing.' And so, after a while, I'd have calls from editors saying, 'This thing you've sent out is in the wrong resolution' I didn't actually know what they meant. I missed two deadlines and ended up on the day of the deadline, in a DVD authoring house in London, on my laptop, just sat there. I was obviously a kid, and they'd taken pity on me and extended the deadline ... at the time I thought, 'Oh my God, I have to do this professionally.' ... yeah I didn't realise the effect that had had on me until I did that year at film school and realised that actually I think I'd had a bit of a nervous breakdown, and it took a good two or three years of learning how to deal with that anxiety and yeah, deprogramming I suppose.

(John, M, 20s, Post-production VFX)

John's story combines the theme of exploitation with a couple of the most widely expressed deleterious consequences and implications of it, namely poor mental health and a sense of being out of your depth, insufficiently trained and equipped with the knowledge to perform their task, but feeling a sense of duty to push themselves to the absolute limit to prove themselves. It is here that many workers will hit what they feel are insurmountable challenges, burnout and leave the industry altogether.

Elsewhere, David explains how there was a general expectation to work longer hours, often due to tight deadlines and heavy workloads:

I suppose there's - exploitation is the correct term where, where they [editors] are working crazy hours and they're expected just do that that day after day, and never have any downtime. You definitely see that they work crazy hours, they come in, come in early and they don't leave until 10 o'clock quite regularly and it just gets worse and worse towards the end. ... And it's usually just building up towards the deadlines. It's either one of two things, either the budgetary, where they don't want to spend more money or it is um, a deadline to do with, um, when things are going broadcast, and stuff. And that's when I usually end up getting most kind of, I ended up getting, doing crazy hours and it's usually because a client has pushed their idea right up to the last minute.

(David, M, 20s, Post-production Editor)

The reality of working long hours is something that is normalised throughout much of the industry. The reality of burnout as a result of the expectations of such working conditions is well-documented, and it supported by the experiences of the respondents here. In the quote below, James acknowledges the difficulty in balancing his life and his relationship around the hours he is expected to work, yet admits that he was aware of what would be expected of him before entering the industry, and that the prospect of working for the company he now works for, is worth the sacrifice:

I knew what I was signing up for, and the most difficult thing about it was finding time to see my partner, as she's a doctor ... I didn't really mind losing my weekend, because I was just so grateful to have the job, I was over the moon to get it, because it had felt like it had been a long time coming. ... Obviously it's not ideal working every weekend, but they're very flexible with your wishes and stuff, and I never felt like I was being pressured or forced to do something I didn't want to do.

(James, M, 20s, Post-production Edit Assistant)

The stress and focus on the right sort of attitude, in terms of not complaining and being prepared for the reality of exploitative work hours clashes with the individuals' own investment in what they see as being their 'dream job.'

James does appear to be wrestling with a working pattern he describes as ‘not ideal’, and not wanting to seem ungrateful for getting the job he now has. The glamorous and enticing nature of working in an industry like television contributes to the willingness of new hopefuls and entrants to be prepared to self-exploit.

What is particularly concerning is that many of the themes highlighted here do not relate solely to entry-level positions, and persisted even once workers had been in the industry for an extended period. Andrew, now in his early twenties, was on a traineeship with a major broadcaster, but had started as a broadcast journalist extremely early meaning he has already amassed over five years’ experience:

It's too fast-paced, there's no time for passengers. That's why it's actually very difficult even on a traineeship. When you start, you think, 'I'm out of my depth, out of my depth.' For weeks, months probably, I felt out of my depth when I started here. Even on this as a trainee, I still feel I need to be better. I don't know [why], really. I think because you're just in the newsroom and you're kind of put I that situation very quickly ... There's a lot to do and only just enough people to do it. So stripped back with staff. So you have to be good ... you always feel a bit under pressure to perform.

(Andrew, M, 20s, Broadcast Journalist)

Linked to this, several of the respondents exhibited a certain degree of concern with the nature of the long days and anti-social working hours. This concern and resentment was also combined with a sense of resignation to the inevitability of this as a working practice, in the absence of any obvious alternative:

I want to say, no they [hours and working practices] don't have to be the way they are, but at the same time, I don't see how they could be any different. Because, I know, intellectually I know why we work such long hours, we work eleven-hour days because, financially it makes sense when we are on one filming location to make the most of it, it doesn't make sense for us to work eight-hour days,

because it would take so much more money to go back to these locations time and again and set everything up. ... I've seen so many people just struggle with these conditions, and it's not just the eleven-hour workdays ... I think it has to change somehow, but I don't see how and when.

(Rebecca, F, 30s, Production Co-ordinator)

Rebecca expresses a degree of conflict about the nature of work in television production. Though she understands the pragmatism of working in a such a manner financially, she admits that the working practices have caused issues and burnout for many of her colleagues and peers. Anthony is no longer in the television industry, but also sees this pattern playing out in his peers and colleagues who are still working in the sector:

That's one of the things that has come across is like a lot of people, in their early to mid-twenties, they're either making a progression, or they're burnt out. That's how it's felt, looking at my peer group.

(Anthony, M, 20s, Not currently in the industry)

The extreme work (Burrow 2015) culture appears to foster a 'do-or-die' reality, where individuals are either 'getting on', or 'getting off.' They survive and thrive through high levels of commitment and self-sacrifice, until such working conditions become untenable and they burnout and leave. A workforce in their mid-twenties should not be experiencing burnout to this extent. Elsewhere, there was further discussion about the nature of the working practices, and distinctions appeared between different geographical hubs. Maria compares the attitudes in London, to where she currently works, in Glasgow, Scotland:

If we're going into studio, or shoots - don't get me wrong, of course we'll burn the midnight oil and stuff like that, but just as standard, that's what you do. And that London series producer who I worked with, ... he just can't believe we are all gone home by half six. So we're only paid until half six. Why else would we stay here? ... I think Glasgow companies in general are of the opinion, if you can't get your work done within 40 hours; there is either something wrong with the schedule, or you need more team members. Nobody should ever be working 70/80 hours a

week when they're only getting paid for 40.

(Maria, F, 30s, Producer)

There is a culture of extreme work practice in the television in London. In London, there is an expectation to work beyond your hours, to embrace overtime, in a manner that is not shared in Glasgow. Maria acknowledges that the long working hours are normalised and structurally ingrained, and that, in reality, there is enough time to get your work done in a more standard working week. That the industry appears to select and progress those who exhibit the appropriate attitude towards working such hours and those who don't complain, contributes to the perpetuation of these working practices.

The findings presented above have sought to illustrate the variety of ways in which television workers experience their work in the industry, and the forces that act in shaping and influencing those experiences. In drawing together the themes established here, it appears that experiences of new entrants to UK television production are very much shaped and governed by their entryways. The shift to network-governed, project-based working practices has served to change the manner in which individuals make their way into the industry. As a result, entryways are unclear, often hidden from view for those without the requisite social capital, and governed by the discretion of individuals with industry knowledge and experience. Similarly, the lack of a formal training structure necessitates an onus on something other than a specialised skillset at the point of recruitment, resulting in an emphasis on possessing the right attitude and showing dedication to endure extreme work practices and self-exploit.

The responses of participants in this study, have exhibited a cohort of workers characterised by feelings of insecurity, exhaustion, deleterious mental health. Operating within a conflict between a desire to gain access to, and find success in, a glamorous and exciting industry, and the realities of extreme work (Burrow 2015; Granter et al. 2015; Peticca-Harris 2015), exploitation and insecure long-term prospects. What is particularly concerning is the extent to which the industry is appearing to nurture and exacerbate these patterns, and the extent to which the shaping of a workforce in this image is intentional. Those who feel

lucky to be in the industry at all, are left with no choice but to adopt the strategies needed to survive. 'Pay their dues', give up their social lives, push themselves to the limit, otherwise get left behind. Those that do, ultimately find themselves succumbing to stress and burnout, and leave. For those from BAME and working-class backgrounds, they find themselves not only the subject of controversy and animosity as a result of inclusivity initiatives, and the perceived 'box-ticking' that results, but also feel compelled to change who they are and conform to the middle-class mores and values that have pervaded the industry for the past few decades, and beyond. The following chapters will present some discussion on these findings, set against the context of hybridised forms of organisational governance, and the nature of neo-bureaucratic control.

8. Discussion

Introduction

The findings examined over the preceding chapters have allowed for a greater understanding of the mechanisms and processes at work at the peripheries of UK television, the antecedents for the current organisational landscape, as well as the responses of workers to the negotiation of these boundaries. The following chapter will offer some discussion on the empirical findings of the study, the relationship between skills and socialisation at the industry's boundaries, the impact of an increasingly short-term, project-based working environment on issues of diversity and inclusion, as well as a consideration of the reactions of workers operating within the contemporary television production environment in the UK.

With relation to skills, this chapter argues that the provision of, and expectation of, a specialised skillset has taken a back seat to the requirements of a certain type of attitude; a move that has allowed a perpetuation of a process of socialisation for new television workers, ensuring that they are malleable, compliant and able to be exploited. Beyond that, there is a consideration of the ramifications of a project-based working environment on issues of diversity and inclusion; suggesting that the increased reliance on informal recruitment and professional networks on which such project-based work is based is negatively impacting the ability of those from outside the traditionally dominant middle-classes to successfully traverse industrial boundaries, and subsequently thrive within it. Finally, the chapter considers the implications of the reactions of workers themselves to the contemporary UK television working environment, and addresses some of the concerning implications of high levels of stress, burnout and attrition providing a considerable challenge in the longer-term sustainability of the sector. To begin with, however, we address the issue of socialisation, and how such processes have taken the place of specialised skillsets, at the boundaries of UK television.

Skills, Socialisation and Knowledge Transfer

The following section considers the nature of skills and training. Specifically, it posits that the focus and reliance on soft recruitment procedures has coincided with the decline of a skills and training infrastructure, to place a disproportionate onus on personality, soft skills and attitude, with potentially serious deleterious effects for skills standards across the industry. There are serious implications for skills going forward within UK television, primarily because the traditional training and skills structure has gone, due largely to cost-cutting and fragmentation. The implications of a freelance labour force, and project-based work, is also important for organisations, who don't want to train individuals who can leave, and are rarely on permanent contracts. Respondents working for major broadcasters have explicitly highlighted malleability as now the most important characteristic, especially for the larger broadcasters. However, more all-rounders, by definition, inevitably results in fewer specialists. Cost-cutting remains key for employers (Christopherson 2008), craft working is an archipelago of workshops (Sennett 2007) and is part of the NBO fragmentation and diffusion of power. Concerningly, however, there is an ever-decreasing knowledge base and concurrent decline in skills (Banks 2010).

Additionally, a lack of specified entry *requirements* contributes to confusion and uncertainty at the point of entry. Instead, there is a stress on personality, and characteristics, which puts the value on having contacts, rather than a specific skillset. In the absence of clearly defined entry requirements; contacts, insider knowledge and social capital are elevated to the utmost importance, and this, in turn has implications both for organisations, and for workers, as will be considered in more depth throughout this chapter.

The working landscape of UK Television is fragmented. At the peripheries, the boundaries of UK television have been marshalled via control of the visibility of the ways in. Incumbents have, largely, had their hands forced in controlling the knowledge about opportunities and entryways in terms of the professional

networks they inhabit, in attempt to retain some degree of control at the industry's boundaries, threatened as a result of profound organisational change. Infiltrate the networks, you infiltrate the industry, but in order to do so, one must *know* about the importance of the network in the entry process, as much as about the entryway itself. Such obfuscation allows control over who knows what, but also keeps prospective entrants, and entry-level freelancers, in competition with one another. Knowledge becomes the key resource, a 'gatekeeper' can now be anyone with knowledge about how to get in, who to talk to, what to do.

Neo-bureaucratic governance relies on the sharing of embedded knowledge (Reed 2011), tacit understandings in the place of explicit training. It would appear that this is the case both for entryways and skills development, and that such a reliance is proving insufficient, especially in terms of the latter. On-the-job learning cannot provide an adequate substitute the lack of a formalised training structure that the fragmentation of the industry has removed. The concern here is that nothing has emerged to replace such a training structure. Apprenticeships, in theory, should offer a greater opportunity to engage with on-the-job learning, but responses from participants show considerable variation in the level of training they felt they received, and the impression gained regarding apprenticeships in general is that they differ little in format from other established entryways: runners and work experience.

Additionally, respondents suggested that, based on their experiences, apprenticeships don't really teach as much as they purport to, and their value remains primarily a method of infiltrating professional networks and contacts. In addition, experiences within apprenticeships differed wildly, dependent on the company, and the individual training you. There is also evidence of ambivalence surrounding apprenticeships on the part of employers. For example, one respondent reporting that a major broadcaster decided not to use an apprenticeship scheme for their recruitment going forward, despite using it the year before.

Higher Education

A discussion of the entryways to UK television cannot ignore the presence of Higher Education (HE), however. Though experiences from respondents who did attend HE differed greatly from institution to institution – and course to course – the principal benefit for those who went on to negotiate successful entry to the sector is contact with tutors, who are either industry professionals themselves, or in possession of contacts to help breach professional networks and secure the knowledge (and relevant contact) to make entry. However, those who graduate are still expected to take one of the entry-level positions (runner or work experience), and most apprenticeships are offered to those without degrees, as an alternative route. The industry itself gives the content of HE media and broadcasting courses little regard, save for a couple of exceptions (The Cardiff School of Media, Journalism and Culture – JOMEC – broadcast journalism course being an obvious example).

What becomes clear, however, is the real value is in contact with individuals via HE who *are* practitioners (Carey and Matlay 2007), and this is all that really matters. In gaining entry – particularly for individuals who before attending HE, did not possess the required social capital to gain knowledge about, or breach professional networks – such contacts can be of huge benefit. As a result, it can be concluded that HE can be a way of acquiring social capital and knowledge about opportunities, but currently does not exist as a viable source of necessary skills, and it not a replacement for a dedicated training structure within the industry.

Higher Education (HE) offers a potential to acquire vital professional contact and breach networks, but in terms of course content, industrial confidence in what is provided at HE is low. At least 60% of the industry are educated to degree level (Garnham 2005; DCMS 2016), degrees that it appears they don't need. This contributes to a perpetuation of middle-class dominance; privileged students cluster together in internships that open doors while at university (Thompson 2012), while the working-classes have to work and miss out on networking opportunities. Apprenticeships offer an alternative to degrees, but

it appears they suffer from similar issues, with professional contacts a more universally positive element, whereas experiences of both placements via apprenticeships, and the course content itself, varied.

Ultimately, contact with practitioners within the HE is of the greatest value, and such contact serves to perpetuate the transmission of a certain set of values and expectations from one cohort to the next. A self-disciplining enterprise culture (Reed 2011), where new workers are socialised into particular norms and attitudes, inevitably shapes individuals into certain types of workers. New entrants to UK television are compliant, extremely hard-working, and open to exploitation, largely by design, because they are highly invested in their self-fulfilment of their work. Individuals are forced to participate in behaviour routines that characterise organisational membership (Reed 2011). Runners fall into this category, particularly in relation to the concept of 'paying your dues', but there is evidence of workers also going above and beyond, in both work experience positions, and as apprentices. To stand out, in the midst of such intense competition at entryways, you have to show an extremely high level of commitment.

There are deleterious consequences of this demanding and exploitative environment, namely poor mental health, burnout, high rates of attrition (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009, Mackenzie and McKinlay 2020). Burnout and attrition have long been associated with TV production, but conditions seem to be approaching breaking point. Those with less stellar reputations fall away, which is not new (Faulkner and Anderson 1987) but even those who 'survive' find themselves feeling stress due to heavy workloads, long hours and brutal deadlines. Such work routines have been normalised and the discourse around them – and levels of self-investment in creative work – is contributing to this. This organisational culture has emanated from London, the industry's historic centre, but does seem to be mediated by location; other hubs are starting to evolve beyond them, and adopt more progressive approaches. This is particularly true in Scotland, with evidence from recent entrants working in Glasgow suggesting a greater adoption of more reasonable working hours, and a more sustainable work/life balance. Within the wider context of entry to UK television, HEIs are

part of a series of structures and processes that are operating to socialise a new generation of workers into a particular set of norms, organisational values and expectations. In short, television workers are being taught what to *be*, rather than what to *do*, and such a focus has potentially

Skills Shortages

In terms of empirical contribution, this study offers a concerning picture of the state of skills and training in UK television. The state of skills transfer and professional training within UK television is one of great insecurity and concern. Conclusions from this study suggest the issue of skills and training could be more substantial and far-reaching than it first appears. The industry is already aware of the potential for skills shortages in certain roles (Bad Wolf CEO Jane Tranter addressed the issue of skills shortages at a speech at Cardiff School of Media, Journalism and Culture (JOMEC) for the Royal Television Society in 2019), but respondents from this study have advanced our understanding in a couple of ways.

Firstly, recent entrants are consistently reporting a feeling of being under-prepared and over-worked, what we are seeing here is the result of several decades of erosion to the industry's skills infrastructure, as a result of fragmentation and under-funding, splitting potential mentors from mentees (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011). Secondly, the freelancers brought into existence in 1990 by the Broadcasting Act's stipulation of 25% of work outsourced to independents were still trained by the major broadcasters, when that training infrastructure still existed. Thirty years later, there seems to be no clear source for developing skills. University and apprenticeships may provide invaluable access to professional contacts for breaching networks and securing work, but the level of training they provide is extremely varied, often determined by the individuals involved, and not viewed particularly highly by the industry in either case.

Policy and political rhetoric continue to push the agenda for the economic potential of growth in the CCIs, both at national and regional level.

However, evidence from respondents suggests most high-profile, big-budget productions brought into regional production hubs do little to utilise and develop talent indigenous to that region, instead reliant on established crews temporarily housed in the area to take advantage of tax incentives and other financial initiatives. It is largely the result of policy and legislation, in conjunction with global neo-liberal trends (du Gay 2004), that has placed the television industry on the path it has been on since the 1990s. In turn, hybrid forms of governance have emerged as a reaction to those changes, in an effort on the part of the broadcasters to maintain control. What we are seeing today are the repercussions of these patterns for new entrants, and for a lot of respondents, the repercussions are troubling, having an observably deleterious effect on knowledge transfer, specialised skillset training, as well as diversity and inclusivity. The following section seeks to expand on this, further, beginning with the issue of Social Capital.

Diversity and Inclusion: The Importance of Social Capital

Any consideration of the entryways to UK television in 2020 has to acknowledge the overwhelming importance of Social Capital (Bourdieu 1984; Lee 2011). In transitioning to a project-based work environment, networks become the mechanisms through which such an environment is sustained. And in turn, members of professional networks are dependent on what they know. Knowledge becomes the key to finding out about opportunities, where such opportunities are obscured or difficult to find. Knowledge becomes vital to industry entry for the same reasons, and can mean the difference between emailing the right person, and getting no answer. In an industry with no established training framework, knowledge transfer also plays a central role in developing skills. In television, knowledge is everything. Bureaucratic domination is domination through knowledge (Benello 1969; Weber 1978; Clegg et al. 2006), and this is most certainly applicable here to TV.

Such an onus on possessing social capital, and the knowledge such contacts can provide, and transfer, is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it highlights the value of familial contacts in gaining access to the *right* social

capital and knowledge to find out about opportunities at the periphery of the industry. Those with social capital – either professional, familial or relational contacts – have a huge impact on whether an individual can put themselves in a position to be considered for a role in the industry. There is the consideration of the impact on diversity and inclusivity in the industry. It is well established that the industry has historically been dominated by the white middle classes (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012; Miles 2016), but such a reliance on social capital at the boundaries of the industry may actually be making the problem worse, as will be discussed. Secondly, and linked to the point above, is the impact such shifts have had to the criteria on which recruitment decisions are based, and the implications of decisions on those terms. Thirdly, there has to be a consideration of how a reliance on informal recruitment based on attitude, personality and social capital reflects power dynamics of hybrid forms of organisational governance, and what impact this process is having on workers entering the sector, particularly from working class and/or BAME backgrounds. The following section will address each of these points in turn, first considering the issue of diversity and inclusivity.

With social capital in network economies being a key resource, the question of who has, and who does not have, access not only to social capital, but the *right* social capital has a huge impact on the chances of a given individual successfully gaining access to the UK TV production sector. This is true at every step of the way. Those lacking professional contacts are at a huge disadvantage before they start; with no access to information about runner positions, work experience or apprenticeship schemes, or professional contacts to provide them with this information. For those that do have the right contacts, the opposite is true. Crucially, evidence from this study suggests that new entrants can assume the role of gatekeeper themselves, very quickly after successfully breaching the boundaries of the industry. Offering a fellow hopeful a specific contact, rather than a generic recruitment email address, for example, allows for those previously unable to navigate the entryways to be successful. Additionally, Heads of Department can also offer a degree of agency in recruitment decisions to those underneath them. Such evidence points to a more nuanced and complex picture of the nature of networks in UK television than previously envisaged, and further

complicates the combination of cooperation and competition present within present in professional networks, with which workers are forced to wrestle (Antcliff et al. 2007).

Within this context, the absence of a training structure combines with a reliance on social capital and professional and familial contacts, to further advantage those who possess the means to infiltrate professional networks and exist within freelance labour markets, with the time to socialise outside of working hours to cultivate contacts and secure opportunities, as well as the disposable income and spare time to obtain and master complex, expensive equipment. Though apprenticeships are becoming more common, respondents from this study express vastly differing views on the learning achieved from such programmes, and it appears the most obviously valuable element of the apprenticeship process is, like that of the runner or work experience route, the accumulation of social capital and professional contacts. Potential entrants from working-class/BAME backgrounds have limited options in terms of ways to accrue appropriate social capital and learn vital information about opportunities. Both HE and apprenticeships were reported with mixed levels of enthusiasm from the respondents to this study, the most identifiable benefit from either channel was exposure to industry professionals, and thus access to the appropriate professional networks. Social interactions within professional networks are information exchanges, primarily (Sennett 1988; Wittel 2001), once in, the nature of entryways and early career pathways becomes far more clear.

The 'knowledge economy' (Allen and Hollingworth 2013; Lee 2017) and the crucial part that knowledge plays for prospective entrants in finding out about work is centrally important to considerations about making entry to UK television. Entry-level positions are largely discovered via knowledge transfer from current industry professionals, more so than friends or family. An interesting development from the respondents in this study, is how quickly entrants can turn into a form of gatekeeper. The nature of recruitment to such a fragmented industry means specific knowledge about opportunities or contact information becomes vitally important, leading to a reconsideration of the notion, and profile, of a 'gatekeeper.' Gatekeepers are no longer solely the

preserve of commissioners and heads of departments. The high levels of informality of work in the TV sector allows even junior freelancers to assume important roles in linking other hopefuls to professional networks. Unlike before, where recruitment required contact with those in the major broadcasters, and more often than not relied on familial contacts, now friends can help others in simply by making entrance themselves, as in the example of Matthew and James.

Both aspiring to work in the sector, Matthew was first to gain entry, through a chance meeting in a taxi during some volunteering. Once equipped with the knowledge and professional social capital, Matthew was able to direct James to contact an individual responsible for recruitment directly, rather than via the company's generic enquiries portal. Doing so kickstarted James' own career, allowing him to also make entry, and equipping him with the same professional knowledge he could pass on, should he wish. Runners tell other runners about opportunities, or give out the specific contact of the individual responsible for recruitment. Even in smaller firms, this makes a huge difference in making a personal and individual connection rather than emailing a generic recruitment or information email and getting no response. When knowledge is such a valuable resource, any knowledge about positions and opportunities can influence an individual's likelihood of successfully infiltrating a professional network, and securing an entry-level position. Such a reliance on social capital, informal recruitment, and the ambiguities both bring to the nature of the boundaries to the UK television industry is only intensified by the ever-increasing proportion of freelance workers operating within it. It is to the specific nature of freelance work, and its interactions with professional networks in ways that further serve to offer barriers to entry for those outside the traditionally dominant middle-classes, that attention now turns.

Diversity and Inclusion: Freelance Work & Professional Networks

A shift to project-based work has heightened the importance of professional networks, but this has also occurred as a result of a proliferation of freelance employment (Dex et al. 2000). Such a shift also benefits the privileged in a number of ways. With the expansion of freelance labour transferring many of

the responsibilities from employers onto the workers themselves (Gil 2002), including skills development as the industry becomes more fragmented, prospective entrants from the middle-classes find themselves with a number of advantages at the point of entry, in addition to the possession of social capital.

The onus on freelance workers to self-develop their skills advantages those with the disposable income and access to expensive equipment, as well as individuals able to spend time outside of working hours to practice and develop their skills with technical equipment, without concerns of working second jobs to supplement the low pay or unpaid entry-level positions such as runners or work experience. Additionally, although professional contacts now seem to take precedence in securing entry-level positions, family and friendly contacts already in the industry can still offer access to professional equipment, and crucially, those from more affluent backgrounds often have more opportunity to socialise after hours and further cultivate their social capital (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009).

A reliance on social capital, professional networks and freelance labour not only negatively impacts diversity (Lee, 2011; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; Allen and Hollingworth, 2013), but also poses potentially deleterious implications for the level of skills in the industry. Communities of practice are being severed by the fragmentation of the industry, splitting potential mentors from mentees, with no clear way of replacing this form of skills transfer (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011). Freelance labour places further strain on this. Individuals can negotiate rates individually, experienced workers have a better bargaining position, so young workers undercut them (Saundry et al. 2007). This, in turn, fosters resentment, breaks the apprenticeship bond, and there's nowhere else to learn skills to an appropriate level (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009). Such mentor/mentee relationships are still present, and remain very valuable to those who are fortunate enough to possess them, but it does not appear they occur on a wide enough scale to sufficiently replace a more formalised training structure.

The landscape of UK television is severely challenged, both in terms of providing skills and training, but also in offering inclusive opportunities for those

from BAME and working-class backgrounds. As the industry has been pushed in the direction of freelance work and project networks, soft power mechanisms have stressed the importance of a neo-bureaucratic 'Discursive Identity' in recruitment decisions, and tacit knowledge has become the *de facto* skills transfer mechanism, in the face of the decline and fragmentation of traditional training infrastructure. While this poses challenges and concerns about the ongoing standards of training, an onus on 'Discursive Identity' also presents implications for the shaping of a very specific form of worker. It is to this that attention now turns.

The Workers

Finally, the chapter turns to the workers themselves, and discusses the impact and influence of the project-based work environment, and their reaction to various elements of hybridised, neo-bureaucratic control, with particular attention paid to influence of a reliance on 'discursive identity' (Reed 2011), as well as forms of normative (Kunda 1992; Alvesson and Willmott 2002) and neo-normative (Sturdy et al. 2010; Jenkins and Delbridge 2017) control, soft power mechanics based on the creation and perpetuation of committed subjects. This is an element of neo-bureaucratic control that is present in the vast majority of the accounts of participants in this study, as well as in wider discourse.

Freelance workers have taken on the responsibility of developing their skills, as well as everything else. Freelance work puts the onus on the worker for everything (McRobbie 2002; Ursell 2000), but all major decisions are still out of their hands, in terms of recruitment, education and career trajectory (Eikhof 2017). As discussed in the previous section, such changes have only served to tighten the grip the privileged middle-classes have on the industrial gateways. With the rise of a freelance workforce, all responsibility is now on the individual. Freelance work groups are now informal apprenticeships (Blair 2001) and it appears this is now all there is in terms of training infrastructure, within the industry, and it doesn't appear to be enough. New entrants often report feeling dropped in at the deep-end, and are not sufficiently prepared. The future for television production in the UK, if current trends continue, is in danger of

developing an increasing chasm between high-end and low-end programming, with fewer and fewer workers able to make the transition from the 'bottom' to the 'top.' Indeed, this has already begun, with Screenskills (2021) research identifying an ever-increasing gulf between High-end television (HETV), and 72% of HETV professionals citing skills shortages as a serious, or very serious problem (Screenskills 2021).

Who can find out about opportunities, and what opportunities are made visible to those on the periphery of the industry, is vitally important. In directing the majority of potential entrants to one of three 'gateways'; runners, work experience and apprenticeships, incumbent industry professionals are creating a 'bottlenecking' effect (Evens 2010). Workers are directed to those bottlenecks, and this creates increased competition (Sennett 1998; Blair 2001), and appears to be an attempt on the part of the industry to retain a degree of control at the point of recruitment, in the face of substantial and fundamental organisational change. Directing new entrants into such recruitment bottlenecks has a number of effects. Firstly, increased competition for places between individuals helps contribute to creating a sense of alienation amongst workers, and keeping recruitment at an individual and informal level also undermines collectivism, very much in the same way as in traditional RBO organisational forms (Edwards 1979). A short-term economy also promotes the consideration of individuals, and 'offensive identities' (Touraine 1988; Antcliff et al. 2007), and this element of project-based work has been utilised by the industry to enforce and perpetuate elements of traditional RBO control. Keeping workers in direct and indirect competition with one another benefits the industry in that it limits collective bargaining, undermines unions and contributes to cost-cutting; which has been a central concern since the 1990s (du Gay 2000; Clegg et al. 2006; Josserand et al. 2006; Morris et al. 2016).

In addition, where union deregulation threatened to create poorer conditions for all (Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014), this is most definitely the case. Respondents provided evidence HoDs accepted changes to regulations on overtime, with time over contract renegotiated as a percentage of an individual's pay rate, rather than a flat rate. This had huge impact on those at the bottom of

departmental hierarchies, expected to work long hours on barely liveable terms (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009), now without the security of a flat rate of overtime bonus.

A stress on a self-exploiting persona is, at least in part, a reaction to threats of new entrants undercutting experienced professionals (Saundry et al. 2007), which is in itself a reaction to the intense competition new entrants feel at the point of entry, and throughout their early careers. Many respondents undergo periods of low or unpaid work with the promise the future pay-off will be more rewarding, what Mackenzie and McKinlay (2020) term 'hope labour.' In turn, the decision to undercut puts pressure on the existence of mentor/mentee relationships, and with no universal training structure, there are question marks over the level of skills on an industry level going forward. Finally, there is the issue of what effect a reliance on these power mechanics, and recruitment based on an attitude that stresses an extremely high level of commitment, is having on those entering the industry.

Additionally, the findings of this study provide concerning implications for the experiences of workers in television in the early 2020s. Entrants experience stress, heavy workloads, burnout and poor mental health, pursuing a career in a glamorous industry where success offers huge rewards, both in terms of remuneration and self-actualisation. Entrants express feelings of good fortune and gratitude, and this is significant, in that it plays to the soft power mechanics characteristic of hybrid methods of governance, and contributes to a compliant, self-exploiting workforce, and contributes to continuing levels of inequality in recruitment (Lee, 2011; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; Allen and Hollingworth, 2013), privileging those with the appropriate social capital even further.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered some discussion on the empirical findings of the study, suggesting skills have taken a back seat to the processes of socialisation at the entryways to UK television, due to in no small part to the cost-cutting and fragmentation prevalent through the last few decades eradicating the traditional

training structure within the industry. Relatedly, though HE may exist as a potential place with the time and resources to train skills, it is currently under-utilised. Suffering from a poor relationship with the industry, out-of-date syllabuses and a proliferation of low-quality media degrees, rather than a place where prospective entrants are able to develop applicable specialised skills and embark on invaluable unpaid work experience within the structure of their course.

In addition, the main value of HE is in contact with practitioners, and this chapter has also argued that the informal recruitment prevalent in project-based work, and the professional networks support them, is having an increasingly deleterious effect on the diversity and inclusion within the industry, both at the entry-level and beyond. Finally, this empirical discussion chapter highlighted the reactions of the workers themselves, offering a picture of the challenges faced by young freelancers in the face of a normalised culture of long hours, and self-exploitation, manifesting itself in high levels of stress, burnout and attrition, and posing an ongoing challenge for the continued growth of the sector, faced with a combination of high attrition rates, short-term career trajectory and a lack of uniform skills and training infrastructure. The following, and final chapter, will aim to elaborate on the conceptual contributions of the study, paying attention to the nature of the processes and mechanisms of control within hybridised, neo-bureaucratic organisations, and the nature of the workforce that is being cultivated as a result.

9. Conclusions

Introduction

Building on the points of discussion from the previous chapter, this final section offers clarification of the conceptual contributions of the study, as well as offering some overall conclusions. It begins by considering, in greater detail, the nature of the processes of socialisation, positing that an over-reliance on soft power control mechanisms, discursive elements that encourage organisational membership and elements of normative control (Kunda 1992; Fleming and Sturdy 2011) are shaping a workforce of a very specific kind. In elaborating on this, the notion of serendipity, and resultant gratitude is explored, with particular attention given to the importance of such feelings in the socialisation process, as experienced at the boundaries of UK television.

Finally, the chapter will return to the nature of power and control in hybrid organisations. The foundation, contextual elements introduced at the beginning of this thesis, and the stage on which all the negotiation of entry to UK television production work play out. The chapter will consider the processes that disguise, obscure and even obfuscate power to those entering the sector, the contradictory elements at work and the characteristics of traditional bureaucratic control that endure, making collectivisation and resistance ever more difficult for new entrants, and subsequent cohorts, and how these findings advance our understanding of the nature of control in hybridised organisational landscapes, and UK television production in particular. The chapter begins with a consideration of the processes that are socialising new workers in more detail.

Socialisation: The Shaping of a Workforce.

There are a variety of mechanisms, at the boundaries of UK television production, that are contributing to the shaping of workers in a very particular way. Unclear entryways contribute to shaping new workers; and are the product of a reliance on soft power mechanics associated with Neo-bureaucratic methods

of control. Within hybridised forms of organisational governance, there is an increasing integration of soft power mechanics, and in television specifically, a potential over-reliance on discourse and organisational rhetoric to create and maintain commitment. This 'Discursive Identity' (Reed 2011) offers a way of exerting power over workers by investing them with high emotional links to their work, to the culture of work, and their peers. Hybrid forms require higher stakeholder interest (Reed 2012), resulting in workers becoming more linked to their values, and to flexibility, both in terms of job roles and control mechanisms, such normative control elements coercing workers into greater levels of commitment and motivation to work (Barker 1993; Adler and Boris 1996; Fleming and Sturdy 2011).

Recruitment decisions to UK television appear to be based on criteria as difficult to define as the entryways themselves. Bain (2005) put forward the concept of a 'Creative persona'; a set of criteria decision makers use for recruitment, including talent, creativity, credibility, peer recognition and artistic reputation. This set of characteristics has been argued to already bias recruitment decisions in favour of the middle-classes (Burke and McManus, 2009; Allen and Hollingworth, 2013; Banks, 2017). However, for respondents in this study, and particularly in relation to those from less privileged backgrounds, it seems even these criteria have been replaced by a desire for the 'right attitude'; which translates to recruiting and creating workers who are compliant, hard-working, exploitative, isolated, flexible and malleable. All of the above is working together to put up numerous barriers to entry, particularly for working-class/BAME hopefuls, and exerting considerable stresses on those who enter the industry at this time. Brook (2016) suggested the modern CCI worker embodies a number of tacit work practices that suits the general labour market's needs. An emphasis on possessing the right attitude promotes a certain type of worker; compliant and self-exploiting, undermining collective bargaining by promoting competition between individuals (Antcliff et al. 2007).

The neo-bureaucratic, soft power mechanic of a 'Discursive Identity' (Reed 2011) is aimed at creating committed subjects, using peer-group mechanisms to ensure commitment is maintained (Ezzamel and Willmott 1998;

Sewell 2001; Sewell and Barker 2006). A stress on inter-personal competition is a key element of motivation, but also intensely significant at the point of recruitment; new entrants are ushered via professional contacts and knowledge transfer discourse to one of three bottlenecks; runner, work experience or apprenticeships. There are differences in the nature of these entryways but the role they play is broadly the same; they are low-paid or unpaid, comprise largely of menial tasks and function primarily as a test for whether an individual has the right attitude to survive and progress. There is, therefore, a great deal of competition at every point of entry. The nature of creative work is key. Self-actualisation and personal investment in a glamorous industry perpetuates the potential for exploitation (Hesmondhalgh 2010a), whereas the organisational discourse and soft power mechanics, designed to operate as the legitimisation of power in hybridised organisations, is perpetuating and exacerbating this culture.

This study contributes to and advances our understanding of the implications on hybridised forms of control in neo-bureaucratic organisations, and argues that a reliance on 'Discursive Identity' (Reed 2011); a soft power mechanic based on the creation and perpetuation of committed subjects, has contributed to shaping the workforce of television production in numerous ways; making for compliant, hard-working, exploitative and self-exploiting subjects, socialised into a culture of normalised intense work, with a recent onus on flexibility and malleability. Though television production, and the CCIs more generally, have long relied on the glamorous and enticing nature of creative work to offset the generally unfavourable and gruelling working conditions that pervade in the sector, an over-reliance on such soft power mechanisms is creating a workforce that exhibits high levels of stress, poor mental health, feeling under-skilled and under-prepared, with many being burned out by their late twenties (Dex et al. 2000; MacKenzie and McKinlay 2020).

Though many of the current issues can be attributed to the adoption of hybridised soft power mechanics, aspects of more traditional, RBO control remain, such as technical control; in the form of workplace surveillance and record keeping (Edwards 1979). Record keeping has not disappeared, but is now digitised, a central role of the administrative duties of the production

departments at the larger broadcasters, particularly in terms of logistics and expenses for location shoots. Having been socialised into a culture of work that normalised long working hours, an organisational rhetoric of 'paying your dues' through penance, rather than 'earning your stripes' through skill and accomplishment, particularly at the point of entry, invites interpretation in terms of how it benefits capital, and undermines the potential of the workforce to collectivise and resist. There are a combination of normative and even neo-normative control mechanisms at work at the boundaries of UK television, conspiring to create committed subjects not only through the normalisation of organisational values that stress effort and compliance (Barker 1992; Adler and Boris 1996), but also in neo-normative forms of control, that encourage workers to instil their work with their own external values and identities, further encouraging investment and commitment (Sturdy et al. 2010; Jenkins and Delbridge 2017).

That entryways to UK television are somewhat difficult to find and define is perhaps not surprising, but when viewed in the context of substantial organisational change, and through the lens of power dynamics and mechanisms of organisational control, this becomes more significant. The decision to direct new entrants towards very specific entry-level positions can be considered a move by incumbents and organisational elites, to retain some form of control at the point of recruitment. Specifically, the use of runner positions, unpaid work experience and apprenticeships, which all of the respondents to this study experienced at some point in their career pathways.

It certainly seems intentional, on the part of incumbents and elites, to obfuscate the pathways and requirements for entry, in order to maintain a degree of control over who is entering the industry. Television is a relatively small world, particularly in terms of regional production hubs such as South Wales, Scotland and Manchester, and as such it is possible to manage recruitment on an individual basis. In maintaining control over who knows about entryways, and directing all hopefuls towards three main 'bottlenecks' (Evens 2010), incumbents are increasing competition amongst prospective entrants, undermining their ability to organise a collective resistance to incumbents' authority. Additionally,

the use of soft power mechanics to perpetuate a discourse around attitude, work ethic and 'paying your dues' (Shade and Jacobson 2015) presents its own set of implications.

Respondents frequently reported feeling over-worked, stressed, burned out and suffering from poor mental health. They express feelings of being under-prepared and under-trained and are concerned about long-term career security and prospects. That this hasn't changed since Dex et al.'s (2000) influential study is concerning enough, but evidence from respondents suggest things have been continuing to deteriorate. An obfuscation of entryways at the boundaries of the industry has had a deleterious effect; creating a workforce that cannot clearly identify the reason for their successful recruitment, and therefore experience feelings of gratitude for being where they are; feeling fortunate to have 'got in' at all, combining with an organisational discourse that stresses compliance and commitment, as well as normalising long hours and exploitative working conditions. The result is a workforce that is flexible, malleable, and compliant, but under-trained, over-worked and liable to burnout and attrition. In addition, an industry that was already stretched thin, is in danger of tearing apart completely in the wake of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

The result is shaping a workforce of a specific kind. A key development in this study is the consideration of the presence of feelings of serendipity, of being lucky, in gaining access to work in television of any kind, and the responses of gratitude, as well as the implications for ongoing discussions about working conditions in the sector. This gratitude is coupled with being socialised into a culture of work that has long been characterised by long hours and tight deadlines (Hesmondhalgh 2010b). It appears that the shifts in industry workflows discussed throughout this paper, have resulted in a reliance on soft power mechanics around the entryways to the industry and specifically, a reliance on 'discursive identity' (Reed 2011); having and demonstrating the 'right attitude', encourages a worker who is compliant, hard-working, and doesn't complain when asked to do something. Coupled with a sense of good fortune, and crucially, no justification in terms of skills requirements or qualifications for being where they are, individuals entering the industry are being shaped into a

workforce that demonstrate low levels of collective bargaining. They are malleable, conforming and unlikely to offer much resistance for fear of losing a position they feel so fortunate to have obtained, and so offer little willingness to resist authority.

Serendipity and Gratitude

This study makes a contribution in providing consideration of the concept of serendipity, or luck, as a method of *rationalising* career entry through undefined, or seemingly insuperable entryways. Stoyanova and Grugulis (2011) addressed the influence of serendipity, suggesting success is as much a product of good luck as good judgement for many freelancers in the early stages of their careers in television, and the result of the interplay of random and serendipitous events with more conscious efforts that shaped careers. Serendipity also manifests itself in the availability and support of more senior colleagues. This study has expanded the notion of serendipity and luck, focusing on responses to such feelings and implications of this. Building on Stoyanova and Grugulis, serendipity in television can play a part not only in negotiating career entry, but also has a profound impact on the responses of those who *are* successful.

When entrants can't rationalise their route into work any other way, it gets attributed to fortune, or luck - serendipity. This is a novel development, and it is significant. It contributes to and advances the debate around career entry in UK television in a number of ways. Firstly, it appears such feeling of serendipity, and feeling lucky manifest themselves as a result of the nature of the entryways to UK television as being obscured and ill-defined as they are. This is particularly true for those who don't possess the right social and cultural capital (Lee 2011) to have the knowledge about these entryways. It appears such feelings of fortune are more prevalent among those from the working classes, as well as BAME backgrounds, contributing to an undermining of inclusivity and diversity within the industry. Those who do not initially have access to the social capital, lack the ability to easily gain into information about entryways to the industry, find out about them through channels such as university, or even chance encounters, and are, as a result, far more likely to view successful traversal of industry entryways

as the product of extreme good fortune, and therefore expose themselves to the deleterious consequences of such emotions.

Secondly, and linked the point above, this sense of feeling lucky translates into a sense of gratitude for being in that position at all. Again, this is more pronounced amongst those without the privilege of professional or familial contacts, and without the privilege of industry knowledge. If one cannot make sense of how they got to where they are on the basis of merit, but have somehow negotiated their way through a variety of unclear entryways, (characterised by high levels of competition for places, a result of chance meetings, or one-to-one recommendation through a contact gained via university) they are likely to rationalise their experience as one of extreme good fortune, and one that they should feel immense gratitude for having. Additionally, rationalising one's career entry in terms of feelings of fortune and serendipity intertwine with other contemporary debates on creative labour, including MacKenzie and McKinlay's (2020) concept of 'hope labour'; workers undertaking low or unpaid work on the basis of a promise of more substantial employment in the future.

Finally, such feelings of good fortune, luck and gratitude increase new entrants' propensity to be exploited, and even to exploit themselves - in order to get ahead - in a competitive environment. It decreases their likelihood to complain about working conditions, hours, pay etc. This impacts their willingness to accept larger workloads, and their disposition to self-exploit and acquiesce to exploitative working practices. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic adds further stress on those at the peripheries of the industry, who are already stretched pretty thin, in terms of the hours they work, the limited remuneration they receive, and the increasingly tight deadlines productions work towards (Ursell 2000). Ultimately, uncertainty at the entryways of organisations benefits the position of elites, and undermines the potential of entrants to collectivise, so recruitment is negotiated via extremely uneven power dynamics. What is potentially more concerning, however, is that such power dynamics remain throughout the early part of careers in television. This has severe implications for the work environment in which television workers exist. Attention must turn back

to the manner in which such power dynamics at the peripheries of the industry are legitimised and maintained, and ways in which they enable workers to continue to be controlled.

Power and Control in Hybrid Organisations

The nature of UK television entryways, and the early careers, invites analysis in terms of power relations. With recruitment operating on an individual basis, via inter-personal connections and recommendations, it is inevitable that those making the recruitment decisions are in a position of great authority. This section makes explicit a series of assumptions about the nature of power in organisations, how those power relations are exercised and expressed via hybrid forms of governance, and what implications that might have for the experiences of those recruited within the current organisational landscape.

The obfuscation of entryways contributes to the disguising of power relations. Power within organisations legitimises itself via soft control, and ensures elite dominance. When this is considered, it becomes clear that the entryways are being governed and controlled. Decisions are being made in the interest of attempting to preserve elite dominance. It is difficult to gain a full understanding of power in hybridised organisations – it is disguised. This obfuscation of power is an element of the obfuscation of entryways; it benefits incumbents to protect their elite status in making the nature of power relations harder to define, and harder to discern, what Zald and Lounsbury (2010) termed an ‘asteroid belt’ of bureaucratic positions and personnel. How power is operating at the periphery of the industry is via the recruitment decisions of HoD, but central power still remains, often in the hands of financiers and commissioners, sometimes in the hands of directors, producers and even executive producers. The harder power is to track, the more difficult it is to resist.

Organisations are structures of legitimacy as much as they are domination. If domination is a process through which power tries to legitimise itself to those being controlled (Courpasson 2000), then organisational elites have to find ways of making the balance of power acceptable, as much as wielding it.

For television, this is made more difficult as a result of the huge range of changes to the organisational landscape imposed upon the sector in the last thirty years. Recruitment decisions are now made via professional networks, on a person-by-person and role-by-role basis. Though decisions on whether productions go ahead still emanate from centralised authority in the form of commissioners and financiers, most individual crew recruitment is the responsibility of the head of a given department (HoD).

The nature of hybrid forms of organisational governance means a variety of control mechanisms are operating simultaneously, traditional bureaucratic control elements persist alongside elements of normative and even neo-normative control, particularly at the boundaries, where workers are socialised into a certain type of working, and first exposed to an organisational discourse stressing a certain set of values (Barker 1993; Jenkins and Delbridge 2017). In addition, there exists control through temporary contracts in CCIs; workers are reliant on foster and maintaining a professional reputation, and in doing so there is an onus on the individual to ensure that the contracted work is completed (Smith and McKinlay 2009). There remains Direct Control (Edwards 1979), in the form of a hierarchical superior. Though a period of vertical disintegration has resulted in a flattening of hierarchies on a macro level (Milne 1997; Farrell and Morris 2003), on a micro-level – within departments – strict hierarchies still exist, and must be navigated step-by-step in order to advance an individual's careers. Additionally, progress is not transferrable. For example, if an individual wants to retrain from production to directing, they would often have to abandon their progress on the 'production ladder', in order to start again.

Hybridised governance regimes therefore emerge as a series of 'command situations' (Reed 2012) rather than one central point of authority; there is an integration of traditional elite domination and sub-elite participation, rather than simply power emanating from the top of an organisational hierarchy. Power has to be considered as a two-way consideration (Crozier 1963, 1964; Courpasson 2000); but what is apparent here is significant. Much of the fragmentation, the extension of freelance work, increased competition for

limited places at the points of entry is chipping away at the potential for collective action and resistance within the labour force (Edwards 1979).

The characteristics of ideal-type NBOs are worth revisiting here, in the context of the impact that they are having on the workforce. A degree of managed improvisation is adept at dealing with things as they change, and vitally important in an industry such as TV. In ideal-type NBOs, careers are often lateral and insecure. This remains the case, as respondents express concern about the long-term futures of their careers. Indeed, this may be exacerbated by the additional pressures placed on the industry (and all industries) by the COVID-19 pandemic. This form of control was designed to incentivise workers to work faster and harder (Edwards 1979), and the nature of creative work, the high levels of self-investment and the forming of committed subjects (Reed 2011) through soft power mechanisms at the entry-points, are creating a workforce of hard-working, flexible and malleable individuals. Entrants who do not possess sufficient social capital from familial or relational contacts feel extremely fortunate and are full of gratitude for entering an industry they cannot clearly determine how and why they have been successful in entering. As a result, they are eager to do anything to seize their chance, including self-exploit.

There are two key points to consider here. Firstly, the authority and agency afforded to HoDs is evidence of the endurance of defined hierarchies and clearly defined job roles within television production departments. Though traditional RBO organisations such as the BBC and ITV exist in more fragmented forms, aspects and elements of traditional bureaucratic control endure. Old processes and elements endure and are not so easily eradicated e.g. hierarchies, formal roles, central power etc. (Clegg et al. 2006). Secondly, the prominence of HoDs in making recruitment decisions for their departments is an example of 'delegated autonomy' (Courpasson 2000; Reed 2011); a hybrid power mechanic, in which elites at the central point of power and authority (e.g. commissioners) will relinquish certain elements of power and control to the peripheries.

This study makes a contribution to the consideration of power relations within hybridised, neo-bureaucratic organisations, and specifically in the creative

industries, in terms of the manner in which relics of more traditional bureaucratic control logics endure, but in disguised forms. RBOs are based on specialisation, standardisation and formalisation of work tasks (Reed 2011), and although new organisational forms require new forms of control that demand a personal involvement in peer-regulation and motivation (Ezzamel and Willmott 1998; Sewell 2001; Reed 2011), it is inaccurate to characterise eras as bygone, elements of RBO control remain (Hesmondhalgh 2010a). Though literature has sought to suggest a flattening of hierarchical structures in television production (Antcliff et al. 2007), there remain strict hierarchies within departments themselves. There are still formal roles, there are still central positions of authority (particularly commissioners), but a combination of policy, tech and organisational change have created a freelance labour market, based on informal recruitment and operating on a project-by-project basis, and they're a lot harder to control via traditional RBO means.

The degree of authority afforded to Heads of Departments (HoDs) is an example of 'delegated autonomy' (Reed 2011; Sturdy et al. 2015), and another element of soft power mechanics utilised in hybridised, neo-bureaucratic organisations. As such, it further illustrates the impact that such forms of organisational governance are having on the workers at the boundaries of the industry. Control elements utilising softer forms of power – normative (Fleming and Sturdy 2001) and neo-normative (Sturdy et al. 2010) forms of control, in addition to control by contract (Smith and McKinlay 2009) – are significant when considering the experiences of workers. Specifically, the harder power is to track, the more difficult it is to resist. Changes in the work environment make power relations a lot more difficult to track than in RBO hierarchies; a degree of autonomy is afforded, or delegated (Banks 2010; Reed 2012), to heads of departments. For those entering the industry, it has become extremely difficult to track power dynamics through a version of what Zald and Lounsbury (2010) termed an 'asteroid belt' of bureaucratic positions and personnel.

The nature of professional networks in a project-based work economy is also centrally important. Entryways are kept obscured to maintain a degree of control in recruitment, but also to intensify competition. The entry-points to

television production are, essentially, entry-points to professional networks. A fragmented, freelance labour workforce prioritises the infiltration of professional work groups, and then the *sustaining* of those professional relationships, in order to gain access to not only opportunities, but also knowledge *about* opportunities. For those without the right knowledge, the right social capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Lee 2011), networks are hard to find, and this is significant, as they offer huge amounts of valuable, practical knowledge, what Wittel termed 'Informational Networks' (Wittel 2001). Though professional networks in television production *can* be both open and closed, and used for both co-operation and competition (Antcliff et al. 2007), it is the competitive element here that is key. Specifically, keeping workers at the boundaries and peripheries of the industry in competition with one another prevents the consolidation of collective resistance to working conditions, and contributes to the cultivation of increasingly demanding working environments, characterised by respondents in this study, and elsewhere (Wittel 2001; Hesmondhalgh 2010b), in terms of long hours, tight deadlines and poor long-term job security.

Reed (2012) spoke in terms of 'Interstitial Power'; Power which is exercised through networks. Both forms of power are present here at the boundaries of UK television. What is concerning here is that at a conceptual level, power is designed to be a two-way street, fluid and negotiable (Crozier 1963; 1964; Weber 1978; Courpasson 2000). However, there is little negotiation here between those in the industry and those outside it. Those hoping of making entry have to accept minimum amounts of autonomy, remuneration and security at the point of entry, regardless of their level of education, in return for a massive level of commitment, both in terms of time investment and emotional investment.

Conclusion

This study has sought to explore the entryways to UK television in the 2020s through the eyes of those who have experienced the industry for themselves. A prolonged period of industrial, organisational and political change has forced the industry to mutate into something very different to its origins, and

particularly the principles on which the BBC was based at its inception (Carter and McKinlay (2013)). Such pressures have changed the nature of work in the industry profoundly, slashing budgets for training and creating a short-term economy based heavily on the enchantment and passion of young, recent entrants. High levels of attrition and burnout have been compensated by a revolving door policy of new workers to take their place in a glamorous, exciting industry.

However, in the light of such changes, processes and mechanisms have been put in place to ensure the socialisation on new workers into a culture of work that stresses self-sacrifice, dedication, compliance and malleability in lieu of specialised training not only increasing the pressure on young freelancers, but compromising the abilities of those who manage to endure the pressures of work to sufficiently train themselves to an industry standard. If television in the UK, and CCIs in general, are to continue to be the basis for economic growth and employment, serious issues over the long-term sustainability, and ability, of the industry to provide the necessarily trained individuals to work on prestigious drama with global appeal, have to be addressed (Clegg and Burdon 2019). As it stands, evidence would suggest the stress put upon the industry by increasing fragmentation, reliance on freelance labour and cost-cutting measures have eroded the training infrastructure to the point that further growth in a 'creative economy', where the major outputs are talent or skill (Coles 2016) is dependent on development of an alternative methods of equipping entrants with the right skills. Currently, it appears the nature of on-the-job learning does not provide a sufficient skillset, and a re-connection of those severed communities of practice (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011) may be necessary if HE and apprenticeships continue to be so varied in their output.

2020 and COVID-19

It is impossible to conclude this study without mention of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though not the main focus of this study – the main data collection period spanned the majority of 2019 – several respondents were contacted again during the summer of 2020 via email, to hear their feedback on the impact of COVID-19, personally. Two emails rebounded with auto-reply messages stating

the individual was no longer at the broadcaster, one respondent explained they were no longer a part of the industry after their contact on a drama was not renewed. A third respondent is still working, and starting to get back to production work as of August/September 2020, however her contract includes a so-called 'COVID clause'; stating that the broadcaster has the right to suspend, without pay, any individual exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or suspected of being in contact with someone infected. During that time, the individual is unable to work for any other production. This offers further evidence of freelance workers shouldering the responsibilities and liabilities of all risk associated with their employment, at the expense of the employers and broadcasters (Gil 2002). Below are a few excerpts from the responses received:

“ It was a really tough few months and I’ve decimated my savings and a chunk of my tax bill for next year. It’s not great but there’s not a lot anyone can do.

I know several people who are now thinking of leaving the industry altogether. I’m sure when we spoke, I talked about how the industry can be extremely difficult for women with children; I know of 3 women who are on maternity leave and the effects of COVID on the industry has made them decide not to come back.

...

The industry was a bit of a mess before. Now it is a total mess and COVID will be used as excuse to make conditions even more difficult for freelancers.”

(Maria, F, 30s, Producer)

“I myself have not worked in TV, game or film since I wrapped in late 2019. I had applied for jobs in Bristol, Cardiff, and even a production in Scotland but received no positive responses. In the end I applied as an admin assistant in a car finance company in Cardiff out of necessity. ... It's certainly not where I pictured I'd be, especially as I had a lot of independent art-based projects booked for the rest of the year (such as commissions and a few fairs and cons where I planned to sell my own work), but I still consider it a stroke of good luck as I am able to work from home on full pay.

It's hard to evaluate in a few sentences the long-term effects COVID-19 is going to have on our industry, culturally and economically. Thousands have lost work, sometimes with no schemes in place to help (especially in the case of freelancers). ... Such effects have not fully reached me yet, but seeing as it is near-impossible to predict the long-lasting consequences of the pandemic, finding work again as a junior or assistant artist in the near future is going to be difficult. I have no idea when to begin applying again."

(Isobel, F, 20s, Artist)

The COVID-19 global pandemic has further highlighted just how insecure these careers are. A largely freelance workforce places further stress on individuals, having to cope with long and unexpected periods without work as virtually the whole industry shut down in the UK between March and June 2020. Many are being forced out entirely, the pandemic contributing another level of uncertainty and precarity to careers already fraught with such feelings. In many ways, the advent of the COVID-19 has served to provide a substantial pull at a variety of threads that were already loose and frayed. As with all industries, the financial and societal impact of the pandemic is going to be unprecedented. In an editorial piece, Harper (2020) cites Oxford Economics' prediction that, across the CCIs in the UK, the decline in revenue is estimated to be in the region of \$92.7 billion, suggesting 'the impact of COVID-19 on the creative industries is almost beyond comprehension.' (Harper 2020. p.93) In addition, there are worrying implications for diversity and inclusivity going forward (Eikhof 2020), the pressures of television work for those without an economic 'safety net' may threaten to further exclude all but the most privileged. Many of these stresses were present in the industry before the pandemic hit, but it may well be the case that this is the straw that breaks the proverbial camel's back.

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APPENDIX A. – INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Labour Entry and Skill Formation in UK Television: Main interview Protocol

FOR RECENT ENTRANTS:

Career/life history. Narrative accounts. What is your experience of work in TV?
 Who gave you your first job? Was it paid/unpaid?
 How did you get into the industry? A contact? Through a network? Personal recommendation?
 Apprenticeship? Qualifications? Developed your own skills?
 What, **in your opinion**, was most important?
Were the entryways clearly defined? If so, how? If not, why not?
At what point did you feel you had entered the industry?

FOR GATEKEEPERS:

How do the gatekeepers make their decisions?
 Based on qualifications? Demonstration of skills? (how do they do this?) Personality? Known quantity/Personal knowledge? Socialising/networking?

What skills do new entrants possess at the point of entry to the UK television industry?

What skills did you possess prior to entry?
 Where/How did you learn them? How did you demonstrate them?
 How important were they to your gaining entry to the industry, in your opinion?
What are your career ambitions? How will/can you go about achieving them?

How do new entrants gain access to the skills required for work in UK television, in a neo-bureaucratic setting?

What resources to help develop did you think were available, at the point when you entered the industry? What about now? Has it changed? How, why? What skills do they develop and how?
 Do people have access to experienced professionals, when they are outside the industry? If there is, what form does it take? Is it useful? If no, do you think it's significant? How/why?
 If you went to HE, what did you study? where did you study? Was where you studied significant? Do you think it was useful? How? Why/why not? Did it help you to gain entry? How?

Diversity:

Can I ask you to talk about diversity in the industry?
 Has your background (where you're from, where you went to school) had any effect on your career pathway, from your perspective? Harder? Easier? No difference?
 How? Why? Examples?
 How inclusive is the work environment? Good enough? Not good enough? Is it changing/improving?

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX B. – TABLE OF PARTICIPANTS

Pseudonym	Gender	Age Group	Current Role	Time In Industry (years)
Lewis	M	60+	Semi-retired	30+
Gareth	M	50s	CEO, Media Tech Hub	30
Virginia	F	60s	Retired, Former Scheduler	30+
Catherine	F	60s	Training Provider	30
Mick	M	30s	Producer, Indie	10
Frank	M	20s	Camera Operator, Freelance	5
Tim	M	20s	Editor	5-10
Graham	M	20s	Storyliner	5-10
Mark	M	20s	Marketing Apprentice	1
Sarah	F	19	Production Apprentice, Indie	1
Helen	F	20s	Prop & Art Department	5-10
Kate	F	20s	Researcher/Casting Apprentice	1
Chloe	F	20s	Former costume Apprentice	N/A
Thomas	M	40s	BBC Learning	10-20
Stan	M	40s	BBC HR	10-20
Andy	M	30s	Former Runner, Camera Technician	N/A

Michael	M	20s	Broadcast Journalist	5-10
Gavin	M	20s	Production Management Assistant	5-10
Matthew	M	20s	Finishing Assistant Indie	5-10
Sian	F	30s	Producer	10
James	M	20s	Post-Production Edit assistant	2
Jenny	F	30s	Broadcast Journalist Presenter	10
Terry	M	30s	Assistant Director/ Camera Operator	5-10
Darren	M	40s	Former Producer, Industrial Strategist	10-20
Rebecca	F	30s	Production Co-ordinator	10
John	M	20s	Post-production VFX	1-5
Stephen	M	20s	Art Director/ Set Designer	5
Anthony	M	20s	Not Currently in Industry	N/A
Isobel	F	20s	Artist	1-5
Elizabeth	F	20s	Production Assistant	1-5
David	M	20s	Post-production Editor, Indie	5-10
Lyndsey	F	30s	Editor, Indie	10
Stephanie	F	30s	Construction, Art director	5-10
Maria	F	30s	Producer	5-10
Melissa	F	20s	Production Assistant	1-5

Eve	F	20s	Production Runner	1-5
Neal	M	30s	Freelance Producer/Director	10
Gina	F	30s	Producer,	5-10
Kerry	F	30s	Production Manager	5-10
Andrew	M	20s	Broadcast Journalist ITV News	5-10
Louise	F	20s	Production Assistant	1
Claire	F	20s	Producer, Freelance	5-10
Christopher	M	30s	Former Lighting Assistant	N/A
Jason	M	30s	Producer/Director	10

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM



Cardiff Business School
Ysgol Busnes Caerdydd

Labour Entry Pathways and Skill Formation in the UK Television Industry

An exploratory study into the early career pathways and entry points to UK television, from the perspective of recent entrants into the UK television industry.

I understand that my participation in this project will involve:

Completion of a face-to-face semi-structured interview with the researcher, James Davies, that will take up approximately 1hr-2hrs of my time.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and includes my consent to be audio recorded during my interview. I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. If, for any reason, I have second thoughts about my participation in this project, I am free to withdraw by contacting the researcher, James Davies (email: DaviesJR16@Cardiff.ac.uk) or discuss my concerns with Professor Jonathan Morris (email: MorrisJL@cardiff.ac.uk), should I so wish.

I understand that the information provided by me will be held confidentially and securely, such that only the researcher can trace this information back to me individually. The information will be retained for up to 3 years, and will then be anonymized, deleted or destroyed. I understand that if I withdraw my consent I can ask for the information I have provided to be anonymized/deleted/destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

I, _____ (*NAME*) consent to participate in the study conducted by James Davies (BA Hons., MSc) of Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University, under the supervision of Prof. Jonathan Morris.

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX D. – COVERING LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this in order to invite you to participate in an interview that will form part of my PhD research, being undertaken at Cardiff University. The focus of the project is:

Labour Market Entry and Skill Formation in the UK Television Industry

Your interview is designed to provide an insight into the ways in which younger workers gained access to the television industry, an industry characterised by high levels of competition, unclear entryways and undefined skills requirements.

Interviews will preferably be conducted face-to-face at a venue that suits you and your schedule, they will be audio recorded, and any comments that you make will be anonymised. The likely outcomes of the project are expected to evaluate the forms of advantage and disadvantage arising from social class, ethnicity, and gender faced by young entrants to UK television, and to offer some public policy recommendations to governments, major employers (such as the BBC) to enhance inclusivity and skill formation.

As an individual with recent experience of gaining access to the sector, your insight will be invaluable in gaining a more holistic and accurate picture of the television industry in the UK as it currently is. Your time, and attention is greatly appreciated, and I hope you will be able to participate in this project.

If you have any further queries or questions, feel free to contact me via email: DaviesJR16@Cardiff.ac.uk. I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks,

James Davies (BA Hons, MSc)
PhD Researcher
Cardiff University