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MAPPING COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RESEARCH IN THE UK

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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Title of the report:

Mapping Communication and Media Research in the UK

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Abstract:

Mapping Communication and Media Research in the UK is part of a larger international research project called Mapping Communication and Media Research. It is a project that examines the contents and trends of current research in communication and media in several countries. The project is funded by Helsingin Sanomat Foundation.

The purpose of the project *Mapping Communication and Media Research in the UK* has been to produce an overview of current issues, the main trends and future challenges in the media industries and related communication and media research in Britain. The focus is on media research.

The report is based on various data sources, but relies mainly on interviews conducted with UK academics and industry. In all, 28 communication scholars and other experts were interviewed for the report. Additional data include content analysis of influential journals in media and communication and various secondary sources.

The report is organised in five parts:

Chapter 1 describes the historical development and current state of the British media, followed by sections on media markets, policies and regulation, and contents and consumption. Chapter 2 discusses research institutions and organisations in Britain, starting with universities and proceeding to commercially-focused media research companies, think-tanks and non-governmental organisations. This chapter ends with an overview of research funding in Britain. Chapter 3 begins with an outline of the current main approaches and methods of British academic media and communication research. This is followed by an introduction to key trends in research. Chapter 4 discusses the future of communication and media research in Britain. Specifically it concentrates on the challenges and concerns identified by various leading scholars. Chapter 5 reaches some conclusions on the basis of the report's findings. Key issues and discussions are illustrated with examples and cases throughout the report.

The study raises certain key issues in the British media landscape. The funding base of the media is in turmoil as advertisers increasingly invest their money in the internet. The traditional media, especially newspapers and commercial radio, are suffering from this development. Britain's traditionally strong newspaper sector has been undergoing a sharper decline in sales than has taken place in other European countries. On the other hand, some newspapers have managed to make their internet versions internationally successful. The introduction of digital, cable and satellite TV has led to the rapid fragmentation of television audiences. Consequently there are more channels competing for diminishing audiences. Despite the ongoing debate on its role, impartiality and funding, the public service broadcasting company, the BBC, remains strong: it still attracts large shares of both radio and television audiences. British people are among the most active internet users in Europe, yet there is a considerable digital divide: in a survey conducted in 2007 one quarter of the population had never used the internet.

In the light of the data gathered, key developments shaping British media and communication research can be identified. Firstly, British media and communication research might be becoming more valued and better integrated into the general body of academic research, overcoming the traditional dismissal of media subjects as less-intelligent. Secondly, collaboration between industry and academia seems to be strengthening in some areas. This development is enhanced by the government's research funding policy and the shared interest of the media industry and academia in the changes taking place in the media landscape. Thirdly, the gap or even rivalry that has existed between the cultural studies and political economy approaches in media research is diminishing. There are new attempts to bridge the gap and merge elements of the two approaches. The research areas that the interviewees for this report identified as most important or promising included: (1) globalisation (e.g. transcultural identities, the media as global business and diasporic media), (2) journalism, the media and democracy (e.g. the tabloidization of news, civic participation, digital divide and war propaganda) and (3) media convergence and its effects, for example on media uses, the media landscape and society.

Some fundamental reconsideration of the nature of the whole field is taking place in Britain at the moment. The basic theories, methods and conceptualisations are being challenged. Efforts are being made to become more up-to-date: less centred on the west, for example, and better suited to the new media landscape being shaped by media convergence and blurring boundaries between producers and audiences.

Key words: Communication and media research, media studies, mass media, media industry, United Kingdom

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Mapping communication and media research in the UK is a project which seeks to examine the contents and trends of current communication and media research in the UK. The focus is on media studies. The aim of the project is to examine the main approaches in research in order to produce an overview of British communication and media research – what is meant by communication and media research in Britain, what is being studied and how? The project has been conducted by the University of Jyväskylä's Department of Communication.

Mapping communication and media research in the UK is part of a larger international research project called *Mapping Communication and Media Research*. It is a project that examines the contents and trends in current research in communication and media in several countries. The University of Helsinki has previously compiled mapping projects of media and communication research in the US, Japan, Germany, France, Estonia, Finland and Australia. At the moment of writing this report, similar projects are taking place in the context of South Korea, the Netherlands, Belgium and Russia. The *Mapping Communication and Media Research* project is funded by Helsingin Sanomat Foundation.

The objective of the project is to provide a general overview of communication and media research in these countries. The project maps the main institutions and organisations as well as each country's approaches and national characteristics in media and communication research.

The main source material for the project consists of interviews with key figures in the field of communication and media research. In addition, material is drawn from existing research and statistics. There are also specific case studies which are designed to illustrate special future challenges, interesting debates, or innovations in each country and in every subproject.

The project's main research questions are:

- What kind of communication and media research is carried out in a specific country?
- How do different approaches relate to each other?
- What is the relationship between communication research and communication industries and what kind of applications does the research have?
- What is the focus of communication and media research in each country, and what direction is this research likely to take in the future?

Each country provides a unique context for communication and media research: in each of the countries examined research has been organised in different ways. In addition, the definitions and conceptualisations of communication and media research vary from one context and one country to another. This means that meaningful comparison of the research between different countries has proven to be a difficult task. The national statistics of the countries studied, for example, are often based on incompatible data and methods. Because of these difficulties in comparability, every sub-report provides country-specific explanations for the concepts used and for its samples and methods.

To try to enhance meaningful compatibility among the sub-reports, the research questions, research principles and structures are the same for each. The same organisation, themes and questions have also been used in the interviews. Each report starts with an introductory chapter describing the target country and its media landscape – i.e., communication and media systems and markets.

The purpose of the UK subproject is to produce an overview of current issues and main trends in Britain and to identify future challenges to the media industries and related communication research there. The main focus is on academic research, but research carried out by government institutions and private agencies is also included.

The UK report is based on various data sources. The main source material consists of interviews conducted during the spring of 2008 with 28 key people in the field of British communication and media research. The emphasis is on academic research and the choice of interviewees was guided by the latest Research Assessment Exercise

(RAE), which was conducted in 2001. The RAE is carried out jointly by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland. The primary purpose of the RAE is to produce quality profiles for the research activity of each institution.

After the institutions that ranked highly in the field of media and communication research were identified, the profiles of their personnel were looked at with the aim of understanding the extent of the field. Some interviewees were heads of their departments, some well established and respected researchers in their fields; some had long academic careers or careers in one of the media industries and could therefore bring a different perspective to the subject. In addition, attention was paid to the diversity of research topics and approaches that the interviewees represented: some people were included because they were seen to represent new kinds of approaches or research institutions. To some extent geographical diversity was also considered, although institutions in Scotland and Northern Ireland were excluded. In addition to the face-to-face interviews, one representative from the media industry's own research projects was interviewed by email. The interviews produce primary data covering not only the facts of current communication and media research but also indications as to how the interviewees foresaw research in this field developing in the future.

The interviews took place mainly between the researcher and one interviewee, but in one case the researcher talked with two interviewees. The interviews were structured around a written questionnaire but other themes were taken into consideration when necessary. In the interviews, which lasted about one hour and were taped and later transcribed, the interviewees talked freely about their work. The transcribed interview material makes up over 400 pages. Although 28 thematic interviews is insufficient to make quantitative inferences with respect to the overall media and communication research conducted within British academia and the media industry, they produced an extensive and multi-voiced body of data for qualitative analysis.

A small scale quantitative analysis was also carried out on recent publications in order to find more information on the main orientations of research.

The report is divided into five major sections: (1) the British media landscape, (2) research institutions and organisations, (3) main approaches in communication and media studies, (4) issues of importance for the future of research in the field and (5) conclusion.

1. Media Landscape in the United Kingdom

1.1. The British Context

The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy that is one of the key players in the world's politics and economy. Owing to its historical role as an industrial and maritime power, the UK has had a leading role in developing parliamentary democracy and in advancing literature and science. After World War II the UK became a significant exporter of culture: literature, theatre, film, television and popular music. The increasingly centralised system of government became more federal when the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly were established in 1999. In media terms, Scotland is the most distinctive region with its own national press (Tunstall 2004: 262). This presentation will mainly focus on national UK media.

The estimated population of the United Kingdom was 60.7 million in July 2007 (CIA 2008). British society is multi-ethnic, especially in London and the larger urban areas in England. According to the latest census in 2001, the proportion of the UK population from non-White backgrounds was eight percent, which means about 4.6 million people (ONS 2001). A more recent survey[1] conducted in 2006 suggests that the population share of ethnic minorities has been on the increase, possibly due to East European immigrants (Ofcom 2007d: 6). The largest minorities come from former British colonies: in 2001 Indians were the largest group, followed by Pakistanis, those of mixed ethnic backgrounds, Black Caribbean and Black Africans (ONS 2001). According to several interviewees, increasing immigration and multiculturalism affect British academia as well as media and communication research.

> "What Stuart Hall said again a long time ago, *the challenge of the 21st century is living together with the different*. I found that a very challenging concept. The demography of London is radically changing (…) and the traditional working class is disappearing. But who does the rotten work? It's migrants. "

> "Young people from around the world just want to come to London. I mean, look at the PhD-program – not a single Brit."

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[1] The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (July - September, 2006) conducted by the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) on behalf of the Office for National Statistics. Eastern Europeans are not defined as an ethnic group in ONS surveys to date, and therefore cannot be isolated for analysis. However, the biggest category increase is seen among those categorised as 'other'. (Ofcom 2007d: 6.)

The British political and media systems are firmly linked. Professors Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004: 66–86, 198–248) categorise the UK, together with the US, Ireland and Canada, as a liberal media model. The media history of these countries is bound together with strong political and cultural ties and their political system is characterised by liberalism, early democratisation, moderate pluralism and majoritarianism. Common to liberal countries is the early development of press freedom and mass circulation of the commercial press, which became overwhelmingly dominant, surpassing party, trade union, religious and other kinds of non-commercial media. In each country (except Ireland), commercial broadcasting has played a larger role than in most continental European countries, and newspaper circulation has fallen after the invention of television, still remaining relatively low compared to Northern Europe. In each liberal country, the professionalism of journalists is strong, as is the tradition of political insulation of public broadcasters and regulatory authorities.

However, according to Hallin and Mancini the British system differs in several ways from other liberal countries, tending rather towards the Northern European media model prevalent, for example, in Finland. Firstly, unlike in other liberal countries, state influence in the British media is high, as is illustrated by the dominance of the BBC and the public service ideology in British broadcasting and by the tight regulation of broadcasting – even though deregulation has undoubtedly been the trend in this decade. Secondly, the role of the print media in Britain has been considerably larger than in the US. Thirdly, while journalism in liberal model countries is considered to be neutral and information-orientated, in the British press distinct political orientations are clearly manifested in news content, although party affiliations have become weaker. (Ibid.)

1.2. Development and Structure by Medium

The Press

The British newspaper sector is considered to be among the strongest within the western democracies. Due to the early industrialisation of the British press from the 1850s

onwards[2], newspaper readership has been among the highest in Europe. Thus the British newspaper market can support many national titles, although the Nordic Countries such as Finland exceed British sales per head of population. In 2006 the UK ranked tenth in the world for newspaper circulation per thousand inhabitants. (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 22–26; Sanomalehtien Liitto 2007.)

A distinctive feature in the British national newspaper scene is the division into three market clusters: downmarket, midmarket and upmarket. The readerships of popular, midmarket and quality papers reflect to some extent social status. Especially the upmarket cluster has been strictly defined, with 90 percent of readers being categorised as more professional workers[3]. The most successful paper with the biggest sales for over 25 years has been *The Sun*. As part of Rupert Murdoch's News International, The *The Sun* redefined the popular market at the end of the 1960s by introducing the formula of entertainment, consumerism, celebrity and sensationalism. The midmarket is engaged with popular themes too, but is not considered to be so obviously populist. However, it is argued that popular content is gaining ground in all fields of British newspaper journalism as the space devoted to serious content, social analysis and policy issues diminishes. (Ward 2007: 73–86.) The characteristics of the three markets are sharpened by their different sources of profit, popular papers depending on daily sales and highbrow papers on advertising revenues. The British usually buy single issues of papers; less than a third of national daily sales were delivered to people's homes in

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[2] Regular news print arrived in the UK in the early seventeenth century, relatively late compared to the European Continent. In the 1620s a group of publishers started to issue regular bulletins called newsbooks that covered domestic and foreign news, and thus contributed to the emergence of a news culture in Britain. (Cranfield 1978:2; Conboy 2004: 9–25.) Until the beginning of the nineteenth century news was a luxury item for the bourgeoisie and highly educated upper class and the contents of papers pro-establishment. The press as a genuine mass medium was invented with the rise of the literate working-class. A radical press targeting urban workers evolved from 1815 on and, though vanished by the end of the century, created the popular market of the British national press. (McNair 1999: 144–145.) The figure of three newspaper markets was completed when *The Daily Mail* was launched in 1896 to cover populist, but conservative and tasteful, material targeting the expanding lower middle-class. The period from the 1850s to the early twentieth century marked the strong industrialisation and growth of newspaper production all over Britain. Since the 1920s the number of national newspapers has been stable as most of the current biggest nationals have their roots in the early twentieth century or beyond.

[3] The classification system widely used in the UK involves five broad socio-economic categories: A (upper professional); B (lower professional); C1 (clerical); C2 (skilled manual); D (unskilled); E (unemployed).

2004. Many readers in the UK are promiscuous and choose to read different titles on different weekdays. (Tunstall 2004: 264.)

Table 1. The most popular British Newspapers by Circulation in December 2007

National Newspapers – popular

The Sun (News International Ltd)	2,985,672
Daily Mirror (Trinity Mirror plc)	1,494,114
Daily Star (Express Newspapers)	726,465

National Newspapers – middle market

| The Daily Mail (Associated Newspapers Ltd) | 2,310,806 |
| Daily Express (Express Newspapers) | 744,539 |

National Newspapers – quality

The Daily Telegraph (Telegraph Group Limited)	873,523
The Times (News International Ltd)	615,313
Financial Times (Financial Times Ltd)[4]	449,187
The Guardian (Guardian Newspapers Ltd)	353,436
The Independent (Independent Newspapers UK Ltd)	228,400

National Newspapers – Sundays

News of the World (The Sun / News International Ltd)	3,167,435
The Mail on Sunday (Daily Mail / Associated Newspapers Ltd)	2,209,642
Sunday Mirror (The Daily Mirror / Trinity Mirror plc)	1,315,188
The Sunday Times (The Times / News International Ltd)	1,148,329
Sunday Express (Daily Express / Express Newspapers)	677,480
The People (The Daily Mirror / Trinity Mirror plc)	674,781
The Sunday Telegraph (The Daily Telegraph / Telegraph Group Limited)	611,293
The Observer (The Guardian / Guardian Newspapers Ltd)	429,420
Daily Star - Sunday (Daily Star / Express Newspapers)	360,416
Independent on Sunday (The Independent / Independent Newspapers (UK) Ltd)	198,222

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulation

The upmarket sector is the largest in number of titles but the smallest in total sales. Former journalist and principal lecturer in journalism Geoff Ward (2007: 83–84) has presented three trends in the upmarket sector that have been introduced to try to achieve bigger sales. First of all, to attract advertisers there has been a trend to launch exclusive supplements covering lifestyle, leisure or various fields of work and social life. Secondly, many quality papers have gone tabloid or more compact in size to serve busy readers in a more user-friendly form. These measures have led to gains in circulation, though the effect seems to fade with time. Thirdly, there has been a shift in the content of the quality papers from newspapers to 'viewspapers'. Due to challenges from more

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[4] *The Financial Times* is often categorised as specialised business paper rather than mainstream national.

real-time media, quality papers have put more emphasis on commentary and analysis than on plain facts. *The Guardian's* lay-out, for instance, has been designed to imitate web pages and "old news" has been recorded briefly to give space for in-depth stories. *The Times* for its part has been absorbing features of the midmarket agenda.

Table 2. Regional and local newspapers in Britain in October 2007

Daily and Sunday titles	Paid Mornings	22
	Free Mornings	10
	Paid Evenings	72
	Free Evenings	6
	Paid Sundays	10
	Free Sundays	8
Paid Weekly titles		532
Free Weekly titles		648
Total		1.308

Source: The Newspaper Society database as in October 2007

A peculiarity of British newspaper markets has been the dominance of national newspapers, while in the US and most large European countries regional dailies play a much larger role (Doyle 2002: 125). However, the British regional and local newspaper field is also strong, with around 1,300 titles. According to the Newspaper Society, the voice of Britain's regional and local press, the sector is evolving into multimedia businesses, which is demonstrated by the growing number of regional press websites, radio stations, niche publications, stand-alone magazines and online television services. (Newspaper Society.) By the 1990s the small-scale family businesses had become a highly profitable and concentrated sector owned by a few major corporations. Free papers emerged to challenge the status quo in the 1970s, and, as in Finland, they are now a significant rival to paid papers. In the UK, freebies made up more than half of all regional and local papers in 2007. (Freer 2007: 89–103.)

Magazines

The history of magazines in the UK, stretching back over 400 years, has been recently characterised by expansion. More than 8,300 consumer and business titles were published in 2007 and the number has been on the rise for over ten years, with new items popping up at a rate of more than one per day. Consequently, the "death rate" has also been fast, indicating the competitiveness of the sector. (PPA Marketing 2007: 3–8; 2008a.) In comparison, the emergence and demise of magazines in Finland has not led to growth in the number of titles (Aikakausmedia 2007a; 2008).

Professor of journalism and communication Brian McNair (1999: 16–18) has noted that there are thriving magazines in the UK, such as *The Economist* and *Private Eye*, with a clearly journalistic emphasis on investigation, background, analysis and commentary. During 2007 several news and current affairs magazines, including *The Week*, *The New Statesman* and *The Oldie*, increased their circulation, and *The Economist* has grown across all its editions in recent years. (PPA Marketing 2008a.) According to McNair the majority of periodicals operate on a less journalistic basis, straddling the boundaries of journalism, leisure, entertainment and business.

Table 3. Number of Consumer Magazine Titles in Each Sector

Leisure Interests	477	Home Interests	109
Sport	321	Men's Magazines	101
County, Town & Local Interest	305	Music	98
Women's Magazines	239	Outdoor Pursuits	96
Youth	217	Health, Fitness & Beauty	87
Travel and Tourism	211	Ethnic & Expatriates	86
Education & Careers	207	General Interest	70
Entertainment & Leisure Guides	182	Computing	56
Motoring	176	Food & Drink	53
News & Current Affairs	136	Motorcycling	40
Buying & Selling	132	Personal Finance	16

Source: PPA Marketing 2007: 19.

As in Finland, the highest circulations are in customer magazines – the fastest growing sector in UK magazines, with a primary goal of communicating business and product information. *Skymag*, the customer publication for British Sky Broadcasting (BSkyB) subscribers, had the highest circulation of more than seven million copies in 2007. Among actively purchased items, readership of women's titles and TV guides has been the highest. The latter contain information on TV and radio coverage as well as TV gossip and celebrity interviews. *Take a Break*, a weekly magazine covering relationship, health, beauty and housekeeping tips with an upfront style, has held the market leadership in women's lifestyle since the 1990s. (PPA Marketing 2008a.)

Behind the top lists, some trends are evident. There has been growth in the number of children's titles in recent years, and high profile children's launches took place in 2007. ABC figures show growth for titles targeted at pre-school, primary school and pre-teen children. These titles include e.g. *Bratz, Doctor Who Adventure Magazine* and *Go Girl*. (PPA Marketing 2007: 34.) The increasing popularity of gaming consoles is reflected in

the success of Xbox 360 and Nintendo titles. A recent phenomenon in the men's lifestyle sector has been the especially successful development of brands online. For example *Nuts*, which has seen the circulation of its print edition decline, launched *Nuts TV* and at the end of 2007 had attracted over 940,000 unique users. (PPA Marketing 2008a.)

Table 4. Total UK and Ireland Actively Purchased Magazine Circulation*
July–December 2007

Rank & Title	Publisher	Category	Circulation
1 TV Choice	H Bauer Publishing	TV Listing	1,403,512
2 What's on TV	IPC	TV Listing	1,385,840
3 Radio Times	BBC Worldwide Ltd.	TV Listing	1,036,476
4 Take a Break	H Bauer Publishing	Women's Lifestyle	988,056
5 Saga Magazine	Saga Publishing Ltd.	General Interest**	649,400
6 Reader's Digest	Reader's Digest Association	General Interest	624,741
7 OK! Magazine	Northern & Shell	Women's Lifestyle	606,198
8 Closer	H Bauer Publishing	Women's Lifestyle	536,186
9 Heat	H Bauer Publishing	Women's Lifestyle	515,934
10 Chat	IPC	Women's Lifestyle	505,178
11 Glamour	Conde Nast Publications	Women's Lifestyle	497,890
12 That's Life	H Bauer Publishing	Women's Lifestyle	453,405
13 Now	IPC	Women's Lifestyle	450,969
14 Good Housekeeping	National Magazine Company	Women's Lifestyle	445,742
15 New!	Northern & Shell	Women's Lifestyle	440,309
16 Pick Me Up	IPC	Women's Lifestyle	413,424
17 Cosmopolitan	National Magazine Company	Women's Lifestyle	386,748
18 Woman	IPC	Women's Lifestyle	363,112
19 TV Times	IPC	Women's Lifestyle	357,848
20 Love It!	News Magazines Ltd.	TV Listing	354,125

*) Table does not include free papers such as many customer papers.
**) Saga Magazine concentrates on the interests and concerns of the over-50s market and simultaneously, though subscription-based, serves as a marketing tool for Saga Group's services.
Source: PPA Marketing 2008.

Television

In broadcasting the British were pioneers: BBC television was first launched before World War II, in 1936.[5] Today British television is a unique mixture of public service

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[5] BBC television broadcasting was launched in 1936 and re-launched after World War II in 1946. The BBC monopoly evolved into a duopoly with the emergence of a commercial ITV channel (now Channel 3) in 1955. However, ITV news, produced by Independent Television News ITN, was constrained with the same impartiality and diversity objectives as BBC News. The ITN's editorial decision-making process was to be free of any pressure from advertisers or the owners of ITV companies. Even today ITV declares on its webpage that it is "the most regulated channel in Britain". The duopoly was broken with the introduction of new terrestrial channels, BBC2 in 1964, Channel 4 in 1982 and finally Five in 1997. A truly multi-channel television system, however, extra-terrestrial television, was introduced to the British in the early 1990s. Especially the satellite company British Sky Broadcasting (BSkyB), the major part of which is owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, proved popular in part due to its UK-based 24-hour news. (E.g. Tunstall 1983 and 2004; McNair 1999.) Due to the failure of cable, the BSkyB satellite package was completely dominant in the pay-TV sector by the mid-1990s (Hesmondhalgh 2007: 124).

and commercial broadcasting. The dominant player in British television with the most viewers is the BBC, a prototype of a state broadcaster funded through television license fees. However, besides two BBC channels, all the other traditional terrestrial channels in the UK are also engaged in public service. Channel 4 is a non-profit public corporation funded by advertising revenues and engaged in public service tasks. Commercial channels ITV1 (Channel 3) and Five (Channel 5) have public service responsibilities. There are also an increasing number of purely commercial channels funded by advertising, sponsorship, subscription or a mix of these.[6] (DCMS 2007a: 243.) Despite the upward satellite and cable penetration, terrestrial TV – moving from analogue to digital – still takes up the majority of main TV sets. (Ofcom 2007a: 3–17.)

Characteristic of recent television broadcasting in the UK is the fragmentation of audiences due to the proliferation of the number of broadcast channels and further speeded up by the digitalisation and deregulation of broadcasting. Multichannel viewing, referring to widened channel options through the use of digital, cable and satellite television, has risen faster in Britain over the decade than in its European neighbours (Ofcom 2007c: 3). Several interviewees regarded the increase in the number of channels, the fragmentation of audiences and thus diminishing advertising profits for public service broadcasters (PSBs) as one of the most notable shifts in the British media landscape over the past decade. It was argued that the quality of TV contents has deteriorated. One interviewee said:

> "It wasn't so many years ago when all of the channels in Britain were public service, now it's a very small proportion. (…) Whereas we had five very well funded channels [the PSBs] that could produce high quality programmes and that had different remits (…), now they're all scrambling for the same pot of money so they tend to invest in cheaper programming."

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[6] In addition, Welsh Fourth Channel S4C makes a special case as it receives grants from the government and benefits from the BBC.

Table 5. Annual % Shares of Viewing (Individuals) 2000—2007

Year	BBC1	BBC2	ITV 1 (incl.GMTV)	C4	five	Others
2000	27.2	10.8	29.3	10.5	5.7	16.6
2001	26.9	11.1	26.7	10.0	5.8	19.6
2002	26.2	11.4	24.1	10.0	6.3	22.1
2003	25.6	11.0	23.7	9.6	6.5	23.6
2004	24.7	10.0	22.8	9.7	6.6	26.2
2005	23.3	9.4	21.5	9.7	6.4	29.6
2006	22.8	8.8	19.6	9.8	5.7	33.3
2007	22.0	8.5	19.2	8.6	5.1	36.5

Source: BARB 2008b.

Since audiences are more difficult to attract, it has been argued that British television has become more populist and commercial. Even though television output in Britain has increased massively, Professor Jean Seaton (2003: 202) has argued that audiences can choose from an even greater concentration of pop, chat, soap and sport and that there might be less incentive to make programmes about British subjects for domestic audiences. Emeritus Professor Jeremy Tunstall (2004: 265) claims that the 1990s saw an increase in advertising minutes as well as in the commercial sponsorship of programming, in the promotion of what channels are offering, and in spending on celebrities to perform on screen. The television news in particular is said to have shifted from traditional journalism to softer content, especially in the case of ITV (Beers & Egglestone 2007: 146, 153). Apart from this, there is an outstanding trend towards broadcasting 'on demand' and time-shifting, whether on TV (24-hour news), digital TV sets that perform a lot more like computers, the internet, or with sophisticated digital video recorders.

Although the share of extraterrestrial and digital-only channels is growing, the oldest British terrestrial channel, BBC1, alone still accounted for over a fifth and the BBC channels together for around a third, of all television watching in the UK in 2007. The total audience share of terrestrial channels offering public service contents was almost two thirds in 2007. (BBC 2007: 66; BARB 2008b.)

Radio

Radio broadcasting started in the UK in 1922, which marks the birth of the BBC as well as of the concept of public service broadcasting. Despite the emergence of commercial radio in the 1970s, the BBC alone still attracts over half of all listening in the UK (see

table 6).[7] Nowadays it is claimed that UK commercial radio has abandoned speech content and focuses only on music, in order to compete for young audiences. Meanwhile, BBC radio is considered the only zone of serious content, analysis and current affairs, although some BBC channels are concerned only with entertainment. (Drury 2007: 105–110.) Despite the competition, radio's appeal in Britain appears strong. In 2005 total time spent listening to the radio was higher than in the beginning of the 1990s, and apparently, new media applications, such as the self-scheduling of radio listening through the web and podcasting, have increased interest in radio. (Rudin 2006.) In the past five years radio's reach has been relatively stable, at around 90 percent, but total listening hours have fallen. (Ofcom 2007b: 233–239.)

Table 6. Average audience share: BBC and competitors

The table shows the percentage of hours of listening in an average week in 2006/2007.

BBC Radio	54.9
BBC Radio 1	10.1
BBC Radio 2	15.8
BBC Radio 3	1.2
BBC Radio 4	11.4
BBC Radio Five Live	4.3
BBC Radio Five Live Sports Extra	0.2
1Xtra	0.2
BBC 6 Music	0.2
BBC 7	0.4
BBC Asian Network	0.3
BBC Local Radio (including Nations)	10.2
BBC World Service9	0.7
All commercial radio	43.1
Virgin AM/FM	1.5
Classic FM	4.2
talkSPORT	1.9
All local commercial radio	32.3
BBC Radio	54.9

Source: BBC 2007: 66.

The deregulation and to some extent the digitalisation of radio has contributed to the number of channels available in the UK. Although commercial radio still hardly serves

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[7] Radio was popular in Britain in the 1930's but after the invention of television, the fate of radio was to be a secondary medium. Radio, however, preserved the core philosophy of the BBC in its serious and educative contents with heavy deference to the political and cultural establishment. An important innovation came from pirate radio, which flourished in ships off the British coast in the mid-1960s; American-style programming with commercials and the emphasis on popular music came ashore. Soon the BBC split into four radio networks with a slightly modernised programming. Commercial radio followed in 1973 and spread quickly to the biggest cities. The 1990 Broadcasting Act brought dozens of community stations and several national channels into being. (Tunstall 1983: 45–53; McNair 1999: 10–11, 132–136.)

groups such as ethnic minorities, in London there are local commercial channels dedicated to a wide variety of minority perspectives stretching from gays to environmental issues. (Rudin 2006.) The BBC participates in the minority market with its Asian Network, a channel dedicated to British Asians with the focus on news and current affairs. The prospects for UK digital radio seem currently a bit gloomy, as a key national provider of digital radio services, GCap Media, withdrew from digital business at the beginning of 2008. The decision was said to reflect the doubts the company had about the economic viability of the platform. (Plunkett 2008.)

Case-in-point: Diasporic Media

When Ofcom awarded television licenses in 2005, two kinds of channels stood out as most popular: entertainment and ethnic channels. Over thirty ethnic channels were awarded a licence, a fifth more than in the previous year. (Ofcom 2007b: 6.) The figure illustrates the fast growth of ethnic or diasporic media in the UK targeting many minorities. Among the 2005 licence receivers there was Channel Punjab, a Punjabi family entertainment television channel that started beaming in September 2006 and widened its service across Europe the next month. According to the channel's webpage it "offers a wide bouquet of informative and entertaining programs and touches upon all aspects of Punjabi life and culture, which has been ignored far too long". In fact, according to Beckett (2008: 149), there has been no widespread increase in the number of e.g. black or Muslim journalists in the UK, which has contributed to a growing feeling among the young in minority groups that the mainstream media is not for them.

Diasporic media take many forms, from a local radio programme on social benefits targeted at the UK Greek population to an Ethiopian webpage addressing the UK refugee community. In 2002 there were over 120 diasporic media in the UK including newspapers, periodicals, radio and TV stations, discussion groups and web pages. The majority of these media were published in London and in print but the Ofcom figure suggests digitalisation and deregulation has contributed to a rising number of especially electronic ethnic media. (Georgiou 2005; 2002: 28–57.)

The Question of the BBC

As in Finland, in Britain the legitimacy of public service broadcasting and especially the fact that the BBC is funded by the licence fee has been repeatedly questioned over the past few decades. As Will Wyatt, the former managing director of the BBC said: "Every decade we have a mighty debate about whether the BBC has a future in whatever is the new world of broadcasting" (Wyatt 2006). At the moment licence fee funding for the BBC is guaranteed until the end of 2016 (BBC). Before that date discussion on the role of the corporation is likely to flare up again. Apart from funding, questions of the core purpose, reach and impact, quality of output, impartiality and management of the corporation have arisen. Critics claim that due to the need to win audiences, BBC contents are less different from commercial channels than they should be; why should the public pay for a service that could be delivered through a commercial business model? It is also widely questioned whether the commercial PSBs, ITV1 and Five, should have any institutional role in the delivery of public service content in the future. (Ofcom 2004; Ofcom 2008; Drury 2007: 110.)

Notwithstanding the critics, the BBC is trusted more than the National Health Service, the Church of England, the military, the media in general and the government (BBC 2008). In attitude surveys the importance of PSBs and the BBC in particular has been highlighted. An undeniable fact is that PSBs made up 90 percent of total investment in domestic UK content in 2008. (Ofcom 2004; Ofcom 2008). Tunstall (2004: 268) has observed that the BBC is the only British media world leader – though in the diminishing field of public service broadcasting. But the BBC has appeared to realise its monetary value: utilising its commercial arms, it increasingly seeks profits outside the UK, in particular in the world's richest English-language market. BBC America, a largely entertainment channel with BBC World news bulletins, has increased in popularity and was available in 40 million US homes in 2007. (Beers & Egglestone 2007: 142.)

New Media and Convergence

The emergence of new media and their convergence with the old was regarded by several interviewees as the most important change in both the UK and global media landscape. In his recent book *SuperMedia*, Charlie Beckett (2008: 41–86), the director

of the journalism and society think thank Polis, states that the idea of networked journalism will lead interaction with the public to a new level and will eventually save journalism. In this vision the journalist is the person who alerts the network to the emergence of a story and begins a process of building, testing and linking the information. Sharing the process with the public means a new relationship of greater transparency and responsibility.

Driven by the widening availability of broadband, the pace of convergence has accelerated in the UK from 2005 on. As a consequence there are many new revenue opportunities for producers of different kinds of content. In the UK music industry singles sales have grown through online and mobile downloads and the computer game market has expanded due to rising broadband take-up. There is increasing choice in new video and audio services, from the UK and overseas, offered via broadband and 3G mobile networks. Mobile operators partner leading internet brands that produce mobile-enhanced versions of their services. But although the conditions for the mobile internet to take off have improved significantly, users have not so far widely embraced the opportunity. (Ofcom 2007b: 5, 19–27, 57–59; Ofcom 2006b: 110.)

The availability and usage of many technologies have widened in the UK. The current penetration rates for mobile phones and the internet are lower than those in Nordic countries but higher than in France and Germany. Despite the slow roll out of broadband, internet use and broadband penetration have increased steadily. Mobile phones were almost ubiquitous in 2007, used by 90 percent of the UK population. (Ofcom 2007b: 5–8, 266; Dutton & Helsper 2007: 20; EIU 2007a.)

Case-in-point: UK Media Brands Flourish Online

The traditional UK media brands attract online audiences around the globe, with visitors outside the UK outnumbering domestic ones. *The Mail Online* attracted the highest proportion of foreign visitors, reaching 70 percent in November 2007. Despite the circulation falls of print editions, online traffic figures of UK media brand websites have been upwards. (ComScore[8] 2008.) January 2008 marked a record month as

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[8] ComScore, according to its own webpage, is a company that measures phenomena of the digital world by surveys.

probably the US presidential elections and a vivid celebrity month led to the reporting of record traffic figures on several UK newspaper web pages. For instance, the *Mail Online* saw unique user numbers rocket more than 160 percent compared to the previous year, to 18 million, and again a high percentage of the users were outside the UK (Kiss 2008a; Kiss 2008b).

Table 7. Top ten traditional UK media brands by web traffic in November 2007

Property	UK Audience	Global audience	Share of global audience
BBC Sites	18,897	45,967	59 %
BSkyB	7,654	9,565	20 %
ITV Sites	5,923	7,677	23 %
Guardian	3,666	8,301	56 %
TheSun.co.uk	3,321	6,000	45 %
Channel4	3,255	5,234	38 %
Telegraph	2,679	6,226	57 %
Times Online	2,422	5,390	55 %
DailyMail.co.uk	2,369	7,556	69 %
Independent.co.uk	899	1,785	50 %

Source: ComScore 2008.

The mainstream media in the UK continue to expand their news offerings online, often encouraging user-generated material and offering audio-visual programming on-demand. The online business models are complex, with the most common sources of revenue being advertising-supported services and partial or full subscription services. (Nel, Ward & Rawlinson 2007.) Even though information on the profitability of the web is difficult to gather, scholars at the Cardiff School of Journalism have come to the conclusion that "[B]y far the most successful British online news providers – the BBC and *The Guardian* – have both had their operations subsidised. This may indicate the commercial limits of online news services." Compared with the other national papers *The Guardian*, owned by the non-profit organisation Scott Trust, which "measures the return on its investment in terms broader than pure financial performance" [Guardian Media Group], has been one of the most successful media houses in its web operations and the one with most staff engaged with the web. (Lewis et al. 2008: 9–10.) However, according to the UK Association of Online Publishers, representing online publishing companies including print, broadcast and pure online media, the total turnover for its members' digital operations grew by around two thirds over the course of 2006. (PPA Marketing 2007: 73.)

Table 8. Content and functionality offered online by the UK broadsheets

Title	Web-site	Mobi-le	Pod-cast	TV	Blogs	RSS	Digital edition*	E-mail	Desk-top	Busi-ness model
The Guardian	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ads
The Times	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Ads
The Telegraph	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Ads
The Independent	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Ads
The Financial Times	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	Ads & subscrip-tion

* A digital edition is a full version of the print copy that can be accessed online.
Source: Ofcom 2007b.

Table 9. Audiovisual output distributed by PSBs over the internet

Broadcaster	On-demand Service	Business model
BBC	BBC iPlayer offers on-demand access to programmes shown in the last seven days	Free to view
ITV	ITV.com offers access to recent episodes of *Emmardale* and *Coronation Street* ITV local offers on-demand access to local news and information	Free to view though ads may be played
Channel 4	4OD on-demand downloadable Access to range of archive programmes	Pay per download

Source: Ofcom 2007b.

1.3. Media Market in the UK

The Creative Industries

Since the late 1990s the media branch in Britain has been categorised as belonging to the 'creative industries', which means industries based on individual creativity, skill and talent. It is estimated that the British creative sector, which comprises thirteen industries including communications (see below), is the largest in the EU and probably the largest in the world measured by the industries' share of GDP. UNESCO estimates that the UK is the world's biggest exporter of cultural goods, while only the US surpasses Britain in its range of certain creative industries such as television, music, advertising and publishing. The creative industries are a growing sector, the importance of which is illustrated by the fact that it employed about one million people in 2007 and accounted for more than 7 percent of the total UK gross value added (GVA)[9] in 2004 – twice as much as tourism in Britain. In 2007 the biggest creative branches by GVA share were all related to communication. These are, in descending order: software, computer games

[9] The link between GVA and GDP can be defined as: GVA (at current basic prices) plus taxes on products less subsidies on products equals GDP (at current market prices) (DCMS 2007).

and electronic publishing; publishing; radio and TV and advertising. (DCMS 2007a; 2007b.)

Table 10. The creative industries

The creative industries are: Advertising; architecture; publishing; radio and TV; design; film; music; software and computer services; computer games (interactive leisure); designer fashion; crafts; performing arts; and the arts and antique market.

Source: Department for Culture, Media and Sports.

Internet Attracts Advertisers

The internet attracts an increasing share of advertising spending. British advertisers' spending on the web has grown the most over the last five years among the "key countries"[10] included in Ofcom's comparison. The revenue per capita generated from internet advertising in Britain was also found to be the highest among the countries studied. The absolute revenue of internet advertising in the UK was twice as much as that of Germany, Italy and France combined. (Ofcom 2007c: 18, 64–65.) According to The Advertising Association, the internet's share of total advertising expenditure was more than one tenth in 2006, while the same figure according to Ofcom was as high as 14 percent (Ofcom 2007c: 18). Nonetheless, the traditional media have been losing in advertising shares as well as in absolute advertising revenues. (Advertising Association 2007a.)

Many interviewees considered the internet's appeal to advertisers to be a regrettable development, particularly for the economics of the print press:

> "It is going to put pressure on local newspapers that will lose their classified advertising. It has already clearly put pressure on national newspapers. (…) It's difficult to predict what will happen; I think that newspapers that are strongly insulated from the market, like *The Guardian*, will survive."

The increase in online advertising was also regarded as a threat to the whole media system, as one interviewee said:

> "The internet is one hundred percent dependent on advertising. I think it shifts our information systems towards being too dependent on advertising revenue and there's simply not enough of that revenue to make good quality media."

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[10] The "key countries" include the UK, France, Germany, Italy, the US, Canada and Japan.

Table 11. Total advertising expenditure, percentage of total %

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
National Newspapers	13.3	12.5	11.5	11.0	10.7	10.1	10.0
Regional Newspapers	16.3	17.1	17.2	17.1	17.0	15.8	14.6
Consumer Magazines	4.4	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.3
Business & Professional	7.5	7.3	6.5	6.0	5.9	5.6	5.3
Directories	5.1	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.8	6.0	6.2
Press production costs	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.4
Total press	50.9	51.4	49.6	48.2	47.3	45.3	43.7
Television	27.4	25.1	25.9	25.2	25.2	25.4	24.1
Direct Mail	12.1	13.5	14.2	14.2	13.4	12.5	12.2
Outdoor & Transport	4.8	4.8	4.9	5.3	5.3	5.5	5.7
Radio	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.1	2.8
Cinema	0.8	1.00	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Internet	0.9	1.00	1.2	2.7	4.5	7.2	10.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: The Advertising Statistics Yearbook 2007 / The Advertising Association 2007b.

Slump in Sales in the Press

The new millennium has meant a slow and consistent slide in British newspaper sales. During the first half of this decade the circulation of UK paid-for dailies declined considerably more than in other European countries such as Finland (World Press Trends 2005: 20). In the national sector, all three markets including Sundays saw their circulation drop by about 7 percent between 2001 and 2005. Despite the fact that there has been talk of a 'newspaper crisis' ever since television was invented, it seems that this steep slump in sales is quite a recent trend in Britain, as the decline has accelerated after 1995. (Ward 2007: 76) In December 2007 even the tabloid market leader *The Sun*, the flagship of News International, sold less than its average three million copies a day for the first time in 33 years. In the same year the *Financial Times*, awarded the title 'newspaper of the year', was the only daily national title to increase its year-on-year sales in most months. (Guardian Unlimited 2008.) According to Senior Lecturer Gillian Doyle (2002: 129, 134), the *Financial Times*, a specialised niche paper, is valued for its unique coverage, not offered in any other UK daily title. She claims too that the *FT* is exceptional in that it is widely read outside its domestic market. With some exceptions, there is also a downward trend in the circulations of paid-for regional and local papers, with the steepest decline in regional dailies. As Julie Freer, BA (Hons) Journalism course leader at the University of Central Lancashire puts it, it is "an industry where (…) a fall of anything less than five percent is considered a success story". (Freer 2007: 94.)

As far as profits are concerned, the regional paper business has so far managed to maintain or actually increase its profitability, due to its highly centralised corporate structures which have enabled efficiencies of scale reinforced by stringent cost savings (Freer 2007: 95). While not as profitable as regional papers, the national newspapers have generally retained healthy levels of turnover and profits over the last twenty years. There were marked differences between the national newspaper groups, however: the tabloid groups have demonstrated the most consistent and highest levels of profitability, which is especially true of *The Sun* and the *News of the World*. (Lewis et al. 2008: 8–9.)

Nevertheless, some interviewees were quite pessimistic about the economic capability of the print media. One of them argued that "it won't take place immediately, but it looks as though we're moving in the direction of fewer national titles". It is claimed that only the market leaders, *The Sun*, the *News of the World*, *The Sunday Times* and the *Daily Mail* are likely to stay substantially profitable in the future in the fiercely competitive national newspaper sector (Ward 2007: 77). All of these titles except the *Daily Mail* are published by News International, wholly owned by US-based media conglomerate News Corporation. According to Tunstall (2004: 264), market leadership has been particularly rewarding in the UK newspaper business as a single issue of *The Sunday Times*, the market leader of quality Sundays, can generate profits of over one million pounds.

In the magazines sector development has been brighter in both the UK and Finland. Overall, average operating profit margins in UK magazine publishing have been higher than in the newspaper industry (Doyle 2002: 134). Consumer and advertising expenditure on magazines and total magazine sales have risen this decade, and many of the UK's leading consumer titles generate profits globally producing regional editions appearing under a generic worldwide brand. However, 2005 seemed to be a turning point, as figures peaked then and were followed by the collapse of UK sales in 2006, with advertising revenues also declining. (PPA Marketing 2007: 10–11, 83–84; Associated Newspapers.; Aikakausmedia 2007b: 6–7.)

Subscription Revenues Grow in TV Sector

The UK television industry has managed to increase revenues year after year. However, the maturity of the sector means that growth has been slower in the UK than in other European countries. Subscription is leaving advertising increasingly far behind as the main source of TV revenue. The change indicates increasing competition, which has led to the commercial public service broadcasters (PSBs) losing audience shares and advertising profits. The PSBs have responded by launching their own digital-only spin-off channels, which have attracted especially younger viewers and, most importantly, advertisers. (Ofcom 2007b: 101–102, 168; 2007c: 16.)

Table 12. UK television industry

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total industry revenue (£bn)	8.9	9.3	10.1	10.6	10.8
Proportion of total revenue:					
Public funds	25 %	25%	23 %	23%	23%
Advertising	35 %	35 %	34 %	33 %	32%
Subscription	32 %	35 %	35 %	37 %	37 %
Other*	7 %	6 %	7 %	7 %	7 %

* Includes e.g. TV shopping, interactive services, pay-per-view, sponsorship, program sales and public funding.
Source: Ofcom 2007b: 101, 117.

Both multichannel development and online distribution were considered to be threats to the economic model of broadcasting by several of the scholars interviewed.

> "If you're delivering podcasts of individual shows to a small and selected audience, I don't know how you make money out of it. (…) Mass broadcasting is very simple: you need lots of money to produce good programmes to get a big audience, now that's not rocket science. (…) But niche-broadcasting – quite a different business. (…) You don't have to be a Nobel Prize winner to realize that the amount of finance available for programming is radically (…) smaller than if you have 20–30 percent of the audience."

In 2007 the British television industry was the largest in Europe, and many key European operators in broadcasting appeared to be British. Measured by revenue, the BBC was the biggest free-to-air channel operator, and BSkyB the biggest in the pay-TV sector. (Ofcom 2007c: 14–15, 111–112.) UK television production is also influential around the world, which is seen in its heavy investment in programme production and the export of television formats. The UK has a substantial and growing independent television production sector made up of producers not belonging to any broadcaster. (Ofcom 2006c: 117–118; 2007b: 141–142.)

Radio Revenues Shrink

The UK radio market is strongly influenced by the BBC. While the BBC's expenditure has been in steady growth over the decade, total UK radio revenue has taken a downward turn after years of growth, partly as a result of increasing advertising on the web. The gap between BBC and commercial radio is reflected in listening figures: the BBC has been able to gather more listening hours over the last five years as the share of commercial radios has shrunk. In comparison, the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE has constantly lost its share of listening hours in favour of commercial radio (Herkman & Vähämaa 2007: 16). In 2007 the most thriving commercial radio formats, generating the vast majority of commercial radio revenue, continued to be chart-led and adult mainstream genres. (Ofcom 2007b: 198–201.)

Two UK radio groups, Gcap and Emap, made it into the world's top ten biggest radio groups by revenue in 2006 (Ofcom 2006c: 155–156). However, the problems of the UK radio business have been demonstrated by acquisitions recently. In 2007 Emap, the second largest radio company in the country sold its radio and consumer magazine functions to the German publisher Bauer, and in 2008 the third biggest UK radio group, Global Radio, bought GCap. According to *The Guardian*, both Emap and Gcap had suffered from the fast-changing advertising-markets, with large amounts of spending moving from print and radio to the web. (Allen 2007; 2008.)

Table 13. UK radio industry

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total industry revenue (£bn)	1.083	1.128	1.158	1.156	1.149
Proportion of total revenue					
BBC expenditure	53 %	52 %	52 %	54%	55 %
Total commercial	47 %	48 %	48 %	46 %	45 %
National commercial	27 %	27 %	25 %	24 %	23 %
Local commercial	13 %	14 %	15 %	15 %	13 %
Commercial sponsorship	7 %	7 %	8 %	8 %	9 %

Source: Ofcom 2007b: 189, 198.

Telecoms Grow Fastest

Telecommunications has been the fastest growing sector of the UK economy since the mid-1990s (accounting for around 3.5 percent of GDP in 2007). Since the privatisation of the telecoms market, network coverage has improved, prices have fallen and new UK-based firms have emerged, especially in the mobile phone sector – for instance

Vodafone, the world's largest mobile-telecoms company in terms of revenue. The UK is a leader in 3G mobile phone research and development as well as a pioneer in developing much of today's electronic industry. (EIU 2007a.)

Mobile telephony makes up the largest proportion of UK telecoms industry by revenue generation. Total growth in telecoms appears to have slowed down as fixed-line revenues shrink, growth in mobile and broadband slows and prices fall. (Ofcom 2007b: 271–292.) Due to the high saturation level of the mobile market and the limited scope for further growth, UK mobile operators have attempted to raise revenue by other services besides voice and SMS. (EIU 2007a) In 2006 the UK was the biggest mobile data market in Europe in terms of revenue, with the major part of it coming from text messaging (Ofcom 2007c: 178).

Table 14. UK telecoms industry

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total retail revenue (£bn)	32.3	34.4	36.3	37.9	38.5
Total wholesale revenue (£bn)	8.6	8.8	8.6	8.3	8.5
Telecom service revenues (£bn)	40.9	43.1	44.8	46.2	47.0
Average weekly household spend in telecoms services (£bn)	60.7	64.2	66.7	65.7	64.7

Source: Ofcom 2007b: 255.

Concentration of Ownership

In the UK, sales and audience reach are dominated by comparatively few companies in many media branches. The simultaneous forces of consolidation and fragmentation have led to the co-existence of both large and small enterprises, which is not, however, an especially British feature. (DCMS 2007: 45.) The discussion about the concentration of media ownership in Britain often refers to Australian-American Rupert Murdoch's activities as a major shareholder and chief executive officer of one of the world's largest media conglomerates, News Corporation. Murdoch introduced cross-media ownership to the British at the beginning of the 1990s when he became not only the biggest owner of their national newspapers but also the chief owner of the only direct satellite television platform, BSkyB. (Tunstall 2004: 263–269.)

In recent years, ownership in British television has been relatively static, but there have been some significant mergers and acquisitions. Perhaps the most notable change has

taken place within the ITV Network as the regional television companies in England and Wales have merged into a single company. Professor Jackie Harrison (2006: 85) of the University of Sheffield has noted that in regional television the relaxation of ownership rules has led to "the establishment of a news oligopoly in the commercial sector (alongside a news monopoly in the public sector)". UK commercial radio has also experienced major mergers and acquisitions, leading to heavily centralised ownership. In 2006 the two biggest groups of the time, GCap Media and Emap, controlled over half, and the three biggest companies, adding Global Radio to the group, almost 70 percent, of all commercial radio listening. (Ofcom 2006a: 29; Ofcom 2007b: 6.) In 2008 Global Radio and GCap have agreed to merge.

The nine most important general national titles and their Sunday supplements are owned by seven companies. In terms of sales, however, ownership looks less diverse, as Rupert Murdoch's News International (*The Sun, News of the World, The Times* and *The Sunday Times*) accounted for over 30 percent of national sales at the beginning of 2006. Moreover, the three largest groups, News International, Associated Newspapers (*Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday*) and Trinity Mirror (*The Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror*, and *The Sunday People*) were responsible for over 70 percent of total national circulation in 2006. (Ofcom 2006a: 37–38.) In the regional and local press sector, acquisitions and mergers gathered pace in the early 1990s and ownership patterns within the sector have been extremely lively ever since. As a result, the regional press is now largely owned by only a few major players who have formed monopolies in many areas of the UK. (Freer 2007: 93.) In 2005 the top five regional publishers commanded more than 80 percent of regional newspaper circulation (Ofcom 2006a: 38).

Table 15. Top five regional press publishers in January 2008

Group name	Titles	Total weekly circulation
Trinity Mirror plc	186	12,494,145
Associated Newspapers Ltd	12	9,709,115
Johnston Press plc	295	9,406,659
Newsquest Media Group	210	9,172,723
Northcliffe Media Ltd	130	8,021,009
Total top 20 publishers	1,151	61,744,833
Total other publishers	141	1,817,583
Total all publishers (84)	1,292	63,562,419

Source: Newspaper Society

Logically, conglomeration increases the scope and lobbying power of individual corporations. In the case of the UK this is seen for instance in the cross-promotion of media products. (Hesmondhalgh 2007: 167.) But there has also been more political lobbying in the UK, carried out by owners restricting journalistic autonomy in some dominant media. For instance, after *The Times* was taken over by Murdoch's News International in 1981 the once centre-right paper was made into a Thatcherite one, and the overt pressure to re-orientate the paper led to more than 100 journalists leaving the paper in five years. (Curran 1990: 132–133.)

Interviewees differed in their opinions of the effects of concentrated ownership of the media. Some were concerned. One stated that interference in stories is nothing compared to the more subtle ways in which ownership has an impact, such as on decisions about the extent to which resources are put into investigative journalism, or celebrity and muck-raking journalism, "and to what extent do you just want to cut your costs and rip and read and get it from the wires." Another interviewee saw that the damage has already been done:

> "[T]hey try to save money by economics of scale, so for example (…) your local paper now tends to be owned by one of four big companies and they try and make much more homogenised products. They will lose the sense of locality."

One scholar, however, did not consider concentration to be a big problem:

> "I think it's clearer in Britain: you know who's Murdoch, you know who's BBC… You know people are quite well informed."

Tunstall (2004: 268) has noted that some branches of the British media are almost totally in the hands of foreign owners. In film, periodicals and books the British industry almost follows the Canadian model of being incorporated into the US industry, while US influence is also strong in the cable and satellite business in terms of both ownership and content.

1.4. Media Policies and Regulation

The most recent and important change in regulating the media in Britain has been the Communications Act 2003, which established the Office of Communications (Ofcom) and gave free market competition more leverage in both media content and media ownership. Still, since broadcasting regulations in the UK continue to rely on the

principles of public service and universally available programmes, the regulatory model involves intense public intervention and this is not likely to change in the near future. (Fairbair 2006: 72.)

Regulating Media Content

Media content is regulated in the United Kingdom primarily through codes of practice agreed by a variety of institutions and bodies that are either largely or entirely independent. In addition to these codes, the broadcast media are subjected to a small number of specific content rules. The print media are entirely self-regulated, with the obvious exception of being subject to laws of general application, such as obscenity and defamation. (See e.g. Article 19: 2000.)

According to the Freedom of Press 2007 Survey, the British government largely respects journalists' rights. The stringent libel laws, usually favouring the plaintiff, were reformed in 2006. However, several laws concerning the acquiring and passing on of information, national security and terrorism have drawn criticism.[11] The report also notes the situation in Northern Ireland, where journalists routinely encounter intimidation. In the 2007 rankings for freedom of the press, Britain was 18th in Western Europe and 31st in the whole world, whereas Finland was in first place together with Iceland. (Freedom House 2007.)

Although Britain has a strong tradition of parliamentary sovereignty in its legal framework and still no written constitution to guarantee press freedom, there have been few attempts to intervene in or subsidise the print press. The early professionalization of journalists led to the formation of trade unions such as the National Union of Journalists, as well as formal institutions of self-regulation, such as the Press Complaints Commission (PCC). These organisations issue commonly agreed codes of conduct, partly to ensure that there is no need for the government to adopt legislative means to control the press more firmly. (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 198–203.)

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[11] E.g. The Freedom of Press Survey report 2007 pointed out especially the Freedom of Information Act as having drawn criticism. This is due to several exemptions for sensitive issues related to national security and health and safety, and frequent bureaucratic delays in responding to requests. According to figures released in December 2006, the report noted, 40% of requests for information were turned down by the government.

The Press Complaints Commission, much like the Council for Mass Media in Finland, receives most of its funding from the press industry. The board of the PCC is comprised of 7 editors and 10 non-media-affiliated members. As in Finland, the authority and power of self-regulation have often been criticised by the British public. Partly because of this, during 2006 and 2007 the PCC extended its activities to not only resolving complaints, but also offering advice to the public via a helpline. In 2006 the PCC dealt with approximately 8 550 enquiries by telephone, fax and email, thus placing increased emphasis on sorting out problems before publication and offering the public a wider range of corrections. Also, as of February 2007, the Commission extended its remit to include the editorial and audio-visual material of newspaper and magazine websites. Interestingly enough, during 2007 the PCC received more complaints about the online versions of articles (56%) than hard-copy versions (44%). (PCC 2008.)

The total number of complaints the PCC received, investigated, resolved or upheld reached an all-time high of 4 340 in 2007. Compared to 2006 there was a rise of nearly a third (31%), which was partly attributable to two items that generated hundreds of complaints from members of the public. In November 2007 *Heat* magazine published an issue with a sticker picturing model Katie Price's disabled child Harvey. The sticker, which showed Harvey's head with an imposed speech bubble "Harvey wants to eat me!" provoked 143 complaints. Earlier on, in October 2007, a column authored by Tony Parsons in the *Daily Mirror*, which reflected critically on the investigation by the Portuguese authorities into the disappearance of Madeline McCann and was headlined "Oh up yours, senor", attracted 485 complaints. (PCC, Jan. 16th 2008.)

Aside from the PCC there are other, mainly non-journalistic self-regulatory bodies in the UK: The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) aims to ensure that newspaper advertisements are legal, decent and truthful; The Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP) ensures that sexual content in teenage magazines is presented in a responsible and appropriate manner;   the industry-funded PhonepayPlus regulates all the premium rate-charged telecommunications services. In addition, several press organizations actively engage in the debate about controlling the media. These organizations include the Editors' Code of Practice Committee; the Society of Editors; UK Publishing Media; The Periodical Publishers Association (PPA); the Newspaper Society (NS); the Scottish Newspaper Publishers Association (SNPA); Association of Online Publishers; and the

Defence, Press and Broadcasting Advisory Committee. There are also advice bodies, such as the charity groups Victim Support and Citizen Advice, aimed namely at non-professionals. (PCC 2008.)

As in most other countries, broadcasting is more heavily regulated than the print media. Dominated by the BBC and the public service ideology, yet also the first in Europe to adopt commercial broadcasting, the TV and radio industry in the UK was long governed through the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). Until the Broadcasting Act of 1990, the IBA held not only the power to regulate, but also the licence to broadcast, therefore retaining ultimate authority over programming decisions of ITV, too. The IBA was later replaced by the Independent Television Commission (ITC), which subsequently had less power, though still remained much more powerful than its U.S. counterpart, the Federal Commission of Communication (FCC). (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 231–232.)

After the mid-1990s, discussion over communications policy began to be dominated by calls for a more unified system of regulation. Smith (2006) notes that the discussion, which was followed by the establishment of a single communications regulator, the Office of Communications (Ofcom), led to a shift of focus towards the control of market power to facilitate free market competition. With the support of a variety of political and commercial stakeholders, Ofcom replaced five separate broadcasting and communications regulators: the Independent Television Commission (ITC), the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC), the Radio Authority (RA), the Radiocommunications Agency and the Office of Telecommunications (Oftel). The statutory duties of Ofcom under the Communications Act 2003 include ensuring optimal use of the elector-magnetic spectrum, a wide range of electronic communication, TV and radio services "of high quality and wide appeal", maintaining plurality in the provision of broadcasting, adequate protection for audiences against offensive and harmful material, and also unfairness or the infringement of privacy. The act also deems among other things that Ofcom needs to always seek the least intrusive way of regulating, consulting various stakeholders and assessing the impact of what it proposes before imposing regulation upon a market.

In 2007 Ofcom was actively engaged, in addition to its more traditional duties, in ensuring a suitable regulatory framework for the digital switchover, spectrum planning and leading international negotiations on spectrum use. It also assessed the market impact of proposed new BBC on-demand services and restricted e.g. the amount of series stacking permitted in the catch-up television services in order to secure competition on the DVD market. The rules for participatory TV-programmes, such as mobile game shows, were reviewed, but overall rules about funding and sponsorship tended to be relaxed rather than tightened. For example, the Broadcasting Code was to be amended so that companies are allowed to sponsor a whole radio station, rather than just one programme. An attempt was also made to make product placement rules less strict. When it comes to licensing Ofcom has also taken a specific interest in the effects of digital radio and digital television on competition. Perhaps one of the most important debates, though, has been that over food and drink commercials in relation to child obesity, which began already in 2003. This will be discussed in the following case-in-point. (Ofcom 2007a.)

Case-in-point: Restricting Food Advertising

In recent years the British government and society have become increasingly concerned about the rising levels of childhood obesity and health problems associated with dietary imbalance. In 2003 Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Tessa Jowell, asked Ofcom to consider strengthening regulations on the advertising of food containing high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) foods to children. In early 2004 Ofcom conducted some research and found that television viewing/advertising was one of the many factors that account for childhood obesity. They concluded that there was a case for proportionate and targeted action with respect to broadcast advertising. (Ofcom 2006b.)

In November, the Department of Health published a White Paper reiterating the Government's view that the advertising of unhealthy foods and drinks to children should be restricted. In 2005 the Food Standards Agency (FSA) published a nutrient-profiling scheme that was intended to help people identify harmful products. During 2006 Ofcom's proposal for new rules went through a consultation process. (ibid.)

The new revised content rules came into force in July 2007, with full implementation required from the beginning of 2009. Products that are defined as harmful according to

the FSA cannot be advertised or promoted in or around programmes made for children under the age of 16. This also applies to programmes that have particular appeal in this age group. All advertising of such foods and drinks will be removed from dedicated children's channels. (ibid.)

After implementing the rules, an Ofcom (2007b) study indicated that there was a 20% reduction in food and drink commercials shown to under-16s during the years 2005–2007. The data also showed a 59% reduction in the same type of advertisements in children's airtime. However, at the same time the study showed an increase in exposure during "adult" non-terrestrial airtime. Thus, the government considered imposing a pre-9pm junk food ad ban in all channels that would have cost – according to Ofcom estimates – 211 million pound a year in lost advertising revenues. The ban was understood to be an extension to HFSS-food advertising of the already existing 9pm-watershed that concerned violence, offensive language and coverage of sexual behaviour. To the relief of advertisers and the frustration of several citizens' organizations that had promoted the extension, these plans were abandoned in January 2008. However, the restrictions are due to be reviewed by the government again during the summer of 2008. (Sweney 2008.)

Regulating Media Ownership

As in most western liberal and capitalist countries, controversies revolving around the centralization of media ownership and how to regulate it have been given far more concerned attention than the actual regulation of media content. Ralph Negrine noted as early as 1994 that such woes are hardly of recent origin: for example the establishment of a Royal Commission on the Press in 1947 was motivated by the perceived need to examine the degree and consequences of concentration of ownership. Although this concentration seems to be contradicted by e.g. the growth of competitive multichannel television, in reality major channels are offshoots of the existing big players (Anderson 2007: 61). A prime example of media concentration can be found in one of the world's largest conglomerate companies, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, which has firmly extended its operations into every sector of the UK's media landscape.

Given the tendency to concentration within liberal orthodox free-market systems with minimal regulation (ibid.) and the continuously morphing state of the media landscape,

section 391 of the Communications Act 2003 requires Ofcom to review media ownership rules at least every three years. Based on the results of the review, Ofcom must make recommendations to the Secretary of State if it sees fit to change the rules. After its 2003 review of media ownership rules and a decrease in regulation the government also saw fit to create some new apparatus to facilitate further liberalization and to review the effects of the changes made that year. Under the current legislative framework[12] there are still a number of general disqualifications on the holding of broadcasting licences or interests of licence holders, restrictions on the ability of certain bodies to acquire a licence, limits on the ownership of multiple radio licences and limits on cross-media ownership. Also, in addition to non-media-related laws on competition, additional rules may apply when mergers of media companies are in question: for example, the Secretary of State may issue an intervention notice to allow the consideration of public interest factors other than the very basic competition test. (Ofcom 2006a.)

In its most recent report on media ownership in the UK Ofcom (2006a) recommends no further changes in the rules drawn up in 2003. In fact no public interest investigations of media mergers were carried out between 2003 and 2005, although the office notes that such investigations are still a requirement. Ofcom acknowledges that consolidations have been made, but not so many that reforms would be required. However, the policy of "as much deregulation as possible" and the current rules have been criticized as being both too strict and too loose. For example Richard Wray reported for *The Guardian* (30th November 2006) on the attack by BSkyB Chief Executive James Murdoch at an Ofcom conference on British regulators as "an elitist and almost authoritarian force". His anger was attributed to Ofcom's decision to review BSkyB's acquisition of 18% of ITV Plc. Murdoch found the status of BBC Channel 4 especially disturbing and called for change in the way the media are regulated. At the same time a growing number of citizen activist groups, such as the Indymedia UK collective, criticise the effects the centralization and commercialization of the media have on news coverage.

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[12] The main laws governing media ownership are the Broadcasting Act 1990, the Communications Act 2003, the Media Ownership Order 2003 and the Enterprise Act 2002.

1.5. Trends in Media Consumption and Contents

Media Consumption Overview

The traditional platforms dominate media consumption in Britain. Television has remained the most popular and time-consuming medium with almost all Britons watching it regularly. In 2005 the second most popular activities were reading both newspapers and magazines and listening to the radio, with more than three quarters of Britons engaged in both on a regular basis. (Ofcom 2006a: 11–12.) But there is a shift in consumption patterns. In 2006 time spent using the internet and mobile phones was on the increase (Ofcom 2007b: 79). Among internet users in 2007, more time was spent on the web than on listening to the radio or reading newspapers, and these web users considered the internet at least as reliable as television and newspapers. Web use did not appear to substantially replace the time spent on reading but instead reduced significantly the hours spent watching TV. (Dutton & Helsper 2007: 8–28.) However, among the young, the internet has appeared to reduce especially the consumption of print media. (Ofcom 2006b: 43.)

As in Finland (see e.g. Herkman & Vähämaa 2007: 29–30), British young people have embraced new media to a far greater extent than the general population, and this has been reflected in their diminishing use of traditional media. Between age groups there is a growing gap in consumption patterns that applies to all media, beginning with young people's (16-24 years old) engagement in digital broadcasting, mobile technology, the internet and the 'on-demand' delivery of services. In 2006 young adults in the UK watched less public service broadcasting output than ever before, turning rather to new TV and radio channels which better reflected their values and interests. Notably, the young watched more than seven hours less TV and listened to almost two hours less radio per week than the population as a whole. This drop is explained by the high rate of ownership among young people of most of the new technologies, such as game consoles and MP3 players. (Ofcom 2006b: 40.)

To illustrate the heavily stratified media consumption in the UK, four separate groups in terms of life context were identified in the research called "Media Consumption and the Public Connection". Firstly, the **traditional** cluster includes people with high news

engagement who follow mainstream issues such as health, crime, the environment, sports, events in Iraq and specialised themes like European affairs, local politics and trade union affairs. These people are mostly male, older than the other clusters and members of the middle class, with relatively high social capital. They tend to use a wide range of media and spend more time with newspapers, the radio and books. Secondly, the **issues**-orientated cluster is more engaged with special topics such us third world poverty or funding for local services. This time-pressured group, close to average in class and age, includes slightly more women than men. Owing to their own narrower agenda, the media are perceived as unreliable and irrelevant to their lives. The third, **celebrity,** group is dominated by women and young people who follow music, fashion, celebrity gossip and reality-TV. These people are least likely to vote and their social capital is considered to be low. This group is close to average in terms of socio-economic class. Fourthly, the **low-interest** cluster is lowest in socio-economic status and overall media use but average in gender and age. They are most likely to find the media irrelevant. The chances of their voting, their interest in politics, their efficacy and their expectation of knowing what is going on in the world are all low. (Couldry et al. 2006: 32–33.)

The traditional media still served as the primary source of news in the UK in 2006. Television was by far the most important source of not only national and world news but increasingly also of local news, while the value of radio and newspapers as providers of local news had diminished during the decade. (Ofcom 2006a: 12–13.) A survey conducted in the UK in 2005 suggested that only one in five people used the web to access news, and it was unclear whether the web generated stable habits of news consumption in the same way as the traditional media did. It was further concluded that many people's media consumption was oriented away from public issues. (Couldry et al. 2006: 27–36.)

Europe's Most Active Online Population

According to a survey carried out by comScore (2007), the UK has the most active online population in Europe, with the highest average number of daily visitors to the web, internet usage days per month and time spent on the web per month per user. Indeed, internet use in the UK has steadily increased. Two thirds of Britons used the

web and accessed it at home in 2007, which is comparable to the figures for Finland (Herkman & Vähämaa 2007: 27). The Oxford internet survey 2007 showed that the digital divide persists, however, as men, students, higher educated and higher income individuals are more likely to use the internet. An astonishing fact is that in 2007 more than a quarter of the UK population had never used the internet, and five percent were ex-users who had given up using the web. The most important reasons for non-use were a lack of computer and internet skills. Ex-users were typically either not interested in the internet or thought the costs were too high. (Dutton & Helsper 2007: 4–10, 14–15.)

A major change in internet use patterns since 2005 has been the rise in popularity of blogs and social networking sites. Almost every fifth UK internet user and less than half of students had created a profile on a social networking site in 2007 (Ibid: 22–53). Measured by time spent online, eBay, an online auction and shopping webpage, was the most popular website in the UK, and social networking sites such as Bebo, MySpace, Facebook and YouTube all ranked in the top ten in 2007. The dominance of brands that simply did not exist a decade ago reflects the huge change the internet has brought to the British media landscape: among the top 20 websites in use and reach, the BBC was the only representative of the traditional media. (Ofcom 2007b: 310.)

User-generated Contents Spread

Fuelled by the take-up of media capture devices as well as the spread of home broadband, UK consumers are increasingly keen on creating and sharing rather than purely consuming media contents. Ofcom suggests that in 2006 1.5 million UK adults used the internet as a means of publishing their own content and opinion, bypassing the traditional media. In the US the big broadcasters already capitalise on the appeal of user-generated sites by adding their own content as promotion of their products and sites. (Ofcom 2007b: 36–41; 2006b: 172–176.) This trend has reached Britain too, with the BBC adding its streaming to YouTube, and Channel 4 collaborating with Bebo.

The traditional media are embracing user-generated contents with different levels of editorial guidance. The most famous UK example of increased interaction between journalists and the public is the contribution of ordinary people to the coverage of the London bombings in 2005: the photos and videos captured on mobile phones were

integrated in BBC news bulletins and BBC Online published survivors' weblogs. Now engaging user-generated content in big news issues has become common practice, and media organisations have increased the public's capacity to post their own material on sites by hosting blogs and message boards. (Beckett 2008: 41–86; Nel et al. 2006: 125–126.) An interesting case is the BBC's User Generated Content Hub, which gives the initiative to the public. Fifteen journalists process the vast amount of material sent in by members of the public and verify the information through journalistic practices of phoning and fact-checking. The hub has produced both new stories and witnesses used in BBC coverage. The material is tagged and saved in folders for future use. (Beckett 2008: 82.)

Case- in-point: Byron Review and Child E-Safety

Children's increasing use of ICTs has prompted a debate on the risks that children face in the new media environment. An independent report on the risks to children from internet and video games, the Byron Review, was published in March 2008 and was described by one interviewee as "a hot potato at the moment". Conducted at the prime minister's request, the Byron Review reported risks related to e.g. cyberbullying, stranger danger, contributions to negative beliefs and attitudes and exposure to violent games or to inappropriate material on the web. Even though the opportunities for fun, learning and development were highlighted, several proposals were made to improve child e-safety. In terms of the internet, the report proposed establishing a UK Council on Child Internet Safety to lead the development of a national strategy for e-safety that would involve better self-regulation within the industry and better provision of information for children, families and adults working with children. Regarding video games the report suggested that parents should be better helped to restrict children's access to games not suitable for their age. This was to be done by reforming the classification system and by pooling the efforts of the games industry, retailers, advertisers, console manufacturers and online gaming providers to raise awareness of what is in games and to enable better enforcement. (Byron 2008: 2–13.)

Digital Video Recorders Affect Consumption

Television in Britain, while still a dominant medium with proliferating channel options, has nonetheless lost some of its popularity over the last few years. Its average weekly reach as well as the time spent viewing have been relatively stable amongst older age

groups, but have fallen among children and young people. In terms of what is watched, entertainment has performed most strongly in channel shares over the past five years in all social and age groups while all other genres have seen their audience share fall. (Ofcom 2007b: 161–174.) The use of digital video recorders (DVRs) has provoked considerable interest in the UK for their potential to fast-forward through advertisements – a notorious function for the traditional economics of television. Indeed, a significant percentage of DVR owners (40%) were found to regularly use their DVRs not only for recording programmes but also for this purpose. Other habits were e.g. pausing live television, rewinding a programme to catch the highlight again and deliberately starting to watch a programme after start time in order to skip the advertisements. (Ibid: 84–87.)

Podcasts Prove Popular

During this decade the audience reach of radio has been gradually declining, particularly among younger age groups, especially young adults. The demographic profile of listeners highlights older people, men and those with lower than average socio-economic status; the over-55s accounted for more than a third of all listening. (Ofcom 2007b: 233–237.) In Britain digital radio, based on the European DAB standard, has been in continuous growth in terms of reach, hours and platform share. (RAJAR 2007; DRDB 2007.) However, notwithstanding the widening options, listening still tends to take traditional forms as over 90 percent of the UK population said at the beginning of 2007 that they used analogue radio sets. Nevertheless, accessing radio contents via the internet, whether in the form of live streaming, listen-again services or podcasting, has proved popular in the UK in recent years. BBC figures indicate that audiovisual BBC content accessed online accounted for 5.6 million hours per week in 2007. Commercial radio has also established its own radio player service giving access to the contents of hundreds of commercial stations. (Ofcom 2007b: 239–248.)

Tabloids Popular Among All Readers

With the exception of the tabloids *The Sun* and the *Daily Star*, the net readership and sales of most national newspapers declined between 2006 and 2007. Less than half of UK citizens (44.5%) read a national newspaper in 2007. The biggest drops were among men and those with higher social status. As mentioned, the readership of newspapers in

the UK is stratified according to social class. National newspaper readership was slightly higher among those classified as less skilled workers and unemployed (44.8%), who tended to read tabloids, than among more professional and skilled people (44.2%). Although less skilled people hardly read highbrow papers at all, tabloids and middle market papers were popular among all social classes. Women in the UK lagged substantially behind men in readership. However, several Sunday supplements and the middle market papers reached women better, with the *Daily Mail* the only paper to actually attract more female than male readers. Age is an even more significant factor than gender, as readership among younger age groups was markedly lower than among older ones. (NRS 2008a.)

Besides the overall "release from the tyranny of the schedules" in broadcasting, one interviewee suggested that a new way of consuming newspapers may be emerging as lack of time leads consumers to turn to web and listservs that pick the relevant newspaper articles.

> "But there is one bad thing about that, which is that you don't browse to the same extent and you're more customized. (…) [B]rowsing would really be luxury, much more of a luxury than it would have been in the days before the huge quantity there is there now to read."

Almost All UK Adults Read Magazines

About three quarters of all adults read a consumer magazine in 2008, and the figure was even higher among women and young adults. The reach of many specialised business & professional magazines has been higher still; in 2007 for instance, almost 90 percent of business decision-makers read business magazines, and 95 percent of farmers read at least one farming publication. (PPA Marketing 2008b; 2006; PPA Marketing 2007: 34–35.) In Finland in 2004 half of the population subscribed to a magazine while 60 percent of adults read magazines (Sanomalehtien Liitto 2004; Aikakausmedia 2004.) Compared to the mid-1990s, consumer expenditure on magazines has grown in Britain, but since 2005 there has been a downturn. Unlike in the US and Finland, where subscriptions account for the vast majority of magazine sales, retail sales have traditionally been the key market in the UK. Since the late 1990s, however, subscription share has seen steady growth. (PPA Marketing 2007: 11, 28–31.) Only a few general titles, such as TV listing magazines, attract readers from all sectors of the UK population, which illustrates the strongly targeted nature of the medium. There is a bias towards women, upper social

groups and readers living in London and Southern England. (PPA Marketing 2006; 2007: 36.)

The Quality of Journalism: Dumbing Down or Braining Up?

As in the USA, in Britain too there is widespread discussion of the news media "dumbing down", referring to a shift towards more tabloid formats and contents, sensationalism, entertainment, leisure, consumerism and to deteriorating journalistic standards. In this context, it is said that even BBC news coverage is more "Madonna than Mugabe". (See e.g. Ursell 2001 or Harrison 2006: 18–19.) Several scholars interviewed mentioned homogenised mainstream media contents and the deterioration of journalistic standards. One of them talked about the "therapeutic culture" that has for decades driven our interest in personal, psychological, emotional and individual issues and that is evident not only in today's reality-TV and gossip journalism but also in political reporting. However, for instance McNair (2003) has taken the opposite stand, claiming that from the 1990s British journalism has been, "if anything, braining up as it interacts with and necessarily adapts to an increasingly choice-rich market of sophisticated, media-literate consumers".

Case- in-point: Sports Journalism as a Hook

According to senior lecturer in journalism Guy Hodgson (2007), sports journalism has become a key part of the bottom line upon which hard news journalism depends economically in the UK. The big change came with satellite television: Rupert Murdoch needed a hook to attract the public to pay for Sky channels, and the one that dragged in most was live football. By the mid-1990s almost all the national papers had increased their number of pages, and on television 24-hour news services demanded contents. Hodgson claims that much of this space was filled with sports. As a result, over the last decades the number of pages, column inches and broadcasting hours devoted to sports has increased in the UK.

Television has become not only the main provider of sports, with 24-hour reporting and frequent live coverage, but also a major influencer on sport itself, for instance on the times at which sports are played. Television figures for sports events in Britain are enormous, easily exceeding those for popular soaps or TV phenomena such as *Big Brother*. Even though television has made serious inroads into local, regional and

national newspaper markets, the UK papers have also benefited from their sports coverage: quality papers use sports as a hook on the front page, and in the popular press sports personalities have special currency due to their lasting appeal compared to other celebrities.

2. Research Institutions and Organisations

This chapter will examine the United Kingdom's education system from an institutional viewpoint. To understand where and how the media and journalism can be studied one must first examine the overall structure of the British education system. Thus after first paying attention to the different types of universities, colleges and community colleges, and to the complex degree structure in Britain, we can then proceed to examine the different schools teaching media and journalism as specialized subjects. The main focus of this chapter is on Master's and PhD level education as these have the most to do with the actual research conducted in the institutions. However, Bachelor's degree courses in media subjects are also considered, since they play a major part in defining a university's reputation, and thus also its research capabilities.

The ranking systems examined here are two independent league tables, The Guardian League Table and The Times League Table, and one research-based ranking table, The Research Assessment Exercise 2001. The two league tables are considered to be important criteria in determining how universities and university courses are appreciated and evaluated especially at the undergraduate level (Higher Education Funding Council for England 2008) whereas the RAE has more to do with post-graduate studies. The Guardian league table does not even take research into account when compiling its rankings. Every one of these ranking methods offers specific subject tables for evaluating the performance of the universities in different subjects. However, the Times League Table does not include a separate subject table for Media Studies, and thus is examined here only as a rough guide to the overall status of different British universities.

2.1. Universities and Colleges

Universities and higher education in general have a long history in the United Kingdom: in Oxford, for example, higher education has been carried on since 1096 (Oxford University 2008), and the University of Oxford is the world's oldest English-speaking university. Nowadays, after completing secondary education it is possible for students

to advance to higher education, to universities, colleges, community colleges or technical colleges. Universities are the oldest form of higher education and they have the awarding power for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees all the way up to PhD level. Colleges, technical colleges and community colleges mainly offer diplomas in specified fields, although some of them are entitled to award degrees even up to PhD level. However, colleges tend to offer a more vocational approach to higher education. There are no longer any polytechnics as such in the United Kingdom, since all former polytechnics were offered university status under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. An institution must fulfil certain criteria to be allowed to use the word 'university' or 'university college' in its name. This right is granted by the Privy Council under the Further and Higher Education Act (1992). Universities and colleges are independent and self-governing (Higher Education and Research Opportunities).

Universities in the UK can be divided roughly into three different categories: 1) Ancient universities, 2) Redbrick universities, and 3) Plate glass or New universities. The ancient universities are the oldest universities in the country, and the term is generally used to refer to Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dublin. Dublin, the youngest of these universities, was founded in 1592, and is situated in what is now the Republic of Ireland. Redbrick universities are next in terms of their foundation year. The term itself is vaguer, as some universities claim to be redbrick universities even though they have not been canonised as such. Normally the term refers to universities built in the 19th century and early 20th century which all resemble each other architecturally. The term "new university" refers either to the many universities established in the 1960s or to the polytechnics that became universities under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. This division of British universities according to their age is important for the reason that a university's reputation and prestige are often defined by its historical status, and the quality of its teaching and research is often seen as correlating with its age and traditions. This may have serious implications in the discipline of media and communication studies, since these subjects are not favoured in the traditional universities. As one interviewee observed:

> "You're welcome to disagree with me…. But the push is to centre money into certain leading colleges and Oxford and Cambridge. These are not the institutions that are known for their media and communications research, quite the reverse. They are privileged by the sheer tradition of their history in

literature and so forth. And they have small, limited, odd media and communications at best."

According to the Higher Education Funding Councils of England, Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland's Department of Employment and Learning, there were 106 universities and a total of 168 higher education institutions in the whole of the United Kingdom as of August 2007 (Universities UK 2008a). This list excludes foreign universities operating in the UK, and the universities of London (including the London School of Economics and Political Science, University College London, King's College, etc) and Wales are counted as one. The number of students studying in higher education institutions in the academic year 2004/2005 stood at almost 2.5 million (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2008b.)

The UK has a long history of welcoming foreign students. Nowadays there are 1.6 million undergraduate students in British universities, of whom 99,000 are international students (UCAS 2008). The number of non-EU students is projected to grow by four percent until the year 2019 at the same time as the EU and the UK are experiencing a downturn in the number of native 18 to 20 year olds (Universities UK 2008b). Attracting international students has been a financial strategy for many UK universities. In 2007/2008 the universities could charge undergraduate students who come from EU countries a maximum of £3,075 per year (British Council Finland 2008), but this set maximum does not apply to non-EU-citizens. This means that universities are able to charge them fees that are closer to the actual costs of teaching. In 2007 undergraduate students from outside the EU were charged between £6,700 and £12,800 per year (Universities UK 2007).

In universities the time required to obtain a Bachelor's degree is normally three years, after which a student can go to study for a Master's degree or a PhD. The clear exceptions are some vocational subjects such as medicine, which takes five years to complete. The Bachelor's degree consists normally of lectures, seminars, essays and exams, of which it is compulsory to attend at least seminars. Students concentrate on their major, and additional modules or subjects cannot normally be taken to any large extent. There are basically two kinds of Master's degrees in the British system, with one being a taught degree and the other a research degree. In addition there are some

Master's degrees which are awarded automatically after a candidate has completed his or her Bachelor's degree. These are found in the old universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, and are a heritage from the past, and they mean that the graduate is allowed to teach in the awarding institution. A taught Master's degree is a one- or two-year course rather similar to the pattern of the Bachelor's degree, with lectures and seminars and a fairly short dissertation at the end of the course. In many ways this is very similar to the Finnish postgraduate (Master's) degree, even though the period of study lasts for only one year in most cases. Two years for a taught degree is more common if it is being taken as a part-time course. Some universities offer research degrees which place more emphasis on research, and often lead to candidates undertaking a doctoral degree straight after obtaining the Master's degree. The time required to obtain a research degree leading to a PhD is often three to four years (Graduate Prospects[13] 2008a). A student can also obtain postgraduate diplomas instead of a Master's degree or doctorate. These are more common in the case of vocational sciences such as medicine, education or architecture. The quality of higher education institutions is monitored by the Quality Assurance Agency, which publishes reports on the subject.

Applying to British universities at the undergraduate level is handled centrally by the Universities and Colleges Admission Services (UCAS). The service handles about half a million applications per year, and offers information on every university and degree course available in the UK (UCAS 2008a). Applying for a postgraduate or PhD course is often done straight through the relevant university or college; there is no centralized admission system for this level of studies. In other words, the applicant is expected to make direct contact with the university, and every university administers their own application process. Universities and UCAS require applicants to provide full information on their previous academic or secondary school record, to give one or more references and write a personal statement. The references and the personal statement are often seen as important factors when deciding whether or not the applicant is appropriate for this particular course of study and the university. Some universities arrange interviews or require applicants to send in portfolios in addition to their written application.

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[13] Graduate Prospects is a commercial subsidiary of the Higher Education Careers Service Unit, established in 1972. It aims to offer information for graduates on possible work opportunities as well as postgraduate study opportunities. Its database includes over 58 000 postgraduate courses.

2.2. Journalism and Media Studies in British Universities

According to the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS 2008), there are total of 96 British universities offering 983 media related undergraduate courses in 2008/2009. In addition, according to Graduate Prospects (Graduate Prospects 2008b) there are 619 taught postgraduate courses in Media Studies and Publishing. These normally lead to a Master's degree or a diploma. In addition there are 133 research programmes which normally lead to either a Master's degree or to a PhD. Media and communication studies can be divided into two or three different sub-fields, namely media studies, communication studies, and journalism. Media and communication studies are more common since, according to Graduate Prospects, out of 607 communication and media courses offered in 2008, only 125 are concentrated on journalism. Of the almost 2.5 million students in higher and further education in the UK, approximately 2 percent study mass communication and documentation subjects. (Higher Education and Research Opportunities 2005.)

In Britain media subjects are often traditionally frowned upon by the public, and therefore they also tend to be looked down on by traditional academia. According to some interviewees, this is mainly due to the fact that vocational subjects were often taught in polytechnics, which became universities in 1992 and are nowadays often considered weaker universities. In addition, it is a new subject which is still trying to fight its way in the academic world, and people are not fully aware what is done in communication and media studies departments. As one interviewee observed:

> "It [media and communication research and studies] is an upstart tradition. Or at least, it still has strong critics (…) but (…) it has become big partly because it's been attacked (…) There's a contrarian tradition amongst young people, they are quite deliberately doing things that they're told not to do. And they do media studies and cultural studies, of course."

Many interviewees draw the conclusion that media studies has taken up the role of the "whipping boy" from sociology: "Sociologists were always picked on, the long-haired pinkos, Marxists, living off public money". One summed up the reputation of the subject at the moment:

"Media studies is used as sort of a whipping boy for anybody that thinks that there's a softer weak science. If there's ever a discussion about the decline of universities or the decline of education, media studies becomes the (…) target of all. Media studies is not very serious, you know, watch films and (…) nobody wants to be tarred with that."

One interviewee commented that media and communication studies make an easy target for populist mockery, as it is a more accessible subject than for example biology.

"I'm sure some really, really batty stuff goes on in biology, but it's not accessible to the outside. (…) But in communication studies, you know… You can read it, you can actually see it (…) particularly in the cultural studies side of communication, and it deals often with out-groups, cultural kind of subgroups, gays or whatever. And then when you get a kind of queer theory… God! It's asking for it."

One scholar accepted the criticism by saying that there is a reason why media studies is seen as a "noddy" subject:

"I go to conferences and you see papers, you know, which tell us, basically. What was it? I couldn't believe it… *The Lesbian Iconography in Buffy the Vampire* [*Slayer*] (…) I mean you're asking for abuse, don't you?"

The reputation of media and communication studies is also affected by the fact that very few of the universities placed high in the league tables or the research assessment exercise offer any kind of media or journalism courses. Conversely, many of those universities that excel in this field come out badly in the overall league tables. These ideas will be explored in more detail below.

2.3. University Rankings

University rankings have a significant effect on the British education system. Almost every administrative decision made by the universities themselves and also the decisions made by students about where to study are at least in some way affected by these rankings. This is because the rankings have a long history in the UK, and a university's placement in the league tables to a great extent affects what staff members they are able to hire, and consequently how they can attract students to their institution. It can be seen as a vicious circle, where the league tables affect which scholars are willing to teach at the university, which in part affects what kinds of students the

institution attracts, and both of these in turn affect the university's ranking in the league tables. This can be especially harmful for universities which do not do well in the league tables, but it also makes life difficult for the government because of its declared mission to democratise university education and reduce differences in the number of students coming from public and private schools in some universities. (Root 2007.)

The two main league tables published annually in the UK are *The Guardian University Guide* and *The Times Good University Guide*. Both of these tables evaluate the universities on the undergraduate level as a whole, as well as within every subject. They both tend to measure the same variables, although they do have some differences, especially when it comes to weighting the variables one with another. The Times league table measures eight different variables: student satisfaction, research quality, student: staff ratio, spending on services and facilities, entry standards, completion rate, the number of good honours degrees obtained, and graduate prospects. The Guardian league table on the other hand measures seven different variables: teaching, feedback, spending per student, student: staff ratio, job prospects, a value added score, and entry score. Value added score means a comparison between a student's degree results and their entry qualifications, and the job prospects score is devised from how many of the graduates are working within six months of their graduation. In addition to The Times and The Guardian league tables, *The Sunday Times* publishes its own league table which differs from The Times' league table mainly in the criteria used. It uses nine different variables to evaluate universities: student satisfaction, teaching excellence, head's/peer assessments, research quality, A/AS-level/higher points, employment, firsts/2:1s awarded, student/staff ration, and dropout rate. However, The Sunday Times league table does not offer separate subject tables.

The differences between The Times and The Guardian league tables are evident even when studying the top ten universities, as can be seen from the following table:

Table 16: Top ten universities according to The Times and   league tables

The Guardian overall league table	The Times overall league table
1. Oxford	1. Oxford
2. Cambridge	2. Cambridge
3. Imperial College	3. Imperial College
4. St Andrews	4. London School of Economics
5. University College London	5. St Andrews
6. LSE	6. University College London
7. Edinburgh	7. Warwick
Warwick	8. Bristol
Loughborough	9. Durham
Bath	10. King's College London

Sources: Education Guardian 2008, The Times Online 2008.

Even though most of the universities on the lists are the same, each list includes three universities that do not appear in the other list, and apart from the top three, the universities are ranked in a completely different order. The differences are mostly the result of different accentuations of the variables.

Many of the scholars interviewed strongly criticised the newspapers' league tables, especially on the grounds that it is not entirely clear what they actually measure, and whether those measures have any significance. In addition it was seen that they matter a great deal to the university administration but are not necessarily of any importance to the teaching staff. One expressed the situation thus:

> "It's an overstatement, but the senior management at the university 'live' – in inverted commas – by the league tables in the way a television company lives by its ratings. It's a… they might say 'We don't live by ratings, we just produce quality stuff'. Bollocks! They are worried about ratings in the same way as the vice-chancellor is bothered by the ratings."

The Research Assessment Exercise is conducted approximately every five years on behalf of the United Kingdom higher education funding councils. Until now they have evaluated research quality by means of a peer-to-peer review panel. The latest RAE in 2001 considered the work of almost 50,000 scholars from 173 higher education institutions (Research Assessment Exercise 2008).The ratings that the universities receive directly affect the funding coming to them from the councils through so-called quality-weighted research funding (Research Assessment Exercise 2008). This funding forms a large part of a university's total research funding, and thus according to many interviewees the RAE ranking is very significant, especially to the pro-vice chancellors and heads of departments. The review is conducted subject by subject, and the results

are combined into subject tables as well as into university tables. One can examine the results either by university, which shows what ratings the different subjects within the university have received, or by subject, which shows what ratings different universities have received in that particular subject. The scale of the RAE is from 1 to 5*, with 1 meaning that no significant study has been made on the subject in the respective university, and 5* indicating international excellence in research in a particular subject.

The RAE is partly based on the number of works published in scientific journals by the professors and lecturers of each department. It has gathered a lot of criticism in the academic world:

> "I mean that's a very strange thing to measure, and it emphasizes only certain things. So for example somebody might have had four articles in academic journals and they're seen as big stars. Somebody else might have had four hundred articles in serious newspapers discussing certain issues and they're seen as a no-hoper because they're not in a peer-reviewed academic journal."

> "I think the RAE destroys to some extent research because people won't do what isn't going to be RAE'able and that's a shame because it makes you wonder what has been left in the process."

The next RAE will be published towards the end of 2008. After that the method of evaluating research and allocating funding is likely to be changed to a metric-based system which is still under construction but which, according to some interviewees, would be based on the number of citations in scientific publications. This change is especially likely in the fields of science, technology, engineering and medicine, but the peer-review system will probably remain in the humanities, social sciences and arts. The planned changes to the RAE, especially making it a citation-based evaluation system, are drawing criticism from scholars: some of those interviewed feared that counting citations does not offer an accurate description of a university's academic quality, and the quality of its staff.

Assessment of Courses in Media Studies and Journalism

When analysing the subject rankings for Media Studies and Journalism, it is noticeable that, first of all, few of the universities and colleges which do well overall in the league tables appear in these lists and secondly, that the league table rankings differ considerably from the research assessment ratings. Only one of The Guardian top ten

universities appears in The Guardian's top ten Media and Communication Studies subject table, and only two others in the Media and Communication Studies top ten are in the overall top twenty. Only one of the top twenty universities in The Times overall league table is in The Guardian's Media and Communication top ten list. This is probably because media studies and communication in general is a fairly new academic subject, and thus is not often included in the syllabuses of the old, prestigious universities which tend to dominate the league tables.

Whereas The Guardian subject table for media studies, communication and librarianship includes 74 institutions, the Research Assessment Exercise 2001 subject table for communication, cultural and media Studies included only 38 entries. The difference is probably due to two distinct differences. Firstly, the RAE was conducted in 2001, while The Guardian league table in question is from 2007. This means that new programmes and courses of study may have emerged during this time, and so some of the courses might not have even existed when the RAE was conducted. Secondly, the criteria for media and communication studies might differ in each ranking, so that The Guardian might consider some courses to be within the discipline while the RAE does not. In addition, The Guardian league table has librarianship with media studies and communication whereas the RAE had cultural studies. The RAE awarded only two 5 star ratings to media studies in 2001, one to the University of East Anglia and the other to Goldsmiths College.

Six further institutions were awarded 5 in the ratings, and six more rated 4. The University of East Anglia does not appear at all on The Guardian subject table list, and Goldsmiths College is 19th on the list. This is probably mainly due to the fact that The Guardian league table does not rate research at all, focusing more on teaching quality and student satisfaction. But from these results, and from the ones analysed above, it can be concluded that to some extent at least research and undergraduate teaching quality do not necessarily complement each other well in the field of media studies and journalism, as only a few institutions have done well in both rankings, the universities of Cardiff and Warwick being the only exceptions (both having RAE 5 rating, and both placed in the top ten in The Guardian subject table). The University of Warwick also did well in the overall league tables.

Table 17 shows all the universities receiving a RAE score between 4 and 5*, and compares this score to their rankings in The Guardian subject table for media studies, communication, and librarianship as well as in the Times overall league table.

Table 17: Research assessment exercise in comparison with the league tables

University	RAE score	The Guardian Subject Table	The Times Overall Table
University of East Anglia	5*	-	20
Goldsmiths College	5*	20	52
University of East London	5	69	99
Nottingham Trent University	5	13	56
University of Warwick	5	8	7
University of Westminster	5	11	91
University of Stirling	5	23	37
Cardiff University	5	6	28
University of Leeds	4	5	30
University of Sheffield	4	10	22
Staffordshire University	4	29	64
University of Sussex	4	21	35
University of West England	4	-	72
University of Ulster	4	32	53

Sources: Higher Education and Research Opportunities 2001,
Education Guardian 2008, The Times Online 2008.

Many of the scholars interviewed for this study believed that appreciation of media and communication studies amongst the public and within academia might well grow in the future. One indication of this could be that The London School of Economics and Oxford University have both established media research institutions within past five years. The emergence of these prestigious universities in media research could put the whole field in turmoil as their reputation makes it easier for them to find money and collaborators for their projects. As one interviewee said:

> "Today the most prestigious universities are beginning to engage in media studies. And I guess, the centre of gravity will move from these rather utilitarian (…) institutions into much more elite institutions, eventually to Oxford and Cambridge. (…) Those institutions will survive. Just as it took them a long time to discover sociology, it will take them a long time to discover media studies. And in the end they will dominate it, because they dominate the society. They are the best, they get all those grants (…) The way he [the Director of the Oxford Internet Institute] operates is completely different to the way in which we can operate, because he can ask people for millions of pounds and they give it to him, because it's Oxford. I can go to ask someone for 50 quid and they're like… fuck off. (…) It will make it much more difficult for us to recruit students, it will make it more difficult for us to hire high quality teachers, and it will make it much more difficult for us to hold on to teachers."

Top Departments Illustrated

As the above discussion illustrates, communication and media research is conducted in several universities. To highlight some of the top ranked as well as new department within the field, communication or media research -related departments of seven universities will be introduced in little more detail below. They are Cardiff University, Goldsmiths College, London School of Economics, The Oxford Internet Institute, The University of East Anglia, The University of Warwick and the University of Westminster.

Cardiff University is renowned for its studies in journalism and journalist training, which have existed since the 1970s. The School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (JOMEC) has received over 40 awards over the years. JOMEC is best known for its research on journalism and news. Other research areas include media coverage of health, risk and science, race, representation and cultural identity, children and media, media audiences, media and cultural policy and media, conflict and war

Goldsmiths College is situated in London, and is one of the best known departments in Media and Communication studies. The University has a new Centre for the Study of Global Media and Democracy, which is a highly interdisciplinary undertaking as it brings together researchers from three departments: Media and Communications, Sociology, and Politics (Goldsmiths College 2008a). In addition it plans to develop inter-disciplinary research bids, and it accepts students from any discipline. The research topics for the first two years (the Centre was founded in September 2007) include 'National media and the construction of 'the citizen' and 'the human', 'Neoliberal discourse and the public realm', and 'Global governance, the state and cultural politics' to name but a few. Research projects in Goldsmiths include for example studying the impact on journalism of the new media and webmagazine *openDemocracy*.[14] In addition, Goldsmiths conducts a research project on media reporting and public knowledge in different countries (the US, Finland, Denmark, and the UK). The project's goal is to study what gets reported in the main news programmes

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[14] *OpenDemocracy* is an online magazine which specialises in politics and culture. It tries to encourage people to contribute to the analysis of current events by building an "open source model for news analysis and opinion" (openDemocracy 2008). It is published by openDemocracy Limited, which is owned by the openDemocracy Foundation for the Advancement of Global Education.

and leading newspapers in each country. Follow-up projects to this research are already planned.

The London School of Economics and Political Science formed a Department of Media and Communications officially in 2003. Before that there had been an interdisciplinary programme in the school spread between sociology and social psychology, as well as joint programmes including the study of law, gender and information systems. The research conducted in the department is now highly interdisciplinary in that it focuses on wider problems such as globalisation, inequality, and changing identities, and incorporates media research in to those questions. In addition it addresses industrial, political and economic issues. The research is organised according to five themes: 1) Innovation, Governance and Policy; 2) Democracy, Politics and Journalism Ethics; 3) Globalisation and Comparative Studies; 4) Media and the New Media Literacies; and 5) Communication and Difference. (London School of Economics 2008)

The Innovation, Governance and Policy theme encompasses such research areas as international governance of the new media, intellectual property rights, and public service regulation along with financial market regulation. Democracy, Politics and Journalism Ethics is based on research conducted on participation in global social movements, and the mediation of suffering and journalism ethics, for example. Global trends in media representation as well as the television and film industries in India and China are just some examples studied under the theme Globalisation and Comparative Studies, whereas Media and the New Media Literacies focuses on such research areas as adult and youthful responses to mediated risks and opportunities. The research projects under the theme Communication and Difference examine culture and everyday life, the politics of otherness, and the production of exclusion as explored post-colonial and innovation studies. Recent research projects in the department that have won acclaim include for example one called Social Contexts and Responses to Risk and Digital Business Ecosystem (DBE). (London School of Economics 2008)

The variety of research areas and the interdisciplinary approach are reflected in the fact that the research methods applied in the department are varied, and there is no single methodological approach which would necessary be favoured over others.

The department has also established Polis, a joint initiative with the London College of Communication. Polis is intended primarily to provide journalists and the wider public with a place for public discussion and policy intervention on key issues of journalism. In addition its aim is to produce outstanding research in the field, especially on the impact of mediation and journalism in different societies. Polis was established in 2006. (Polis 2008a)

The Oxford Internet Institute was founded in 2001 in response to the demand by parliament for Oxford to conduct research in areas concerning the dot-com phenomenon and the internet in general. Funding for the Institute comes from both government and private industry. Unlike many other departments of internet studies, the Oxford Internet Institute decided not to focus on technology hardware, software, application development or business development. Instead, Oxis is studying the social implications of the internet, what it means for people, businesses and governments.

The best known research project carried out by the Institute is the Oxford Internet Survey, which has thus far been conducted three times every two years. It is carried out by door-to-door interviewing of approximately two thousand people about their internet usage. It tries to give researchers a picture of how, why, when and how much people actually use the internet. The survey is part of a research area called Everyday Life one of the four main research areas in the Institute. Current projects in Everyday Life include 'Me, My Spouse and the Internet: Meeting, Dating and Marriage in the Digital Age', 'Digital Choices and the Reconfiguring of Access', and 'Cybertrust: The Tension between Privacy and Security in an e-Society'. The first of these is supported by an online matchmaking company, e-Harmony, and tries to look at how the internet has affected intimate relationships in the modern world (Oxford University Internet Institute 2008c). The 'Digital Choices and the Reconfiguring of Access' project looks at how the outcomes of internet usage are shaped by many overlapping arenas and strategic choices in everyday life (Oxford University Internet Institute 2008b), while the 'Cybertrust' project tries to examine the perception of trust in online activities (Oxford University Internet Institute 2008a).

The other three research areas are 'Governance and Democracy, Science and Learning, and Shaping the Internet' The Governance and Democracy research area is concerned mainly with the relationship between governments and the internet. It examines both how governments use the internet and how the public uses government-provided internet services. For example, a project called 'Government on the Web' aims to improve understanding of e-government and the impact web technologies have on governments (Government on the Web 2008). The Science and Learning area, on the other hand, is concerned with how the internet can be used in learning and research. It examines the possibilities of e-learning and e-research. Finally, subjects as varied as internet governance and stopping the expansion of so called badware (i.e. spyware, malware, and deceptive adware) are covered in the third research area, 'Shaping the Internet'.

The University of East Anglia is located two miles from Norwich, in Eastern England. Its School of Film and Television Studies, which includes the East Anglian Film Archive, is one of the longest-established film and television studies programmes in the UK. The school is known for its research into, for example, British and American film history and gender and representation studies. Current research projects include for example 'The Post-Apocalyptic TV Drama in the UK and US', which analyses dramas within a wider socio-cultural and historical context; 'Experiencing Anime: Anime Culture in Contemporary Japan'; and 'Entertaining Television: British TV, the BBC and Popular Programme Culture in the 1950's'. (University of East Anglia 2008.)

The Department of Film and Television Studies of the **University of Warwick** is renowned for being the first free-standing department of film and television studies in the UK. (University of Warwick 2008a) The university is located in Coventry, about 37 kilometres from Birmingham. Its current research areas include television genres, everyday television, the history and future of the study of television and representation of gender. An ongoing project is 'The Cult of the Duce: Mussolini and the Italians, 1918–2005', which aims to study the cult of Mussolini and its consequences until today. Mussolini used visual arts and the media to his own advantage in ruling the country, to reinforce the support he wanted for his rule. (University of Warwick 2008b.)

Many of the interviewees mentioned the **University of Westminster** as one of the leading universities for media and communication research. The university specialises in media policy and economics. The other research areas include BBC history, media policy and regulation, media audiences and global media. The School of Media, Arts and Design's Research Centre contains two major research groups: the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), and the Centre for Research and Education in Art and Media (CREAM). CAMRI has research interests for example in global and transnational media as well as in Indian and African media. Members of the Institute are editing six scholarly journals, and are the founding editors of *Media, Culture and Society*. In addition, the Institute includes the China Media Centre and the Arab Media Centre. CREAM, on the other hand, concentrates on research into ceramics, visual arts, photography, film, digital media, and fashion.

2.4. PhDs

All British universities have the authority to award PhD degrees and do in fact do so. Most Doctorates take two to four years of full-time independent study and research. The most common doctorate is the PhD or DPhil. The New Route Doctor of Philosophy is a PhD programme offering a mixture of research and taught elements which takes four years to complete. (The British Council Finland 2008b.) Part-time PhD degrees are more flexible, but the guideline for their duration is six years (The UK Grad Programme 2008).

The costs of a doctoral degree vary notably in the UK depending on the course and the institution. In 2008 the average tuition fees for postgraduate study for arts and humanities courses were normally 7,000 – 9,000 pounds per year, science courses 7,500 –12,000 pounds a year, clinical courses 10,000 – 21,000 pounds per year, and MBA from 4,000 to more than 30,000 per year. (Education UK 2008.)

Traditional UK doctorates are achieved through research. Doctoral programmes consist of highly specialised study and independent research under the guidance of an academic supervisor. At the end of their studies, doctoral students submit a thesis (up to 100,000 words) that shows evidence of original research and can be prepared for publication.

Some institutions offer Split PhD programmes, which offer students the chance to benefit from the advantages associated with taking an international degree. Students enrolling on a Split PhD programme spend part of their time at an institution in their home country and part in the UK. (The British Council Finland 2008b.)

In 2006/2007 about a half of the nearly 500 PhD students in the fields of media studies and journalism were UK residents before entering PhD programmes. The British PhD programmes in media studies and journalism were especially popular with students from United States, China, Germany, South Korea, Greece, India and Canada. (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2008a.)

Originally the programmes were based on a kind of apprenticeship between the supervising academic and the student. The design of the course was very thesis-centred. According to interviewees, taught components providing research training are increasingly being added to the programmes, especially for the first year of the programmes. The main requirement remains the production of a thesis under the supervision of a tutor. In cases where the PhD student has not completed his or her Master's degree, more training in methodology and theory will be added to the doctoral programme. In many departments one of the reasons for adding on training in methodology and theory is the increasing number of international PhD students.

> "By the time you got on to the doctoral programme, you were expected to be familiar with the scientific literature. I think that's no longer the case, particularly as we recruit doctoral students whose undergraduate level was in other countries. You can't make that assumption, you can make it to the Finns, but you can't make it of the Chinese."

According to the academics interviewed, the growing proportion of foreign PhD students reflects the lack of funding for doctorates for British students. It was suggested that the scrapping of the grant system and the introduction of tuition fees has made British students less likely to continue their studies after graduating with a Bachelor's degree, as further education would require additional debts.

> "British middle class families pay for their kids' education – up to BA, that is. After that they're on their own. (…) the appreciation of Master's degrees is not very high. People find jobs without it. That's why it's getting rare that a Brit would do a Master's degree. The same applies to the PhD students. Almost all of them are non-Brits."

The shortage of money means that those who do apply for PhD programmes either have grants or scholarships from somewhere else. "Or they've got rich mums and dads", as one of the interviewees remarked. Many interviewees thought there is a struggle to get students every year or a shortage of top quality PhD students. Especially those working in new universities found the situation worrying. One interviewee said that except for two or three of the most prestigious universities in the field, who have plenty of applicants and are able to choose the best, universities are finding that the level of applicants often leaves much to be desired.

One of the interviewees remarked that "a certain critical mass" is needed in order to have a good doctoral programme. In order to get the programmes running, some academically less equipped students have to be accepted. As one interviewee pointed out, "if you only recruit people who've got the money, there's no direct correlation of having money and being any good." The quality of the students was described as uneven: "Some are very, very good, some aren't. Some struggle to get through, basically."

Besides the funding problem, another reason for the unattractiveness of PhD programmes among British students was thought to be the general unattractiveness of an academic career in 21st century Britain. According to many academics, it is difficult to find permanent jobs or get book deals and funding, and at the same time the working hours are long and social status and earnings are low.

> "Our salaries are pretty mediocre really in my view, you know, you earn as much being a tube driver than as a lecturer."

> "Academics are badly paid, academics have got no social status, and academics are buried in bureaucracy. They [students] see us and they think 'I could be a TV-producer, thank you, and get three times as much and a much more interesting life. What, become an academic?'"

The latter interviewee thought that the number of Chinese students in British PhD programmes is growing because in China, in contrast, the culture regards learning as being a positive social good. One interviewee suggested that the "more established members of the profession" should "think more about what we can do to sustain the culture of research within our institutions and more widely" in order to make an academic career more appealing to the younger generation.

2.5. Research Agencies and Companies Conducting Research

The bodies outside academia that conduct media research can be divided into four groups: 1) market research companies, 2) media companies' own research units, 3) think-tanks and NGOs and 4) government-funded media research.

Market Research

There are several media-monitoring companies that produce qualitative and quantitative data on audiences. The biggest ones include Nielsen Media Research, Ipsos Mori, GfK NOP Media, MRUK, BMRB, TNS, RSMB and MINTEL. These companies sell their services to the media and advertising industry but also carry out their own research projects on audiences and public opinion.

Ipsos-Mori, for example, is at the moment responsible for collecting the data for Radio Joint Audience Research Limited (RAJAR) i.e. compiling the official statistics on UK radio audiences. Another research company, RSMB, weights and designs the sample for RAJAR. (Radio Joint Audience Research 2008.)

The Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB) is similar to RAJAR, but working with the TV industry. BARB is responsible for providing the official measurement of UK television audiences and it uses RSMB, Ipsos, MORI, Nielsen Media Research and TNS as their contractors. (Broadcasters' Audience Research Board Limited 2008a.)

Media Companies' Research

Commercially driven market and audience research takes place within the research units of all the major media companies, like the BBC or Channel 4, and is directed towards measuring audiences, and getting information on their consistency in order to sell them to advertisers. The vast majority of this type of research is confidential in nature and its results are rarely published.

Case-in-point: Measuring Cross-media Audiences

BBC Research conducts research among audiences across all areas of BBC involvement: on radio, television, websites and marketing. The subjects of research

range from micro level issues, such as details of the execution of a particular programme or a marketing campaign, to macro level studies on general consumer trends, uptakes on new platforms such as mobile internet or the perceptions audiences have of the value of the licence fee.

According to BBC New Media's audience research manager Alison Button, the most important topics are at the macro end of the scale, such as new ways of delivery of BBC content. For example, the BBC iPlayer was introduced after research suggested that mass uptake of home high-speed broadband connections was taking place. Many projects are 'medium-sized', such as launches of new TV or radio channels or new media services, or projects that try to explore how, in the future, mainstream audiences may want to access what is on offer.

The most popular methodologies and data BBC Research uses are analysis of industry data such as BARB and RAJAR. They also maintain audience panels to provide feedback on media content, analyse return-path data (e.g. ways in which users navigate on a particular website) for new media offerings, and conduct different types of surveys, focus group and individual in-depth interviews.

Knowing what audiences do with the media has always been a difficult question for industry-driven and academic media research. Nowadays researchers are faced with a new fundamental question: what is 'audience'. The same media content can be consumed using a wide range of technical devices at any time that suits the individual user. It is hard to find technical solutions that will measure this kind of audience. At the same time the fragmenting of audiences makes it hard to obtain large enough sample sizes for analysis. BBC Research & Innovation are currently in the process of developing a new cross-media measurement system, which is aimed at measuring the reach of BBC's content across television, radio and new media platforms such as the internet and mobile phone delivery.

Think-tanks and NGOs
Different kinds of think-tanks and NGOs with various ideological backgrounds also carry out media research in Britain. Many of the academics interviewed said that the

quality and impartiality of their research varies considerably. None of the think-tanks are concentrated wholly on media. However some, such as Demos UK and the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), also run media-related projects.

Demos UK is part of the international network of Demos think tanks for 'everyday democracy'. Politically independent, it works with many different groups of people, including policy-makers, companies, public service providers and social entrepreneurs. One of its past media-related research projects is a study on the 'aged based digital divide' of elderly people i.e. the fact that around 70 percent of people over 65 do not use the internet.(Demos 2008.)

IPPR was founded in 1988 by Lord Hollick. It describes itself as "the UK's leading progressive think tank, producing research and innovative policy ideas for a just, democratic and sustainable world."(Institute for Public Policy Research 2008a) IPRR's recent media research includes a project called 'Behind the Screen: The hidden life of youth online', which looks at the other side of the age based digital divide i.e. the way in which British young people use the internet and the issues this raises. (Institute for Public Policy Research 2008b.)

As the significance of the media in society has increased, so the interest of NGOs in the media has also grown. The quality and range of this research varies significantly. Some NGOs concentrate more on media training than on doing research.

Case-in-point: Training for diversity

The Media Diversity Institute (MDI) is a London-based NGO that aims to use media to lessen inter-group conflict, advance human rights and support understanding of social diversity.

> "I worked on national television in Serbia, which was bombed later on for spreading war propaganda, for portraying the others as evil doers and mongering hate and things like that, so that's how I learned how dangerous journalism could be", said Milica Pesic, the executive director and founder of MDI in an interview for this research about how she got the idea for the institute.

MDI partners with organisations in a range of countries with a focus on regions where news media have played a destructive role. MDI gives training in diversity issues for media organisations, journalists, journalism educators and other NGOs. The training is

most often done through workshops. Other of MDI's activities include compiling databases of 'best practices' in the field of reporting diversity in the media.

One of the groups that MDI focuses on in Europe is the socially and economically disadvantaged Roma minority in South Eastern Europe. In 2001 MDI ran a workshop for Roma and non-Roma journalists from six countries. They worked in pairs and produced newspaper and magazine articles and radio and TV packages on Roma-related issues. The aim was to produce balanced stories while building professional and personal contacts.

Ofcom

One of the guidelines directing the operations of communications regulator Ofcom is that regulation has to be evidence-based. (The work of Ofcom is introduced in detail in this report in the chapter *1.4. Media Policies and Regulation*.) In its research activities Ofcom both uses data from the commercial media research companies and commissions media research projects from universities.

In addition to policy-oriented projects, Ofcom compiles an annual communications market review, an international review on the media market. Ofcom also monitors the media literacy of British children and adults. This first project was carried out in 2005, with a follow-up survey to this being compiled this year. The research covers all media including the internet and looks not only at the ownership of technical equipment but also at how people use and how confident they are when using different technologies.

2.6. Research Funding

In the light of the data gathered one can conclude that there are currently three major trends in British media research funding: 1) internationalisation, 2) an emphasis on ICT and 3) knowledge transfer. These trends will be outlined later in this chapter, after the sources of British media research funding have first been examined.

Sources of Funding

The main sources of funding for academic media research are public research councils that distribute government money. There are seven councils arranged around different areas of science. Most media researchers apply for grants from either the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) or the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

In matters of funding, the social sciences and humanities receive only a fraction of the money that the hard sciences get. For example, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), which also funds media and communication research projects that involve ICT elements, has a budget of £500 million (about 630 million euros) to distribute each year (Engineering and Physical Research Council 2008). In comparison, the 2007/2008 budget for the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is £181 million (228 million euros) (Economic and Social Research Council 2008) and for the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) £75 million (94.5 million euros) (Arts and Humanities Research Council 2008).

The application process for Research Council funding is regarded by many of the academics interviewed as difficult and frustrating. The grants are awarded by a peer review panel, which according to several interviewees leads to the exclusion of the most critical and morally charged proposals. Furthermore, some types of media and communication research were seen as not really fitting clearly in either AHRC's or ESRC's area of expertise. The government has also indicated that it might in the future concentrate its funding on the larger research institutions, which some interviewees find worrying.

Other sources of research funding include:
- The British Academy, which grants government money for post-graduate level small-scale research
- Foundations e.g. the Leverhulme Trust, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the European Science Foundation (ESF)
- The media industry
- NGOs

- The European Commission (EC)/European Research Council
- UN agencies, World Bank, OECD
- Ofcom
- UK and foreign government departments
- Local authorities (the mayor of London, regional development agencies)

Many interviewees said the proportion of media industry money in media research is relatively small at the moment. One person pointed out, however, that in his experience, many of the projects funded by the industry are confidential in nature and therefore people do not even know how much of it takes place.

Internationalising Funding

The fact that more and more UK research projects are international in nature is at least partly a result of the European Commission's policy, which has emphasised international collaboration. This has led to studies comparing media-related phenomena in different countries and joint projects involving scholars from two or more countries.

One separate sector within media research is capacity-building projects. Capacity building refers to assistance that is directed towards improving society's competence, usually in the context of a developing country. The media research capacity building projects usually revolve around democracy issues such as citizen participation, journalist training and freedom of expression. For example, one of the interviewees had been involved in compiling a handbook for African radio journalists.[15] Another example was some UK academics helping to set up a community radio in Georgia. These kinds of international projects receive funding from sources ranging from UN agencies to government departments and NGOs.

ICT gets the Money

When asked to list topic areas in media and communication research that do particularly well in terms of funding, the interviewees mentioned most often those associated with

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15 Gaber, Barber & Ledger 'Live from Africa – Handbook for War and Peace Reporting
<http://iwpr.net/pdf/LiveFromAfricaPart1.pdf> 22.4.2008

ICT: the internet, interactivity, mobile phones, virtual reality, e-society and e-democracy. This applied to both research councils and the private sector. ICT-related research is funded by e.g. Fujitsu, Sony, Nokia, Hewlett Packard and British Telecom. Some more practice-oriented media departments also received grants from both the private and public sectors for the digitalisation of different kinds of archives.

Another area that has recently been doing well in terms of funding is health. Projects on health communication and 3D animation receive money from the medical industry. For example, Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media & Cultural Studies runs a research group on risk, science, health and the media. Its major funded research project topics include public discourses of stem cell research, representations of women scientists and media representation of genetic explanations. Funding bodies include the Wellcome Trust, CESAGen, UKRC and the Department of Health. (Cardiff University 2008a.)

Another type of medically related media research is undertaken at the National Centre for Computer Animation of Bournemouth University Media School. Some of the projects that the centre runs aim at developing computer animation software that can be used for purposes of medical research (Bournemouth University 2008).

Towards "Knowledge Transfer"

The Knowledge Transfer initiative is part of the government's so-called innovation strategy. Minister of State for Science and Innovation Malcolm Wicks defines the concept:

> "Knowledge Transfer is about transferring good ideas, research results and skills between universities, other research organisations, businesses and the wider community to enable innovative products and services to be developed." (Department of Trade and Industry 2006)

For the academic community the new policy has meant that the research councils nowadays prefer funding projects with practical, generally economic, applications. Buzzwords are 'user engagement' and 'policy relevance'. One of the interviewees described the situation:

> "Never has applied social research been so valued. (…) Can it actually help the economy, can it (…) solve political problems. (…) The government has put money in there and the government actually wants the money back."

The interviewees predicted that this knowledge transfer policy will have its winners and losers. Amongst the winners they thought would probably be numbered the ex-polytechnics, which have always been more engaged with the industry and applied science. London-based institutions might also find it easier to build networks with the media industry, which is concentrated on the capital. The name of the university or of the department, which works as a kind of brand name, and is already regarded as a key element in getting funding and networking, is likely to become increasingly important in the future.

The interviewees' responses to knowledge sharing were divided. On the one hand there was relatively strong agreement that academic research has to be relevant to real world problems and have an impact on society or "the world outside academia". Indeed, some were very enthusiastic about knowledge transfer. On the other hand, the idea of the value of research being determined by its economic value was contested. There was also a worry among them that an emphasis on knowledge sharing will make it difficult to carry out basic research that develops the field intellectually.

> "How can you find economic value in some creative innovative approach to something in our field, it's just… it's ridiculous in my view. So, because of the pendulum going more and more to the applied direction, across the whole field we will resist and say there's need for pure research, basic research."

The whole idea of a need to operate with the industry was also strongly questioned:

> "If you think of political science or sociology, do people tell political scientists to spend more time with politicians? Co-operation is OK, but both should take care of their own businesses."

There was also concern that less conventional and more critical research questions, "questions that question the nature of the way the political establishments understand the world" are not likely to get funded in the current climate:

> "I mean questions like what is the impact of advertising on the way we understand the world. (…) A research council might fund that but (…) the advertising industry isn't going to fund that, why would they. And actually probably nor is the television industry who get their money from advertising, why would they want to ask such a question. The BBC might be kind of vaguely interested but it doesn't really affect them."

There are several obstacles to the use of knowledge transfer in the field of media and communication studies. Even if the topics of interest to the media industry and the academic world are becoming more similar, the industry still operates on a different logic and a different time-span than university departments. According to some of the academics interviewed, the industry wants mainly two things of them: vocational training for future media professionals and information on their audiences.

> "By and large the media industry – most research they want, they want to know about audience and consumption – there are specialist agencies who can do it much better than we can."

On the other hand one of the interviewees thought that particularly in the new media area, companies are using "ethnographic techniques and sociologists" in order to understand user preferences and interfaces:

> "I had a PhD-student collaborating with somebody at Hewlett-Packard who did some really quite fascinating research from an ethnographic point of view on the way people would use interactive devices on the tube trains in London, so download music and exchange and share files with each other."

According to many interviewees, the academic world in Britain is more distant from the world of media professionals than in some other countries. This was brought up in almost every interview. Several interviewees said there is relatively deep mutual distrust between the media industry and media academics, most clearly manifested in the way in which the British press mocks media studies as un-intellectual "Mickey Mouse Studies".

> "It [media studies] is not viewed by journalists as an academic subject or something you should study in a university, which is a very striking contrast to many countries."

One of the interviewees compared this attitude to his experiences in the US. He pointed out that British media research is more appreciated abroad than at home, where there is a strange "deep-rooted anti-intellectualism towards media studies."

> "When I worked in the United States I mean there was a huge respect for media studies in Britain and yet in Britain there's not."

Two main explanations for this distrust were put forward. First of all, a university degree in journalism has not necessarily been seen as a requirement for finding employment in journalism.

> "Increasingly what they're doing now, they're doing their Master's in journalism, at some of these places like Cardiff [University] et cetera, but that's sort of less common than it is in American universities."

In other words, journalism has not traditionally been a graduate profession, but something where "people went straight from school". According to one interviewee, self-educated journalists have traditionally tended to be "a little suspicious" towards practitioners of media studies: "their image would be ivory tower intellectuals who don't really know about life."

Moreover, institutions like the BBC have historically preferred to hire people from the old red-brick universities with degrees in subjects other than journalism. Finally, there is no system or tradition in the UK that could be compared to the US fellowship system, which allows American journalists to spend some time in academia and then return to practise journalism.

The second explanation is that the expansion of media studies as an academic subject took place at the same time as the widening of access to universities in 1992, when polytechnics were given the status of universities. The new universities were looked down on by "redbrick-educated BBC types" who thought the whole university system was being "dumbed-down" and that media studies was just typical of the sort of courses that working-class people "with a precondition that they are more stupid" end up taking "if you open up the universities" to them.

The data gathered suggest that this divide between media professionals and academics might now be becoming narrower. Some interviewees thought that media professionals and the academic world have recently started moving closer to each other in many ways:

> "It's much easier to set up internships than it ever was (…) and you've had sort of one or two highly successful careers of people who did media studies. (…) and then there's a whole generation of people who've got a lot of television or journalism experience, who are now coming to academia, you know, it's quite common among people at the age of 45."

In addition, the ongoing change in the media landscape is worrying the British media industry. Despite the obvious differences in approaches, the media industry's research

units are nowadays to some extent interested in the same sort of issues as academic media research. Shared topics of interest emerging from this ongoing change include e.g. media convergence, fragmenting audiences, diminishing readerships of newspapers, digitalisation and social websites.

As a part of its knowledge transfer policy the government is also encouraging research to be oriented towards solving political problems. This idea fits in well with the European tradition of academic-citizen, which is alive and well in the UK too. I.e. there is a strong belief that academics should also be active participants in public life. It is not unusual, for example, for there to be consultations between British academics and ideological organisations or government policy-makers.

One interviewee thought, however, that the government does not always practise what it preaches e.g. when it comes to the policy of regulating images of sex and violence in the media.

> "Media academics have been campaigning very strongly against the kind of legislation they're proposing. (…) They want us to engage in their policies as long as we support their policy."

Another one criticised the government for implementing its agenda on research priorities and for the fact that they "focus funding only on research that meets certain central government targets such as global security, the digital economy – various government defined priorities" and are trying to close down "the space within which the research councils can work".

Examples of academia – 'outside world' co-operation
- Students on the Postgraduate diploma programme in Journalism Studies at Cardiff University are experimenting with Nokia N95 mobile phones to explore how they can be used to provide a full multi-media platform for journalists. (Cardiff University 2008b)
- A professor from the University of Bedfordshire is working on research on ethnic media for ethnic minorities in London. The research has been commissioned by the mayor of London.

- Staffordshire University's Faculty of Arts, Media and Design have collaborated with the Alton Towers amusement park to produce the Alton Towers Heritage website. (Alton Towers 2008)

- The BBC commissioned the Department of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Cardiff University to compile a report on the role of media coverage of the 2003 Iraq war and the role of reporters who were embedded in the army. (BBC 2003)

- From 2002 to 2005 the University of Bristol took part in a project called Mobile Bristol together with the IT-company Hewlett Packard, Bristol-based Appliance Studio and an initiative sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry called the Next Wave of Technologies and Markets initiative. The project looked into how mobile devices and pervasive information technology can be used to enhance the ways in which residents and visitors experience and interact with their physical environment and with each other in urban and public spaces. (Mobile Bristol 2008)

Case-in-point: Networking Journalism

Polis is a joint initiative of the LSE and the University of the Arts London/London College of Communication (LCC) and it provides an example of an attempt to connect the worlds of the university and the media. The key concept of Polis is 'networked journalism'. Its goal is to develop a forum in which journalists, people in public life and students both from Britain and abroad can examine and discuss the media and their impact on society.

Polis was established in 2006 and can be described as a hybrid of a think-tank and a discussion forum. Its activities include public lectures, panel debates, seminars, conferences both at home and abroad, research and teaching. It has recently run joint projects with for example the BBC College of Journalism and *The Guardian*.

Polis' main focus areas include media leadership, trends, media change, concepts and ethics. So far the main work of Polis has been the promotion of public discussion events, which have been attended by journalists, academics and members of the general public. The topics have included, for example, children and media, media freedom in China, Russia and Zimbabwe, the future of the public service ethos and the reporting of

Muslims and extremism. (Polis 2008.) Some seminars that have dealt with particularly sensitive questions have been held off the record.

One series of seminars was held last year under the theme 'Future of the News'. These seminars brought people from different sectors of the media industry together to think broadly about where the industry is going.

Case-in-Point: International Reuters Fellows at Oxford

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism was established in autumn 2006, and is based in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. The Reuters Foundation has supported a programme of visiting fellowships based at Oxford University for journalists from around the world since 1983. Fellowships have allowed well established mid-career journalists from all over the world to spend one or two terms in Oxford studying at the university.

Previously the fellows, sponsored by the Reuters Foundation or other sponsors, have been able to study any discipline at Oxford University. Since the establishment of the new institute the area of study has been reduced to international comparative journalism within the broad subcategories of 1) politics and journalism 2) the economics of the business of journalism 3) the future of journalism and 4) specialist journalism, such as science or business journalism. The approach to study is multi-methodological and the use of methods typically used in media studies is discouraged.

3. Key Approaches

3.1. A Multidisciplinary Field

The British scholars interviewed for this report often described the field as multidisciplinary. Many scholars thought that the fact that 'media studies' can be understood as anything and everything from film-making to journalism, production design to discourse analysis, probably contributes to its poor reputation among the public and academics.

Nevertheless its multidisciplinary nature was also seen as an asset, something that should be further strengthened rather than ignored. Points like "The more one can draw from multiple disciplines (…) the better off we are" and "we just have to remember it's only a topic, it's only a subject, it's not a discipline and it gets its real intellectual gravity from its parent disciplines" were mentioned.

Many people defended this position by reminding us that what happens in the media cannot be studied as something separate from the rest of society, and called for a less media-centric approach. Those interviewed also made the point that media research will have more influence on social theory through serious engagement with it.

> "One has to see the connections, and I think to enrich the media studies literature with a much more serious engagement with social theory, the problems of social theory. (…) And I think it's only through that being done on a broader scale we media theorists, media researchers will actually come to have a lot more influence on social theory."

Interestingly, this view is quite contrary to that of American scholars. In the report *Mapping Communication and Media Research in the US* (2007, p. 84), the American scholars interviewed regretted that the field is "so fragmented and the theoretical bases so distant from each other that the field itself is not benefiting from the growing body of research."

In order to get some understanding of the range of disciplines that British media and cultural studies draw upon, a small content analysis was carried out. For this, from each department in which general media and communication research takes place one of the interviews conducted for this report was selected. Specialised research institutions such

as Oxford Internet Institute were excluded so that a general view of the field could be obtained. Then a list was made of the subjects and fields that were mentioned in these interviews as being represented in each department. Similar subjects, such as animation techniques, computer animation and digital imaging were grouped together. It should be emphasised that the data in this small listing derive from only ten interviewees and cannot be used to draw any very profound conclusions about the field.

- computer science, animation techniques, computer animation, digital imaging (times mentioned: 6)
- sociology (6)
- visual arts, photography, design (6)
- anthropology, visual anthropology (3)
- history (2)
- politics (2)
- philosophy, philosophical aesthetic (2)
- Mentioned once: advertising, law, leisure industry, literature, marketing, postcolonial studies, psychoanalysis

In this small data analysis, the social sciences, visual arts and computing are all equally represented in the field. Business-related subjects, on the other hand, do not seem to have a very prominent role in these ten departments. The range of subjects and fields mentioned appears surprisingly wide and includes perhaps unexpected elements such as the leisure industry.

The Complexity of Defining the Field

Interviewees' definitions of the key approaches in the field of British media and communication studies were quite varied. One of the most commonly agreed ways of categorising the field was to divide it into the academic and the more applied tradition, of which latter was labelled either creative, technological, production based or practically oriented.

The academic field was most commonly divided into two traditions based on their scientific roots: one deriving from the social sciences and the other from the humanities. The social science-based approach was seen as more concentrated on quantitative and

empirical research while qualitative methods were thought to characterise the humanities-based approach. This distinction was generally agreed upon by the interviewees. However, there was less agreement about the ways of labelling the two approaches and where the line between them should be drawn.

The categorisation of 'film studies' also proved problematic. For example, one of the interviewees said the main approaches were 'media studies' based on sociology and history and 'cultural studies' based on English literature and film studies. Another one said the field was divided into 'film and TV studies' with its roots in literature and the visual arts and 'media and cultural studies' deriving from the social sciences. A third interviewee characterised film studies as "quite a separate area" with "its very own special concerns of psychoanalysis and so on" and "very little connection to the wider media studies field". This academic divided the approaches outside technological research into political economy, cultural studies and film studies. In addition he saw the work of the Glasgow media group as a separate tradition since, like cultural studies, it works on audiences, but uses the methodology of the social sciences.

There were also several other ways of defining the main approaches e.g. by the subject of study ('audience tradition' and 'institutional approaches') and by scientific approach (theoretical "that draws mainly from the cultural studies end of media studies" and "fairly atheoretical" which includes "a lot of work in journalism and politics of media").

The categorisations mentioned above as well as the division into social science-based approaches and humanist-based approaches can be traced back to the rivalry between political economy and cultural studies in the field of British media and communication research. Because of the interesting relationship between the two approaches, they will be discussed together. After that the tradition of film studies, which can be seen as developing separately, will be examined, followed by the tradition which can be called creative, technological, production-based or practically oriented research. After describing these main approaches, this discussion will move on to methodology in British media and communication studies. The last part of the chapter will be devoted to introducing current and promising areas of research.

Political Economy & Cultural Studies – Old Rivals

Many of the interviewees identified political economy and cultural studies as the most important approaches in British media studies and juxtaposed the two. Both political economy and cultural studies are highly critical of the media and have Marxism as their ideological basis. Historically there has been a divide between these two approaches and they have been seen as rivals.

The political economy tradition looks at the ways in which the dynamics of capital accumulation and class power manifest themselves in the capitalist mode of production, particularly the institutional structure, organization and production processes of the media industries (See e.g. Calabrese 2004:1–12). This tradition is well presented e.g. in the University of Westminster and the London School of Economics.

The cultural studies approach was developed in Britain in the 1970's and 1980's. The emergence of this tradition is associated with the establishment of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University in 1964. Traditionally, cultural studies looked at audiences and the problems of ideology; how audiences in different social positions understand the content of the text, typically a TV programme or film. Cultural studies was seen by many interviewees as "the dominant flavour" of media and communication research in Britain. "Cultural studies" was also a very common answer to the question: "Is there something that makes British media and communication research uniquely British?"

Cultural Studies in itself, however, is, according to many interviewees, an increasingly fluid concept. As one interviewee put it, research on ideology and audience reception "stopped in the mid-90's, when the solutions seemed to be too simple for the complexity of the problem." At the same time audience studies developed in new directions such as fandom studies, which looked at audience pleasures, and the social process involved in media text. Consequently it is less clear today what 'cultural studies' actually is:

> "Cultural studies can mean all sorts of things from people doing text analysis of *Desperate Housewives* through to studies of audiences in Bhutan. It can mean all sorts of different things. So there isn't, I think, a clearly defined field."

According to interviewees, political economy was historically seen as interested in 'harder' subjects and as using more quantitative methods and theories based on social sciences. Cultural studies, in contrast, was seen as 'softer' in its focus and typically used focus group interviews and different forms of textual analysis as methods. The interview data suggest that the rivalry between the two approaches was most clearly evident in the way in which the practitioners of each tradition "didn't really read each other's work (…) and they tended to be very adversarial and object to each other's positions." Cultural studies-based researchers have previously regarded political economy as a descriptive practice that lacked theory. Political economists, for their part, have in the past criticised cultural studies for being heavy on theory, for the use of "flimsy" methodology and for not having any real impact or interests in the real world. One of the interviewees voiced this kind of criticism:

> "I don't think cultural studies is engaging in anything else than understanding that world and from a particular intellectual, enormous ideological framework. It has always been very coltish."

> "You need the other method [in addition to focus group interviews], which is actually quantification and they just don't do it. So I actually think this is where cultural studies actually becomes trivial. Absolutely trivial."

In practice cultural studies and political economy have generally been studied in the same institutions. As one interviewee put it: "I think most of the courses and departments you would look at in this country are actually rather an uncomfortable combination of both."

Two different views on the rivalry between political economy and cultural studies today were voiced in the data of this report. First of all, many of the scholars interviewed thought that the rivalry between political economy and cultural studies was becoming a matter of history, and they welcomed this development.

> "One cannot look at one or the other. You have to pay attention to some degree to both, even if your interest is in one rather than the other."

> "Now I think you see a lot more work which tries to draw from both. (…) That's not to say that those gaps don't still exist. I think they do, but there's more work that tries to work within that (…) which I think is a positive shift."

For example, one interviewee argued that the attempt to understand the phenomenon of reality-TV has brought political economy and cultural studies approaches together, as it has proved to be "a replication of an economically very successful model for cheap

programming, which was a new way of presenting social reality in mediated form involving new forms of interactivity, new forms of story-telling, witnessing, new forms of authority with psychologists and so on, new forms of play".

The increasingly similar interests of practitioners of political economy and cultural studies do not apply only to Britain and they have also been noted in the literature. For example, Professor Andrew Calabrese (2004: 9) of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication of the University of Colorado argues that both political economy and cultural studies–oriented research nowadays show interest in the meaning of citizenship and the way in which audiences are commoditised. According to Calabrese the newly found focus on audiences is enabling political economists to "answer empirical questions about what we think we know regarding the production and circulation of meaning, which is not of negligible importance, given claims on which the work of political economists rest."

The second often repeated view was that cultural studies and political economy are both in crisis and both about to lose their radical heritage. Especially more senior academics were worried about the departure from the critical and radical roots of media studies in recent years.

> "I think media studies was always very clearly situated in a kind of social-political context and hence informed by a broader political understanding. I think we see now a lot more media studies that is not, that is just about the media and doesn't really work within the broader context of society."

The de-radicalisation of the field was blamed by the interviewees on the rise of neo-liberalism, individualism and the "celebration of the popular" in society. One interviewee thought it was mainly due to the collapse of Marxism as a critical strand of thought.

In the past especially the British cultural studies tradition was seen as the more critical alternative to the more "often positivistic, relatively empiricist". Not many of the interviewees agree with this view nowadays.

> "It's a tragedy that cultural studies in Britain is no longer critical like it used to be. It still has a legacy of rhetoric, which is, but the actual, the underlying assumptions are not as critical as they used to be."

One of the interviewees thought that British cultural studies will soon hit a crisis, when it will have to "rediscover its political edge and reach out to mean something different" or "completely disappear as a term".

Similarly, another interviewee pointed out that since losing its Marxist origins during the generation shift and being theoretically unable to renew itself, political economy has become a mostly descriptive activity that is largely concerned with giving detailed mappings of the activities of certain corporations or the links between corporations and is failing to take the field further.

> "I think that the tradition of analysis has passed to the straight-forward... what could be called bourgeoisie economists. They are the people who are currently analysing media industries, the people who are currently saying about how these industries work as opposed to simply listing the fact that Rupert Murdoch is an obscenely rich man."

Film and Television Studies

The tradition of film studies (also labelled screen studies) was seen by interviewees as less radical and critical than cultural studies and political economy. Film studies developed somewhat separately from the other media studies traditions. It is essentially in the textual and humanistic tradition, i.e. it looks at media products as texts rather than problematising them as ideological products. Typical methods for film studies include close reading, different types of textual analysis and increasingly different ways of analysing audience reception. Psychoanalysis, which is not very commonly used in other areas of media studies, has traditionally been a prominent tool in this field.

The approach is based on the study of fine arts rather than social sciences. Consequently film studies research often takes place within literary departments; for example, at the University of Oxford film some courses is taught at the Faculty of Modern languages (Oxford University 2008b). However, film studies are also well represented in media studies departments, for example at Goldsmiths College (2008b), Cardiff University (2008a) and the University of Sussex (2008). There are also departments that specialise in film and television studies, such as the School of Film and Television Studies at the University of East Anglia (2008).

The current research areas in British film and television studies include:

- History of film, television and popular culture.

- Representations of gender and sexuality.

- Practice-based approaches, in which practitioners are involved in making documentaries or fiction films.

- Global cinema e.g. diasporic taste cultures, ethnic cinema, national identities, culture- specific genres such as Japanese anime.

The area of film studies was considered by some interviewees to be changing. "I think the whole area of film research has become much more dynamic in the past 10 years; less heavily theoretical, but more empirically open to studying film across the world." According to one interviewee the ongoing change has brought the tradition partly towards "the bigger mix" of media and communication research. One part of it, represented by institutions like Oxford, continues to maintain a literary tradition, while the other has since the 1990's started to pay a lot more attention to empirical variations in the audiences.

> "And that's the type of films studies… this is much more able to be linked in to the wider media studies field and is facing in the direction of social science type questions whatever methodology or practices it uses."

One of the interviewees remarked that British film studies remains less critical than its American counterpart, which approaches film much more as a social form.

> "There's a strong interest in the history of film [in the US] and through that concern with history a series of social and cultural questions emerge, which rarely emerge in the British context."

According to this interviewee, British film studies is still largely dominated by the textual tradition and suspicion of more sociological methods and sociological questions. Social contexts are considered merely as background for reading films as texts.

Practice-based Approaches

A practice-based approach is an applied form of research in the process of which, instead of a piece of writing, the practitioner produces a technical or creative artefact. In the field of media and communication research the final product could be for example a film, an interactive work, animation software, a television programme or a performance.

This type of approach is more typical in those British research institutions that concentrate on the creative or technological sides of the media. Occasionally this kind of research also takes place in departments of journalism. Interviewees working in this type of institution described practice-based research as an emerging area.

> "I think we are a part of an emergent movement, if you like, which is about defining and developing this national practice-layered research and that's not only the media field, that's going on in a number of disciplinary fields and we're a part of a what seems at the moment to be amorphous or kind of a multifaceted development."

There is debate surrounding the scientific nature of practice-based research. This discussion revolves around the question of whether or not the final product can be considered a piece of research in its own right. Some interviewees confessed their doubts about this:

> "In my view, there has to be some sort of commentary around that to explain in what way this is a piece of research, you know, what it contributes to knowledge. There are some people I think who argue that artefacts can just in themselves be research products and this is one of the common debates going on nationally at the moment."

One interviewee saw the emergence of practice-based research in the context of the growing cultural, social and political importance of creativity in society, and thought that new ways of conceptualising research might be needed in order to achieve creativity.

The practice-based approach to media research requires new thinking in terms of academic conventions, such as journals. A DVD-journal *Screenwork*, which is described as being for film-makers who produce their films as pieces of research, was established in 2007.

> "It's the first time actually for people who are practitioners to have the opportunity to have their work peer-reviewed, so when they submit their films it's subjected to a panel of experts and then they view them and say should they be published or that they should not be published so actually that's quite a significant kind of breakthrough really because practice is quite underprivileged."

Examples of practice-based research:
- Researcher Peter Hardie works at Bournemouth University's National Centre for Computer Animation on artworks consisting of a series of computer-animated

sequences and prints based on a visual investigation of waterfalls (University of Bournemouth 2008).

- *Relocating Choreographic Process* is a joint project of e-science and dance researchers from the University of Bedfordshire, the Open University, the University of Leeds and the University of Manchester. It focuses on the ways in which practice-led dance research might be informed and documented by e-Science technologies, and how choreographic knowledge and sensibility can help shape e-Science practice to make its applications more usable within the field of arts research and the broader arts and humanities context. (University of Bedfordshire 2008)

3.2. Methodology

The interviews indicate that qualitative methods dominate in the field of media and communication research. Some interviewees mentioned that there is concern in the research councils that media and communication research is too often qualitative:

> "That would not be my concern. And I don't even believe that that's necessarily true. (…) Certainly the top down view from the research councils is that there's too much qualitative, too many one-off case studies."

Several interviewees also pointed out that some forms of quantitative research, especially large surveys, are expensive to carry out. Moreover, there may well be a lack of the skills needed for this kind of research.

> "There are not that many people who have the skills for doing good quantitative research. And it's bloody expensive."

The methods that were mentioned in the research interviews were counted in the same way as the subjects and fields in the previous section. The most commonly mentioned methods for data gathering and/or analysis were:

- content analysis (times mentioned: 3)
- focus groups (3)
- surveys (3)
- discourse analysis (2)

- textual analysis (2)
- ethnographic techniques (2)
- interviews (2)
- Mentioned once: thematic analysis, heuristic analysis, diary techniques, participatory research techniques, analyses of industry practices, psychological experiments

The list suggests that the interdisciplinary nature of the field is reflected in the choice of methods. Methods from the social sciences, such as surveys, are represented as well as more humanistic ones such as textual analysis. Both qualitative and quantitative methods seem to be used.

New Methods

The data gathered suggest there have not been any major methodological shifts in recent years. However, there have been some experiments with the methods of collecting data on audience engagement. The methods that have been tried out have been largely variations on the relatively old method of audiences keeping diaries on their experiences. New variants of this method have included for example video diaries, interplay in which interviewees are asked to react to scenes that are played in front of them and people drawing maps on how they understand space. These experiments have, according to one interviewee, been common to the whole field of general sociology and have been taking place in the 1990s and early 2000s. This interviewee detects a methodological split nowadays: while some people see that broadening out the data collection methods is fundamental to understanding audiences, others, including the interviewee, are not so convinced about the superiority of these new creative methods.

There have been some experiments on the use of focus groups. In new approaches to focus groups, participants have been asked, for example, to respond to lively scenarios in order to find out about their moral judgements. According to one interviewee, this moves the method away from being quantitative to rather a qualitative one: "You get people to actually think through the answers." In addition to scenarios, focus groups have been formed into video-editing groups, a method in which the group acts and edits

its own video. An interviewee gave an example of a project which aimed at defining violence for the purposes of the industry.

> "It's very difficult, so we use this method to get people to show... 'You say this is violent, show what you mean?' And they were actors, though not editors, they could say: 'Take that back a bit, just have the screen on the stick hitting that person.' And they could actually play with it. So if they saw violence, they could tell us and then we could re-edit it, lower the sound, higher the sound, lower the laughter... So we could see the situation, what is violent."

3.3. Current and Promising Areas of Research

This section will introduce both areas of research that were mentioned by interviewees as interesting or promising at the moment and areas that should be studied in the future. The questions of present and future research areas were included together in this section as there was so much overlap in interviewees' answers. A variety of research areas and topics emerged, but the areas that were cited most often were the media and the global, the media and democracy, and the influence of the ICT. These areas are outlined and illustrated by case-in-points from on-going or recent media research projects.

Globalising Media Studies

In the past the British academic world was often criticised for having "an island mentality". This criticism referred to the tendency to focus on British things (and media, such as the BBC), and their lack of contacts with academics in other countries. If this mentality ever truly existed, according to several interviewees it now seems to be changing or has indeed already changed.

> "Intellectually I think we are all working now much more internationally and reading the same journals and I think the kind of national curricula of the past I think is really fragmented, broken down and for a good reason you know."

Growing interest in the transnational and global aspects of media and communication has characterised the whole field for the past ten years. New study programmes, such as the MSc in Global Media and Communications at the London School of Economics (LSE), and new research centres, for instance the China and Arab Media Centres at the University of Westminster, have been established. MSc students on the LSE's Global media and Communications programme study global media for one year at the LSE followed by a second year at either the University of Southern California or Fudan

University in Shanghai. They graduate with diplomas from both universities. The China and Arab Media Centres focus on media in Arab countries and China. They also run international seminars and conferences for both scholars and journalists.

At the moment it is even possible to argue that because of the abundance of global links and interests there is no such thing as British media and communication research. There are several reasons for this trend towards the global besides the reasons related to funding that were discussed in Chapter 2.

First of all, the internet has made it easier for scholars to keep contact with their colleagues in other countries. In a sense there is nowadays a global research community.

> "You can sit at your desk and within seconds you can call up articles by people all over the world, many of which are in English. It's very hard I think, today anyway, for us to be a national, you know a strictly defined national tradition in anything."

It is worth noting that according to the academics interviewed, this global community is still largely limited to the English-speaking world as the majority of scholars continue to be monolingual.

Secondly, the media have changed. The media industry is nowadays global business and media products are also global. The globalisation of the subjects of research requires a global approach from the scholars who are engaged in that research.

The third reason for thinking globally is the multinational nature of post-colonial British society. The terrorist attacks in London on 7th July 2005, carried out by second generation British Muslims, painfully highlighted the importance of research on issues of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, transcultural identities and the media's role in reporting migration. This urgency has also been noticed by funders. For example, the former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone commissioned an enquiry into the portrayal of Muslims and Islam in the British media (*The search for the common ground* 2007).

The fourth important factor is that the British research community today is in itself increasingly global. This development was discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. The internationalisation of the research community shows in the type of research that is

carried out. Several interviewees identified such topics as diasporic media, or the media and identity as areas of interest to international PhD students or to young academics with an international background. According to some of the academics interviewed, these young academics typically work on transnational or transcultural comparative research approaches and/or approaches that question the concept of the nation state.

The increasingly international body of students and the involvement of British scholars in international projects have led to questioning of the presumed universality of many concepts and approaches. It is no longer possible to make assumption on students' cultural or educational backgrounds. As an interviewee from the University of Westminster remarked:

> "We can't assume that they know about BBC programmes. They are much more likely to know about Chinese television or something."

The diversity of the global age has also shown that there are limits to methods that were once thought not to depend on their cultural context. One of the interviewees gave an example based on the experiences of a colleague of hers who collaborated in Algeria with researchers from different cultural backgrounds:

> "She was acutely aware that her colleagues were coming away with completely different answers to the same questions, simply because of who they are… the context, etc. (…) If the issues can be that stark, I think we need a much more sensitive eye to... So it's not to say that surveys and interviews can't work, but it's just to be much more in tune with what the shortcomings might be."

Another interviewee thought that a "radical internationalisation of media research" is taking place and the traditionally Western and Anglo-American paradigms of research questions are slowly beginning to be reconsidered and "our terms and our theoretical concepts transvalued through a most serious international openness and then more serious exchange of research knowledge."

Case-in-point: How to Study Arab Media?

When researchers operate in areas that are culturally and politically different from their own, the methods used in western social science need to be reconsidered. The Arab Media Centre of the Department of Communications and Media Research Institute (CAMRI) at the University of Westminster is looking at this issue.

The director of the centre, Naomi Sakr, argues that the different concept of public life in Arab countries raises a whole wealth of methodological issues, which have been insufficiently considered. The centre run a popular workshop on this issue in 2006 and continues to study it.

The authoritarian political systems of Arab countries form serious barriers for researchers. The use of surveys and questionnaires is problematic in societies where conducting surveys or focus groups without official permission is a public security crime. Sakr says that research on Arab media is for this reason currently virtually devoid of reliable data on audiences and media reception.

In these societies respondents are also often afraid of giving honest answers or having their answers recorded. According to Sakr, difficulties of access to respondents may lead to excessive dependence on samples obtained through snowballing. The informants may not have been exposed to polling techniques and questions before, which makes certain research methods more time-consuming.

> "It has also been suggested that, in societies characterized by extended families, strict social hierarchies and tight collectivities, administering questionnaires to individuals may not always be a wholly satisfactory method of gathering data."

The Media, Democracy and Journalism

According to the interviewees, one of the areas of research that is currently experiencing a renaissance in British media and communication research is the media, democracy and journalism. This area is mainly studied in departments of journalism. In the background are worries about such issues as voter apathy, the rising power of the PR industry in journalism and the UK's role in the US-led "war on terror". A lot of interest is also directed towards the alleged "dumbing down of the news" i.e. the development in which the news is becoming increasingly entertainment oriented and affected by the culture of celebrity. Many of the scholars interviewed saw war propaganda and its impact on journalism as a very important research topic.

> "America now officially recognises electronic propaganda or propaganda in general as the fourth arm of its military service, you have the army, the navy, the air force and you have the propaganda army. (…) Where's the role of journalism in that? Do something about it or oppose it? Or?"

At the same time the war on terror has raised classic questions related to ideology and power relations in society. One interviewee pointed out that states always create enemies in order to "keep order and justify legislation and laws and so on" and the media function to support "ideological state operators".

> "It immobilizes ideas of comfort, by constantly going on about Islamic fundamentalists, but people ignore the fact that we have very powerful class segregations in this country that are just… No one talks about segregation in those terms and yet, fundamentally… This country is massively more influenced by class segregation than by any form of racial or ethnic segregation."

Another area within media and democracy-oriented research is the role of the media in the process of democratisation in transitional societies (e.g. Georgia) or non-democracies (e.g. China). These research projects often use case studies on how the media are organised and its consequences on the rights of citizens and democratic processes.

Case-in-point: From Journalism to "Churnalism"

One of the most vivid current discussions on the media, democracy and the quality of British journalism revolves around "churnalism". This concept refers to bad journalism i.e. journalism that churns out rewrites of press releases. The concept was introduced by *The Guardian* journalist Nick Davies in his book *Flat Earth News* (2008). Davies argues that the whole profession of journalism is corrupt: most reporters are generally not allowed to dig up stories or check their facts. Davies gives examples of both national news stories that have turned out to be pseudo events manufactured by the PR industry (e.g. 'the Millennium Bug') and global news stories which have proved to be fiction generated by new machinery of international propaganda (e.g. Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction).

Davies' book came out at the same time as the publication of a study from the Cardiff University School of Journalism, *The Quality and Independence of British Journalism: Tracking the changes over 20 years* (Lewis et al. 2008). Cardiff scholars found that while the number of editorial staff in the national press has increased slightly during recent decades, they now produce three times as much copy as they did twenty years ago. A survey of journalists revealed that pressures to create a higher number of stories daily had intensified – in part due to the requirement to produce multi-media versions of the stories. Most journalists felt that there was less checking and contextualizing of

stories than hitherto and that there was increasing pressure to use 'pre-packaged' material, both of which points were evident in the news material studied. Domestic news in the UK quality media was found to be heavily dependent on PR material and wire services: 60 percent of press articles and more than a third of broadcast stories came wholly or mainly from one of these sources. The researchers in fact felt that this was almost certainly an underestimate. Almost every fifth newspaper and broadcast story was verifiably derived mainly or wholly from PR material, while less than half of the material appeared entirely independent of traceable PR. The main source of PR was the corporate world and the most influenced topics health, consumer and business news, entertainment and sports.

Case-in-point: Tracking Down Internet Filters

The OpenNet Initiative (ONI) is an example of a project with an international research network that looks at issues of democracy and the internet in a global context. ONI is a collaborative partnership of the Citizen Lab at the Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto, the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School, the Advanced Network Research Group at the Cambridge Security Programme, University of Cambridge, and the Oxford Internet Institute.

ONI investigates, exposes and analyses internet filtering and surveillance practices all over the world. ONI's goal is to see what type of content (pornography, political speech etc.) gets filtered and how the practice of filtering is changing over time. Their data are arranged in country profiles and regional reports. ONI tries to uncover the potential pitfalls and unintended consequences of these practices, and thus help to inform better public policy and advocacy work in the area of internet censorship. (OpenNet Initiative 2008.)

Media Studies 2.0

The social and technological changes taking place in the whole of the media landscape have emerged as a major challenge for media and communication research. Not only have they brought into its domain new subjects of study, such as computer games and the culture surrounding them, but they also put into question the conventional concepts, theories and models of this field of research.

This discussion revolves around the concept of 'Media Studies 2.0' established by University of Westminster professor David Gauntlett (2007). Gauntlett argues that the traditional form of media studies teaching and research fails to recognise the changing media landscape in which the categories of 'audiences' and 'producers' are blurring together, and in which new research methods and approaches are needed.

Several interviewees pointed out that new models of political economy need to be redrafted for the age of the internet as the boundaries between producers and audiences are blurring.

> "The economy of the internet is very poorly documented and part of it changes rapidly, even industry analysts don't really understand how to project the possible earning potential of an internet idea."

Similarly one interviewee saw a need for the development of a "flexible successor to traditional audience research" in order to provide an understanding of "what people do online". The same academic thought that the general word 'audience' itself could even disappear over the next 10 to 20 years.

Also other basic concepts, such as television, need to be reconsidered. As one of the interviewees put it, TV is not really any longer the box in the corner of the room that schedules people's daily rhythms in the way that it used to be.

> "If you think about a programme like *Lost*, (…) people are downloading it from America before it gets to Europe (…) people (…) are playing the ARG game online and looking at bits of it on their mobile phone… (…) If we are looking at YouTube or we are looking at a download or we are looking at a bit torrent that's an illegal pirate, is it still television?"

This change was often discussed in the interviews through the concept of media convergence, which is a subject of research in many British media and communication departments. Many of the interviewees highlighted the importance of research in this area and emphasised that this convergence is already a fact, something that is happening rapidly, especially among young people. Research questions that were brought up included:

- How does media production respond to converging technologies?
- How should journalism researchers and journalism teachers respond to media convergence?

- How is media convergence affecting audiences?
- How does media convergence affect the text?
- How interested are people really in converging media contents and technology? Do they enjoy them, are they necessary?
- What benefits do audiences find in media convergence, what encourages them towards it?

One of the interviewees also called for some international comparative studies. He argued that the area would be very fruitful for such enquiries; the fact that the new technology is globalised means that it would be both possible and interesting to see how audiences in different contexts are reacting to its development.

The rapid change in media landscape was thought by many to be likely to affect media studies itself. One of the interviewees feared that the change could mean that media studies "will be outrun by its own object of study" unless there is a convergence within media studies itself. Similarly the view was expressed that the study of new media or media technologies should be further integrated into the core of media studies.

> "I'm hoping we're going to move away from the idea that studying new media is a separate ghetto, separate from the rest of the field and with a special priority because it's associated with the new. I think that it's sort of irrelevant to the dynamics of what's actually going on."

Many interviewees emphasised the importance of maintaining a critical approach to media technology. In order not to become a part of its marketing machinery, academics need to be aware of the dangers of hyping up the joy of new technology. The vital critical questions are often historical ones. Several interviewees pointed out that big claims about the effects of new media technologies on human consciousness and democracy have been made ever since the invention of the telegraph in the 19th century.

> "Any new media, when it comes aboard, there are a series of predictions. There is a whole industry of futurology that exists around. (…) The evidence of 200 years of history is that while media may change things, they never change things in the way that's predicted at the time."

Some interviewees thought that the human aspect of communication and media as subjects of study will remain the same, despite the technological changes:

> "You are still going to want to look at narrativity, cultural identities, the make-up of audiences, patterns of consumption… (…) Just because the technology is

changing doesn't mean (…) that people massively change in relation to technology. They still are humans and they have all the needs that humans do, for relationships in the real sense, for food, water and safety and the sense of belonging to particular communities."

Case-in-point: Spaces, Connections, Control

At the moment of writing this report the Media research programme at Goldsmiths College is carrying out a wide-ranging interdisciplinary study in the area of the ongoing transformation of the media. *Spaces, Connections, Control* is funded by the Leverhulme Trust. Its aim is not only to study media spaces but also to design them to better understand their future potential.

The project consists of five individual, overlapping and interconnected projects. 1) Project one is interested in the future of journalism and considers the spaces of news gathering and how the dispersal of news sources in the age of blogging and camera phones changes the dynamics of news production. 2) Project two investigates the ways in which new metadata (i.e. data about data) in software make data accessible or block it. 3) Project three is a design project which explores the potential of new media to transform the vision of the city through an interactive installation in the London Eye. 4) Project four concentrates on media spaces that are simultaneously globalised and transnationalised. It asks how the ability of migrants to be simultaneously in Europe and at home through media is transforming the European public sphere. 5) Project five looks at how moving images and media usage shape locations and how media images are shaped by those locations. (Golsmiths College 2008b.)

Case-in-point: Creating a Language for Pervasive Media

The need for a new language to describe new phenomena is being taken up very literally in the Department of Culture, Media and Drama, of the School of Creative Arts in the University of West England. While this report was being researched the department's pervasive media studio was about to start an ethnography-based research project aiming at constructing a language for the new and interdisciplinary field of pervasive media. In the experience of the leader of the project, Professor Jonathan Dovey, people come to pervasive media from a variety of fields including human-computer interaction, programming, arts, psychology and design and they "all speak a different language". A

shared language would make the necessary co-operation between professionals from different fields easier.

> "My project is to convene a series of workshops where we look at work and we employ some ethnography expertise to talk to users about their experiences of these pilot applications and we look at user responses and look at them with the designers and over a period of a year we've worked towards agreeing a set of terms and a set of languages to describe this new field."

3.4. A Thematic Illustration of Recent Publications

To illustrate current British media and communication research, a small scale quantitative analysis was conducted on recent publications in the field. The aim of this section is to complement the interviews with scholars by depicting the kinds of research recently carried out within UK academia. Given the vastness of the field, only a selection of the media and communication-related items published within the UK in recent years could be considered.

The analysis consists of two sets of data: 1) journal articles by scholars within UK academia published in the chosen six journals over the past four years and 2) other publications by UK scholars or UK-based writers and organizations issued in 2006 and 2007 that were listed under the subject categories "mass media" and "media studies" on Copac, a British academic and national library catalogue. Three features were analysed within the data in the abstracts: the type of media, the geographic scope and the thematic area studied. All items were classified in no more than two thematic categories and as many geographic and media categories as were mentioned. The thematic categorization was occasionally extremely ambiguous as many publications oscillate between several thematic approaches and some categories overlap with each other. The analysis on Copac publications is introduced first, followed by the journal analysis.

Mapping the Themes in Academic Publications

To examine recent publications the British union catalogue Copac[16] was utilized. Copac gives access to the merged online catalogues of many major UK and Irish academic and

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[16] For more information see Copac website: <http://copac.ac.uk > 30.5.2008

national libraries including e.g. the British library, the National Library of Wales, and the libraries of around thirty universities, including Oxford, Cambridge and the London School of Economics. Since the focus is on research related to the mass media, all items under the Copac subject categories "mass media" and "media studies" published in 2006 and 2007 were examined. It is clear, however, that Copac, and these categories in particular, do not include all the media-related academic items published in the UK during those years. Publications by scholars within UK academia and by UK-based writers and organisations, such as Ofcom, were selected. The data in this section consisted of 332 publications including monographs, other scientific publications, textbooks, doctoral theses and reports. New editions of previously published items were also included. The vast majority of publications analysed were research-related books written by UK academics, although there were also contributions from a few British journalists and from solicitors.

The publications were classified in 13 thematic categories according to short summaries provided by Copac or the publisher. With some exceptions, the categories used in Estonian and Finnish reports within the *Mapping Communication and Media Research* project were used as a guideline (Salovaara-Moring & Kallas 2007: 60; Herkman & Vähämaa 2007: 53–54). In the following section the categories are briefly introduced.

Table 18. Proportion of publications under the various thematic categories

The media, society and politics	24 %
Media culture and popular culture	23 %
Journalism	16 %
Structure, ownership and economics	9 %
Policy and Regulation	8 %
Globalization, ethnicity and identity	7 %
Language and discourse	6 %
Media history	5 %
Audience, reception and media use	5 %
Research, methodology and theory	5 %
Journalism education and media studies	3 %
Media management	2 %
Media technology	1 %

1) *The media, society and politics* covered publications dealing with the complex relationship of mass communication to politics and society at large. This wide category embraced items that examine mediated political and social phenomena (e.g. political processes, or the legitimacy of war); and items that focused on political and social

implications of the media (e.g. on certain codes of society, foreign policy, democracy or ethics). Within this area the focus was often on traditional news media. Mentioned in almost every fourth item, the media, society and politics turned out to be the most dominant area of research in the data analysed.

2) *Media culture and popular culture* was almost as popular a thematic category as the previous one. Present in less than every fourth publication, this area depended on the cultural and film studies tradition and typically focused on popular culture and audiovisual media such as television series, film, popular music, video games and photography. Media culture refers to phenomena within the media such as cultural meanings, practices and processes that are often examined using qualitative methodology.

3) *Journalism* referred to publications about journalistic work and practices. The questions concerned e.g. journalistic culture, routines, news sources, working conditions and textual practices. Journalism was the focus of 16 percent of publications.

4) *Structure, ownership and economics* covered studies with an economic or institutional approach to the media. Typically a branch of the media industry, e.g. sports broadcasting, was examined, but efforts to understand and analyse the whole media systems in a certain society or at a certain time also occurred. This category includes questions concerning e.g. the concentration of ownership, media mergers and the legitimacy of public service broadcasting. Less than 10 percent of publications were categorised in this section.

5) *Policy and regulation* was concerned with questions of media law, policies and regulation. In geographical scope this category was quite UK-centred, although the data did also include some comparative studies within Europe and especially the EU. Policies and regulations were studied in 8 percent of publications.

6) *Globalization, ethnicity and identity* encompassed the multiple implications of the globalization of the media. This area looked into local, ethnic and minority media as well as ethnic and national identities, often in the context of globalization and

immigration. This strictly defined thematic area was dominant in 7 percent of publications.

7) The *Language and discourse* category comprised publications with a linguistic approach, often examining media discourse and its implications for society or the coverage of specific cases. This area of study, present in 6 percent of publications, also included thematic dictionaries made for media students.

8) *Media history* focused on past media-related phenomena such as the development of certain media or the media industry, media coverage of past cases or the role of the media at a certain time or place in the past. Media history was examined in 5 percent of publications.

9) *Audience, reception and media use* was typically approached as a part of a broader framework in publications handling wide phenomena in the media. This section, studied in 5 percent of publications, included e.g. studies on media literacy, video game playing and the relationship between media consumption habits and public participation. Traditional surveys were rare.

10) *Research, methodology and theory* included theoretical publications destined to serve academic research. Publications looking at the current state of the field were also classified in this section, and it was dominant in 5 percent of the publications studied.

11) *Journalism education and media studies,* a marginal category covering only 3 percent of publications, included guide-like items and textbooks dedicated to both students and teachers within media studies or journalism education.

12) *Media management* focused on issues of organisational communication and public relations, often looking into ways exterior actors and organisations manage the media. These publications offered guidance on how to put one's message across and handle media contacts. This section, infrequent in the data, also included items on the implications of PR and political spin for media contents. Many items on media management were probably excluded due to the orientation towards mass media-related research rather than communication research in general.

13) *Media technology* referred to publications approaching the media from a technological point of view. This area was practically not touched on at all in the data, probably due to the focus on mass media rather than communication research.

The brief analysis suggested that media-related publishing in Britain over the past two years has been orientated towards society and politics. Aside from the most dominant category, publications on journalism, media structures and economics as well as policies and regulations had societal dimensions, and were often linked with political economy. The role and power of the media in societies and politics were highlighted in many of the publications.

Along with social, political and economic media research, the cultural studies tradition originating in the UK and film studies appeared to strongly influence media-related publishing in Britain. Common themes within research on media culture and popular culture included mediated stardom and celebrity culture, gender and sexuality, fandom and lifestyles as well as the whys and ways of mediated popular culture in Arab and Chinese societies. Media research under this category was engaged with both popular and to some extent also highbrow culture. With its distinctive approach this area of research is often critical of phenomena in the current mediated world, such as its violent contents and pornofication. Distinguishing between the categories was often difficult as social and political aspects were also examined through a cultural approach.

Interestingly, popular themes in the data that crossed the boundaries of the categories were questions of the media, war and terror. Besides the war in Iraq, other past and present conflicts were studied in many publications, but there were also several items wholly devoted to the themes of the information war, the influence of the media on war, failures of war reporting, representations of terror and media discourse legitimising war.

Illustrating the Approaches in Communication Journals

A content analysis was also conducted on recent journal abstracts written by UK academics. With the help of strictly focused journal articles the aim was to throw further light on the topics currently engaging research efforts. Six journals were chosen for analysis according to the preferences of the academics who were interviewed. It became

apparent that there is really no such thing as a British communication journal, as even those journals published in Britain and with mainly British contributions are in fact international in scope. The journals were chosen to reflect different focus areas of UK media and communication research as well as some of the journals in which British scholars, according to the interviewees, seek to publish their articles.

Table 19. Academic journals and the number of abstracts analysed

Media, Culture & Society (59)
Journalism Studies (53)
European Journal of Cultural Studies (41)
European Journal of Communication (21)
New Media & Society (19)
Global Media and Communication (4)

All the chosen journals are international and interdisciplinary and have at least some UK scholars among their editors or on their editorial boards. All of them except *Journalism Studies* are published by international Sage Publications. *Media, Culture & Society* is a bi-monthly journal with an extensive focus. It is dedicated to research and discussion concerning the media within their political, economic, cultural and historical context. *Journalism Studies*, a bi-monthly journal from international academic publisher Routledge, provides a forum for discussion and the study of journalism as both a subject of academic inquiry and an arena of professional practice. The *European Journal of Cultural Studies* is a quarterly journal based in Europe promoting the concept of cultural studies rooted in lived experience. It engages in critical discussion on power relations concerning e.g. gender, class, sexual preference and ethnicity. Thus the *European Journal of Cultural Studies* is not actually a communication journal although it often handles media-related issues. The *European Journal of Communication* is a quarterly publication that seeks to reflect the variety of intellectual traditions in the field, with an emphasis on work charting the changing character of communication processes and institutions. *New Media & Society* is a quarterly journal engaged with issues arising from the scale and speed of new media development. Launched in 2005 and issued three times a year, *Global Media and Communication* is a forum for critical debates and developments in the continuously changing global media and communication environment.

The analysis included a total of 197 abstracts published in the chosen journals over the past four years (2004–2007)[17]. Only the articles written by authors within UK academia were included. In the case of the *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, only articles concerning communication were selected. Practically all the articles were orientated towards the mass media.

Table 20. Thematic analysis of six journals

Thematic areas	Total	MCS	JS	EJCS	EJC	NMS	GMC
The media, society and politics	49 = 25 %	18	10	5	7	8	1
Journalism	37 = 19 %	5	24	2	6	-	-
Media culture and popular culture	34 = 17 %	9	3	21	-	1	-
Audience, reception and media use	30 = 15 %	4	1	12	7	6	-
Globalization, ethnicity and identity	28 = 14 %	6	2	12	3	2	3
Research, methodology and theory	22 = 11 %	7	1	3	6	4	1
Media history	19 = 10 %	2	14	3	-	-	-
Policy and Regulation	11 = 6 %	8	1	-	2	-	-
Structure, ownership and economy	11 = 6 %	7	-	2	-	1	1
Media management	5 = 3 %	-	4	-	1	-	-
Language and discourse	4 = 2 %	4	-	-	-	-	-
Journalism education & media studies	2 = 1 %	2	-	-	-	-	-
Media Technology	1 = 1 %	-	-	-	-	1	-

The media, society and politics was the most dominant thematic category also in the small scale analysis of journal abstracts: 25% of the abstracts studied were classified in this category. Research on journalism and media culture and popular culture were the next most popular categories, with around 20% of the abstracts concerned with these themes. Audiences as well as globalisation and ethnicity issues were touched on in around 15 percent of abstracts, both equally popular in all the selected journals. As expected, the focus areas of the journals vary widely (see Table 20), and consequently the actual selection of journals influences the findings. In the following section, the kinds of studies included in the most dominant categories are briefly introduced.

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[17] *Global Media and Communication* was launched in 2005. Thus only the issues from 2005 to 2007 were analysed.

In the abstracts analysed the wide theme of the **media, society and politics** was often approached through notions of democracy and the Habermasian 'public sphere'. The public sphere was typically examined as a space or process of public, rational, critical discussion that seeks consensus and deliberation. Accordingly, the public sphere was linked with questions of e.g. tabloidization, civic participation, the digital divide, empowerment, freedom of expression, class, and access to democratic processes in the media. Another wide area of study in this section was articles looking into different aspects of political communication. Abstracts with a social and/or political emphasis handled e.g. whether the Scottish press acted as watchdog of the people or government poodles in their Iraq reporting; the formation of the European public sphere; the participatory experiences of people who have called to political talk shows aired before the general elections in Britain; and attempts to overcome youth civic disengagement through the design and promotion of public sector internet-based content and services.

Articles focused on **journalism practice** often reflected a less theoretical, more diffuse area of research. This area of study is founded on the methodological basis of textual analysis and interviews with journalists and news sources. Besides UK-centred studies, international comparative studies also occurred. The articles were concerned with themes such as sourcing and framing routines and the implications of such practices, editorial policies, professional identities and the impact of new technology on the attitudes and practices of journalists. Items in this category looked into e.g. how online journalists react to new ways of knowing about their audiences; sourcing routines of alternative media; a journalistic technique combining satirical humour and investigative journalism; and the changing editorial policies of UK teenage magazines with an emphasis on the current 'dumbing down' debate.

Articles on **media culture and popular culture** often focused on questions of identity, gender, sexuality, cultural meanings, myths, norms, values, style and ideology. Articles in this category were more likely to be about television, popular music or film and to use qualitative textual analysis or in-depth interviews. An illustrative example of this area in the data studied is the special issue of the *European Journal of Cultural Studies* dedicated to Spike, a character in the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* television series. In articles written by UK academics, vampire fan culture, fan identities, readings of the vampire(s), the narrative structures of the series sections as well as the identities, gender

and sexuality of Spike were studied in detail. However, articles in this category could be more related to journalism too, examining the cultural appeal of a magazine on metal music and the fabrication of fantasy and new cultural myths in post-Soviet women's magazines in Russia.

The category of **audiences, reception and media uses,** which covers both a thematic and a methodological approach, embraced several overlapping categories of media culture and popular culture, globalization, ethnicity and social communication study. The articles under this category can roughly be divided into two categories: those concerning new media and the internet and those concerning audiences with a cultural studies approach. New technologies and their impact on use were widely studied, as well as practices of media consumption and interpretative activities of audiences in general. With regard to the internet, articles examined e.g. the oscillation between individualising and group-orientated patterns of sociability on the web and the reasons for non-use of the internet. An example of an article with a cultural studies approach is an examination of the ways in which the author's family made meanings with the television programme, the *Teletubbies*.

Articles dealing with **globalization, ethnicity and identity** comprise an outstanding category: compared to those introduced above this is a more strictly defined thematic area of study that nevertheless appeared in 14 percent of the abstracts studied and apparently engaged some of the top UK scholars. Articles in this area included e.g. a critical examination of the notion of globalization; systematic mapping of all 24/7 news channels broadcast in the world; and a study of Australian diasporic and indigenous media in a global context.

The UK and Television Interest Scholars

The analysis of both the journal abstracts and of other publications shows that television is the most studied medium. The internet and new media & the press were about equally popular and were covered in 15 percent of publications. Film was studied in more than 10 percent of the publications in our data. However, within books and other Copac publications, film was the second most popular medium after television and was studied in almost 20 percent of items, which indicates the strong presence of cultural and film studies. However, in about 40 percent of publications, information on the particular

medium of interest was not available because of its theoretical point of view or the limitations of the data in the abstracts. Research interest in radio was noticeably low.

Table 21. Percentage of items covering a medium

General / not mentioned	41 %
Television	22 %
Internet and new media	15 %
Press	15 %
Film	12 %
Radio	5 %
Magazines	4 %
Popular music	3 %
Photography	2 %
Video /computer games	2 %
Books	2 %
Miscellaneous	2 %

Table 22. Percentage of items covering an area

Not mentioned	48 %
UK	36 %
Europe	12 %
US	7 %
Asia	5 %
Middle East and Arab world	3 %
Africa	2 %
Latin America	1%
Australia	1%

Looking at the geographic scope of the publications, the UK was the dominant area of interest: the UK was in focus in more than 30 percent of publications. European countries other than the UK, and Europe generally formed the second most popular area. It is notable that Asia and the Middle East & the Arab world combined formed a more significant area of research than the US. In almost half of the cases the geographical scope of the publication was not defined.

Case- in- point: British Journalism Review Bridges the Gap

Outside the analysis there is a unique British journal engaged with the media and journalism bridging the gap between the media industry and the academy: the *British Journalism Review*, BJR, a forum for analysis and debate, dedicated to media monitoring and raising the level of dialogue. As the first chairman of the editorial board, Professor Ivor Gaber explains:

> "*British Journalism Review*, (…) which is non-academic, tries to get academics to talk to journalists. That's the whole purpose of it; academic written in

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journalistic style, journalistic writing on academic subjects. So it tried to cross the divide."

The *BJR*, published quarterly by Sage, mainly has contributions from British journalists but also from scholars, students and various other professionals engaged with the media and journalism. A wider audience than is normal with academic communication journals is the aim, as the *BJR* is directed at "anyone who cares about communication". *The Guardian*'s media supplement *Media Guardian* and *Press Gazette*, a weekly journalists' newspaper, is allowed to use *BJR* articles free of charge. Regularly, several times per month, *BJR* articles are featured in the *Guardian*. "So, it's not to make money, we just want to spread the word", Professor Gaber said.

4. Future Challenges

This chapter will discuss the future challenges that have arisen out of the research interviews. Before outlining these challenges, however, it should be stressed that the majority of scholars considered the quality of British media and communication research to be very high at the moment and did not think it likely that any dramatic changes would take place in the foreseeable future.

In this chapter, attention is first focused on the increasing institutional pressures faced by academics, which worried many interviewees. After that the future challenges facing British media and communication research will be discussed through the idea of the subject's approaching a "mid-life crisis". British media and communication research is a young field compared with many other academic fields, being widely considered to have started in the 1970s. In the near future the first generation shift in key personnel in media studies departments will take place. It also seems that media studies is already on its way to becoming an established part of mainstream academic research. At the same time, though, media studies may lose its currently strong appeal to students, which is likely to affect the resources available for research. In addition, the "age crisis" is reflected in calls for serious rethinking of the field. This is evident in the discussion of Media Studies 2.0, which was discussed in Chapter 3 of this report, and also in the way in which the whole term 'media studies' has recently been challenged.

Mounting Pressures

The academic world in the UK is coming under increasing institutional pressure. Some interviewees saw this as a major challenge for the sustainability of media research.

> "The pressures on each of us are hugely increased from ten years ago, making the energy for an independent research project more and more difficult to sustain. That's a huge personal cost on each of us."

The issue was raised in the interviews mainly in the context of the Research Assessment Exercise, which according to the information gathered puts enormous pressure on scholars to produce articles and publications and "to fit the timetable". One of the interviewees compared the pressures caused by decreasing funding to those faced by journalists today.

Another major source of pressure that many interviewees identified was the increasing emphasis on vocationalism or employability. The concern was voiced that the role of media studies departments is reduced "to simply producing a set of skills for employability" for future media professionals. The pressure was seen as coming from three directions: the government, the media industry and media students themselves:

> "It seems to me that people [students] are very focused on how many modules they need to get a degree, how many do you need to pass each module, and that tends to dominate over intellectual interest."

The pressure was thought to be increased by media convergence, as media graduates nowadays need a whole range of technical skills in order to be able to operate across all media platforms. One interviewee thought that as a result media studies is in danger of losing its "intellectual gravity", drifting away from its parent disciplines of sociology, history, literature and semiology and becoming "just industry training".

This development was seen as worrying because of the resources that are needed for vocational media teaching. As one of the interviewees pointed out, having practically-oriented courses "requires a lot of capital investment, you know, we've got very good studios, theatres and editing suites". Teaching also takes it toll on time that academic staff could otherwise use for research:

> "If you teach in practical journalism (…) it takes a lot of time, so I think there are constant time pressures which makes it harder for people who teach practical journalism to actually do research."

The question of the personal well-being of academics was also touched upon. As a result of the rising work levels, an academic career now "comes with a major personal cost in terms of just keeping any balance in life" and is reaching an unsustainable level, said one interviewee. It is also getting harder to "sustain a research voice" according to one interviewee.

> "That was really unchallenged 15 years ago; there was no question that that was a privilege that came with the job and now all of us know from the inside that it's increasingly difficult to sustain that voice."

"The Mid-life Crisis"

The ageing of British media and communication research will take a very concrete form in the retirement of many of its key personnel. At the moment those who started the tradition in the 1970's and 1980's in Britain are still prominent figures in its leading departments. Even if this generation of practitioners have different areas of interest and represent different approaches, as representatives of the same generation they have certain experiences in common.

> "Of course they have different research interests and ideas and it is not a homogeneous group as such, but it is homogeneous in terms of age and experience. And I think these people hold the power at the moment."

It is unclear how the retirement of the first generation of media studies professionals is going to affect the field. It could be that the multidisciplinary nature of the field might be lost as, instead of starting with something else and then moving over into media studies, practitioners will increasingly have spent all their academic careers in the field of media and communication studies. As one interviewee put it, at the moment the "people who are involved in media studies themselves tend to be people who didn't do a media degree themselves, they did other things and then came to media studies later on." The interviewee reckoned this "is going to be less and less true, I think it already is less true than it used to be. There's staff in film studies that did do film studies and in media studies that have a graduate degree."

One trend that is likely to continue and intensify with the generation change is the internationalisation of the field, as the staff of media departments will more often consist of non-British people: people, who have done their previous degrees somewhere else and then come to Britain to do their PhD. "They apply for the posts here and they are very, very international and European people." As a result, the largely monolingual nature of the British research community could become history and there will be an increase in connections between British media studies and the non-English speaking world.

According to many interviewees, media studies degrees have so far been very attractive to students in British universities. Many scholars, however, predict a decline in the near future as the novelty of the subject starts to wear off and it is no longer seen as "a particularly sexy subject" among today's young people. One interviewee predicted that

global warming will make the traditionally stable subject of geography more popular, as students will see it as "crucially important for their future", while in comparison media studies "will just be more the same."

If there is a decrease in the number of students, it will probably be reflected in reductions in funding and consequently also in research. According to many interviewees, the growth of the whole field has essentially been driven by the growing number of students.

> "In the end in Britain very few institutions are in a position to sustain a purely research orientation. That's not even the LSE, to tell you the truth. So you have to have students. That demand over the years has been colossal, but I think there are signs that it's beginning to dry up."

Some believe that advantage should be taken of the approaching "mid-life crisis" to undertake a thorough self-reflection and reconsideration of the field. Such a review is in fact already evident in the way in which the Western roots and underlying assumptions of media and communication research are now being contested. Another discussion that could be seen as reflecting the crisis is the call for new conceptualisations and methods in order to meet the challenge represented by the rapidly changing and converging media landscape. These discussions on de-Westernising or globalising media studies and Media Studies 2.0 have been discussed in Chapter 3 of this report. The third area of debate on the nature of the field that could be considered evidence of an "age crisis" revolves around the concept "media studies" itself.

In January 2008, Sally Feldman, the Dean of Media, Arts and Design at the University of Westminster, suggested in a provocative newspaper column (published in The Times Higher Education) that the disparate nature and variable quality of media studies courses makes the title Media Studies meaningless. Feldman announced that the Westminster Department will split the practice-oriented pathways that students can choose between (journalism, television, public relations and radio) into separate degrees. Feldman argued that the term media studies should be reserved for purely theoretical degrees only. By abandoning the "troubled tag" of media studies it will be possible to have each practice-oriented degree "still underpinned by a substantial core of theory but without the Mickey Mouse connotations", Feldman wrote.

"Westminster was the first to offer a degree in media studies. So now we're going to be the first to chuck it out. It's not so much dissolution as reformation. Not so much a killing as a glorious rebirth."

One interviewee thought Feldman put forward good arguments, but thought that there were also other reasons why the concept of media studies has become problematic: the whole of society is now so thoroughly mediated that media has become a rather meaningless term and there could therefore be a need for "a different word":

"Maybe we need to rethink what we're actually doing, on the other hand it's a brand that does encompass most of what we do so that's an awkward – it's an awkward issue – yes we probably do need a new agenda for the next 20 years, possibly need a new label also."

5. Conclusion

The British media landscape is going through changes that are similar to those that are taking place globally, but the volume and pace of these changes is greater in the UK than in many other European countries. The most significant changes involve diminishing newspaper circulations, convergence in media, redistribution of advertising money on the internet and fragmenting audiences due to increased multichannel viewing. Some UK-based media companies have succeeded in their strategies of attracting global audiences for their online news offerings.

British young people have embraced new media to a far greater extent than the general population, and this has been reflected in their diminishing use of traditional media. Between age groups there is a growing gap in consumption patterns that applies to all media, beginning with young people's engagement in digital broadcasting, mobile technology, the internet and the "on-demand" delivery of services.

Internet use in the UK has steadily increased. The UK has the most active online population in Europe, with the highest average number of daily visitors to the web, internet usage days per month and time spent on the web per month per user. A major change in internet use patterns since 2005 has been the rise in popularity of blogs and social networking sites. Fuelled by the take-up of media capture devices as well as the spread of home broadband, Britons are increasingly keen on creating and sharing rather than purely consuming media contents, and they use the internet as a means of publishing their own content and opinion, thus bypassing the traditional media. Traditional media, however, remain the preferred source of news.

Measured by time spent online, eBay, an online auction and shopping webpage, was the most popular website in the UK, and social networking sites such as Bebo, MySpace, Facebook and YouTube all ranked in the top ten in 2007. The dominance of brands that did not exist a decade ago can be seen to reflect a remarkable change the internet has brought to the British media landscape: among the top 20 websites in use and reach, the BBC was the only representative of the traditional media. However, reflecting these changes, engaging user-generated content in big news issues has become common

practice also within traditional media organisations, which have increased the public's capacity to post their own material on sites by hosting blogs and message boards, for example.

As regards research sites, in addition to academic research, British media and communication research takes place in market research companies, media companies' own research units, think-tanks and NGOs. Market research companies produce data that monitor the media mostly for the needs of the media and advertising industries. The media companies' own research focuses typically on audiences and product development and is hence secret in nature. As regards the research within media industries, BBC Research & Innovation is the most significant one – in fact the only one the academics interviewed for this report mentioned when they were asked to name research institutions within the media industry. The quality of research that takes place at NGOs and think-tanks varies. None of the think-tanks concentrates exclusively on the media. However, their work on society and policy issues often involves media elements.

British academic media and communication research is a proud tradition. Institutions such as the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and the Glasgow Media Group have widely influenced the whole Western tradition of research. Their international success has not, however, been reflected in the reputation that British media studies enjoy in Britain. The field has been branded as unintelligent "Mickey Mouse studies" by both academics and the press. The old prestige universities, which are slower at accepting new areas of study, have until recently shunned media studies. Hence the mockery could be seen as reflecting the hierarchical British university system, in which opinions about a university's quality and status are highly influenced by its age.

There are signs that the status of media and communication research is improving. Highly respected universities, like the London School of Economics or the University of Oxford, are nowadays active in media and communication research. Furthermore, media professionals in Britain are nowadays more likely to have media studies backgrounds, when traditionally they would have been self-educated on the job or done a degree in some other area from a prestigious university. It could therefore be concluded that

media and communication research is becoming a more integrated and accepted part of British academic research.

British media and communication research is a multidisciplinary field drawing on a range of fields in the social sciences and humanities as well as in the visual arts and computer science. The academic community fosters the multidisciplinary roots of media and communication studies and sees their maintenance as an asset for research. Many of the scholars interviewed for the study thought that this was a good thing, since what happens in the media cannot be studied as separate from the rest of society.

The diversity of the field makes it rather difficult to define. The definitions given by the interviewees of key approaches in the field of British media and communication varied considerably. One of the most commonly agreed ways of categorising the field was to divide it into academic and more applied (or practice-based) traditions. Traditionally, academic research in this field in Britain has drawn on two major approaches, political economy and cultural studies; the former based more on the social sciences and the latter on humanities. Historically, the two approaches have been seen as rivals, and practitioners of cultural studies and political economy have worked quite separately from each other. The rivalry now seems to have begun to fade. There are new attempts to bridge the gap between approaches and there is a wide consensus that both are needed. Political economy and cultural studies are both still strongly represented. Some argue that both are facing a challenge as Marxism, on which they are based, is in crisis as a critical strand of thought. A third major approach is film studies, which is largely based on literature studies and is not a particularly critical tradition.

A small scale analysis of the topics of recent publications suggests that media-related publishing in Britain over the past two years has been orientated towards society and politics. The role and power of the media in society and politics were highlighted in many of the publications. Along with social, political and economic media research, cultural studies and film studies appeared to strongly influence media-related publishing in Britain. Common themes within research on media culture and popular culture included mediated stardom and celebrity culture, gender and sexuality, fandom and lifestyles as well as the mediated popular culture in Arab and Chinese societies. Media

research under this category was engaged with both popular and to some extent also highbrow culture.

Media and communication research conducted within the UK is both diverse and rich. However, as regards current and future research, in the light of the interview data gathered some emerging trends could be traced. Due to changes in the media as a business and in British society, interest in the global is one of the most prevailing trends in media and communication research. The importance of research on issues of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, (transcultural) identities, ethnic and diasporic media, among others, was highlighted in the interview data. It is worth noting, though, that while UK-based academics embrace the global, their sphere of reference is still by and large limited to the English-speaking world. This might be changing with the approaching generation shift. The interest in the global is accelerated by the increasingly multicultural and international nature of the academic community in Britain. Especially the PhD programmes in media and communication in universities in London are dominated by foreign students.

In addition to the global, another important area of research seems to be the media, journalism and democracy. This type of research is often based on the Habermasian notion of public sphere and linked with questions like the tabloidization of news, civic participation, the digital divide and empowerment, for example. There is also a focus on war reporting and representations of terror in the media. The third significant trend seems to be the study of digital media convergence and, for example, its effects on the media landscape and society or on the production and consumption of media (texts). The study of new media and the internet is represented in most media and communication departments and seems to be relatively well integrated in the study of "old media and communication".

The British government has recently put a strong emphasis on applied and practice-based research. This policy is accompanied by pressure in research funding towards so called 'Knowledge Transfer'. In the case of media and communication research this means increased co-operation between the media and communication industry and media and communication policy-makers. In the light of the data gathered for this report, not a lot of this kind of research seems to be taking place at the moment. What

collaboration there is seems recently to have been in the form of ICT-related projects. Another typical example has been local authorities or the media industry commissioning research from departments oriented towards journalism studies.

The new government policy has been treated with both deep suspicion and enthusiasm among academics. Many people think that the government is pressuring media and communication departments to reduce their role to merely vocational training institutes for future media professionals. It is too early to predict the scale and nature of the effects of these policies, but this will definitely be an interesting area to follow in the future.

Co-operation between the industry and academic research could be enhanced not only by government policy but also by changes in the British media landscape, which represent a challenge to both academic and commercially driven research. Both universities and the media industry have recently found themselves faced with questions such as what is meant by 'audience' when the same media content can be consumed at different times and by using several different technologies. As social networking sites and blogging become increasingly popular, the boundaries between producer and audience are increasingly blurring. There are also new initiatives that are aimed specifically at reducing the gap between industry and academia. Perhaps one of the most notable of these initiatives is Polis, established by the London School of Economics and the London College of Communication (LCC) (part of the University of the Arts London) as a place where journalists, academics and members of the public can examine and discuss the media and its impact on society.

As the field of British media and communication research prepares for its first transition from one generation of practitioners to another, a process of self-reflection is taking place. In the first place, the demands presented to research by the ongoing digital convergence in the media are being discussed through the idea of 'Media Studies 2.0'. This refers to the need to reconsider the traditional approaches and methods of media and communication research in order to understand the media in the age of digital convergence. Secondly, there is a call for the globalisation or de-westernising of media studies. The prevailing western domination in the field of media and communication studies is seen as problematic and so alternative, global perspectives, theories and

methods are being developed. A third area of self-reflection is evident in the way in which the whole concept of 'media studies' has been recently questioned. According to its opponents, the area of study has become so wide in both content and quality that an altogether new label is needed.

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Appendix 1.

Interviewees (28)

Gëzim Alpion is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Birmingham. Born in Albania, Alpion completed some of his studies in Egypt, and he now takes a special interest in the sociology of the media, religion, nationality and fame. He is particularly interested in the notion of "Britishness" and the representation of the "other" in British and European media. His recent publications include work on the idea of fame capital.

Kam Atwal is Senior Research Manager at the Office of Communications (Ofcom), the media communications regulator in the UK. Specialized in broadcasting, Atwal has contributed to such reports and studies as *What Children Watch* (Ofcom, 2003), and others.

Steven Barnett is Professor of Communications in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications, in the School of Media, Arts and Design at the University of Westminster. His main research interests are media policy, the media and politics, public service broadcasting, public opinion and journalism. Barnett's recent publications, in such journals as *Political Quarterly*, include articles on television programmes, Ofcom, media ownership and the crises of democracy. He has also directed a number of research projects on the press and broadcasting. Barnett is a frequent commentator on media issues on radio and television programmes and writes regularly on broadcasting for the national and specialist press.

Charles Beckett is the founding director of Polis, a think-tank concerned with journalism and society that is supported by two universities: the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and the University of the Arts/London College of Communications (LCC). During his academic career Beckett has served as Reuters Fellow at Green College Oxford, where he focused on digitalization and the developing world. Before his appointment at Polis, Beckett worked as programme editor for Channel 4 news at ITN in London and in various BBC news and current affairs programmes. Beckett has won various awards for film-making and programme editing.

Sarmila Bose is the founding director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Oxford University. In May 2008 she was appointed to the post of Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Oxford. Bose thus gave up her role as Director of the Institute, but continues to be a member of the Institute's Advisory Board. Bose's main research interests are electoral politics and public policy issues in South Asia. Her recent publications include articles on wars in South Asia and have been published in journals such as the *Economic and Political Weekly*. She is now preparing a book on the 1971 war in South Asia. Born in the United States but raised in Calcutta, India Bose has also worked as an assistant editor and senior political writer with the ABP Group newspapers in India.

Alison Button is Audience Research Manager on New Media at the British Broadcasting Company (BBC).The BBC conducts audience research across all areas of the company's involvement. Recently the BBC has paid special attention to new and emerging platforms and new ways of delivering BBC content.

Simon Cottle, since the beginning of 2008, is Professor of Media and Communication and Deputy Head of the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (JOMEC), part of Cardiff University. He is also Director of the Mediatized Conflict Research Group. Cottle holds Honorary Professorships at the Universities of Melbourne and Tasmania, and is a Faculty Fellow of the Centre for Cultural Sociology at Yale University. His research interests include the sociology of journalism, news production, research methodology and different mediatized conflicts. Cottle's most recent book, *Global Crises Reporting* (Open University Press), is due for publication in July 2008. In 2006 he authored the book *Mediatized Conflicts: Developments in Media and Conflict Studies* (Open University Press). Cottle is the series editor of the *Global Crises and Media* book series.

Nick Couldry is Professor of Media and Communications at the Department of Media and Communications at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is also Director of the new Centre for the Study of Global Media and Democracy. Couldry's research interests include reality-TV, celebrity and fandom; the media and democracy; alternative and community media; media ethics; social and cultural theory; and anthropological approaches to the media and media rituals. He has authored or edited altogether seven books and most recently has been working with Sonia Livingstone and Tim Markham in a project called Media Consumption and the Future of Public Connection, which published a book-length report, *Media Consumption and Public Engagement: Beyond the Presumption of Attention* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

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