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Citation for final published version:

Garner, Ross 2015. Brand reconciliation? A case study of ITV's 2013 rebrand. *Critical Studies in Television: An International Journal of Television Studies* 10 (1) , pp. 3-23. 10.7227/CST.10.1.2

Publishers page: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7227/CST.10.1.2>

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Brand Reconciliation? A Case Study of ITV's 2013 Rebrand

Ross Garner

Abstract

This article extends existing work in Television Studies on branding through a study of rebranding practices. To this end, the discussion takes the mainstream UK commercial broadcaster ITV's 2013 rebranding as a case study and examines both the institutional contexts motivating change and the construction of its altered brand image through publicity materials. Engaging with the latter allows for strategies of what I have called brand reconciliation as, despite focusing on the channel's contemporary output, publicity stills demonstrating the channel's new logo attempt to activate popular audience memories of the broadcaster and unite its 'past' and 'present' incarnations.

Keywords: ITV, rebranding, television industry, UK, popular memory, public service.

On the 14 January 2013, ITV plc—the organisation that runs the UK's commercially funded television network founded in 1955—implemented a major re-brand. Using this overhaul of both the wider company and the main ITV channel as a case study, this article extends discussions of television and branding in two ways. Firstly, the article focuses on institutional rebranding and considers why a television company and channel radically altered its public image. Preceding academic work on tele-rebranding has offered a slightly one-dimensional account of these processes by equating such decisions with either 'networks struggling in the ratings' or being 'adopted at times of crisis' (Johnson 2012, 139). Developing these positions, this article argues that other institutional factors must be considered on a case-by-case basis to achieve a more nuanced understanding of why television institutions (and their individually-branded channels) undergo rebranding exercises. These goals are achieved by contextualising ITV's 2013 channel rebrand within the range of internal corporate and policy changes that have taken place following Adam Crozier's appointment as Chief Executive in 2010 and the instigation of what ITV plc names its Transformative Plan (ITV plc 2013a).

Secondly, recognising brand identities as a ‘set of culture-specific meanings and attendant mental constructs that are evoked’ (Danesi 2006, 29) through combinations of signifiers, this contribution considers how an established mainstream commercially-funded channel with residual public service responsibilities reconfigures its brand identity through balancing its accumulated heritage with both present-day programming output and institutional concerns. To this end, I analyse promotional images produced to demonstrate the new logo for the main ITV channel. Analysing these images, which were presented under the heading ‘Flagship Programming’ (ITV News 2013, online), suggests that the 2013 rebrand campaign is an example of what I explore as channel brand reconciliation. This is because, although the Flagship Programming images denote the channel’s contemporaneity through combining the new logo with images from immediately-recognisable shows such as *Downton Abbey* (2010-) and talent including Ant and Dec (hosts of ratings behemoths *I’m a Celebrity Get, Me Out of Here!* [2002-] and *Britain’s Got Talent* [2007-]), the images simultaneously connote popular memories of its past.

Popular memory is frequently characterised as constructing selective recollections of the ‘past’ (Spigel 1995, 21), as foregrounding ‘the concerns and needs of contemporary life’ (ibid) by using the ‘past’ to support contemporary concerns and discourses, and as being ‘enmeshed in knowledge circulated by dominant social institutions’ (ibid, 22). The latter point opens popular memory up to critiques concerning hegemony and power as it has been suggested that producers can employ ‘institutionalised templates’ (Garde-Hansen 2011, 57) to mediate historical and/or nationally-significant events and reassert dominant interests. However, rather than analysing televisual remembrances of historical events such as the Holocaust or 9/11, this article focuses on how a media institution (re)activates memories of itself when constructing a new public image for one of its channels. Ideological issues are arguably less significant in this context because, as Emily Keightley (2010, 59) argues, discussing memories purely in terms of the values articulated overlooks how

just as social affiliations are not the sole determinants of memory, neither are ideological structures. They are another structure of meaning, intersecting with social networks and representational conventions, through which memory is filtered and shaped.

By discussing the representational conventions that ITV plc employs for rebranding its main channel, I will demonstrate the channel’s strategies for reminding audiences of the ‘shared set

of references and experiences' (Spigel and Jenkins 1991, 132) that arise from its 'historical status as a commercially funded and regionally constituted public service broadcaster' (Johnson and Turnock 2005a, 7). The Flagship Programming images demonstrate the channel's ongoing visibility and relevance within British television's fragmented, multi-channel environment whilst simultaneously activating audiences' memories of the channel's heritage.

Catherine Johnson (2007, 6) observes that 'branding has emerged as the defining industrial practice' of the contemporary TVIII era due to the impact of myriad social, technological and political changes (as well as other factors) on television over the last 30 years (Dunleavy 2009, 199-210). These changes have resulted in the continuing fragmentation of audiences across multiple channels and platforms of delivery. These alterations have, in turn, given rise to the importance of distinctly branded products to all areas of the television industry (ibid, 212-3). However, although both ITV and/or televisual rebranding exercises have received some scholarly consideration (Johnson 2012, 25-8), these issues have generated less attention than others. Television Studies has explored branding in terms of how individual series strategically include content, such as characterisation and/or iconic sound effects, to distinguish programmes and attract audiences (see Hills 2010a, 132-3; Hills 2011, 29-32). Other studies have expanded on this programme-centric approach by recognising that 'the process of constructing and maintaining brands [h]as ... two complementary modes, one that builds the identity of the network and one that builds the identity of the show' (Reeves, Rogers and Epstein 2007, 96). This analytical strand has been explored at both national (Nelson 2007; Brown 2010) and international (McCabe 2005) levels, revealing how synergistic relationships have been forged between programme and channel brands. However, until the recent acquisition of *The Americans* (2013-), imported series have been absent on the main ITV channel due to regulation and this has contributed towards its absence within debates (Knox 2007, 188). Additionally, the main ITV channel's aim is to be 'the largest commercial channel in the UK' (ITV plc 2013a, 2) and so target a mainstream audience. This intention also contributes to its omission from discussions of tele-branding as much of this work discusses strategies for targeting 'quality' niche demographics rather than a wider 'coalition' audience (Johnson 2005, 130).

An alternative strand discussing television and branding has, specifically in analyses of British television, critically reflected on the tensions generated between the perceived intrusion of 'commercialised' marketing techniques into institutions with public service remits such as the BBC and Channel 4 (Born 2003; Johnson 2012, 84-110). Debating

branding and fulfilling public service remits has further contributed towards ITV's 'often ...marginalised or neglected' (Johnson and Turnock 2005a, 1) position within studies of tele-branding (and/or British Television Studies more generally) due to the company's ever-decreasing PSB responsibilities (see below). When ITV-as-channel has been analysed in terms of branding, it has been from a historical perspective. Johnson (2012, 73) discusses the channel's 1999 'From the Heart' campaign – which showcased 'key ITV networked programmes ...and drew attention to the range of genres offered by the channel' – but accounts for this campaign in relation to ITV's adjustment to the emerging digital landscape,

As branding became more accepted in the UK television industry, even though many of its regional franchises actually had very clear and long-standing brand identities that were targeted to their specific regional audience segments. It is perhaps ironic that, while elsewhere the industry was increasingly turning to niche targeting, the ITV network was effectively attempting to undermine the relationship that some of its long-standing regional franchises had with their audiences (ibid, 74).

Resonances of ITV's public service heritage, such as providing a mixed schedule of programmes and the network's regionalised structure, frame the analysis here. Similar discourses are also recognisable in the Flagship Programming images produced to introduce the 2013 rebrand which suggest continuity between the channel's 'past' and 'present' incarnations to audiences. Despite these echoes, it is important to recognise that the company's 1999 and 2013 campaigns take place against very different institutional backdrops. During the late 1990s, although increasing consolidation of ownership was beginning to integrate the network, regional franchises were still the norm and these were mostly named and branded according to geographical location (e.g. Westcountry for South West England, Anglia for the area including Norwich and Ipswich: see, Johnson and Turnock 2005b, 29). In contrast, ITV plc currently self-presents itself as 'an integrated producer broadcaster' (ITV plc 2013b, online). This 'integration' emerged historically from the merger between the two largest franchise owners (Granada and Carlton) in 2004 (Johnson and Turnock 2005b, 29). Yet, despite proclaiming its integrated nature, franchises in both Scotland (which total two and make up STV) and Northern Ireland (UTV) remain separate from ITV plc and have developed their own individuated brands. Alongside its national interests, ITV plc also now includes global production and distribution companies (ITV

Studios Global Entertainment) with branches throughout Europe, the United States and Australia. ITV's contemporary institutional structure is therefore still characterised by complexity (ibid, 15) but this now extends globally. To comprehend the scope of the 2013 rebrand it is first necessary to outline the extent of the campaign before then contextualising the rebrand within ITV plc's recent activities.

ITV in 2013: Brand Architecture and Rebrand Overview

ITV plc first announced its intention to rebrand the company's (at this point national) production and distribution services on 16 November 2012 (Sweney 2012a). This was justified through employing two sets of discourses. The first concerned consolidation, as the statement made by ITV's director of marketing and research, Rufus Radcliffe (in ibid, online) declared, the rebrand is an attempt to "simplify and rationalise" the company's branding' demonstrates. The second discourse related to adjusting ITV's domestic market position via (re)confirming the centrality of its channels to the lives of its audiences; the exercise was thus presented to the press and the public as an attempt to (re)position the company within 'the heart of popular culture' in the United Kingdom (Radcliffe in ibid, online). The campaign went live at 07.00 GMT on 14 January 2013 simultaneously across ITV's portfolio of UK television channels, online presence (itv.com) and both its national and global production outlets (ITV Studios and ITV Studios Global Entertainment) (ITV Press Centre, 2013).

Before discussing ITV plc's rebrand further, it is necessary to summarise the corporation's brand architecture to avoid conflating ITV plc's cumulative corporate brand image with that of its individual products (e.g. channels, production facilities or services/portals like ITV Player). Brand architectures are difficult to generalise about as multiple strategies are frequently combined in accordance with the demands of individual companies (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000, 8-23; Olins 2008, 44-51). Within the context of contemporary media industries, of which television constitutes just one part (Johnson 2012, 40), such management techniques have become essential due to cross-media ownership (Murray 2005).

Although not as diversified or wide-reaching as its American equivalents, ITV plc's 2013 rebrand employs strategies to construct a range of individual brands that are linked by the ITV brand name and new logo. Consequently, each of ITV plc's products and/or services 'are ...independent, but they are also endorsed by another brand, usually an organisational brand' (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000, 12) as each shares 'a linked brand name, where a name with common elements creates a family of brands with an implicit or implied endorser'

(ibid, 14). ITV plc constitutes the wider company responsible for operating its family of channels (ITV, ITV2, ITV3 and so on), but these products develop individuated brand identities via materials including idents (short promotional clips inserted into the televisual flow before programmes [Blandford and McElroy 2011, 392]) and programming flows (Johnson 2012, 18). Nevertheless, each channel also accrues status through the intra-brand equity derived from the endorsing parent organisation (ITV plc). Similarly, UK production company ITV Studios—which as part of the 2013 rebrand now shares the same logo and colour palette as other ITV products—also derives brand equity via its semiotic associations with other ITV plc products. This is despite ITV Studios functioning as a production company in its own right by obtaining commissions internally from ITV channels and producing programmes for other domestic channels such as *Come Dine with Me* (2005-) for Channel 4. As part of the 2013 rebrand, ITV plc's brand architecture constructs endorsed brands that, while operating independently, produce cross-corporation synergy by sharing logos and, in certain cases, colour palettes. The new brand architecture therefore attempts to gain leverage by using the organisation's cumulative brand equity to gain advantages in production and consumption sectors:

The endorsing organisation is focussed on financial audiences, shareholders, commentators, governments, legislators, its own staff, potential staff, pensioners and similar groups, whilst the individual brands are usually focussed on customers and quite often the supply chain (Olins 2008, 47).

Demonstrating this point, ITV plc's UK TV services have each been assigned new colour schemes and idents as part of the 2013 rebrand. The new promotional materials are designed to reflect the programming policies and target audience of each channel and extend the overall ITV brand into these niche markets. Youth-orientated station ITV2 now uses a bold red and white colour scheme alongside highly-stylised content in its idents as young people are depicted engaging in atypical behaviour in everyday locations (e.g. having trolley battles in supermarkets or playing Curling with chairs in offices). These inserts, which layer the ITV2 logo over the top of the action, connote ITV's wider brand value of centrality to audiences by connecting the channel to the leisure time of its target audience while also demonstrating the channel's self-proclaimed 'heightened reality world of fun and entertainment' (ITV Press Centre 2013, online) offered via programmes including *The Only*

Way is Essex (2010-). In contrast, ITV3, which re-runs middlebrow ‘quality’ drama series including *Inspector Morse* (1987-2000) and *Midsomer Murders* (1997- ; see, Thomas 2002, 75-102), now adopts ‘a ...midnight blue logo, and ...stop motion film idents’ (ITV Press Centre 2013, online). This subdued colour palette aims to connote the ‘seriousness’ and perceived value of the scheduled programmes.

The most radical overhaul has, however, been reserved for the core ITV channel. In a move that was announced as the company responding to its audiences, the channel’s name has been changed back to ‘ITV’ from ‘ITV1’ (the name it adopted in 2001 as the company’s digital portfolio expanded). Additionally, instead of adopting a singular colour scheme, the channel’s logo now utilises ‘a “colour picking” facility that ...allow[s] the logo to be branded with hues that “flex with the mood” of specific programmes’ (Sweeney 2012a, online). The new chameleonic logo replaces the channel’s previous branding, launched in 2006, which juxtaposed gold against black to position (what was then) ITV1 as ‘The Lighter Side’. This previous campaign fed in to many of the channel’s idents and featured gold colours—typically forms of light—erupting into darkened locations, such as Chinese lanterns launching into the night sky. Renaming the main ITV channel arguably constitutes one inflection of brand reconciliation strategies by re-connecting the channel with its ‘past’ by returning to its previous *nomenclature*.

While the above summarises the changes made to ITV plc’s brand portfolio, it says little about the organisational factors motivating the rebrand. Writing in relation to ITV, Johnson and Turnock argue in favour of analysing the company ‘as a *whole institution*’ (2005a, 2). This involves recognising that content produced for (re)branding the ITV channel should not be divorced from the institutional and regulatory circumstances guiding the organisation at a specific historical moment. This perspective dovetails with methodologies used in previous work discussing tele-branding where content constructing individual channel brands has been read through wider institutional discourses such as targeting specific imagined audiences (Reeves, Rogers and Esptein 2007; Johnson 2013). Adopting an institutional lens allows for material produced to promote the 2013 rebrand to be analysed as employing ‘textual strategies’ (Johnson 2005, 7) that encode a specific identity for the intended product. Textual strategies are the realisation of wider ‘strategies put in place at the point of production ...that can only be understood in relation to the context of production, and enable us to understand how that context shaped’ (ibid, 6) the content and form of the output produced. The material selected as Flagship Programming for the ITV channel in 2013 can be analysed as conveying core brand meanings during this historical period.

It should be noted, though, that while the remainder of this article adopts an institutional perspective towards ITV's corporate and channel rebranding, the wider reception of this campaign has attracted criticism—especially towards the new ITV logo. Stuart Heritage (2013, online) of *The Guardian* states that the new logo 'spells 'UVV' and looks like a moustache made of bums', whilst marketing practitioners have also expressed ambivalence towards how clearly the new logo communicates its intended values (Clarke 2012) and audience polls also demonstrated a muted response (Unaccredited 2012). Despite these critiques, arguments concerning the need to locate textual content against the wider set of internal factors taking place within a specific historical period have also been made in discussions of rebranding outside of Television Studies. Both practically-focused guidebooks (Wheeler 2013, 194) and academic studies agree that rebranding is a 'practice [which] carries a high level of reputation risk' (Muzellec and Lambkin 2006, 803), as the wholesale development of new identities can result in the loss of established brand equity (ibid, 804). However, this literature also recognises that rebranding may be necessary for a company/product as it can enable brands to be reinvigorated or, alternatively, project an adjusted corporate image due to changing institutional/management structures (Olins 2008, 55-6). Rebranding can also occur for repositioning purposes within changed market conditions (Huppertz 2005; Berry 2012) or to forge new associations for a company and/or product within specific spatial and/or temporal circumstances (Denison 2010, 553-4). Other motivating factors can also include,

decisions, events or processes causing a change in a company's structure, strategy or performance of sufficient magnitude to suggest the need for a fundamental redefinition of its identity. Such events can vary from a sudden, total structural transformation following from a merger or acquisition to a gradual erosion of market share or reputation due to changing patterns or competitive conditions (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin 2003, 33).

The impetuses behind rebranding can therefore be multiple and should be understood as the intersection of various institutional concerns. Christine Fanthome's (2007, 260) analysis of the evolution of Channel 4's brand highlights this by demonstrating that, although on one occasion rebranding was undertaken to re-state the channel's 'new and innovative' identity, at a different historical moment '[c]hanges in senior management were also an influence'

(ibid, 262). Given the need to locate a rebrand against the institutional processes motivating change, the next section examines ITV plc's recent activities.

Rebranding in Context: ITV in 2013

Although ITV plc announced the 2013 rebrand through discourses of consolidation and centrality to audiences, Laurent Muzellec and Mary Lambkin (2006, 810) argue for adopting a critical attitude towards official statements. A more rounded understanding can be acquired through making inferences from ITV plc's recent institutional manoeuvrings. Firstly, on 21 November 2012, ITV plc found out that all of its broadcast licences within the UK (an overhang from the channel's regionalised structure) would be renewed for another 10 years (Plunkett 2012a). Although the renewal date falls after the company's rebranding announcement, rumours emerged that its licences would be renewed in the preceding September (Brown 2012a). Thus, while it is almost certain that the rebrand would have been instigated in advance of September 2012 due to the project's scale (Wheeler 2013, 194), the rebrand can be partly read as a response to the company moving in to its next decade of existence.

However, the rebrand can also be linked to other institutional policies instigated since January 2010 when Adam Crozier was appointed Chief Executive (Sweney 2010). Crozier has implemented a Transformative Plan 'which aims to reduce ITV's dependence on TV ad revenue, primarily by boosting its production and distribution business and driving digital revenues' (Sweney 2013, online). This plan has been executed as a result of the circumstances ITV plc faced at the end of 2009:

in January 2010 a recession-scarred ITV was struggling to recover from a £2.7bn annual loss and had a £1bn debt and pension deficit ... Crozier signed on when ITV was climbing out of the UK's worst ever advertising recession – its share price fell as low as 17p (ibid.)

Since 2010 ITV plc has had a tumultuous relationship with advertising-based income. During 2012 the main ITV channel suffered slumps in revenue throughout the summer as a result of the BBC's coverage of major sporting events such as Wimbledon and the Olympics (Plunkett 2012b; Sweney 2012b). This was followed by a noticeable decline in audiences for its flagship Autumn/Winter talent show *The X-Factor* (2004-), which was estimated as costing around £10m in advertising revenue across the entire series' run (Sweney 2013c). Yet,

despite these losses, it was reported in January 2013 that ITV plc's share price had 'topped £1 for the first time in five years' (Sweney 2013, online) with financial success being partly linked to:

the revitalisation of production division ITV Studios, which makes and sells shows including *Coronation Street*, *Mr Selfridge* and *Dancing on Ice*. Profits have rebounded in the past year, with ITV forecasting more than £100m (ibid).

In-house commissions for the ITV channel from ITV Studios are financially important to ITV plc as the company is able to retain all of the rights to its programmes across different media platforms (Midgley 2011). Whereas American television allows its major commercially-funded networks 'to invest billions of dollars in top-flight drama that will make a loss on its first airing but a fortune from repeats around the world' (Garside 2008, online), the company is not afforded these opportunities in relation to its independent commissions. The current agreement between ITV plc and the Producers' Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT)—renegotiated in 2009 to address the emerging On Demand and Download market—instead allows independent companies to retain programme rights in multiple areas. These include global sales and distribution, merchandising (including DVD and BluRay) and Download to Own rights (ITV plc 2009, 37-55). Thus, although ITV plc retains primary rights to broadcast and exploit revenue through advertising, sponsorship and interactive/participatory elements during the initial licencing period, it loses out on revenue streams concerning international sales and, potentially, digital media platforms. An institutional policy prioritising ITV Studios productions has resulted in increased financial returns at both national and international levels due to the success of exported reality TV formats including *Come Dine with Me* and *Hell's Kitchen USA* (2005-) as well as 'quality' drama co-productions such as *Mr Selfridge* and *Titanic* (2012) (Sweney 2012d).

ITV plc's post-2010 development of ITV Studios has also resulted in a series of acquisitions occurring at different levels of production. These include buying its production headquarters on London's South Bank where programmes including *The Jonathan Ross Show* (2011-) and BBC One's *The Graham Norton Show* (2007-) are filmed and acquiring both national and international independent production companies (Halliday 2013). So Television (which makes the aforementioned Norton show) has been purchased domestically (Deans and Sweney 2012) while US reality TV company Gurney, responsible for programmes including *Duck Dynasty* (2012-), has also been acquired (Sweney 2012e). As

outlined above, factors including altered corporate strategy and performance, alongside a series of acquisitions, frequently provide incentives for rebranding. Since ITV plc's Transformative Plan dovetails with each of these areas, these policies allow for the 2013 rebrand to be understood against a backdrop of multiple changes altering the company's institutional structure.

Alongside developing its production side, ITV plc's rebranding can also be located in relation to its drive towards establishing a digital media presence. The company has previously endured a stuttering relationship when adapting to domestic digital transmission and reception methods. The reasons behind the collapse of its domestic ONDigital service are well documented (Smith and Steemers 2007) while the company has also been blighted by a series of misguided acquisitions (Wray 2009). ITV plc has, however, recently made in-roads in these areas:

In the past two years the broadcaster has dramatically increased the distribution of its online TV service, ITV Player, to platforms including Virgin Media, Sky Anytime and handheld and gaming devices such as PS3, Android and Apple phones. A digital pay strategy has been introduced which includes licensing shows to LoveFilm and Netflix, as well as charging for some programmes on the ITV Player (Sweney 2013, online).

Some media analysts have adopted a critical stance towards ITV plc's perceived financial rejuvenation (Hewlett 2012), raising doubts about the success of the company's alleged decreasing reliance on advertising revenue. Irrespective of these critiques, though, the 2013 rebrand must be understood against this backdrop of multiple institutional changes. The intersection of the long-term stability provided through licence renewal, changes in management personnel and the instigation of new policies designed to expand the company's presence on digital platforms and grow both its national and global production wings provide fertile grounds for altering the company's corporate image. Having established this context, the next section analyses the Flagship Programming images produced to demonstrate the rebrand of ITV plc's core domestic product—the ITV channel. This focus may seem out-of-step with recent studies of tele-branding as much of this work has focused on the role of idents and interstitials in generating a channel's identity (Blandford and McElroy 2011; Johnson 2012, 115-39) or programming zone (Woods 2013). ITV's 2013 channel rebrand did coincide with the arrival of new intra-flow idents that reaffirm core brand messages

concerning its centrality to British culture. However, idents remain only one form of the vast array of promotional paratexts produced to construct channel brand identities. John Ellis makes the argument that programme trailers,

pick out key moments..., and in doing so they define a number of vectors of significance. They will identify who the leading stars or faces are ... They may inscribe indicators of the programme's generic status and the important or novel aspects of its format. So in their attempt to parade the most marketable aspects of the programme, they provide condensed definitions of the market. Anything from the career status of a star to the state of a genre ... can be judged from a study of trailers (2011, 62).

This point extends to the Flagship Programming images because selecting specific programmes and talent to demonstrate a brand identity also generates vectors of significance for the rebranded channel. Using the channel's recognisable content attempts to forge 'an iconic signification of the brand ... [via] the marketing technique of personification, in which the properties of a product (or series of products) are associated with the characteristics of a person' (Lury 2004, 90) or, in this case, programmes and talent. The next section thus analyses how the ITV channel's 2013 image is 'constituted by those programmes' (Johnson and Turnock 2005a, 2) that it positions as flagship in publicity material, arguing that this represents strategies of brand reconciliation by (re)connecting the channel brand with its popular heritage.

Brand Reconciliation: Contemporaneity and Continuity

To introduce both audiences and the TV industry to its rebrand, ITV's Press Centre (n.d.) released a short video showcasing the new logo, the core channel's change of name and the new colour schemes for ITV's sister channels (ibid.). The video clip was also co-ordinated with an online article that reiterated key information about the rebrand. Included were eight images, named Flagship Programming, which layer the new channel logo over pictures of recognisable programmes and/or talent to demonstrate its tonal adaptability. These publicity stills, which were (mostly) included in the video, emblematised core brand values constructed for the ITV channel via the rebrand. The content included can be grouped under two broad headings: light entertainment and drama. In the light entertainment category, alongside the aforementioned image of Ant and Dec, Olympic gold medallists Jane Torvill and Christopher

Dean are depicted performing a routine on celebrity ice-skating contest/reality TV show *Dancing on Ice* (2006-), whilst the other is a more stylised image of (mildly) controversial (Kelly 2010) chat show host Jonathan Ross in front of an exploding flat-screen television. ‘Flagship’ drama places a strong emphasis on period pieces as two stills feature cast members (scullery maid Daisy (Sophie McShera) and butler Carson (Jim Carter)) from *Downton Abbey*; the other is of Jeremy Piven as Mr Selfridge. A shot of Surrane Jones and Lesley Sharp as the titular detectives in crime drama series *Scott and Bailey* (2011-) is also included and the set is completed by an image of the sun rising over a terracotta chimney which indexes the working-class locales of long-running soap opera *Coronation Street* (1960-).

The range of content selected for these publicity stills can be read in a variety of ways. On the one hand, the chosen programmes intersect with the institutional context outlined in the previous section, as half of the images are commissions for the ITV channel from ITV Studios (*I’m a Celebrity*, *Dancing on Ice*, *Mr Selfridge* and *Coronation Street*). Using series produced by ITV Studios to demonstrate the rebrand of the main ITV channel builds synergy across ITV plc’s endorsed brands by using original commissions to partly construct the identity of its core channel. Additionally, the programmes selected arguably demonstrate the channel’s present stance towards discourses of ‘public service’. Similar to Faye Woods’ (2013, 20) argument concerning Channel 4’s branding of its youth-focused T4 strand, using ‘a mixture of entertainment, reality, sitcom and drama’ connects ITV’s channel brand to discourses of public service ‘less explicitly’ as popular programming forms are foregrounded over those concerning social responsibility and citizenship. Although ITV targets a wider audience than T4, the channel’s foregrounding of light entertainment/reality TV formats and drama series as its Flagship Programming implies a relaxed attitude towards public service discourses. This strategy reflects the channel’s current regulatory status and disposition towards its public service responsibilities. OFCOM (2012, 1), the regulatory body responsible for setting the channel’s public service responsibilities, states in its guidelines that ITV should focus ‘on meeting public service purposes in a small number of core programming genres ... (in particular news and current affairs)’ (ibid, 17), as well as displaying plurality by commissioning a quota of its output from independent producers. What’s more, although publically rejecting such accusations in the run up to its 2012 licence renewals (Brown 2012a), the channel has continually lobbied for an ongoing reduction of its PSB requirements in recent years (Sweney 2012f). The Flagship Programming images represent this stance as what Ien Ang (1991, 50) names ‘ratings discourse’ drives the

selection process since programmes with established popularity are used to demonstrate the channel's centrality to its viewers' lives.

Additionally, if the shows positioned as Flagship Programming are read in terms of the channel's history, they connotatively connect ITV's 2013 brand image with aspects of its popular history. Beyond the broad headings of 'drama' and 'light entertainment', closer inspection indicates a wider range of genres: soap opera, crime series, period pieces, reality TV formats, game shows and celebrity chat shows. Whilst this range of content may loosely connote contemporary 'public service' discourses concerning diversity and choice (which ITV historically provided via a mixed schedule; see Johnson and Turnock 2005b, 18), it overtly foregrounds 'popular' entertainment forms such as soap operas and game/talent shows that the channel initially employed to build its audience (ibid, 21). These programming types have formed the cornerstone of how ITV self-presents its history in recent years. The officially-sanctioned retrospective *ITV: The People's Channel*, which was produced as part of its fiftieth anniversary celebrations, includes a foreword from broadcaster Melvyn Bragg (2005, 1), praising the channel for 'creat[ing] the country's most popular drama series ever (*Coronation Street*)', as well as sections dedicated to the channel's legacy in developing variety and talent shows (Cherry 2005, 26-36). Thus, although the programmes selected for the Flagship Programming campaign immediately denote both ITV's range of content and its national and global successes, they also connote popular conceptions of the channel's heritage where popular forms were housed within a mixed schedule to distinguish ITV from the BBC. As with the aforementioned 'From the Heart' campaign, which constructed ITV's channel brand identity through combining 'commercial' and 'public service' discourses, the Flagship Programming images reconfigure these concerns within a fragmented, multi-channel environment. This is achieved by foregrounding the channel's present successes whilst reminding viewers of its history of offering programming across a range of ('commercialised') genres.

The range of programmes selected for the rebrand therefore attempt to arouse audience memories of its 'past' by utilising television's characteristic of 'ebb and flow' (Holdsworth 2011, 34). Writing about television's ability to stimulate memory, Amy Holdsworth argues that the medium is characterised by a 'rhythm of movement and stasis, the cyclicity and endlessness of the television text' (ibid). This metaphor is explored in relation to how TV dramas use formal elements to remind and replay previous events to viewers:

[television's] part/whole relations ...work to generate forms of resonance, associative possibilities and allusive meanings that can reveal the significance of thinking through the relationship between television and memory. Central to this relationship is the idea of the television viewing experience of one of accumulation, where viewing experiences and references are built up over time (ibid).

These ideas also characterise the Flagship Programming images. While contemporary programmes are used to demonstrate the new ITV logo, the images build on the cumulative experience of watching ITV that many of the channel's viewers will have. Audiences witnessing the rebrand are reminded that, as in the 'past', ITV continues to offer a range of programming types including forms of drama and light entertainment. The campaign draws on viewers' ebb and flow of ITV memories, to suggest continuity between the channel's 'new' and 'past' incarnations.

The connotations arising from ITV's 2013 Flagship Programming images can therefore be understood as what I would call brand reconciliation. Although the publicity stills primarily demonstrate the channel's new brand identity, the pictures also work to (re)establish continuity, and so transfer brand equity between the channel's heritage and its current mediated image. Brand reconciliation, as a concept, challenges existing academic work discussing corporate rebranding. Muzellec and Lambkin (2006, 806-7) argue that rebranding exercises can take place at different organisational levels, ranging from the overall corporate image (e.g. ITV plc) to individual product identities (e.g. the ITV channel). Differentiations can therefore be made between an 'evolutionary modification of the logos and slogan' (ibid, 804-5) and a more 'revolutionary' root-and-branch overhaul (ibid, 805). ITV's 2013 channel rebrand falls in the middle of this. If '[r]evolutionary rebranding ...describes a major, identifiable change in positioning and aesthetics that fundamentally redefines the company ...usually symbolised by a change of name' (ibid, 806), then the channel's rebrand intersects with this definition. The new logo, with its chameleonic use of colour and change of name, signify that noteworthy changes to the channel have occurred. Yet, if renaming a product constitutes how 'a corporation sends signals to consumers' (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin 2003, 34) about changes to the product's identity, then reverting back to 'ITV' from 'ITV1' is not revolutionary. Rather than 'wip[ing] out the positive mental images that the brand usually stimulates' (Muzellec and Lambkin 2006, 807), ITV plc's decision to rename the channel by recourse to its past instead connotes an attempt

to reunite this product with its heritage in the context of the present. Yet, these changes arguably represent more than ‘a fairly minor development in the company’s positioning and aesthetics’ (ibid, 805) and goes beyond Muzellec and Lambkin’s definition of brand evolution. The 2013 exercise combines aspects of both approaches because, while continuity is maintained between the channel and its pre-2001 naming, ITV’s channel brand aesthetic is completely overhauled. The changes to the channel brand therefore exemplify brand reconciliation. This term retains connotations arising from the prefix ‘re’ of ‘rebrand’, ‘implying the action is done a second time’ (ibid, 804), but also recognises how that a key aspect of this exercise is maintaining existing brand equity by re-forging links between popular memories of ITV and its ‘present’ incarnation.

Further inflections of brand reconciliation strategies can be observed by analysing other connotations arising from the Flagship Programming images. For example, positioning light entertainment programmes and stars as relevant to ITV’s 2013 brand identity connects the channel’s contemporary output with its initial blurring of taste markers regarding ‘both high and low quality, ...both British and American’ (Bignell 2005, 60) culture that dates back to early variety shows such as *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* (1955-67). Moreover, the four flagship dramas evoke memories of ITV’s previous regional structure. This is because all four of the images connote discourses of regionality in terms of either their production context or diegetic setting as the stills relate back to the Granada Television franchise. Granada was one of the original ‘Big Four’ regional franchises established at ITV’s inception which consistently provided programming for the entire ITV network while also serving directly the North West of England (Johnson and Turnock 2005b, 19). Despite losing its title as a result of the 2004 merger with Carlton, Granada remains one of the most celebrated regional ITV franchises: the company has been the subject of multiple historical retrospectives and insider accounts targeted towards both academic and popular readerships (Finch, Cox and Giles 2003; Fitzwalter 2008). Additionally, Granada has an established visibility within official retrospectives of ITV as the creator of both *Coronation Street* (Cherry 2005, 35-72) and long-established examples of ‘quality’ drama such as *Brideshead Revisited* (1981) (ibid, 126-31). The dramas positioned as Flagship Programming for the rebrand link to Granada’s legacy in various ways: *Downton Abbey* and *Mr Selfridge* suggest connections between the company’s ‘quality’ period dramas across two distinct televisual epochs, while connotations of regionality arise from *Coronation Street* and *Scott and Bailey*’s diegetic setting in Granada’s Greater Manchester area (*Scott and Bailey* is located in Oldham, approximately 10 miles from central Manchester). Positioning programmes evoking Granada

Television's history as examples of Flagship Programming can, on the one hand, be discussed in terms of ITV plc and ownership: Granada's stake as one of the largest ITV franchises prior to the formation of ITV plc suggest that the company still wields significant influence over the channel's brand identity. However, the content included in these images can also be read as an inflection of brand reconciliation as, by connoting ITV's previous regionalised structure, continuity between past and present is again connoted.

Conclusions

This article has contributed towards debates concerning television and branding in two areas. Firstly, the discussion has focused on issues of rebranding and has brought insights from both Cultural Studies and/or Business and Marketing to extend existing perspectives concerning the (re)construction of tele-brands. The necessity to contextualise a channel/company rebrand within the wider set of institutional circumstances that motivate change has been extrapolated from this work as there are often multiple factors that instigate rebranding exercises and these are complexly intertwined. In the case of ITV, the 2013 rebrand of both its channels and ITV plc arises from the combination of securing domestic stability as a result of licence renewal, increased financial success and expansions on both national and international fronts as part of the company's Transformative Plan. Equating channel rebranding with periods of either struggle or crisis provides too simplistic an understanding of why these exercises take place because, as this case demonstrates, aspects of institutional planning and policy provide additional motivating factors. Yet, although a range of factors point towards the reasons why the organisation undertook a rebranding exercise in 2013, the stated goals of this exercise suggest the continuation of existing knowledge concerning why tele-branding has been important to British broadcasters. Writing within the context of branding's emergence within British television during the 1990s, Johnson argues that such practices were 'particularly useful within the public service context ... because brands function to connect together different products and services within one set of values' (2012, 125). Although taking place within a different industrial context, this point resonates with ITV's overall rebrand as the exercise was presented with the aim of standardising its corporate image across myriad products and services. This has led to developing an architecture where independent identities are constructed for each product or service brand, but these also cumulatively build ITV plc's corporate identity. Moreover, as the Flagship Programming images suggest, attempts at transferring equity between different endorsed brands can occur by making strong associations between the main ITV channel and in-house commissions from ITV Studios.

Brand coherence therefore remains an important goal for British tele-brands within the contemporary marketplace.

This article has also sought to extend work on television and branding by making ITV visible within these discussions and considering how a mainstream commercial broadcaster with an established history (re)constructs its brand identity within British television's current fragmented landscape. This has led to discussion of what I have named brand reconciliation where, instead of forsaking established brand equity through wholesale overhauls of the ITV channel's name and aesthetics, attempts are instead made within promotional paratexts to reconnect ITV with audience memories of its previous incarnations. However, with regard to academic studies of ITV, discussing brand reconciliation strategies has not moved analysis of the institution away from its established discursive straightjacket concerning its negotiation of 'the relationship between commercial and public service broadcasting, and the relationship between national and regional broadcasting' (Johnson and Turnock 2005b, 15). With regard to branding, though, re-engaging with these issues may be inevitable. As Matt Hills reflects with regard to *Doctor Who* (2005-), rebranding exercises are usually 'all about reassuring viewers that things remain substantially the same' (2010b, online). In other words, ITV's attempts to activate memories of its regionalised structure and programming output through its Flagship Programming images are to be expected, as the channel's rebrand necessitates that continuity is foregrounded. Nevertheless, the connotations arising from these publicity images point towards the increasing commercial value of popular memories to established broadcasters within a multi-channel environment. One of the core brand messages for ITV's rebrand is to re-establish the brand within contemporary British popular culture and these Flagship Programming images appear 'on message'. By re-activating audience memories of watching ITV throughout their lives, this mainstream broadcaster is recognising the value of its heritage and is using this as a strategy for securing its future.

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