

# Creative Industries Policy and Practice: A Study of BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen



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## Abstract

This thesis examines creative industries policy in film and television in Scotland. It explores the impact that different approaches to creative industries policy have on creative practice in two media industries, BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen, and reflects on how each of these bodies articulates its role as a ‘national’ institution. BBC Scotland is the Scottish branch of the UK’s largest public service broadcaster, while Scottish Screen exists on a far smaller scale, to serve the screen industries in Scotland. The thesis examines the role of BBC Scotland in sustaining the creative economy and contributing to the cultural life of Scotland. The study of Scottish Screen examines a key early aim of the agency, that of establishing a national film studio. The work investigates the connections between UK and Scottish levels of creative industries policy in light of the debates over the future of public service broadcasting and the Scottish Executive’s cultural policy framework. The study outlines how ideas of cultural creativity and its economic significance have developed, charts how these ideas have affected policy debate, and explores the extent to which devolution has affected film and television policy. By mapping the historical, sociological and political terrain, the research analyses the specificity of Scotland within the UK context and explores areas in which ideas of ‘the national’ become problematic. In order to investigate how policy has impacted on the production of creative goods, a further three case studies are explored. These are the feature film *Red Road* (Arnold, 2006), an independent production company called The Comedy Unit, and a BBC Scotland television series, *River City* (BBC, 2002-date). The work concludes with an examination of the impact of contemporary policy developments, including the establishment of Creative Scotland and the Scottish Broadcasting Commission.

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## Author's declaration

This thesis represents the original work of Lynne Hibberd unless explicitly stated otherwise in the text. The research upon which it is based was carried out at the University of Stirling and the University of Glasgow, under the supervision of Professor Philip Schlesinger, during the period January 2006 to December 2008. Parts of this work have been published elsewhere as listed below.

Boyle, R., Hibberd, L. & Magor, M. (2007) *Public Support for the Creative Industries in Scotland*. Glasgow: CCPR

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## Definitions

The terms used in this study preference Scottish over British identity, that is, ‘national’ refers to Scotland while ‘UK national’ designates the UK framework, the Parliament assumes the Scottish Parliament unless stated otherwise, etc. Before 2007, the government of Scotland was termed the Scottish Executive. In 2007, this term was changed by the incoming Scottish National Party (SNP) to what was argued be a less confusing term, the Scottish Government. Although these adjustments were not received wholeheartedly,<sup>1</sup> the terms Executive and Government are used interchangeably throughout this work to reflect these changes. Unless otherwise stated, ‘broadcasting’ refers to television broadcasting, ‘film’ to feature film, and ‘media’ to film and television. Films are referred to by their English title and where applicable, the year of theatrical release in their country of production. Various branding changes have occurred over the time of the study - such as Scottish Television (STV) becoming stv, and BBC1 being referred to as BBC One or BBC ONE – these brand identities are disregarded and consistent terms used throughout. Public service broadcasting and/or broadcasters are referred to by the acronym PSB. A full list of acronyms and abbreviations are provided in the glossary. The primary concern of this thesis is with film and television policy in Scotland from 1997 to 2007, with reference to other periods and the wider European perspective only as it is immediately relevant to the study. The work is not nationally comparative and does not seek to examine ways in which Scotland is similar to, or different from, other nations in and outside the UK. It seeks instead to say how it is in Scotland.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Scottish Executive is still used to refer to the Civil Service. Westminster does not recognise the term ‘Scottish Government’ and refers instead to the Scottish Executive.



## Introduction

How has Scottish devolution affected film and television policy? The primary research question immediately opens up many related lines of enquiry. One of these threads is concerned in the first instance with definitions of national identity. How does Scotland exist – as a nation, an idea, a community, a culture? What is Scottish about Scotland's institutions? How do industries articulate with national identity, and on what grounds do they do so? Another theme picks up from this, to examine the role, purposes and effects of devolution, the process by which one nation is demarcated as different from another. This involves an interrogation of the process by which Scotland is distinguished as different, a consideration of how the nation is at once self-governing and dependent, and an examination of how partial autonomy influences ideas of national identity. A further line of enquiry relates to film and television – how the two media exist, as products, institutions and industries, how they interact with audiences, and what they are used for. What are the benefits of exploring the relationship between film and television, and how do they exist on a national scale? Given that both are absent from the thesis' title, why are they referred to as creative industries, and what is it that defines them as being at once creative, cultural and industrial? Yet another problem is raised by the examination of policy – first in determining what it is, and then by exploring how and by whom it is created – the role of governments, institutions and individuals in the policymaking process. Who uses policy? How is creative industries policy translated into the practice of creating cultural goods? And does national policy create national film and television?

This research examines film and television policy during the early years of Scottish devolution, and is predominantly concerned with the decade from 1997 to 2007. It takes as its basis the study of two media institutions, BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen. In order to investigate how policy has impacted on the production of creative goods and services, a further three case studies are explored. These are the feature film *Red Road* (Arnold, 2006), an independent production company called The Comedy Unit, and a BBC Scotland television series, *River City* (BBC, 2002-date).

It is difficult to discuss what is Scottish about national cultural institutions, without first examining the concept of national identity. It is similarly impossible to ignore the relationship between Scotland and the UK, an affiliation which some commentators have argued has relegated Scotland to a culturally, politically and economically subordinate position in the UK since the 1707 Treaty of Union (Chapman, 1978; Nairn, 1981).

However, to go into the debates on nationhood fully is beyond the scope of this study. Instead this thesis takes as its starting point as wide a view of Scottish identity as possible, which accepts that being Scottish is a diverse and pluralistic term, which includes a range of socio-economic, political and ethnic identities. Similarly complex problems are encountered with attempting to define what is Scottish about the Scottish media, and these issues are considered more fully in the following chapter. This very broad approach to national identity is not intended to be lacking in theory, or simply to assert that the world is now 'post-national'. Rather, it means to reflect that nationality is a complex and contradictory term, which nonetheless has a potent descriptive, denotative, symbolic and cultural importance. The contestations that are posed by the concept of nationality are at the heart of this work and are considered more fully throughout. In the late 1990s, the notion that Scottish identity was a conceivable, discrete entity, was most fully realised in the recognition of Scotland as a separate, partially autonomous nation within the UK. The work now turns to an examination of this process of Scottish devolution.

## **Scottish devolution**

Recent histories of devolution can usefully be traced back to 1970, with the discovery of North Sea oil off the coast of Aberdeen. The find provided the country with new economic optimism, which was quickly built on by the Scottish National Party (SNP). The SNP had enjoyed a dramatic by-election success in Hamilton in 1967, and acquired its first seat in Westminster in 1970. The discovery of oil, regarded by the SNP as a 'national treasure', enabled the party to garner further support in the 1974 elections (Lynch, 2001: 166-174). Although the SNP's popularity was not sustained into the 1980s, its success over this short period effectively forced the hand of the major parties into taking up a position on Scottish 'home rule' (Bogdanor, 1999: 179, cited in Schlesinger et al. 2001: 6). A white paper on devolution was produced by the Labour cabinet in 1975, but the calls for a greater level of Scottish autonomy were eventually thwarted in 1979, when a devolution referendum failed to generate a required level of support. Shortly after, Labour lost the general election to the Conservatives and the calls for devolution gradually fell by the wayside.

Over the following years, the politics of Prime Minister (PM) Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) ensured that Scottish electoral support for Conservatism slumped to an all time low. Under Thatcher's policies of monetary control, privatisation and self-help, along with the reduction in trade union power, the Conservatives became ever more unrepresentative of Scotland. Thatcher's assertions that there was 'no such thing as society' (Kingdom, 2003:

293) rested uneasily with a nation which prided itself on welfare reforms (Paterson, 1994). For many Scots, Margaret Thatcher, as a person and politician, represented the 'worst' of England through her lack of understanding of Scotland (Watson, 2003: 114-116). Over the eleven years of Thatcher's period in office, Scottish political allegiance became ever more distanced from, and unrepresented by, that of the wider UK. Although Scottish and British identities may have been viewed as complementary at the beginning of the twentieth century, by the end of the 1990s, Scotland had evolved a different agenda to that of England, one in which national identity came before social class, and in which Scottish people saw themselves as more liberal and left of centre than their English counterparts (McCrone, 2001: 13, 27). By this time, Philip Schlesinger et al. argue,

The growing belief that something was wrong with British governance *per se* began to take root in Scotland. In time, this gave rise to a movement for constitutional change and increasing pressure to alter the rules of the game. (Schlesinger et al., 2001: 8)

The Major government of 1990-1997 was fractionally more popular in Scotland than Thatcher's had been, but it was the Labour election victory of May 1997 that allied Scottish and UK politics once again. The landslide victory of New Labour promised a change in direction from the previous eighteen years of Conservative rule, as Tony Blair brought a different agenda to Downing Street.

One of the first acts of the incoming Labour government was the publication of a white paper on devolving a Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. For Scotland, the positive result of a devolution referendum in September 1997 resulted in the Scotland Act 1998, which provided the basis for creating the Scottish Parliament in July 1999. The establishment of a devolved government in Scotland was the result of a push towards greater legislative independence that had been growing in force for many years. The Scotland Act established the Scottish Parliament as the legislature (operating under devolved powers defined by the Act); the Scottish Executive was set up as the administrative equivalent of the UK Cabinet. The Scotland Act specified the difference between reserved and devolved powers. Reserved matters remained the control of Westminster, and included foreign policy, defence, national security and social security.<sup>2</sup> Devolved matters - areas that had previously been administered by the Scottish Office - were presided over by Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and included, among

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<sup>2</sup> John Kingdon notes that the preservation of the constitution as a reserved matter theoretically prevents Scotland from being able to vote for independence, though a referendum would be unlikely to be prevented if the Parliament voted for it. KINGDOM, J. (2003) *Government and Politics in Britain: An Introduction*, (third edition), Cambridge: Polity Press and Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

others: education, health, agriculture and justice. In addition, the Scottish Parliament had discretionary powers over varying the level of basic income tax. Under the terms of the settlement, broadcasting was an area reserved to Westminster, while culture was a devolved issue. The tensions that result from this asymmetrical framework – administering culture in the absence of the most popular cultural form - are central to this thesis.

The period 1999-2007 witnessed three Scottish Executives and four First Ministers. Due to the nature of the voting system, all of these governments were formed by a coalition of parties. The first two Executives (1999-2007) were made up of a Labour/Liberal Democrat (LibDem) alliance, where Labour was the majority party (Hassan and Fraser, 2004: 562, 567).<sup>3</sup> In October 2000, the untimely death of the Labour First Minister Donald Dewar offered a brief spell for Labour's Henry McLeish to take the lead role. He resigned in November the following year, after a scandal involving a non-declaration of income. LibDem Jim Wallace briefly presided as Acting First Minister, before Labour's Jack McConnell was appointed later that month. The second Scottish Parliament elections, in May 2003, again saw a clear victory for Labour, where the party was returned with 34.6 per cent of the vote and 50 seats (Yonwin, 2004: 48). Over the same period, a Labour government was installed at Westminster under three successive elections in 1997, 2001 and 2005. This was presided over by Tony Blair until his resignation in June 2007, and succession by Gordon Brown. Hence, the period 1999-2007 saw Scottish and UK politics in greater accord than at any other time, both predominantly governed by the Labour party. The consensus of party politics between Scotland and the UK over this period contributed to the Scottish Executive's reluctance to question the devolutionary settlement established by the terms of the Scotland Act.

Before moving on to consider how film and television existed in a newly devolved Scotland, two further points must be made about the period under investigation. The first is concerned with technological changes over this time, and the second, with a change of ethos in key media institutions.

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<sup>3</sup> This period was overseen by two Executives, elected in 1999 and 2003. For simplicity, from this point on I use the term 'first' administration to refer to the entire period, and distinguish it from what is later called the 'second' government, that of the SNP, elected in May 2007.

## Technological and institutional changes

In the early twenty-first century, rapid advances in digital technologies and increased convergence meant that producers, consumers and regulators were questioning the uses and purposes of the media.<sup>4</sup> Although the pace of change was dramatic, in many respects the technological transformations of the period had relatively little impact on film and television audiences or producers. Chapter 1 argues that these advances must be seen in light of the specific nature of the social structure, demography and geography of Scotland. Like the rest of the UK, the provision of new technologies in Scotland was universal, but by no means universally accessible. In 2007, Scottish audiences continued to consume both film and television in much the same way as they had eight years earlier. On the part of producers, 'new' media lowered production costs and offered alternative ways of transmitting information within companies and out to audiences. But generally, as David Hesmondhalgh (2007: 269) suggests, the new industries bore a strong resemblance to, and carried the inherited legacy of, previous ways of organising film and television production. Although the technological changes made little difference to either the production or consumption of film and television in practice, they proved more problematic for policymakers, politicians and regulators eager to formulate policy which would adequately meet the needs of the present yet still prove relevant in the future. The concerns over predicting, regulating and adapting for the future of film and television also made itself felt in changes in the ownership and structure of media institutions.

Although a study of any era will reveal changes in the nature of institutions, from 1997-2006 the media industries perhaps experienced more scrutiny of this process than ever before, following a 1995 pledge by the then Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown MP to instigate a 'bonfire of the quangos' (Condon, 1995). On a UK level these changes included the founding of the Film Council (later the UK Film Council) in 2000, and the Communications Act 2003 and consequent establishment of the Office of Communications (Ofcom) as the single telecommunications regulator, both institutions being centrally concerned with competition in line with the principles of neoliberalism. In Scotland, the already established institutions of Scottish Screen and BBC Scotland did not have competitiveness at their heart, although as Chapters 4 and 5 show, the rhetoric of 'creative industries' thinking, concerned with economic expansion and development on a global

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<sup>4</sup> A few examples serve to highlight a selection of the changes of the era. The period between 1999 and 2007 saw the launch of interactive digital television, DVD, widespread broadband availability, wireless Internet connections, blogging, MP3 players including the iPod, music, film and television downloads, free-to-air digital terrestrial television (Freeview), social networking sites, third generation (3G) mobile phones and the BBC iPlayer.

scale, would soon filter down into the policies of both bodies. Several agencies were re-imagined in the process of slimming down bureaucratic structures. Most notably for this study, Scottish Screen was born in 1997 from the ashes of four other bodies overseeing various sectors of the film industry, a process discussed in further detail in Chapter 5. Over the course of the early twenty-first century technological changes were reflected in structural changes at Scottish Screen, where the body instigated a renewed emphasis on supporting the whole of the screen industries rather than just the film sector. A new board, Chief Executive and Chair appointed in 2004 aimed to fit the agency for the changes that were happening within the industry, but by this time, it was looking increasingly likely that Scottish Screen would be merged with the Scottish Arts Council (SAC). This process is examined further in Chapter 7.

At the end of the 1990s, the BBC responded to technological changes with significant forays into digital media, such as the launch of BBC News 24, interactive television and BBC Online. The early 2000s saw the corporation under scrutiny as it underwent its Charter Review (December 2003 - December 2006), but this inspection was essentially superseded in the public eye by other events. By the middle of 2003, the BBC was fully embroiled in a row that had ensued over a report on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme, which suggested that the government had 'sexed up' the case for war with Iraq in a dossier of evidence about weapons of mass destruction. Initially, the BBC Governors backed the programme's report and rejected Prime Minister Tony Blair's demands for a retraction of the allegations. But in July, the death of David Kelly, the government weapons advisor who had been exposed as the source of the BBC report, resulted in the Hutton Inquiry (2004) and the eventual resignations of BBC Chairman Gavyn Davies and BBC Director-General Greg Dyke in January 2004. The proceedings of the Hutton Inquiry overshadowed the Charter Review (DCMS, 2003; House of Commons Culture Media and Sport Committee, 2004: 5) and resulted in a re-structuring of staff, structure and policy for the corporation. The Hutton Report had discredited the old system of BBC self-regulation by its Board of Governors, and the new Charter aimed to reinstate public trust in the institution with the formation of a new sovereign body overseeing the BBC, the BBC Trust, with effect from January 2007.<sup>5</sup> The BBC Trust was envisioned as a more independent body which would monitor the standards and integrity of BBC output. Gradually, the mantra of creativity that Dyke had instigated at the BBC (Born, 2004; Dyke, 2004) began to be replaced by a focus on increasing public trust in broadcasting (Burnham, 2008; Thompson, 2008). As the new Chair, Michael Grade worked with incoming

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<sup>5</sup> The Broadcasting Council for Scotland was also changed to the Audience Council Scotland with effect from January 2007.

Director-General Mark Thompson to secure a further ten years of the licence fee and keep the BBC independent from industry regulator Ofcom. Grade played a crucial part in securing the new Royal Charter, but left the BBC in November 2006 to move to ITV. Thompson eventually secured a lower licence fee settlement than the BBC had hoped for, with a shortfall of £2.4 million on the requested sum (BBC News, 2007). Although the Hutton Inquiry resulted in structural changes in the governance of the BBC, it is notable that, despite devolution, the period saw little alteration to the wider configuration of the corporation. BBC Scotland remained *in situ* in much the same way as it had always done, with some changes being made to programming, including the first edition of *Newsnight Scotland* in 1999. Consequently, BBC Scotland's role in the cultural life and the creative infrastructure of the nation came under increasing scrutiny. This is discussed further in Chapters 4 and 7.

If the Hutton Inquiry had adversely affected the BBC, it had further resonances for public trust in the UK government. The 1997 election saw Labour securing 43.2 per cent of the UK vote, a figure which fell to 35.2 per cent in the 2005 ballot (Yonwin, 2004; BBC News, 2005a). The substantial drop in support for New Labour was widely believed to be a response to the controversial governmental decision to invade Iraq. In Scotland, the percentage of people voting for Labour dropped from 45.6 per cent to 39.5 per cent over the same period (Yonwin, 2004; BBC News, 2005b), the beginning of a decline in Labour support which would later result in the election of an SNP government in May 2007. With its ultimate goal of Scottish independence, the SNP clearly had a different agenda from its predecessor, and this made itself felt almost immediately. The key differences in policies pursued by the SNP, which are still unresolved at the time of writing, are detailed further in Chapter 7. For now, it is suffice to say that the first decade of Scottish devolution can already be divided into two distinct and very different phases, from July 1999 to May 2007, and May 2007 onwards.

### **Research base**

Although film and television have always been related, academic studies tend to focus on one of the two areas, and favour different approaches for each. By examining the two sectors together, this thesis gathers comparative data on moving image policy and practice. As industries, both film and television depend on collaborative production practices and the use of technology. Both sectors produce prototype products on an industrial scale, and, at least during the course of this study, both were dependent on mass audiences. Film and television operate in competitive global markets historically dominated by US producers,

and both see creative individuals as a key economic resources which can act as a means of attracting investment. Both media have been of interest to the state because of the important roles they play in cultural identity, citizenship, and growing the economy. Although the two industries are subject to different forms of intervention and regulation, both have had to address the impact of digitisation, convergence and competition. The many similarities between film and television mean that they share an economic and political logic. This thesis recognises the interdependence of the two industries and gives some indication of how the sectors work together. Examining film and television over a distinct period of time also enables an exploration of the variations in policy that affect the media at a Scottish and UK level. The work integrates an analysis of creative industries policy with empirical research, and as such provides a holistic account of creative industries policy and practice in a devolved nation.

This research was undertaken to inform my doctoral study and to contribute to a wider project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC): *Creativity: Policy and Practice. A Study of the UK Government, the BBC and the UK Film Council*, (ID number 112152). The research project as a whole explored evolving concepts of creativity and how these ideas have existed within a wider cultural context. This included examining the roles of individuals and think tanks in shaping policy, charting how these ideas developed, and exploring their impact. The research was also tasked with determining how creativity in film and television was affected by the changing structure of the UK, and this element, exploring the creative industries in Scotland, forms the basis of this thesis. The creativity project defined the two institutions for the doctoral study as BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen, chosen to provide a comparison with their UK counterparts - the BBC and UK Film Council (UKFC). By mapping the historical, sociological and political terrain, the thesis examines the specificity of Scotland within the UK context and explores areas in which ideas of the 'national' become problematic.

## **Structure**

So far this chapter has introduced a socio-political context for a discussion of the film and television industries in Scotland. This includes an analysis of the way in which Scotland, at the turn of the twenty-first century, exists as a nation and a 'communicative space' (Schlesinger, 2000a). Chapter 1 examines the extent to which film and television can be explored on a national scale. Chapter 2 looks more specifically at Scottish cultural and creative industries policy in the period under discussion, providing a review of key policies of the era and identifying problematic areas for governmental intervention. The work then



moves on to a methodological discussion which states the rationale for the research, outlines the methods used for the enquiry and justifies the reasons behind their application. Chapter 4 examines the role of BBC Scotland in sustaining the creative economy and contributing to the cultural life of Scotland. It analyses the relationship between BBC Scotland and the BBC since devolution, and examines the role and relevance of BBC Scotland as a national institution. In Chapter 5, a similar process of investigation is applied to Scottish Screen, where the work examines a key early aim of the agency, that of establishing a national film studio. Chapter 6 outlines three case studies chosen for the purposes of this research: *Red Road*, The Comedy Unit and *River City*. These case studies contribute to the scrutiny of the two key institutions under investigation. Chapter 7 looks at the impact and future of current policy developments, and the final chapter concludes the research.

This introduction has outlined the parameters for this research, explained the context in which it was undertaken, and sketched the scale and structure of the thesis. The work now turns to an examination of the historical, social and political frame of reference in which film and television exist in Scotland.

## Chapter 1. National film and television

The previous chapter noted that in 1999, devolution provided a framework in which Scotland could be viewed as a specific and unique cultural entity for policymakers. It also outlined the terms of the Scotland Act, under which this status was established. This chapter examines areas where devolution has, and has not, affected the film and television sector. The unique economic, cultural, and social histories of Scotland's inhabitants have helped shape traditional patterns of political allegiance, influenced attitudes toward the church and education, and affected patterns of employment and migration. This chapter explores how Scotland's diversity has impacted on the role, availability of, and access to, the media.

The extent to which media can be regarded as 'national' is explored as an amalgam of three factors (ITC, 2002):

1. Film and television which is produced in Scotland. As such it contributes to the national economy, creates employment opportunities, and builds and bolsters the talent and skills base.
2. Film and television which is made for Scotland. This is a culturally specific media which, wherever it is made, aims first and foremost to address the Scottish audience.
3. Film and television which reflects Scotland, to itself and to the rest of the world. The ensuing representations of Scotland should, in an ideal world, recognise the cultural diversity and breadth of Scottish experiences.

The above three definitions open up a Pandora's Box of complex and interrelated factors which run throughout this work. For example, media produced in Scotland may increase the national wealth, but what if it is owned outwith the nation? It is theoretically possible to have considerable inward investment in the country but to generate media products with little cultural relevance, and eminently possible to invest in Scotland but for wealth and power to be held elsewhere, through processes such as retaining intellectual property rights (IPR). Film and television produced for Scotland is similarly problematic, relying as it does on an implicit assumption that Scottish interests, if not quite homogeneous, are at least definable. The premise also glosses over the nature of communications media which transgress national boundaries. Do media for Scotland cater for the Scottish diaspora, the

considerable numbers of people who define themselves as Scottish but who do not live in the country? Finally, film and television which reflect Scotland have similar problems. How to reflect a range of experiences, and at what point do the representations become so diverse as to be nationally unrecognisable? Why should national identity be the overriding definition of what is represented, when nationality may not feature in the range of ways in which people chose to define themselves? And by what criteria do we judge the person or the institution which is best placed to reflect the nation? The quandaries over national film and television cannot be extricated from the UK's history of public service broadcasting, a premise based on the BBC's first Director-General John Reith's belief that by informing, educating and entertaining the public, the BBC would envision 'the nation as one man' (Reith, 'Memorandum of information on the scope and conduct of the broadcasting service', 1925: 4, cited in Scannell and Cardiff, 1991: 7). This situation is clearly complicated by the existence of Scotland as a discrete nation within the UK and the complexities of the devolved settlement outlined in the previous chapter. How the BBC specifically has responded to devolution is the focus of Chapter 4. The following section provides an overview of how film and television facilities have come to be based in Scotland.

## **Film and television in Scotland**

In the early days of broadcasting, radio transmitting stations were based at several sites throughout Scotland. Over the first half of the twentieth century, the birth and expansion of television brought with it a drift of the infrastructure towards Glasgow, as staff once employed in radio moved to jobs in television (McDowell, 1992: 85-86). BBC Scotland, based from 1952 at Queen Margaret Drive in Glasgow's salubrious West End, gradually built up a base of human resources and technical skills which complemented the UK national services broadcast from London. Programmes for the nations and regions of the UK (including Scotland, a 'national region'), were provided on an opt-out basis from the main network schedule. Over the 1950s, the establishment of the independent television (ITV) companies as regional franchises under the auspices of the Television Act 1954, enabled them to serve regional interests and spread production facilities throughout the UK. In 1956, Scottish Television (STV), holding the ITV franchise for central Scotland, set up its base in Glasgow. Grampian established its base in Aberdeen in 1961, serving the north of Scotland. Border Television, based in Carlisle, began broadcasting to the north of England, Scottish Borders and the Isle of Man in the same year. The small size of Grampian and its focus on rural matters specific to the region kept it in close contact with

its audience (McDowell, 1992: 130). Border however, was never regarded as truly Scottish – in part because its English base negated its visible impact (Sweeney, 2008b: 95), but also because the three regions that Border served were culturally very different, united only by a largely rural demographic.

Throughout the 1990s, the process of mergers and takeovers facilitated by the Broadcasting Act 1996 saw STV buying Grampian, and then being acquired by Scottish Media Group (SMG) plc. SMG diversified into print journalism, taking over Glasgow dailies *The Herald* and *Evening Times* in 1996, and launching the *Sunday Herald* three years later. Border was sold to ITV plc in 2004. In England and Wales, many of the media buyouts of the time resulted in a re-branding exercise whereby the stations became known by the generic name, ITV. This was not the case in Scotland, where SMG's decision to re-brand Grampian as STV North met with much criticism from those in the north of Scotland eager to re-state their differences from the central Scotland area, served by STV Central. In 2007, Michael Grade, Chief Executive of ITV plc, announced plans to close ITV Border and merge the region with ITV Tyne Tees as part of the move toward digital switchover (DSO). The history of the BBC in Scotland is discussed further below, and in Chapter 4, where it is noted that the BBC's public perception as a UK national broadcaster has influenced attitudes towards the institution. For now, it is suffice to say that the process of takeovers and the deregulation of the media initiated by the Conservative government has meant that in the early twenty-first century, the vast majority of Scottish television output originates from Glasgow or London. This situation has left many viewers in Scotland feeling unrepresented and ignored by both the commercial and public service broadcasters.

In July 2006, STV was the first broadcaster to move to a new base in Glasgow's docklands, Pacific Quay. This 'digital media campus' is discussed further in Chapter 4. STV were quickly followed by BBC Scotland who had instigated the move, as well as STV's parent company SMG. Together these institutions provided employment for approximately 2000 people in 2006. Channel 4 has its nations and regions base in Glasgow city centre and invests between £10 million and £18 million a year in Scotland (Burns, 2007a). Although the Glasgow media hub is significant in Scottish terms, in the UK, it is comparatively small. London's television production sector is almost two and half times the size of the rest of the UK put together (Partyka, 2006), and the size of the Scottish industry as a whole is more comparable with that of the city of Manchester, than it is with that of the nation of England. Consequently, in the early 1990s, the Comedia consultancy group argued:

In film and television more than any other cultural industries sector it is difficult to perceive of a city strategy. The weakness of Scotland vis-à-vis London is so overwhelming that the response needs to be seen at a Scottish level. Distribution, finance, marketing and sales and high level production facilities are all based there. Glasgow can simply not compete. (Landry, 1991: 81)

Edinburgh is no longer home to any large media operations, although the communications departments of several financial institutions are based in the city, and its reputation as a cultural hub ensures that some independent production and advertising still survives there. Dundee has a thriving games, interactive and new media industry, and Gaelic television production finds a base in Stornoway. The media infrastructure around Glasgow is largely dependent on BBC Scotland, and the role of the institution in sustaining the industry is explored further in Chapter 4. The BBC has also played a key role in supporting the Scottish film industry, and it is to this area that the work now turns.

Studies of the Scottish film industry are situated in the wider discourse of national cinema, often concerned with representing the 'self' of the nation in opposition to the 'other' of Hollywood, and reflecting recurrent anxieties about cultural dependency and homogenisation (Schlesinger, 2000b). Consequently, Scottish Anglophone film competes for an audience not only with Hollywood, but also with British cinema. There is a tenuous argument that prior to devolution Scotland might have benefited from being part of the broader (but still very small) British film industry, but the extent to which this worked to Scotland's advantage is arguable (Lockerbie, 1990). The studies of film which seek to define cinema as national tend to use one of two approaches, which stress either the costs and resources involved in making a film, or its consumption by audiences. Because films are often financed with the contributions of several countries, they are resistant to definitions of national identity constructed along the lines of geography - although some textual analyses argue that it is possible to attribute a nationality to the end result (Hayward, 1993; Street, 1997). Similar problems arise with exploring the extent to which a film is a cultural product of a nation, with *Braveheart* (Gibson, 1995) being a classic example of a Scottish story, played by an Australian, filmed in Ireland, with Hollywood production values.

Nonetheless, a history of film in Scotland reveals a handful of filmmakers whose contributions have been especially notable, and whose work has indubitably affected any perception of Scottish cinema. Over the 1930s, John Grierson established a particularly influential documentary tradition, which was taken up later by the work of the General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit. During the 1940s, Ealing Studios portrayed an enduring

vision of Scottish life in *Whisky Galore!* (Mackendrick, 1949) and *The Maggie* (Mackendrick, 1954), films which remain popular today. The traditions of documentary filmmaking were expanded on further by Lindsay Anderson and the work of the social realist directors in the 1960s. In the 1970s, Bill Douglas received much acclaim for his autobiographical trilogy: *My Childhood* (1972), *My Ain Folk* (1973) and *My Way Home* (1978). Bill Forsyth provided some relief in the wasteland of British film production in the 1980s, with hits *Gregory's Girl* (1981) and *Local Hero* (1981). By the mid 1990s, a number of high profile successes led to bold proclamations that an 'upsurge in creativity' (Petrie, 2000: 1) would surely represent 'the most dynamic period in one hundred years of Scottish film history' (Bruce, 1996: 3). *Shallow Grave* (Boyle, 1995) and *Trainspotting* (Boyle, 1996) captured the zeitgeist and provided a platform for several Scottish film actors to rise to prominence, and movies of legendary Scots heroes - the eponymous *Rob Roy* (Caton-Jones, 1995), and William Wallace in *Braveheart* - reinvigorated the Scottish tourist industry. The success of the latter location shoots, which re-envisioned Scots history with some artistic licence, prompted concerns over whether the focus of the national screen agency, Scottish Screen, should be primarily cultural or commercial, a tension which is explored in Chapter 5. By the turn of the millennium, the documentary tradition was once again recalled in a series of films which looked set to make 'Scottish social realism' a genre of its own. These included a trilogy of films directed by Ken Loach, *My Name Is Joe* (1998), *Sweet Sixteen* (2002) and *Ae Fond Kiss* (2004), as well as Peter Mullan's *Orphans* (1999) and *The Magdalene Sisters* (2003), and Lynne Ramsay's work on *Ratcatcher* (1999) and *Morvern Callar* (2002). These gritty depictions would later provide a reference point for critics anxious to categorise *Red Road*, a film examined further in Chapter 6.

The films and filmmakers above, and a host of others not mentioned, have provided a rich source of material for commentators exploring the significance of culturally relevant film and television to Scottish audiences. In addition, the productions are visible reminders of the talent which is produced in Scotland, and the extent to which this talent stays within or moves outside the nation. The work now turns to an examination of media intended for Scottish audiences, regardless of its site of production.

## Film and television for Scotland

Is it possible for media producers to create material which specifically meets the needs of a national audience? At face value, the question seems inescapably to envision an

identifiable, homogeneous mass, defined primarily by its nationality. But there have been continued attempts by broadcasters to target a Scottish audience, which make use of those cultural characteristics that distinguish Scotland from other nations (Miller, 1997: 85-86).<sup>6</sup> In the early years of radio broadcasting, diverse programming designed to cater for all individuals was counterbalanced by the standardisation of accents, views, news and culture that the BBC provided, a process which saw local and regional culture diminished in the face of metropolitan bias (McDowell, 1992: 14). This trend continued with the advent of television and thrived well into the second half of the twentieth century, with the major broadcasters being accused of presenting a parochial image of the nation in *The White Heather Club* (BBC, 1958-1968), *Dr Finlay's Casebook* (BBC, 1962-1971), and *Take the High Road* (STV, 1980-2003). In the 1980s, the establishment of Channel 4 motivated the BBC to provide more challenging representations, and programmes such as *Tutti Frutti* (BBC, 1987) were an early indication of regionalism that would become even more apparent in depictions of life 'up north': *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* (Central, 1983-2002; BBC, 2002-2004), *The Royle Family* (BBC, 1998-2006) and even further north, in *Tinsel Town* (BBC, 2000-2002). Over the late 1990s, *Hamish Macbeth* (BBC, 1995-1997) and *Monarch of the Glen* (BBC, 2000-2005) enjoyed considerable success north and south of the border as well as further afield, although both met with familiar accusations of presenting a 'heather and highlands' image of the nation. Since the 1990s, several high profile comedies have also been very well received, and these are discussed further in Chapter 6.

All of these representations have been contested, particularly since 1982 when *Scotch Reels* (McArthur, 1982) kick-started a discourse on Scottish national identity that remains a touchstone for discussions of Scottish cinema. While this thesis does not enter that debate, it is notable that many of the arguments on representations have been harnessed in the name of nationalism, with the Saltire Society and the SNP particularly vociferous in their complaints of parochialism (McDowell, 1992: 56-57; MacMillan, 2006). Audience reaction to programmes for Scotland has been influenced by three further factors.

First, as outlined above, the BBC treats Scotland as a single area within its UK broadcast, rather than a composite of different regions. This is most evident in the production of news and current affairs programming, in which the BBC's 6.30pm news broadcast *Reporting Scotland* (BBC, 1968-date) follows the UK national and international news at 6pm, and addresses Scotland as a singular entity at the same time that the English regions

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<sup>6</sup> This section takes it as read that Anglophone films may reasonably anticipate 'playing' better with a local audience but will rarely intentionally target one.

have a half hour of local news. In contrast, STV produces two regional Scottish bulletins at 6pm: *North Tonight* (STV, 1980-date) and *Scotland Today* (STV, 1972-date), which broadcast to their respective regions and advertise to local markets. These are followed at 6.30pm with the ITV UK national and international news. This situation has led to a good deal of debate regarding the extent to which the BBC recognises or disregards Scotland as a national entity. The argument over whether Scotland would be better served by its own news broadcast, a 'Scottish Six', is examined further in Chapter 4.

Second, BBC Scotland broadcasts to the nation on an 'opt-out' basis, by which allocated hours are devoted to Scotland-specific programming. In 2007, this constituted in the region of seventeen hours a week on BBC1, and twelve hours a week on BBC2. Opt-out slots take place all day and night, and range from between a twenty minute programme to a five hour segment. Programmes during these times need not be 'about' Scotland, but they must be deemed by BBC Scotland to be of value to the Scottish audience. Sometimes this relevance is self-evident – as in the provision of Gaelic language children's programming or *Newsnight Scotland*. Often, it is less clear why a Scottish audience should have been served differently.<sup>7</sup> Opt-out programming clearly served a function for the BBC as a PSB in an age of broadcasting scarcity. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, in a digital, multi-platform environment, this practice, like that of PSB more generally, has come under increasing scrutiny. The peculiarities of opting-out are examined further in the case study of *River City* in Chapter 6.

The third factor that has played a significant role in audience reaction to broadcast programmes has been the geographical, cultural, socio-demographic and linguistic diversity of the country. This has impacted on patterns of media consumption, preferences, access and availability, and it is to these areas that the work now turns.

In his history of Scottish broadcasting, Bill McDowell (1992) notes that several factors combined to ensure that television broadcasting did not begin in Scotland until 1952, sixteen years after its regular transmission in the Home Counties. By this time, it was firmly established in the minds of its audience as a London service, with the *Glasgow Herald* archly welcoming its arrival as 'television in Scotland, not Scottish television' (Glasgow Herald, 1952, cited in McDowell, 1992: 84).<sup>8</sup> The arrival of television met with

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<sup>7</sup> An example chosen at random revealed an hour of comedy, *Harry and Paul* and *The Armstrong and Miller Show*, replaced by a comedy drama, *Mutual Friends*. BBC1 Scotland, Friday 5 September 2008.

<sup>8</sup> These deficiencies in broadcast coverage continued, with BBC2 eventually beginning to broadcast in Scotland in 1966, over two years after its first transmission in England.



a fairly lukewarm reception and a low take-up rate. People were reluctant to spend on the new technology in the face of potential problems with broadcast reception, as had been the case with inaudible and infrequent radio broadcasts during the war. By the end of the first decade of broadcasting, television was available to 95 per cent of the Scottish population, and while this figure was significantly higher than it had been in 1952 (McDowell, 1992: 93), it nonetheless masked some peculiarities in transmission. Viewers in south-west Scotland for example, were unable to receive BBC Scotland broadcasts but were able to pick up the BBC through transmitters in the north of England or Northern Ireland. This situation remained the case for terrestrial broadcasts in the early twenty-first century (Bonnar Keenlyside, 2000: 7). In the 1970s, satellite systems proved more adaptable to the problems that distance or mountainous terrain posed for terrestrial signals, but the increased channels afforded by satellite resulted in a more fragmented audience and diminution of allegiance to the BBC. In the early 2000s, Scotland's access to digital technologies initially lagged marginally behind that of London, but by 2005 this gap was negligible. Digital television was available in 57 per cent of Scottish homes, just behind London's figure of 58 per cent (Ofcom, 2005c: 10, 184), and people in Scotland watched more television, and more digital television, than the UK average (Ofcom, 2006a: 2; 2006b: 2). By 2006, Ofcom found that digital terrestrial television was available to 82 per cent of Scottish homes, and had surpassed the UK average of 73 per cent availability (2007d: 99). Despite a gradual decline in figures, viewers in Scotland continued to watch more television than any other nation (Ofcom, 2007c: 39, 41). Although television had been firmly embraced by the early twenty-first century, audience response to the BBC was less enthusiastic. In 2003, BBC1 and BBC2 accounted for 35.8 per cent of the audience share for the five main channels in Scotland, a figure which had decreased to 30 per cent three years later (BARB figures cited in Ofcom, 2004b: 78; 2007c: 39).<sup>9</sup> Scottish audiences were also less likely to trust the BBC website than other adults in the UK (Ofcom, 2006a: 3).

In contrast to television broadcasting, cinema-going has always been a favourite pastime in Scotland. Many early film exhibitors were Scottish entrepreneurs who played a central role in the way that cinema practices developed over the course of the twentieth century. In the cities, going to the pictures provided warm, dry and cheap entertainment, and this tradition, established in the early days of film, expanded over the course of the century to accommodate multiplex viewings, film societies and independent cinemas. Rural areas were differently served. In the eastern half of the Highlands, cinema flourished under the

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<sup>9</sup> Audience share refers to the percentage of the total viewing audience watching one channel, as opposed to another channel, at a given time.

approval of the Church of Scotland, where many early films were praised for their educational and cultural benefits. The predominance of the Free Church in the Western Isles and West Highlands over the early twentieth century led to a much smaller demand for, and provision of, cinema in these areas. This situation remained the case at the turn of the millennium (Bonnar Keenlyside, 2000: 8), where the Highlands and Islands were served by five static cinemas in Inverness, Kirkwall, Fort William, Oban and Thurso. Since 1999, Scottish Screen's introduction of the Screen Machine - an 102 seat cinema in an articulated lorry to serve rural areas at least an hour's drive from a cinema - has ensured that cinema exhibition has been regular, if infrequent.<sup>10</sup>

## Film and television reflecting Scotland

A final introductory point about the media in Scotland refers to how film and television reflects Scotland: to itself, the UK and the world. As noted above, a significant body of work explores representations of Scotland and the Scottish. These critiques examine images offered by both indigenous producers and productions made outside the country. This discourse has variously argued that imagery is regressive, romantic, parochial and masculine (Dick, 1990; Hardy, 1990; McArthur, 1982), and while these works constitute key texts in studies of Scottish cinema, their emphasis on representations make them somewhat tangential to this study. The visible success of Scottish films in the mid 1990s renewed academic focus on Scottish imagery (Petrie, 2000), and by the turn of the decade this was embedded in a wider discourse on the role of cinema in changing nations (Blandford, 2007; Hill, 2004; Hjort and Mackenzie, 2000; Hjort and Petrie, 2008). Since devolution, several works have examined the extent to which Scottish representations have changed, or stayed the same (Martin-Jones, 2004; McArthur, 2003; Murray, 2005; Neely, 2005). A broad and necessarily reductive summary of the analyses concludes that there are a limited range of Scottish images in film and television, and those representations often rely on stereotypical iconography. While this study does not enter into the debate on the power, importance and significance of representations, it is concerned with the policy and practice of showing film and television 'of' Scotland in national, UK and global contexts, and the extent to which media producers are able to do this. Those studies which combine analyses of film and television note that the practice of filmmaking - reliant on co-production financing, collaborations of talent and skills, and multiple locations - is a more complex process than that of television (Hill and McLoone, 1996; Blain and Hutchison, 2008). Once made, films counter the distribution and exhibition practices dominated by

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<sup>10</sup> The Screen Machine was joined by Screen Machine: Take Two in 2005.

the conglomerates, before reaching an audience versed in the cultural practice of viewing American product. In addition, the nature of filmmaking makes it difficult to obtain any data on 'film in Scotland', as to do so requires some preliminary identification of how this is defined. Hence, Martin McLoone (2008: 63) notes (in relation to Ireland) that identifying what constitutes a national film in an age of co-productions is a more contested area than that of defining national identity *per se*. It is not within the scope of this thesis to engage fully in the complexities of the debates over defining national cinema, although the case study of *Red Road* in Chapter 6 explores the process of filmmaking in Scotland in further detail.

The production and distribution of images reflecting Scotland on television is slightly more straightforward, being largely dependent on two processes, funding and commissioning. These factors are considered further in Chapter 4 on BBC Scotland, although as the case studies of The Comedy Unit and *River City* in Chapter 6 demonstrate, they bring their own problems.

## Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the way in which film and television exist in Scotland – as media in, for, and reflecting the nation - or a combination of two, or all three, of these factors. As the focus of this thesis is predominantly with the media industries, there is a tendency for the work to err toward the first of these, but they are all interrelated - if Scotland was not reflected at all on television there would likely be no media industry in the nation, and so on. The work has noted that in the early twenty-first century Scottish media was centred in and around Glasgow. The positioning of the city as the media hub has resulted in media emanating from the city often being seen as representative of all things Scottish – a situation which does little to reflect the diversity of the Scottish nation. The chapter noted that the independent and public service broadcasters were established in Scotland with different histories, intentions and remits. For the Scottish audience, some of the founding principles of PSB - access and availability to all audiences – have been flouted or disregarded on a national basis. The BBC's legacy as the UK's PSB is inextricable from the wider discourse of state and nation.

The chapter has examined media that purports to serve a Scottish audience and highlighted some of the problems that arise with attempting to target an audience on the basis of nationality. It has noted that attempts to grow the industries in Scotland face competition in the UK market even before they encounter an international audience. In the early days of

broadcasting, radio and television take-up in Scotland was often slow and behind the UK national average. Satellite, cable, and Internet broadcasts have overcome some of the difficulties associated with terrestrial transmissions, but these technologies are not available to, or accessed by, all of the population.

Finally, the chapter has introduced the media that exists to reflect the nation. The latter point has noted that representations of Scotland and the Scottish are frequently disputed, but this discourse does not form part of this thesis' analysis. The following chapter builds on this history of national film and television in order to discuss the development of Scottish cultural and creative industries policy. This examination forms the basis for thinking about film and television as creative industries concerned with the production of cultural goods.

## Chapter 2. Cultural and creative industries policy

The previous chapter outlined how film and television existed in Scotland, as cultural products and as institutions, at the turn of the twenty-first century. This analysis recognised that for a number of reasons, Scottish culture was poorly articulated in the UK national framework. In 1999, devolution recognised that Scotland was not adequately represented or reflected in the UK's political structure, and acknowledged that Scottish culture warranted a different level of expression and intervention in governmental policy. Culture, consequently, was a devolved issue, and one of the first areas of policy intervention for the new Executive. This chapter explores this foray into cultural policy, by examining how the Executive attempted to conceive a national cultural strategy against the background of creative industries policy being advocated by the New Labour government.

### The creative industries

Over the 1980s and 1990s, much cultural policy was led by its ability to provide 'a return on public investment' (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 139-148). This process saw previously subsidised areas of the arts and culture merged with new growth areas and referred to as the 'creative industries'.<sup>11</sup> Over the course of the 1990s the industries were championed as an inroad to economic regeneration (Garnham, 2001), urban development, employment creation, and later, as a means to combat social exclusion (Leadbetter and Oakley, 1999).

One area of early creative industries policy involved channelling funds for urban regeneration towards cities that were involved in pursuing a particular cultural goal. For Glasgow, hosting the Garden Festival in 1988 proved to be the first of several urban regeneration initiatives which later saw the city named as the European City of Culture (1990) and City of Architecture (1999). In 1990, Glasgow's success in securing the City of Culture title proved to be an enabling factor in stimulating further growth in the film and television sector. The award brought much prestige: endorsing the winning city as a truly 'cultured' area and so identifying it as a region worthy of potentially lucrative tourism. In addition the accolade, like those before it, ensured the release of European funding to develop the area's full potential. The award was the precursor to further research from the

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<sup>11</sup> In his definition of cultural industries, David Hesmondhalgh includes: broadcasting, the film and music industries, publishing, digital games, advertising and marketing, and those aspects of the Internet industry that are concerned with content. Consequently, cultural policy tends to refer to 'policy that has an impact on the primarily symbolic domain' HESMONDHALGH, D. (2007) *The Cultural Industries* (second edition), London: SAGE Publications..

Comedia Group (Landry, 1991), which was used as the basis for directing Glasgow's cultural industries strategy in the 1990s. This included four significant film and television initiatives, which are discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6:

1. The Glasgow Film Location Service (which subsequently became part of Scottish Screen Locations and later, Scottish Screen);
2. The Glasgow Film Office (GFO), which expanded from a location service into a combined locations and business development service for the screen industries;
3. The Glasgow Film Fund (which later became Glasgow Film Finance Limited), and,
4. Film City Glasgow Limited.

The extent to which Glasgow truly benefited from these regeneration schemes is questionable. The decline of the heavy industries that had preceded much inner-city decay was closely attuned to Conservative policy, and the urban regeneration initiatives were regarded by some as a cynical attempt to sustain ideas of Britishness in the face of growing rifts between Scottish and UK polity (Nairn, 2000). Consequently, the strategies did little to improve Thatcher's reputation in Scotland, although went some way towards brightening Glasgow's public image.

By the mid 1990s, the creative industries worked with economic development initiatives in a bid to form 'creative cities' and 'creative clusters' (Landry, 2000; Landry and Bianchini, 1995, cited in Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 142), a process by which the previously subsidised areas of arts and culture were merged with private development initiatives in order to ensure cities were seen as inherently creative, vibrant, dynamic, and worthy of continued investment. By the time that New Labour won the UK General Election in May 1997, it was clear that given the right spin, Glasgow had the potential to be marketed as one of the major cultural destinations of Europe. The urban redevelopment initiatives were consequently continued under Blair, when the nation's cities were promoted as tangible signs of the UK's diversity and creativity.

Defining exactly what the creative industries were however, proved to be difficult. In the late 1990s, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) produced a series of mapping documents which defined the sector (DCMS, 1998). By this definition, the creative industries included: advertising, architecture, art and antiques, crafts, design,

designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software, and television and radio. The common denominator of this disparate range of activities was their capacity to generate revenue through intellectual property rights (IPR). The DCMS's definition challenged conventional distinctions between art, commerce, and science, and recognised that other sectors, such as tourism, hospitality, heritage and museums, were able to contribute to and benefit from the growth of the creative industries. But the DCMS's definition of some areas and not others as 'creative' was enigmatic, and several scholars attempted to identify exactly what made these industries special. Chris Bilton (1999: 19-20) posited that the creative industries could rightly be regarded as unique because of the 'unusually risky' nature of investing in cultural production. It was difficult, even impossible, to determine the economic value of cultural products, and the process of cultural production was often highly dependent on 'individual subjective decisions and relationships'. In further work, Chris Bilton and Ruth Leary (2002: 50) argued that the mapping documents failed to explain what distinguished the creative industries from any other sectors. What made the creative industries unique, they suggested, was their relationship to their audience who played a role in 'decoding and finding value' in the production of symbolic goods. Mark Banks et al. (2002: 256) also argued that the DCMS's definition of the creative industries was problematic, if only insofar as it 'undermines the role creativity has in other industries'. Kate Oakley (2004: 72) warned that the classification risked 'blurring the distinction between what are, in fact, very different industries'. She noted that some areas (such as publishing or art) were high risk sectors which could be attributed to individual creativity, while others (e.g. designer fashion or architecture) were the result of considerable teams of people working together to 'translate an individual vision'. Stuart Cunningham (2004: 112-13) also concluded that the creative industries were 'intrinsically hybrid in their nature... at once cultural, service-based – both wholesale and retail – [research and development]-based and part of the volunteer community sector'.

The lack of agreed definition of the industries led to other problems. The conflating and complicating terminology, which saw various sectors classified as one or more of the cultural industries, creative industries, screen industries, media industries, film and/or television industries, made it difficult to measure the sector. John Hartley noted the problems with attempting to determine the efficacy of the industries given the lack of a coherent definition, arguing:

Creativity, content, IP and the "copyright industries" are increasingly significant sectors of developed economies, but are not fully mapped even at national levels.

Their growth, impact, international profile and future prospects are all poorly documented. (Hartley, 2004: 6)

Kate Oakley (2004: 69, 74-75) argued that any perceived economic value of creative products would be dependent on their cultural value – and the estimate of cultural value would be difficult to assess. David Hesmondhalgh (2007: 179) noted that the DCMS's inclusion of software in its definition of creative industries substantially helped to 'bolster figures' about the sector's economic performance. Even if it were possible to determine the economic value of a clearly defined sector, some commentators noted that to do so would be accepting the premise that the value of the creative industries lay primarily in their economic benefits, a strategy which threatened to ignore the value of culture *per se* (Galloway and Dunlop, 2007; Miller, 2004).

Despite concerns that the sector was poorly defined, and that consequently, hard data to support claims for the efficacy of the creative industries was hard to come by, the terminology became integrated into the Scottish Executive cultural policy framework (Bonnar Keenlyside, 2000: 10-12; Scottish Enterprise, 2000). By the mid 2000s, as Chapter 7 argues, the proposed merger of Scottish Screen and the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) as a single body, 'Creative Scotland', was a fully-fledged attempt to practice creative industries policy. Under one banner, the range of sectors were variously championed as prestigious and lucrative, could be harnessed for fostering social inclusion, and promoted as enabling urban regeneration. Above all, the creative industries implicitly endorsed the UK as a collective entity, envisioning a competitive nation which would progress through the expansion of its 'knowledge economy' (Schlesinger, 2007: 2). In short, they could be used in the pursuit of a national cultural agenda. However, the Scottish Executive's adoption of creative industries rhetoric ignored a key problem – that under the terms of the Scotland Act, broadcasting, the most popular cultural form and one of the most significant industries, was not a devolved matter. Consequently, the Executive was unable to conceive of a wholesale creative industries policy along the lines envisioned by the DCMS's strategy, which emphasised the importance of synergy between different sectors. The work now charts how this tension was evident in the formulation of a national cultural strategy.

## **The National Cultural Strategy**

The idea of a national cultural strategy developed through several guises over the first nine years of the devolved administration, beginning with the initial proposal, *Celebrating*



*Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 1999), which eventually mutated into the legislature as the Creative Scotland Bill (2008). This chapter explores the earlier part of this process, and the latter bill, still in progress at the time of writing, is discussed in Chapter 7.

The Executive launched its quest to develop a national cultural strategy only a month after the devolved administration had been established. The process began with the publication of *Celebrating Scotland*, a document which promised that arts and culture played ‘a central role in shaping a sense of community and civic pride in the new Scotland’ (Scottish Executive, 1999: 2). In this, Rhona Brankin (MSP), the Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport, called on the people of Scotland to contribute to developing a strategy which would promote and develop Scotland’s culture. In order to do this, the Executive organised a series of public meetings throughout Scotland, and invited written responses to the proposal. The consultation process and a review of cultural strategies in other countries were collated in a report by Bonnar Keenlyside (2000).

Even at this early stage, it was clear that the strategy faced three immediate problems. First, preliminary responses to the consultation noted a difficulty determining what was meant by ‘culture’ in the first instance, and then what made it distinctively ‘Scottish’. These fundamental issues – philosophical in scope – would dog the progress of the strategy, and continue to form a necessary part of the debate on cultural policy. Second, the initial document had aimed to encapsulate as broad a vision of ‘culture’ as possible, noting that:

Scotland’s culture belongs to all the people of Scotland. It belongs to anybody who creates, designs or performs: Scotland’s writers and painters, architects and craftworkers, musicians and composers, actors and dancers and, more recently, film directors and television producers. It also belongs to all of us who enjoy films and plays; who listen or dance to music of any kind; who go to a museum or an art gallery or a library; who visit Scotland’s many historic buildings or monuments, or appreciate its architecture. (Scottish Executive, 1999: 3)

Film and television were therefore unarguably established as central to Scottish culture – although under the devolved settlement, it would be difficult for the Executive to pursue any legislation in these areas. The third problem stemmed from this inclusive vision of culture. Incorporating film and television in the definition of Scottish culture morphed the cultural strategy into one which was essentially concerned with creative industries, rather than national culture. Consequently, the document looked forward to a strategy that could embrace the ‘new, exciting and economically important developments associated with Scotland’s creative industries’, and argued that,

Scotland's culture will play an important role in the nation's economic and social development... Scotland's culture can be the seedbed for new ideas and expressions of creativity that can form the foundations for the development of new artforms and creative industries. (Scottish Executive, 1999: 7-9)

Respondents to the consultation picked up on these problematic areas. The Bonnar Keenlyside report noted that several areas affecting the cultural life of Scotland were held under reserved powers, and that these areas could usefully be included in the strategy. In particular, specific issues in the film sector included the need for focused investment into funds and incentives, a commitment to building a sustainable infrastructure, and providing training and skills for the sector. It was felt that the strategy should commit to investing in a film school and studio, and that a Scottish Film Charter could build on links between film and television. The demands for the policy to address broadcasting were even more forthright, with respondents noting that access to terrestrial channels was problematic throughout the country, calling for quotas to raise levels of indigenous production, and noting that television could be more fruitfully used to promote Scotland abroad. The consultation stated the anomalies that existed in funding strategies for film, the arts and museums, pointing out that each sector funded different things, had different constitutions and played different roles, and suggesting that remits, responsibilities and relationships with UK bodies, specifically the National Lottery, DCMS and the Film Council, should be reviewed. Overwhelmingly respondents also argued that while culture could be used to deliver economic and social benefits, these should not override the 'intrinsic values of cultural and creative activity' (Bonnar Keenlyside, 2000: 20).

The strategy was formally established in 2000, with the publication of the first policy document, *Creating Our Future... Minding Our Past* (Scottish Executive, 2000a: 14). The report promised that full account had been taken of the consultation responses and that 'culture' would be referred to in its broadest sense. Once again, it made promises about the benefits of the creative industries – arguing that they contributed approximately £5 billion to the Scottish economy each year and estimating that 100,000 people were employed in the creative industries sector. Consequently, the policy made the support of the creative industries a key priority, stating that the Executive would work with the DCMS 'to assure the contribution of the broadcast media to Scotland's cultural life, to include plans to capitalise upon the opportunities afforded by developments in digital technologies'. These points, as well as repeated references to information and communication technologies (ICT), the Internet, and other digital media, made the document's lack of reference to film and television in Scotland's cultural life all the more noticeable.

The progress of the *National Cultural Strategy* was charted over the course of the next few years in the publication of three annual reports, all of which continued to disregard broadcasting.<sup>12</sup> The first annual report (Scottish Executive, 2001b) announced the Executive's intention to review Scottish Screen in order to ensure that it would provide maximum benefit to the creative industries. This review is discussed further in Chapter 5. The following year's report was slightly more dynamic in tone and format, although increasingly vague about strategy and direction. The estimates of the contribution of the creative industries in Scotland had changed since the strategy was announced, with the report still maintaining the economic contribution at £5 billion each year, but claiming that the sector provided employment for only 70,000 people, down 30,000 on the figure two years previously. The review promised that by 2004 a method would be established for assessing the contribution of the creative industries, cultural, and tourism sectors, to the Scottish economy (Scottish Executive, 2002a: 23). The final annual report returned to the theme of promoting Scottish identity that had been so integral to the creation of the Scottish Parliament four years previously (Paterson et al., 2004), but this time the emphasis was on a visible national identity to ensure that Scotland would be 'a "must visit" and "must return" tourism destination' (Scottish Executive, 2003: 9). As such, filmmaking was mentioned primarily in relation to the importance of Scotland as a location shoot. For the first time television was mentioned directly, as the report conceded that 'production for television has helped some companies to grow and expand into feature film production' (Scottish Executive, 2003: 23-24). Estimates of the contribution of the creative industries in Scotland had returned to the exact same figures as three years previously, with optimistic predictions that the following five years would bring further growth, an increase in exports and the creation of 2,000 new jobs. Reasons for this optimism were not provided.

A few days after the publication of the final annual report, First Minister Jack McConnell (2003) continued the effort to put Scottish culture at the forefront of the national agenda in his St Andrew's Day address. McConnell stressed that culture and talent were interlinked, that culture had a role to play in tackling health problems, anti-social behaviour, and in creating a confident and civic-minded community. In short, Scottish culture was championed as the fix-it for a vibrant and confident economy and nation, the single most important factor in creating 'a powerhouse of innovation'. McConnell's speech followed the publication of an *Audit of the Screen Industries in Scotland* (David Graham & Associates, 2003), which had reviewed the sector over a period of five years between 1997

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<sup>12</sup> Gaelic broadcasting, discussed further in Chapter 4, was the notable exception to this rule.

and 2001. The audit was straightforward in concluding that the lack of a channel or network commissioning department based in Scotland impeded the expansion of indigenous production and hampered the growth of a sustainable screen infrastructure. It was therefore notable that in his longest speech to date, McConnell made no reference to broadcasting and its role in Scottish culture. In a response to the First Minister's speech, the Scottish Executive announced that it would establish a Cultural Commission to investigate the institutional infrastructure of the creative industries, considering the relationships between institutions, public, private and voluntary sectors, and to 'consider the designation 'national' and how it might be more appropriately determined' (Scottish Executive, 2004: 18). Although a reserved matter, the Commission was explicitly charged with investigating broadcasting. In June 2005, the Cultural Commission report, *Our Next Major Enterprise*, began optimistically, claiming:

We stand on the verge of one of the most radical, and exciting, policy shifts in our lifetime. If the First Minister is supported in his aim of placing culture at the heart of government, Scotland will lead the world. (Cultural Commission, 2005: 13)

Although the main body of the report focused on the arts, an appendix put BBC Scotland at the heart of Scottish culture, and the Broadcasting Council for Scotland (BCS) at the heart of the BBC. But the report also acknowledged that while as an institution the BBC played a central role in Scottish culture, the structure of the television industry had not changed and as such, was 'not calibrated in line against the changes in Scottish society but in line with BBC corporate policies' (p. 323). The Cultural Commission explicitly noted that while the media and politics intersected in an important and meaningful way in the transmission of political affairs, it was nonetheless necessary to consider the implications of broadcasting and its impact on national culture more widely. The Commission noted the need to improve the talent and skills base, and called for more quality programmes, particularly drama, to serve the Scottish audience. Most radically, the report called for 'an element of devolution in broadcasting' (p. 326) and suggested establishing at least one channel in Scotland in order to increase the possibility of a strong indigenous television production industry. The Commission suggested that the Scottish Executive should continue to lobby for further commissioning to be based in Scotland and that it should explore the feasibility of using Scotland as a test bed for digital broadcasting.

While the process of the Cultural Commission was heralded and its findings received with some excitement, the publication of the Executive's response document, *Scotland's Culture* (Scottish Executive, 2006: 43), largely disregarded the Commission's suggestions. Although it had charged the Commission with investigating broadcasting, the Executive

concluded that, ‘broadcasting is a reserved matter and is the responsibility of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport’. The report made very little reference to television, film, or digital media and rejected outright the recommendations to establish a separate television channel in Scotland on the grounds of cost. Instead, the Executive concluded that resources were best allocated to ensuring the future of Gaelic broadcasting, increasing indigenous television production and ‘encouraging broadcasters to improve coverage of Scottish issues on existing channels’.

The Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill (2006) responding to the process of the Cultural Commission was published on 14 December 2006. The only reference it made to broadcasting was with regard to proposing a change in both Scottish and UK legislation which would allow Scottish local authorities to broadcast information to people in the local area about their services. Although the bill did not engage with broadcasting in a way that many had hoped, it did propose the establishment of a new body, ‘Creative Scotland’, to oversee the arts and screen industries. The agency was envisioned as a merger of Scottish Screen and the SAC, and is discussed further in Chapter 7.

## **Conclusion**

The first Executive was quick to pick up the baton of defining, developing and promoting Scottish culture. This remit, sanctioned by the Scotland Act, was conducted under the aegis of a New Labour focus on celebrating the difference and diversity inherent in British culture. The Executive’s development of a national cultural strategy would not be without its problems – too weak a definition of national culture would run the risk of negating the prominence of the new Parliament, while pursuing the doctrine of difference too strongly ran the risk of reinforcing the SNP agenda and jeopardising the alliance of Labour north and south of the border. Party allegiance should not, however, be seen as the sole, or even the most important factor, in making sense of Scottish cultural policy over this period. The development of the Executive’s cultural strategy must be contextualised in light of a simultaneous New Labour move away from focusing on cultural policy, in favour of creative industries policy. The Executive’s cultural policy framework drew heavily on the creative industries initiatives of the DCMS, but in the absence of film and television - key sectors in the creative industries rhetoric - this meant trying to establish a national cultural strategy without including a discussion of the most popular and influential cultural forms of the twentieth century. The Executive’s reluctance to discuss broadcasting significantly hampered the development of a coherent cultural policy over this period, and made it

difficult to acknowledge that film and television serve both cultural and economic functions.

These first chapters have highlighted some problems, tensions and disparities that run throughout this work. It is clear that policy is uneven even between film and television. This is in part because of the nature of the devolved settlement, but is also influenced by perceptions about what particular media are 'for'. It includes, for example, the perception that television programming plays a role in democracy, while feature film's function is one of entertainment. The chapters have established a link between the policies of the first Executive and its counterpart at Westminster – a harmony of party politics that seems to have affected the Executive's stance over this period. Before moving on to examine the effect of these changes on the two key screen institutions, the work now turns to an explanation of the research processes used and the reasons behind their application.

## Chapter 3. Methodology

The research was carried out using a variety of methods, sources and strategies. These included desk research of documentary, archival, policy documents and academic material, an analysis of three case studies chosen for the purposes of this study, and interviews with those involved in the film and television sector in Scotland. This chapter reflects on the processes used for this research and analyses the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.

The primary aim of the research was to explore the impact of the devolutionary process to date on creative industries policy in Scotland. As the Introduction noted, this single question opened up many areas of further enquiry, which necessitated an understanding of the processes of policy formation, an awareness of Scottish and UK policy, and an appreciation of the practice of creating film and television in Scotland. In order to engage with these questions a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods were chosen to enable an examination of the ‘multidimensional and complex processes and phenomena’ under investigation (Hansen et al., 1998: 2). A combination of desk research, case studies and interviews enabled data to be gathered, policy movements to be plotted and information cross-checked. Each of these methods is now explained in turn.

### Desk research

The starting point for this study was an extensive process of desk research. This included examining official papers and policy documents, think-tank output, academic publications, consultancy reports, internal memoranda, annual reports, briefing papers, research papers and histories. Although Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1998: 49) do not advocate extensive literature reviews of the field at the start of the study, arguing that ‘it is impossible to know prior to the investigation what the salient problems will be or what theoretical concepts will emerge,’ a preliminary investigation of the field was necessary in order to become familiar with the policy documents under enquiry and build up a foundation of knowledge for the study. This investigation continued as the work progressed. The constant review of documentary literature enabled a comprehensive analysis of discourses relating to the development of UK government and Scottish Executive policies on creativity. In addition other academic literature helped provide a context in which aspects of social and political histories could be seen as influencing, and being influenced by, public and policy debates. This research has been reviewed in the

preceding chapters, which contextualise the work to follow in a political, social and historical framework.

One of the immediate difficulties of policy research lies in defining what constitutes 'policy' in the first instance. This quandary has been noted by Anders Hansen et al. (1998: 67-68) who identify five key polemics facing policy researchers:

1. Policy is not a complete or coherent set of statements.
2. Policies may be invisible, or inaction itself may be indicative of a non-interventionist policy.
3. Policies may have unintended consequences.
4. Policies may be contradictory or incremental, dealing with some sectors and not others, and creating anomalies by straddling two or more areas of involvement.
5. Policies may contradict or be at odds with each other because two or more governmental departments may implement them.

The following text notes particular examples of where these problems were encountered during the course of this study.

There is no coherent package of ideas and strategies which comprises policy for film and television in Scotland. Instead, policy is formulated from a combination of legal Acts established by relevant Parliaments, institutional policies of BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen, the interventions of regulators such as Ofcom, and strategies of economic development pursued by relevant bodies, including Scottish Enterprise and the Glasgow Film Office (GFO). These agencies and their interventions in the film and television industries have made substantial contributions to the policy framework, but this list is by no means definitive and constitutes a fraction of the documentation under examination. In order to facilitate a coherent understanding of the subject under discussion it was necessary to take as wide a view of policy as possible, and this meant examining documents from a number of sources. Much of the information researched was in the public domain, including institutional annual reviews, reports and promotional literature. Research papers produced by and for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) also contributed to the study. Other



material was publicly available if not in the public domain. This includes the minutes of Scottish Screen board meetings from 1997 to 2007, which were made available by the Principal Investigator on the project who had served on the board of Scottish Screen from 1997 to 2005. Absences in these documents were supplemented by minutes provided by staff at Scottish Screen. These provided some indication of organisational decision-making but not a flawless or even necessarily reliable account. In his study of broadcasting in Scotland, Bill McDowell notes that the minutes consulted during the research,

... did not necessarily convey the tone of each meeting, act as an absolute guide to how individual members of [the Broadcasting Council for Scotland] were thinking, or outline matters discussed over working lunches. Moreover, the reasons behind all policy decisions were not always minuted. (McDowell, 1992: 100)

Similarly, the minutes consulted during the course of this study can be taken as indicative of general directions in policymaking. Absences in official minutes are particularly evident in the study of the film studio in Chapter 5.

The extent to which policies were invisible, or noticeably lacking, were particularly evident in two areas, examined further in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 notes that the lack of devolved control afforded to the Scottish Parliament for matters of broadcasting policy has been the subject of considerable attention. This lack of policy has, intentionally or otherwise, led to a great deal of debate on the role of broadcasting in Scottish culture, and these considerations underpin any study of BBC Scotland. In Chapter 5, Scottish Screen's pursuit of a national film studio appears to be driven largely by the belief of one individual rather than being an intentional policy of the screen agency as a whole. The chapter notes that Scottish Screen's involvement in the film studio had unintended consequences for its public image as well as affecting its financial involvement in other areas of the screen industries.

The extent to which policy consequences are intentional or otherwise is always difficult to ascertain. In the case of this research the interviews, discussed further below, allowed for further debate on how policies were interpreted and to whose benefit they were perceived to work. An example of this includes the position outlined in Chapter 5, where extra funding was allocated to BBC Scotland after devolution in order to improve its news and current affairs coverage. This funding revealed a gap in the provision of Scottish entertainment which led to *River City*, a series discussed in Chapter 6. While the interviews enabled some discussion over the consequences of particular policies, it is not

possible, given the precarious nature of policy itself, to acquire a definitive stance on whether or not these consequences were intentional.

Throughout the study it is evident that many of the policies for the creative industries dealt with some sectors and not with others, and nowhere is this more evident than in the devolved settlement discussed in the Introduction, which reserved some issues to Westminster and devolved others to Holyrood. Further problems arise with the anomalies created by those policies which attempt to meet both a cultural and an economic remit, as well as the blurring of boundaries between types of media that is an inevitable feature of communications research (Hansen et al., 1998: 67). These problems are compounded further with the addition of party politics pursuing particular agendas. Similar difficulties are presented with the implementation of policies by two or more governmental departments. For example, the DCMS and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) have collaborated on a number of policies discussed, despite pursuing quite different agendas. This situation is further complicated with the positioning of Scotland as a semi-autonomous nation within the UK.

As it is not possible for any policy research to avoid the problems outlined above, Hansen et al. (1998) suggest that research be structured in such a way as to take into account the relationship between policy regimes and growth and the implementation of policies. For this reason, although the main time frame of the study is 1999-2007, policy documents outwith this era have been examined in order to study the process of policy change and development, and to build up a picture of the wider context of film and television policy in Scotland. The need to do this is particularly evident in Chapter 5, where events preceding and following Scottish Screen's launch in 1997 are shown to have affected the agency's later development.

Because policy does not simply constitute formal documents, it was necessary for the research to take a broader view. By mapping historical media and monitoring contemporary news, I was able to explore how policies were formed, articulated, disputed and amended, and to examine the role of pressure groups, individuals, and other influencing factors in the policy debate. The archive of material that was built up from this desk research served as a basis for selecting interview participants and preparing for the interviews accordingly. An examination of the press revealed how policies, events and discourses evolved and slipped in and out of the public domain. Articles varied in form, from conventional news stories to editorials, features and letters, and this variation gave

further depth to the analysis, highlighting as it did the changes in prominence, attitudes and the role of individuals in shaping the policy debate.

An examination of contemporary news reports was facilitated by the use of Google news alerts which emailed links to news stories containing selected key words. These were: *Scottish Screen, BBC Scotland, Ofcom, Creative Scotland, UK Film Council, Scottish Enterprise, River City, public service broadcasting* and *Scottish Broadcasting Commission*. A search of historical press reports was enabled by the use of the electronic newspaper databases *Lexis Nexis* and *Newsbank*.<sup>13</sup> Both databases enabled an extensive database of global newspapers and online news sites to be searched. Further enquiries were made every month to the homepages of Ofcom, the DCMS, the BBC Audience Council for Scotland, the BBC Trust, the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive in order to monitor their publications, consultation documents and ongoing research. Quarterly checks were made to the homepage of the University of Central London (UCL) Constitution Unit to keep up to date with their devolution monitoring programme (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/research/devolution/devo-monitoring-programme.html>). Articles in academic journals were monitored through monthly electronic alerts from Oxford Journals, Sage, Informaworld and CSA Illumina.

### ***The strengths and weaknesses of desk research***

The use of electronic databases, Internet search engines and homepages has undoubtedly drastically reduced the amount of time that could previously be spent scouring newspapers, journals and academic papers for relevant articles. In addition the Freedom of Information legislation has made many documents publicly available via the Internet. These factors have facilitated the research process tremendously but neither are without their problems. The selection of keywords to search the current press was adequate, if imperfect. For example, the BBC Scotland news alerts would return all press releases issued by BBC Scotland, few of which were relevant to the study. Nonetheless there were still a relatively small number of articles returned on a daily basis which could be sifted for relevance quite easily. As this research project was only concerned with UK stories, the search engines used for the historical press reports were instructed to seek out only UK publications using particular search terms. Unlike the Google news alerts, the more advanced Boolean searching capacity of the electronic databases enabled very specific terms to be entered and so ensured that only relevant analytical data was found. Both databases included the four

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<sup>13</sup> In October 2007 the University of Glasgow library changed its subscription from *Lexis Nexis* (<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/professional/>) to *Newsbank* (<http://infoweb.newsbank.com>).

key Scottish newspapers, *The Herald* (and the *Sunday Herald*), *The Scotsman*, the *Press and Journal* and the *Courier*. As the news articles on both *Lexis Nexis* and *Newsbank* appeared in their textual form only, I was not able to note the positioning of news reports in newspapers and so could not determine the level of prominence given to particular stories. However, as the aim of the searches was essentially for fact-finding material rather than an analysis of the press items, this limitation was not particularly problematic. The main weakness of the desk research was also its greatest strength, that of the sheer wealth of available information. This included numerical and statistical data, analysis and comment, all of which could be overwhelming and often contradictory. It also rarely addressed how policy translated into creative practice. In order to overcome this, the desk research was supplemented by two further methods. Case studies enabled the 'great wealth of empirical materials' to paint a diverse picture of the sector (Hamel et al., 1993: 45), and interviews allowed a fuller articulation of ideas and working practices. This combination of methods enabled the interplay between interested parties and relationships between sectors to be examined in further detail, and it is to these methods that the work now turns.

## Case studies

At the core of this thesis is the examination of two institutions, BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen. As noted in the Introduction, these bodies were chosen by the provisions of the project research proposal. The companies have several comparable points but there are also distinct differences between them. Both are public bodies which are concerned with the creative industries, or the screen industries more specifically. As their names imply, both are national organisations, although as Chapters 4 and 5 identify, the extent to which their national remit is articulated is very different. The major difference between the two agencies lies in sheer scale. As an arm of Britain's largest public service broadcaster, BBC Scotland is a large organisation and a microcosm of a massive one, having a significant impact on film and television in Scotland, the Scottish cultural and creative economy, as well as bringing wider resonances as a national broadcaster. As a non-departmental public body (NDPB) serving the screen industries in Scotland, Scottish Screen is tiny in comparison. Despite this distinction, both bodies are large in comparison with much of the creative industries sector, where many companies are made up of individuals working alone or comprising a handful of people. As such, while neither institution is representative of the film and television sector in which they operate, both play a central role in disseminating policy through the broader culture that they inhabit. The study of these bodies also acknowledges that the organisation of creativity affects what is made and

provides a basis by which institutions can be studied as ‘social microcosms’ (Born, 2004: 67-68). In order to form a clearer understanding of the workings and interaction of these two institutions and their effect on individuals and media products, and to explore the interface between big organisations and creative personnel (‘creatives’), three ‘micro’ case studies were chosen. The following section outlines the choice of these case studies and the processes used to research them.

### ***Case study design and selection***

Initially, it was considered that each of the two institutional chapters on Scottish Screen and BBC Scotland would contain a micro case study. Over the course of the research it transpired that the complex and convergent nature of the film and television sector could best be explored through three case studies which would allow for greater scrutiny of the two main institutions under investigation. Two of these are studies of media products, the feature film *Red Road* and television soap opera *River City*, and one a study of an independent production company, The Comedy Unit. Given the small size of the screen industries in Scotland, it is difficult to conclude that any of the media products or companies examined in the case studies can be seen as entirely representative of other products or companies in the sector, and this inability to be representative has been one of the most frequently cited criticisms of the case study approach (Hamel et al., 1993: 23). However, Jonathan Grix (2004: 51) argues that the case study approach allows the researcher ‘to identify, uncover and unpick specific contextual factors in which the event, person or policy [being analysed] is embedded’, even though they may not be explanatory in the formal sense of the word as it is used by social scientists. In this research, the unique and specific nature of the cases contributes to the analysis rather than detracts from it, as outlined below. The work now turns toward a discussion of the motivation behind the selection of each case study.

#### ***Red Road***

The *Red Road* case study is predominantly descriptive (Grix, 2004: 50), giving a detailed account of the process of filmmaking in Scotland and a concrete example of the intervention and impact of Scottish Screen. In order to examine the nature of contemporary filmmaking in Scotland it was necessary to choose a film that had been in production during the course of the study’s timeframe. *Red Road* was chosen as a case study due to its high profile critical reception while the study was taking place, as it was hoped that this factor would mean that those involved in the film’s production were quite

willing to talk about the process of making it.<sup>14</sup> Although the work does not seek to conduct a textual analysis, it was an added advantage that the film had a distribution deal and was available for public viewing. The *Red Road* case study used four data sources for its analysis. These comprised news articles, figures obtained from the film's funders, notes and memoranda from Scottish Screen and GFO, and interviews with key people involved in the production and distribution of the film. As Chapter 6 demonstrates, the context of *Red Road*'s production was in some respects unusual, but the exploratory research into the case study, coupled with the interviews with filmmakers, confirmed that it would be difficult to determine such a thing as a 'usual' film production. The peculiar context of the film's production makes it hard to conclude that the specifics of this case study can be extrapolated to other cases of filmmaking, although there are clearly some general lessons which can be learnt from this exemplar. The case study provides a clear example of the basis on which funding decisions are made and agencies co-ordinated for a film's production, and highlights the use of the Scottish talent and skills base.

## The Comedy Unit

The case study of The Comedy Unit examines the growth of an independent production company in Scotland, exploring factors in its success, its positioning in relation to the larger institutions and other independent companies in the sector, and its relationship with BBC Scotland. Although The Comedy Unit can be seen as representative of other companies in the independent sector, there are factors which distinguish the company. These include the emergence of the two managing directors from previous roles at BBC Scotland, the genre specific nature of the firm's production, and the active pursuit of company growth by the directors (Preston, 2002). These factors, in particular the move of individuals from BBC Scotland to the independent sector, contributed to the choice of The Comedy Unit as a case study. The Comedy Unit case study used five data sources for its analysis. These comprised news articles, reports on the independent sector in Scotland, BBC Scotland annual reviews, reports and literature, academic writing on the independent sector, and interviews with key people involved in The Comedy Unit and BBC Scotland.

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<sup>14</sup> Another film which was considered as a case study was *The Flying Scotsman* (MacKinnon, 2006) which received a considerable amount of negative publicity in 2006 due to disputes over funding. In the end it was decided that these ongoing disputes would hamper the interview process.

## ***River City***

As a BBC Scotland in-house production, *River City* was chosen as a case study primarily because of its specificity as a programme. As Chapter 6 outlines, *River City* was produced by BBC Scotland as a direct result of funding allocated to the broadcaster in the light of devolution, and was always intended to serve a Scottish audience. Researching a programme made as entertainment fills a gap in the work of communication studies which are dominated by analyses of news and current affairs. David Hesmondhalgh argues that these works:

... can perhaps be fairly accused of treating entertainment as merely a *distraction*, a diversion from what [cultural studies] sees as the most desirable goal of mass communication, which is the activism of the concerned, rational, participatory citizen. (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 46)

As the only Scottish soap opera in production, *River City*'s specificity makes it difficult to imagine how findings from this study could be applied to other cases, but as Keith Punch (2000: 155-156) identifies, it is precisely the unique nature of the case that makes it worthy of research. The *River City* case study used five data sources for its analysis. These comprised news articles, BBC Scotland annual reviews, reports and literature, academic writing on the role of soap opera, interviews with key staff at BBC Scotland, and audience figures measured by the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB).

Together the case studies provided a useful structure for the complexities of the research process, enabling contemporary phenomenon to be explored in a real-life context by using multiple sources of evidence (Grix, 2004: 162; Yin, 2003: 13). The case studies and the desk research were enhanced by interviews with key people involved in the film and television sector, which enabled me to gather qualitative information regarding observations on and involvement with, film and television in Scotland. The work now turns to exploring the role of these interviews.

## **Interviews**

Formal interviews were carried out between April 2007 and July 2008. The overall aim of the interviews was to inform my knowledge on a number of topics relating to film and television policy, rather than to gather any 'hard' data in the form of statistics or questionnaires. For this reason, interviews were individually tailored, semi-structured and used open-ended questions. A full list of participants with their role at the time of

interview is reproduced in Appendix A. The work now examines the design of the interviews and explains how participants were selected for the study.

### ***Interview design***

The interviews were largely exploratory and were used to help interpret events, documents, policies and procedures. Where possible they sought to bridge the gap between policies as they existed on paper and their interpretation into creative practice. Broadly, the interviews asked for responses to the research questions. However, each one was tailored differently, enabling policy construction to be explored with elites, and creative practice with creative personnel such as producers and writers, who were often not familiar with specific policy documents. This enabled me to gain the broadest amount of information and allowed individuals to extrapolate on their particular level of knowledge. In a few instances, interviewees were aware of both policy and practice. The semi-structured format offered some consistency across interviews but gave respondents the opportunity to digress into individual feelings and beliefs (Denscombe, 2007; Robson, 2002). Questions were developed following discussions with academic supervisors.

### ***Interview selection and access***

The principal selection criteria for choosing who to interview were that respondents should be made up of a range of people working within the film and television sector, together with people who were able to supply a historical perspective on the development of film and television, both industrially and culturally, in Scotland. In total eighteen people were interviewed, with several follow-up emails and requests for further information. Generally respondents were happy to be involved with the research and few problems were encountered with elite interviews. Staff at both of the key institutions were relatively accessible as I was in close proximity to the majority of participants and able to use existing contacts within the establishments to facilitate the research process. Academic supervisors were involved in the nomination of interviewees and in the dissemination of information to potential participants. Selecting staff from within and outwith BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen provided a breadth of experience and opinion from a range of personnel, and it is notable that many of the interviewees had worked across the sector and in several of the institutions under discussion through the course of their careers. Their willingness to be involved can be attributed to a number of factors, including the particular conduct of interactions, and the small world that makes up the Scottish film and television sector. These factors are now considered in turn.



Interest in this study, the wider research project, and participants' desire to contribute to the work can firstly be attributed to the profile of the investigative team and their previous record of research at the Stirling Media Research Institute (SMRI), the Centre for Cultural Policy Research (CCPR), the British Film Institute (BFI), and The Research Centre (TRC). The academic profile of the team meant that doors were opened in the first instance, and that I was able to build on a base of contacts that had been established long before my research began.

In addition to the formal interviews, the research also benefits from informal conversations conducted at various events over the course of the project. Many people working in the media are more familiar and comfortable with 'networking' events, when they speak more freely than they might do in a more formal environment. The opportunity to talk with people in an environment in which they felt comfortable provided more information than may otherwise have been the case in an interview setting. It also allowed me to overcome some issues of access to people who might otherwise not have been available for a more formal interview. Because of the collaborative nature of this PhD research, I was also privy to the transcripts of interviews undertaken by colleagues at the CCPR involved in the wider research project. Although none of the latter conversations have been reproduced here they certainly contributed a good deal to my understanding of the issues under discussion.

The formal interviews were further enhanced by my involvement in a seminar programme over the early part of 2007. In March 2007, the project's Principal Investigator was approached by the SAC and requested to run a series of seminars in order to inform the thinking of the joint board of Creative Scotland, a body referred to in Chapter 5 and discussed more fully in Chapter 7. My participation in the seminars provided a rich source of knowledge in the area, both from the formal programme, networking and discussion that formed a part of the events, and the opportunity to experience at first hand the process of policymaking in action. In addition to hosting the seminars, the CCPR also produced a series of documents and working papers for the board and the information compiled for these constituted part of the fieldwork for this study and is referred to throughout the course of this work. The reports provided some useful data on how the creative industries were supported, and highlighted some methodological issues, as it proved very difficult to obtain robust information about specific expenditure on the creative industries from some organisations. It was apparent for example, that different institutions used different definitions of creative and cultural industries, that exact expenditure was difficult to quantify because of the operation of various partnerships, and that some organisations were

simply unable to identify the specific level of support they offered to the creative industries (Boyle et al., 2007). Similar problems with obtaining robust data are referred to throughout the work, and it is clear that this lack of information proves to be a fundamental problem for the sector more widely.

My involvement in these seminars also provided a useful way of forming contacts with key people in the creative sector. This was of great help in establishing trust and seeking out further conversations, as people who were at first slow to respond to requests for interviews warmed up as word got around about the project. In some instances, this seemed to be a response to knowing someone who had just been interviewed and wanting to have a chance to tell their own version of events. In other cases, the knowledge of the project's Principal Investigator's involvement instigated a favourable response. Still others were alumni of Glasgow or Stirling Universities and keen to contribute to studies being undertaken by these institutions.<sup>15</sup> As outlined in the previous chapter, the Scottish film and television sector is sufficiently small that there is a tendency for the same faces to turn up at the same events. Consequently, and unintentionally, some parts of this research were carried out in the role of participant observer. This was particularly the case for the examination of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission, discussed in Chapter 7. In the course of its enquiries, the Commission hosted a series of public seminars throughout Scotland, inviting people to join the discussion over the future of broadcasting. When I joined the Stirling seminar in April 2008, I was surprised to find that only seven other people were in attendance, and the micro-meeting put paid to my plans of keeping quiet and taking notes. My reflections on this meeting, which indicate some concerns about the Commission's methodology, are provided in Appendix B.

There were however, a few people who did not respond to requests for interviews. This was particularly so in the case study of *Red Road*, where requests for interviews with representatives of Sigma and Zentropa were refused or ignored. Ironically this lack of response may have been due to the positive critical reception of the film which ensured that it became the focus of much academic attention. The film's director Andrea Arnold did consent to email questions but did not eventually respond. Although it was frustrating to be denied access to some people who may have contributed to the study, any qualitative research inevitably reaches a point where it can only represent the voices of those who are prepared to be part of it.

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<sup>15</sup> The creativity project was applied for in 2004 and began in January 2006, at the University of Stirling. In January 2007 the Principal Investigator became the Academic Director of the Centre for Cultural Policy Research at the University of Glasgow. The project and my research transferred there with effect from that date.

Interviews with elite staff at BBC Scotland proved relatively easy to access, but data was much more difficult to obtain. Over ten months of the research, numerous requests were made to BBC Scotland for viewing figures for *River City*, which are collated weekly at the BBC, but only one set of data were eventually forthcoming. Phone calls to BBC Scotland were directed straight through to the central BBC information desk, where I was directed to BARB on the grounds that the BBC held no statistical information. Although the central information desk is based in Glasgow, staff there appeared to have little knowledge of the workings of BBC Scotland.<sup>16</sup> Phone calls and emails directed toward specific staff at BBC Scotland were ignored, or I was (erroneously) advised that people would get back to me. Similar problems were encountered with obtaining data on tracking talent at *River City*. This lack of response was surprising, as in an interview, the Controller of BBC Scotland suggested that asking for the viewing figures and talent statistics of *River City* would ‘inspire us to capture [data] better than we probably have captured it’ (Controller, BBC Scotland, 2007). BBC Scotland’s reluctance to release this information, and the uncharacteristically recalcitrant response from staff, initially suggested that the institution was far from being as transparent as it would like to appear. Over time, it became clear that talent was not being tracked at BBC Scotland, which explains the lack of data for that, if not for the viewing figures. This anomaly is discussed further in the case study of *River City* in Chapter 6. BBC Scotland’s unwillingness to release audience viewing figures did not eventually impact on the methodology used, as I was able to obtain the BARB statistics for *River City* through another source.

### ***Ethics and anonymity***

The nature of this thesis and the wider research project was explained to all interviewees prior to gaining access. Respondents were given an outline of the research, and signed a consent form on which they could state their preference as to whether or not they were cited. Where consent was given, interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder and lasted approximately one hour, and where requested, comments were treated as off-the-record or confidential. Verbatim transcripts were produced to ensure that none of the data was lost during the process of collection. The process of digitally recording conversations minimised background noise and greatly helped with the transcription of the interviews and confidential storing of information. On a few occasions where people were not available to be interviewed in person, telephone interviews were conducted, or questions

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<sup>16</sup> For example, I was advised three times by this service that BBC Scotland did not produce a separate annual review.

responded to via email. Some excerpts of interviews with people who were willing to be quoted are reproduced in this study.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the research methodology for this thesis, which used a combination of desk research, case studies and interviews in order to conduct an analysis of creative industries policy and creative practice. It has discussed the rationale behind the variety of approaches used for the study, outlined the research design, described the selection of the case studies and explained the process of interviewing. Each of the methods and modes of analysis discussed here have their strengths and weaknesses. Running throughout this work is an awareness that policies are not created within a vacuum, nor do they exist as static entities. Even if it were possible to ascertain what a particular policy is and where it existed as a single document, policies are not static but evolve and are adapted by specific individuals and institutions.

The preceding chapters provide a historical, social and political frame of reference in which to locate the contemporary policy discussions. The following chapters turn to an examination of the two key media institutions under enquiry, BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen.

## Chapter 4. BBC Scotland

So far, the thesis has outlined the socio-political context leading up to devolution, explored the context in which film and television exist in Scotland, charted movements in Scottish cultural and creative industries policy and explained the methodologies used in this research. This chapter now turns to an examination of the nation's key media institution, BBC Scotland, and explores the policies specific to television programming and production in the UK's nations and regions.

The work begins by placing BBC Scotland in its historical context. It examines the level of autonomy BBC Scotland has as an institution, and explores its importance to and relevance for audiences in Scotland. The chapter notes a history of antagonism between BBC Scotland and the BBC in London, a positioning which reflects the complexities of Scotland *vis a vis* the UK. The work examines how policies for the UK's nations and regions have attempted to increase indigenous production, and suggests that concerns over national identity have found a voice in debates over whether Scotland should have its own hourly news broadcast. It then moves on to an exploration of BBC Scotland within the wider creative economy of the nation. This includes examining its funding, programme output, and the process of commissioning.

### A history of the BBC in Scotland

In 1927, the establishment of the BBC as a corporation under Royal Charter accorded it a special status as one of the UK's nationalised industries. As a public body, the BBC did not need to make a profit in order to ensure its survival, but did need to perform a public service. The principles of PSB, established by the Sykes Committee (1923), required the broadcaster to support programming and production in the UK's nations and regions. In addition, the BBC was required to support independent production companies (indies), and in so doing, develop a healthy and vibrant production and broadcasting service which was well adapted to reflect the UK in all its diversity. As argued in Chapter 1, the BBC would thus 'reflect the nation as one man'. In order to achieve the maximum broadcast coverage, the BBC placed eight broadcast stations throughout Britain, and one of these was in Glasgow. From the outset though, it was clear that the BBC was a single operation - run, controlled, managed and financed from its London base (Scannell and Cardiff, 1991). For the first Director-General John Reith, arguments for retaining the BBC's activity in London stressed the economic benefits of operating from a central hub: a strong foundation

acting as a nucleus from which the standards and values of public service broadcasting could be maintained. However, the assumption that a London based company could adequately meet the needs of the UK was challenged from the outset.

In Scotland, as Chapter 1 noted, early audience reaction to the BBC was influenced by a poor quality or absence of radio and television transmission, dearth of regional accents, metro-centric bias, and a more general perception, often allied to political beliefs, that the BBC was 'not Scottish'.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, although the BBC was a significant regional employer, there was nonetheless a growing perception that for it to increase its relevance, it would necessarily have to devolve a level of administrative, managerial and financial control away from its London base. Calls for a greater devolution of power in the BBC came from both within and outside the corporation. The BBC argued that a reliance on London sourced programming made it impossible for any region<sup>18</sup> to operate independently as an effective self-contained broadcasting organisation. The Beveridge Committee (1951) recommended that broadcasters in the nations be given greater fiscal autonomy, and the UK government concurred that the devolution of broadcasting policy in the BBC was 'inadequate', although recommended that responsibility for the corporation's financing should remain in London (McDowell, 1992: 70-79). Despite this recognition, over the 1950s, the interests of the nations and regions were temporarily appeased by the establishment of the ITV franchises as a federal system under the Television Act 1954. The introduction of commercial television via regional franchises gave the ITV companies a head-start in being affiliated with the regions, a contrast to the BBC's role as a UK national broadcaster. Over the course of the 1960s competition from ITV, and the establishment of BBC2, contributed to a rush of more innovative programming than had been the case previously. This new environment saw *Coronation Street* (Granada, 1960-date) becoming quickly recognisable as the 'regional working-class soap' (Born, 2004: 38). In the 1970s, a combination of socio-political and technological changes posed further challenges for the BBC in Scotland. Strengthened calls for political devolution were mirrored with calls for a greater level of control over broadcasting. Both the Crawford Committee (1974) and the Annan Committee (1977) proposed changes for BBC Scotland in the event of a Scottish Assembly being formed, and Radio Scotland began

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<sup>17</sup> In their study of attitudes to the media in Scotland, Richard Kiely et al. found that 'Britishness' was often seen as synonymous with 'Englishness'. KIELY, R., MCCRONE, D. & BECHHOFFER, F. (2006) 'Reading between the lines: national identity and attitudes to the media in Scotland', *Nations and Nationalism*, 12(3), pp. 473-492. This presents a rather fundamental problem of definition for the BBC.

<sup>18</sup> BBC London used the term 'region' as an 'administrative convenience' MCDOWELL, W.H. (1992) *The History of BBC Broadcasting in Scotland 1923-1983*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

broadcasting in anticipation of the same. But by the late 1970s, the failure of the referendum on devolution resulted in a loss of impetus in calls for greater broadcasting autonomy. By this time it had become clear that attitudes toward the most desirable level of devolution in broadcasting were not consistent even within the BBC.

The establishment of Channel 4 in 1982 as a publisher-broadcaster catalysed indie production and renewed innovative programming (Brown, 2008). In the same year, the recommendations of the Hunt Committee (1982) ensured the expansion of cable and satellite broadcasting. The growth of cable and later, satellite broadcasting, posed further questions over the role, function and purpose of PSB. The Reithian model of PSB was based on the premise of broadcasting scarcity, in which a handful of providers aimed to bestow upon their captive audience all the best that was on offer. Cable and satellite allowed audiences to choose from a greater range of service providers, and so re-situated audiences as consumers of media, with consequent implications for funding television as a public service. Deliberations over how best to fund the BBC against the backdrop of these new technological advancements fell to the Peacock Committee (1986), which stressed the power of consumer choice over and above a state-centred approach. The Peacock report resulted in a series of BBC staff cuts and efficiency drives that would become a frequent feature of the broadcast landscape through the remainder of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Further moves toward promoting a market economy in broadcasting were evident in legislation over the 1990s, where Broadcasting Acts (1990, 1996) aimed to reform the sector through a process of deregulation and increased private finance. This thrust toward stimulating business efficiency in broadcasting was unpopular with many inside the prevailing Conservative government as well as those in the opposition parties (Crisell, 1999: 65). Over the course of the 1990s, the two Acts became more generally accepted for heralding a greater expansion of choice in the market, although the wider range of available services was nonetheless seen as an instigating factor in 'dumbing down' television content on both the commercial and public service channels.

Inside the BBC, similarly market-driven policies were realised most profoundly with the introduction of 'Producer Choice' in 1993. This policy required that BBC producers choose between BBC suppliers and the outside market for their facilities, effectively introducing an internal marketplace into the public corporation. This initiative, coupled with 'Extending Choice' (1992), in which the BBC sought to offer a range of programmes that commercially funded broadcasters would not provide, helped secure a new Royal Charter in 1996. The savings made under Producer Choice helped the corporation to streamline its costs and invest in new digital technologies, but had a negative impact on

staff at the BBC (Harvey, 2002). By this time, most households had more than one television set and a proliferation of channels were available from terrestrial, cable and satellite broadcasters. By the end of the decade, television and telecommunications were increasingly convergent, produced and distributed by multi-national global conglomerates (Bignell, 2004: 36). And by the turn of the millennium, the BBC had launched BBC News 24, BBC Online, interactive television services, and had plans underway for digital channels BBC3 and BBC4. The corporation's success in these new delivery formats was contiguous with further debates over the role, funding and functions of PSB, which saw the BBC under constant pressure to justify its licence fee in the face of fragmenting audiences and media plenty (Ellis, 2000b). Mammoth technological changes had changed expectations of television, altered viewing habits, and provided competition for audiences. Changing policies under the Thatcher administration had undermined the concept of state provision and replaced it with an emphasis on the marketplace, a situation which was not transformed by the incoming New Labour government. Finally, changes in the structure and governance of British society were felt from the top-down and bottom-up, as the UK received increasing direction and jurisdiction from Europe, and the UK's smaller nations were devolved.

## **Autonomy and audiences**

As the Scottish arm of the UK's largest single service broadcaster, BBC Scotland is a real and imagined site of tensions between reserved and devolved powers and negotiations between nation and state. BBC Scotland is not a devolved institution, and the changes in UK governance in 1999 resulted in no changes to the structure or independence of the corporation. This lack of autonomy has led to continuing difficulties between the BBC in London and BBC Scotland which add to the documented disputes between the two arms of the one institution (Geraghty and Goode, 2004; Hetherington, 1992; McDowell, 1992). Both industrial and personal histories of the BBC make it clear that conflicts over structures, funding, and regulation were, and remain, commonplace. In some instances, personal disputes between key individuals have spilled into the political arena and affected policy debate and decisions (Schlesinger, 1998; 2000a; 2004; 2005; Schlesinger et al., 2001). The lack of autonomy that BBC Scotland has, coupled with the specificities of the broadcast landscape outlined in Chapter 1, have impacted on audience perceptions of the institution. While it has become accepted wisdom to suggest that the BBC is a well-regarded and valued enterprise (Kuhn, 1985), BBC Scotland has never enjoyed the same audiences or approval ratings that the BBC has in the rest of the UK. As a UK broadcaster



the BBC espoused a 'particular view of the nation-state' which did little to reflect the cultural and regional diversity of the country as a whole (Creeber, 2004: 30). Although BBC Scotland has repeatedly stated that adequately reflecting Scotland is a key aim of the organisation, it is widely speculated that in a digital age, commercial narrowcasting may be better placed to reflect cultural specificities more comprehensively than a traditional model of public service broadcasting (Creeber, 2004: 32; Hartley, 1999: 88). The centralisation of broadcasting outlined in Chapter 1, which has impacted on local economies and audiences, has resulted in calls for the public service broadcasters to fulfil their remit by extending production into the UK's nations and regions. This section outlines key policies and movements in this respect.

### ***Nations and regions policy***

In 1982 the establishment of Channel 4, with a remit to broadcast programmes made only by indies, paved the way for encouraging production outside of London. Competition from the new channel instigated a response from the BBC, which began making its first real foray into meeting its non-metropolitan commitments in the early 1990s. In 1992, 80 per cent of the BBC's programmes were being made in London and south-east England (Birt, 2003: 312), and dispersing genres across the nations and regions in an attempt to counter metro-centric attitudes formed the focus of the Hatch Report (1993), which stipulated that 33 per cent of all network production must originate from the BBC's bases across the UK. This initiative went some way toward providing a higher profile for the BBC's nations and regions centres over the 1990s, and a further boost arrived for Scotland toward the end of the decade when Channel 4 established its nations and regions base in Glasgow. After devolution, *A New Future for Communications* (2000) reiterated the need for public service broadcasting to maintain its regional and cultural plurality. In insisting that broadcasters look to independent companies outwith London to source their programming, the bill created further opportunities for growth in the nations and regions.

The calls for greater decentralisation of broadcasting were also evident in the findings of a report by the Independent Television Commission (ITC) into television in the nations and regions (ITC, 2002). The ITC examined the role that television played in the culture, democracy and economy of the UK, noting a need for more relevant regional news and examining the problem of how to develop and retain talent in the nations and regions against the pull from London. In response, ITV promised that in excess of 50 per cent of its total investment would fund productions made wholly or substantially outside the M25, and that at least 90 per cent of its dedicated regional programmes would be produced in the

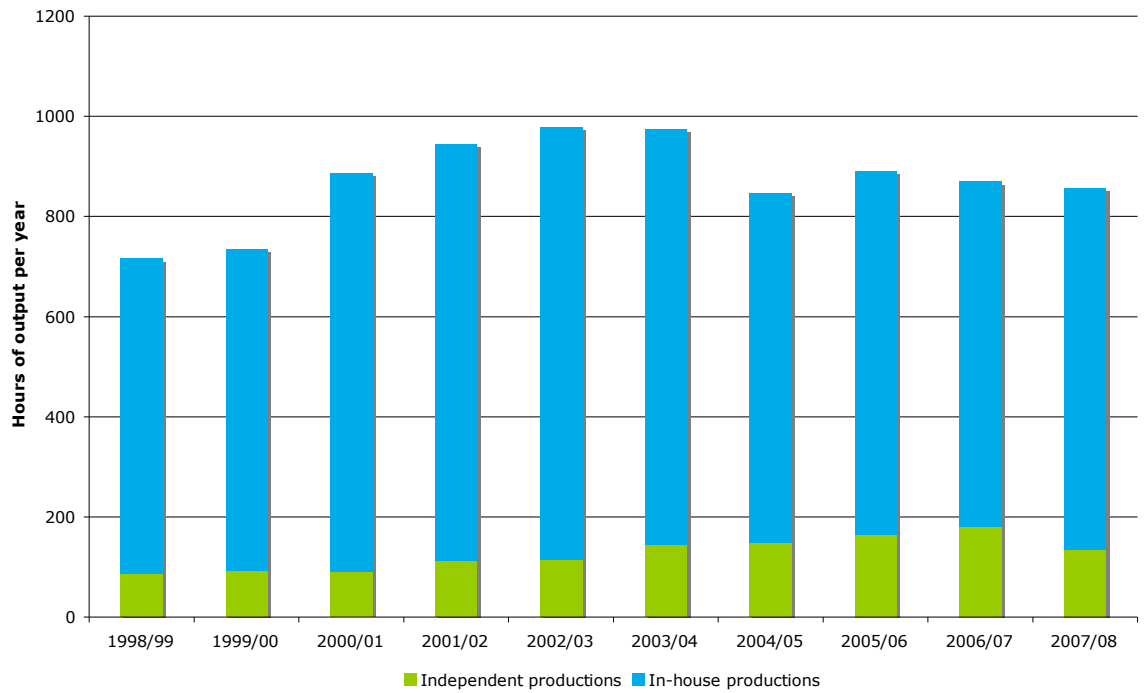
region for which they were commissioned (ITV Network Limited, 2002, cited in ITC, 2002: 11).<sup>19</sup> BBC Director-General Greg Dyke also vowed to improve production in the BBC's nations and regions (BBC, 2002). In 2003, the Communications Act further pushed production out into the whole of the UK, requiring that 95 per cent of regional programmes be made in and for the nations and regions and charging new regulator Ofcom with policing these targets. This quota did not apply to the BBC, which instead worked to an 'agreement' established in consultations between the corporation and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. This stipulated that BBC1 and BBC2 should provide just over 126 hours of dedicated programming per week (Ofcom, 2004b: 21). In accordance with the Act, Ofcom immediately began the first stage of its three-phase review into PSB, a rolling process which was to be repeated every five years. The review examined the extent to which the terrestrial channels provided programmes and services which fulfilled the purposes of public service broadcasting in the UK, aiming to make recommendations on maintaining and strengthening the quality of PSB television in the future (Ofcom, 2004b).

Ofcom's data collection indicates the extent to which nations and regions policy has been effective. In 2003/04, 31 per cent of the BBC's produced hours were made outside London, accounting for 33 per cent of network production spend (Ofcom, 2005a: 45). Despite this, the terrestrial broadcasters produced very little peak time output in the nations (Ofcom, 2004d: 28), with Scotland contributing 2 per cent and Wales just 1 per cent of peak time network hours in 2003 (Ofcom, 2004b: 38). In the same year, BBC Scotland's non-news output exceeded 50 per cent of its total regional broadcast hours and BBC channels delivered in excess of their agreed nations and regions target (Ofcom, 2004d: 22, 26). This situation contributed to Ofcom's conclusion that the UK nations fared better than the English regions for programming and expenditure (Ofcom, 2004b: 5). In 2005, Phase 3 of the PSB review (Ofcom, 2005d) focused specifically on the nations, and proposed a minimum hourly requirement for nations programmes of 5.5 hours per week of news and current affairs, and 4 hours per week of non-news programming across Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (Ofcom, 2005b: 3). Despite attempts at bolstering output and assurances about expenditure, BBC non-network hours in Scotland steadily decreased from 992 hours in 2002 to 921 hours in 2006 (Figure 1).

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<sup>19</sup> Dedicated programming refers to programmes made specifically for the nations and regions.

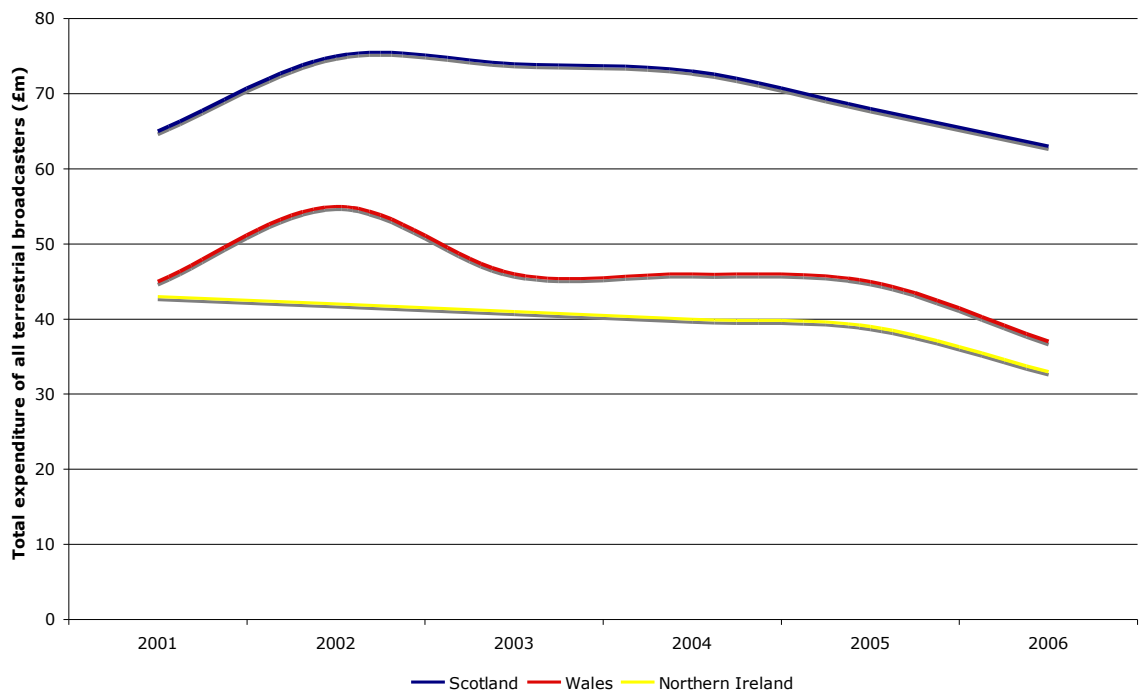
**Figure 1 BBC non-network output in Scotland**



Source: Ofcom (2007b:87)

This reduction was paralleled by a more general decline in nations and regions expenditure across all the broadcasters (Figure 2).

**Figure 2 All broadcasters' spend on nations and regions output, 2002-2008**



Source: Ofcom (2007d: 70)

In *Building Public Value* (BBC, 2005: 75) the BBC committed itself to increasing network production in the nations and regions by 50 per cent. But despite the assurances that more

opportunities would be available outside London, there were increasing concerns that the English regions were outrunning the nations, particularly as the BBC had announced the move of several of its key genres to a new regional base in MediaCity:UK, Salford, in a move welcomed by Ofcom (2005a) as a real attempt to push production into the nations and regions. Ofcom noted that the nations were under-represented on the network but held that voluntary targets remained preferable to quotas (Ofcom, 2005b: 5), a stance which had traditionally been supported by independent producers who feared that quotas might result in a lowering of standards and the ghettoisation of Scottish producers (MacPherson, 1991). In 2005, Ofcom required ITV to increase its level of provision of network production from outside London to 50 per cent, and consulted with the BBC about increasing its out of London quota to the same figure (Ofcom, 2005a: 92). The following year, BBC Scotland devoted £21 million to news and current affairs broadcasting and double this figure (£42 million) to 'other' programming for the nation (Ofcom, 2007d: 72). This high expenditure in non-news and current affairs, particularly in producing dramas such as *River City* (discussed further in Chapter 6) meant that the cost of programme production for Scottish viewers became more than double the production price of that for the UK audience – £12.50 per head in 2006, compared with a UK wide average of £5.40 (Ofcom, 2007e: 8). By 2007, dispiriting figures released by Ofcom once again showed a decline in investment in Scotland across all the broadcasters, with nations and regions spend and hours of production being dominated by the English regions (Ofcom, 2007d: 83-85). The north of England was particularly benefiting – possibly a result of increased confidence in the sector following the BBC's announcement of the move to Salford. The poor results politicised the debate and the incoming SNP government announced their intention to establish an independent Scottish Broadcasting Commission. This is discussed further in Chapter 7.

In establishing Ofcom and creating continual reviews of PSB, the UK government effectively created a system for data collection on television production and audiences. This reveals that policies for the nations and regions have so far had minimal impact in Scotland, which contributes relatively little output to network production. In Chapter 7, it is noted that this data provides a crucial function in measuring the sector and instigating plans for future policy developments. However, for most people, nations and regions policies can be difficult to understand. The terminology for television production outside the M25 is variously referred to as regional, dedicated, out of London (OOL), or national and regional, and many of the policies are reliant on statistics and numerical data. It is not immediately clear to the casual observer who polices policy, and what the difference is between targets and quotas. In short, nations and regions policies indicate a good deal

about television production in the UK, but do not make good copy. For this reason, these concrete strategies to improve Scotland's television infrastructure and increase its visibility on the network rarely make the headlines, and a far greater amount of public attention is focused instead on a single programme. Since devolution, antagonism between BBC Scotland and the BBC, and audience perceptions of and attitudes toward BBC Scotland, have best been exemplified in disputes over whether Scotland should opt-out of the BBC *Six O'Clock News* bulletin. The following section outlines these arguments.

### ***The Scottish Six***

In Scotland, the early evening news has become much more than just a scheduling challenge. The question of whether Scots should be provided with UK and international news from studios in London or from Glasgow has made the programme into a national totem of either the link with, and dependence on, London, or the confidence that Scottish-based news executives can edit a news service to match the requirements of a Scottish audience. (Fraser, 2002)

The 'Scottish Six' has become the shorthand for a key debate in the Scottish media, that is, whether Scotland should have its own six o'clock news bulletin, produced by BBC Scotland and broadcast from Glasgow. Although proposals to establish distinctive news coverage for Scotland had been mooted since the late 1970s, the moves toward establishing a Scottish Six gathered in strength as devolution approached and reached a crescendo in 1998. The complexities of people, politics and policy involved in the Six at that time have been covered in detail by Philip Schlesinger et al. (2001: 39-49). In Scotland, the arguments over whether a Scottish Six is necessary and what its implications might be resurface regularly, although the issue receives little comment south of the border. This section outlines the mainframe of the arguments and explores developments since 2001.

Schlesinger et al. detail how the news bulletins of the late 1990s, made up of the network *Six O'Clock News* broadcast followed by half an hour of *Reporting Scotland*, were unpopular with television audiences and BBC staff. The promise of devolution had set up demands over how best to report the UK, which would from 1999 have three capital cities. It had also allowed the BBC in the nations to pitch for additional resources in order to cover news and current affairs. It was recognised in the BBC that London needed to be more sensitive to devolution, and that the heads of news in the nations could benefit from the major BBC News facilities. Consequently in 1998 BBC Scotland, under the control of John McCormick, had drawn up plans for a Scottish version of the *Six O'Clock News*. Digital technology made it possible for Glasgow to access and edit UK and international footage and present news 'from a Scottish perspective' - a process which BBC Scotland

was already doing very successfully with the flagship radio broadcast *Good Morning Scotland*, a programme which consistently drew larger audiences than Radio Four's *Today* programme. The idea of a Scottish Six received considerable support from politicians in all the major parties, journalists, and audience consumer groups (Smith, 1999). Those who felt that a Scottish Six was necessary pointed to the jarring effect of news bulletins which simply did not fit the Scottish experience (Kiely et al., 2006: 481-488), where stories relating to items such as cricket or education were Anglocentric in nature.<sup>20</sup> The most heartfelt support for the Six came from the Broadcasting Council for Scotland (BCS), whose chairman Norman Drummond was the sole Scottish governor of the BBC. Those against the Six argued that like it or not, the English audience made up the largest proportion of licence fee payers, and would be 'bored to tears' by stories originating from the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly (Wells and Hardie, 1998). Other voices argued that a Scottish based news service would be parochial, a retreat into 'a world of introspective media coverage' which failed to recognise the complexities of Scotland's positioning in the UK and the relationship of Holyrood to Westminster (Wilson, 2008: 247). Still others pointed out that any quest for a Scottish Six might soon be overtaken by technological changes - why bother creating a Scottish based half hour of news, when digital television could offer Scotland-specific news 24 hours a day? Towards the end of 1998, it became clear that BBC Scotland's plans for the Six met with resistance from BBC Governors, who made it known that they opposed the idea. There were widespread reports that the newly installed Labour administration was pressurising the BBC not to commit to a news plan which would allow Nationalist leader Alex Salmond too high a status in Scotland (Fraser, 2002). Against this backdrop of political difference and rising confidence in national status, the news broadcast became the subject of political and public dispute, helped along by the influential and partisan national press, with the Edinburgh-based *Scotsman* particularly vociferous in its calls for a Scottish Six. By December, it was clear that BBC management had little intention of considering the Six despite the recommendations of the BCS, and they eventually rejected the campaign. BCS member Professor Lindsay Paterson resigned in protest, and by 1999 the Scottish Six story temporarily ran out of steam. BBC Director-General John Birt announced £10 million in

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<sup>20</sup> Perceptions over 'national' sports are clearly subject to change. In June 2008, First Minister Alex Salmond rallied against BBC Scotland for failing to broadcast a Scotland versus England cricket match, claiming, 'It's an important sporting event in Scotland, and TV and radio should be rising to the occasion... It should certainly be shown, given the widespread and growing interest in the game in Scotland'. GORDON, T. (2008) 'Alex Salmond says BBC move "not cricket"', *Sunday Times*, 22 June. Here, it is clear that sport is often a 'substitute for political nationalism in modern Scotland' JARVIE, G. & WALKER, G. (1994) *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation: Ninety Minute Patriots?*, Leicester: Leicester University Press. It is the site where the relations between England and Scotland are imperfectly mediated and national identities reinforced. BLAIN, N., BOYLE, R. & O'DONNELL, H. (1993) *Sport and National Identity in the European Media*, Leicester: Leicester University Press.

extra funding for BBC Scotland to improve its news and current affairs coverage, which included the creation of *Newsnight Scotland* and three Holyrood programmes each week.<sup>21</sup> The new version of the *Six O'Clock News*, fronted by Huw Edwards, began broadcasting in May 1999. This saw the main news headlines being read out, a switch to the national and regional studios for an overview of the headlines from that area, followed by the main news broadcast, before half an hour of *Reporting Scotland*. The cash boost, the new evening news format and *Newsnight Scotland* were largely viewed as consolation prizes: token gestures which failed to realise the potent totemic value that a Six would have for the Scottish audience and for BBC Scotland (McNair, 2008; Smith, 1999; Wells and Hardie, 1998). Schlesinger et al.'s (2001) analysis of this incident points to a lack of efficacy in the BCS as a lobbying pressure group. They argue that the BCS's support for the Scottish Six was effectively overruled - if it was considered at all - by senior management in London, who were working closely with the New Labour Cabinet to ensure that the Six would not come into fruition. This account was later confirmed in the publication of John Birt's autobiography (2003: 479-483), in which he admitted approaching several senior politicians, including the Lord Chancellor and Prime Minister, in order to join forces and fight against the proposed Scottish Six. Birt viewed the quest as 'a bitter battle to prevent the BBC being split apart by the fissiparous forces of devolution', arguing that a separate news bulletin would result in 'dire consequences for the BBC, and unintended consequences for the United Kingdom'.

By the turn of the millennium, increased Scottish autonomy ensured that the dream of a Scottish Six would not be quashed. Investigations both north and south of the border examined whether news and current affairs broadcasting was adequately serving the UK. The BBC quietly reconsidered the Six in May 2000 (Schlesinger et al., 2001). In 2001, the Scottish Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons (2001) examined the effects of devolution on news and current affairs. In response, the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) reported that media attention was focused increasingly on the workings of Holyrood, sometimes at the expense of Westminster (Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2002) – a state of affairs noticed by media audiences (Kiely et al., 2006: 489). In June 2003, after the Holyrood elections, BBC Scotland revisited the question of a Scottish Six in a six-month review of its news and current affairs output (BBC, 2003). By the time that this was published in December, the alliance of Greg Dyke as BBC Director-General and John McCormick as Controller, BBC Scotland, made the Scottish Six look set to be a winner. Dyke had made promising inroads into supporting the

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<sup>21</sup> *Newsnight Scotland* begins broadcasting thirty minutes into the *Newsnight* bulletin, with twenty minutes of Scottish current affairs.

nations and regions, and given public assurances that there would be no repeat of the political interventions sought by Birt (Sunday Herald, 2002). McCormick was a known supporter of the Scottish Six. Despite this, the BBC review found insufficient public support for the idea, with 38 per cent of the 1000 people surveyed saying they were interested in the Scottish Six, while 45 per cent favoured the *status quo*. The Scottish Consumer Council (2004) opened its own debate on the Scottish Six in March 2004, with the publication of a report into consumer satisfaction with BBC news reporting. Although the Scottish Consumer Council concluded that there was a 'large minority' who were not happy with the situation, the survey was not so definitive. 51 per cent of the 916 people asked were quite or very satisfied with the current situation of broadcast news, while responses to another question framed favourably toward the Scottish Six found 69 per cent in favour of changing the situation as it stood. Perhaps more importantly, the survey also found that respondents in the lower socio-economic groups felt generally less well-served by the BBC. A report by Ofcom (2005d) a year later found significant demand for a Scottish news service, although by this time changes at the BBC (outlined in the Introduction) had resulted in a different management structure in both London and Glasgow. In 2008, the prospect of a Six was revisited yet again following the publication of a BBC Trust review of impartiality in news and current affairs coverage in the UK's nations (King, 2008). This is outlined in Chapter 7.

Debates over the Scottish Six are indicative of the critical role that BBC Scotland plays in uniting and distinguishing Scottish and British national identities. While the statistical complexities of nations and regions policy reveal much about indigenous production, the Scottish Six debate has proved to be a more readily identifiable point of concern over the state of broadcasting in Scotland. It is easy to form an immediate opinion on whether a Scottish Six is necessary and justifiable, and similarly simple to harness the Scottish Six arguments for political ends by rehearsing well-known tropes on the role of news and current affairs broadcasting in a democracy. The Nationalist arguments for a Scottish Six, and John Birt's concerns over separatism, point to wider concerns about the role and function of BBC Scotland in a devolved nation.

The attempts to establish a Scottish Six in the late 1990s were thwarted, and this is often framed as the 'fault' of London management. But Schlesinger et al. (2001: 40-41) note that opposition to the Six existed both within and outside BBC Scotland. The Glasgow branch of the corporation was undergoing its modernisation programme, and with a proposed expensive move to new premises at Pacific Quay (discussed further below), senior management felt little inclination to antagonise the London staff.



Finally, it is important to note that at least for the Scottish press, the Scottish Six is regarded as a BBC issue, in which the *Six O'Clock News* broadcast has a 'talismatic status' (Schlesinger et al., 2001: 261). The debate is often framed as an example of how the corporation fails to serve the Scottish licence fee payer. This is of enormous consequence for the BBC, and particularly for BBC Scotland, which has its lack of autonomy highlighted as a result. In June 2008, the announcement that STV would opt-out of the network broadcasts at 5.30pm from 2009 in order to provide an 'hour of news for Scotland each weekday' was received almost without comment in the Scottish press (Edinburgh Evening News, 2008). Despite the highly public debates over the Scottish Six, the audience for the BBC's evening news bulletins have remained remarkably constant since devolution - although due to the strength of the indigenous press, fewer people in Scotland (than the UK) use television as their main source for local news (Ofcom, 2008b: 45-46). The concern that devolving any powers over broadcasting will 'lead inevitably to separatism and the collapse of the union' (Schlesinger, 2005: 222) has been a recurring feature of discourses on media ownership and regulation in Scotland, and the Scottish Six debate predictably re-surfaced with some vigour after the May 2007 elections resulted in a minority SNP government. With the SNP at the helm, the Scottish Six issue was re-opened almost immediately, with First Minister Alex Salmond giving his unequivocal support to the idea, and establishing the Scottish Broadcasting Commission (Salmond, 2007). These developments are explored further in Chapter 7.

Although the Scottish Six was not realised, by the time the Scottish Parliament assumed full powers in July 1999, BBC Scotland had already made plans to reflect the new constitutional structure of the UK. The first *Newsnight Scotland* was broadcast in October that year, although as noted above, the programme was seen as something of a compromise, having been agreed when the campaign for the Scottish Six was eventually turned down. Further improvements in news and current affairs, drama, and entertainment for a Scottish audience, were achieved through extra funding allocated in 2000 which, argued former Director-General Greg Dyke, allowed BBC Scotland to become 'a serious and well-respected player within the BBC' (Dyke, 2004: 195-196). The impact of some of these changes are discussed further in the case studies of *The Comedy Unit* and *River City* in Chapter 6.

Scottish devolution also offered the opportunity to discuss what devolved broadcasting might mean beyond a Scottish Six. But as already noted, the first Executive was very reluctant to mention the subject at all. Consequently, as Philip Schlesinger (2005: 227) has argued, much discussion prior to 2007 was left in the hands of major interest groups.

Invariably, these arguments assumed a political standpoint, with those opposed to greater devolution in broadcasting falling back on the argument that a more devolved structure would inevitably lead to parochialism and ‘kailyard broadcasting’ (Brown, 2007).<sup>22</sup> This position reveals much about a lack of confidence in the Scottish sector, and is often couched in pro-unionist terms which assume that devolved broadcasting necessarily means a Scottish, rather than a British Broadcasting Corporation. The arguments for greater autonomy in broadcasting are similarly politically tainted, and it is no accident that press coverage of the debates on broadcasting reached a zenith following the narrowly-fought Scottish elections of May 2007. But this tendency for discussions to be framed as Unionist or Nationalist, has minimised the complexity of the arguments. The Labour/LibDem administration that made up the Scottish Executive until 2007 were unwilling to engage in any examinations of devolved broadcasting on the basis that as an area reserved to Westminster it was best left off the policy agenda. The validity of this stance was disputed (Hamilton and Scullion, 2002; Schlesinger, 2005) and concerns over the hands-off approach to discussion was often evident at public meetings on the state of broadcasting in Scotland. Since 2007, debates on the most appropriate and desirable level of devolution of broadcasting in Scotland have begun to be heard more widely (Schlesinger, 2008a). These broadly acknowledge two areas. First, the problematic history between BBC Scotland and BBC London outlined above, in which it must be acknowledged that BBC Scotland’s lack of autonomy no longer reflects the state of the nation. Second, relatively few programmes commissioned by BBC Scotland are broadcast on network television, and this situation has been exacerbated, not alleviated, by devolution. This has cultural implications when Scottish stories are absent or distorted, and economic effects, when Scotland is unable to build a sustainable film and television infrastructure. Before considering the latter point – BBC Scotland’s role in the creative economy of the nation - it is worth briefly noting some aspects of Gaelic broadcasting. While a full analysis of this is outwith the scope of this thesis, the case of Gaelic serves to highlight the intractability of broadcasting from that of national culture more widely.

### ***A note on Gaelic broadcasting***

There is a general appreciation of Gaelic’s role in Scotland, as the strongest signifier of Scottish difference. For many Scots, a Scotland without Gaelic would not only be

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<sup>22</sup> Cairns Craig argues: ‘The kailyard is established as the primary image of Scottish experience, a world concerned only with its own cabbage patch... and unaware of the parochial absurdity with which it will be viewed by the outside world.’ CRAIG, C. (1982) ‘Myths against history: tartanry and kailyard in 19th century Scottish literature’, in McArthur, C. (ed.) *Scotch Reels*, London: BFI Publishing, pp. 7-15.

culturally poorer, but would also be a less distinct place, with a less distinct identity. (Cormack, 2008: 217).

The first Executive's reluctance to discuss broadcasting, a reserved issue, is a recurring theme in this work. But it is not true to say that broadcasting was entirely disregarded, as the period witnessed significant changes in the provision of Gaelic services.

In the Gaelic language, Scottish culture has a visible identity, although not one which is representative of the majority of Scots. Gaelic speakers constitute approximately 65,000 people in a national population of just over five million, and Gaels, making up approximately one per cent of the population, number far fewer than the (largely overlooked) English migrant population (Watson, 2003). The Gaelic language is predominantly spoken only in the Highlands and Islands. The majority language of Scotland – English - needs no definition, while the indigenous language – Scots - is largely invisible in media policy and representations (Corbett, 2008). Under the terms of the Scotland Act, Gaelic, like culture, was designated a devolved matter. The inclusion of Gaelic as a devolved issue, and the Executive's acceptance that broadcasting should be utilised to protect and promote the language, highlights the disjointed policy settlement that results from the Act. Gaelic broadcasting consequently exemplifies the difficulties of determining the boundaries between cultural and communications policy (Schlesinger, 2008b).

Gaelic broadcasting has always existed on radio and television, with the BBC being the central provider of these services (Cormack, 1993). In 1989, the Thatcher government agreed funds of £8 million (later increased to £9.5 million) in order to set up the Gaelic Television Fund. STV's bid for the renewal of its franchise in 1991 committed it to 200 hours of Gaelic language programming, out of which Gaelic soap *Machair* (STV, 1993-1998) was born (O'Donnell, 1999: 202). But the lack of common use of Gaelic, at least outside a small geographic area, leads to some immediate problems for PSB. How to justify expenditure from the public purse for so small an audience? Should Gaelic programmes be broadcast in Gaelic or English, with or without subtitles? Is Gaelic culture different from Scottish culture, or is the distinction purely a linguistic one? In short, just what is the relationship between the Gaeltacht and Scotland? Perhaps in response to these dilemmas, provision of Gaelic services and discussions of Gaelic culture are frequently framed within the discourse of European rather than British identity. This framing acknowledges that the more 'natural' trade routes of the north and west of Scotland are to continental northern Europe rather than south of the border in the UK. BBC Scotland's

current affairs programme, *Eòrpa*, firmly situates the Gaeltacht as part of Europe, and the programme provides much cause for reflection over what might constitute 'ideal' Scottish broadcasting (Blain and Hutchison, 2008).

Both the UK and Scottish governments have supported Gaelic broadcasting (Scottish Executive, 2000b; 2006), consequently the Executive has developed an 'embryonic Scottish broadcasting policy' (Schlesinger, 2008b: 45). This recognises that broadcasting has a role to play in the sustenance of Gaelic culture, and that the provision of these services would not be met by the market. In January 2008, the BBC Trust authorised plans for BBC Scotland and the GMS (later known as MG ALBA) to launch a Gaelic Digital Service (GDS), co-funded by the BBC Executive and the GMS, with content deriving from in-house and independent production. The channel would be available on Sky, Freesat and Virgin Media, but not on the most popular digital system, Freeview, until 2010, by which time the BBC Trust would have re-evaluated the station. The channel, referred to on-screen as BBC ALBA, was launched on 19 September 2008 (Holyrood Today News, 2008). It has an annual budget of £14 million and sets out a daily schedule broadcast from 5-11pm. On its launch, Alan Esslemont, Head of Content for MG ALBA, set out the channel's intention to capture an audience of around 250,000. Esslemont claimed that the development of a continuing series would play a crucial role in achieving this goal, stating: 'our aim is to develop a long form drama, basically a soap centred in a Gaelic-speaking area.' (Miller, 2008)

The establishment of a Gaelic channel opens opportunities and poses problems for broadcasting in Scotland more generally. On the one hand, the provision of Gaelic demonstrates that it is not beyond the wit of the Executive and UK governments to formulate a joint media policy. The support of Gaelic through broadcasting clearly serves a public service remit and contributes to the process of nation-building. On the other hand, the emergence of Gaelic broadcasting also highlights a fissure in ideas of Scottishness, where the provision of broadcasting for this tiny population within Scotland must surely throw doubt on the provision of a Scottish channel, discussed further in Chapter 7.

## **The creative economy**

One of the most significant ways in which BBC Scotland is important to Scotland is the role it plays in sustaining the national creative economy. The broadcaster is the largest single contributor to the creative industries in Scotland, spending £106 million on television production alone in 2006 (Boyle et al., 2007). This far outstrips any other bodies

subsidising the arts or enterprise initiatives supporting the creative industries. Establishing a sound infrastructure is one of the key factors in sustaining a film and television industry in Scotland, by which a secure base provides production facilities, attracts inward investment, and functions as a hub around which other creative facilities congregate. In 2007, BBC Scotland's move to a new base at Pacific Quay was an attempt to create such a cluster. The following section begins with an exploration of Pacific Quay, and moves on to examining the contribution that BBC Scotland makes to funding and commissioning programmes.

### ***Pacific Quay***

In 1998, it was clear that BBC Scotland had outgrown its premises at Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow, and the BBC Governors decided on a move to a custom-made building. The chosen site for the move was Pacific Quay, a redevelopment of Glasgow's docklands area once known as Prince's Dock. The area had undergone a series of developments since the early 1980s, and had been explored in the late 1990s as a possible placement for a national film studio – a process which is discussed further in the following chapter. Although Pacific Quay did not eventually materialise as a site for a film studio, it has become the most significant media hub in Scotland.

Prince's Dock, an area of nearly 100 acres, once serviced the thriving shipbuilding industry on the River Clyde, but closed in the 1970s with the diminution of the heavy industries. Following some redevelopment in the early 1980s, the area staged the Glasgow Garden Festival in 1988, the first of several urban regeneration initiatives which later saw Glasgow named as the European City of Culture (1990) and City of Architecture (1999). In the early 1990s, Pacific Quay was acquired by Scottish Enterprise with the intention of creating a mixed business and leisure park, and since that time the site has attracted the interest of a number of other parties keen to invest in the mixed development regeneration of the entire area. This is made up of offices, hotels, residential accommodation, retail units, and leisure facilities. Glasgow Science Centre was built on the site in June 2001, and the Clyde Arc (more widely referred to as the 'Squinty Bridge') linked Pacific Quay with the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre across the Clyde in September 2006. Although the potential for the redevelopment of the docklands was realised in the 1980s, it was only in July 1999, when BBC Scotland announced its intention to relocate there, that the area became the definite focus for the creation of a media hub. SMG and Setanta stated their plans to follow suit. Channel 4 was initially expected to move its nations and regions base from its premises in Glasgow city centre, but eventually concluded that there was

little need for it to be closer to production units.<sup>23</sup> SMG was the first broadcaster to relocate its staff from its previous base at Cowcaddens, Glasgow, to the site in summer 2006, and BBC Scotland's move commenced in earnest in April 2007. Its lease on the imposing building designed by David Chipperfield Architects (Figure 3), extends until 2034. Seventeen of the 24 Scottish independent television production companies are based within a five mile radius of Pacific Quay (David Graham & Associates, 2003: 40), although the high cost of rent has dissuaded smaller media units from establishing bases there. Many of the smaller firms that are unable to afford premises on site have established a home nearby in Film City Glasgow. This development is discussed in Chapter 5.

**Figure 3 The BBC Scotland building at Pacific Quay**

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (LZW) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

*Source: <http://www.bdonline.co.uk/Pictures/web/r/w/k/BBCScotlandEDITED.jpg>*

Pacific Quay was envisioned as a 'creative cluster' which would build on Glasgow's recognised status as a creative city, evidenced by its ability to secure multiple redevelopment awards. These initiatives were associated with the work of the Comedia consultancy group (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 142), which produced *Glasgow: The Creative City and its Cultural Economy* – a particularly influential document directing the cultural industries strategy of Glasgow City Council in the 1990s. Comedia argued that the development of a creative cluster in Glasgow would act as a key to further urban

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<sup>23</sup> Channel 4 will review the situation in 2011.

regeneration. The push for Pacific Quay as a media hub was intended to secure the economic growth of the area, with Fiona Hamill, Director of Creative Industries at Scottish Enterprise, referring to Pacific Quay as ‘an important strategic development in Glasgow’s regeneration’ (Pennington, 2006).

The Pacific Quay development was promoted by BBC Scotland as resulting from a period of natural organic growth where the institution simply outgrew its old premises. Senior staff argued that working in Queen Margaret Drive was effectively leading to a ‘silo mentality, where people worked away in closed offices and closed areas’, and that the move to Pacific Quay would result in ‘greater opportunity for synergies, for meetings, for collaborations’ (Head of Public Policy and Corporate Affairs, BBC Scotland, 2007). The site provided a huge visible presence for the BBC in Glasgow, where the building’s transparent exterior and open-plan interior design were emblematic of the post-Hutton accountability of the BBC. Staff at the corporation were keen to stress that it was a creative, non-hierarchical space which was open and accessible to the public, ‘like a high-tech library’. Much of this ethos derived from the Comedia report, which had argued for the creation of a media hub in Glasgow which ‘should have the feel of a film and TV centre and club, and pervade an atmosphere where people feel they can drop in to browse’ (Landry, 1991: 143).

BBC Scotland’s move to Pacific Quay came at a cost of over £188 million, which covered the move, build, fit-out, and associated staff training for the new technologies in the building. As noted in the above section on the Scottish Six, this funding was negotiated between senior staff at BBC Scotland and in London. Pacific Quay offered hi-tech digital facilities integrated across all delivery channels, as well as the largest television recording studio in Scotland. These facilities were seen as essential resources to enable BBC Scotland to grow and compete in a digital age. Media commentators noted that these technologies improved news gathering and collation, and made possible satellite link-ups with domestic and foreign correspondents which could be ‘transmitted simultaneously, if necessary, on different programmes or channels’ (Macwhirter, 2007a). In short, the production facilities available at Pacific Quay were argued to be the perfect resources to facilitate a Scottish Six.

Pacific Quay was officially opened by the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, on 20 September 2007. In an opening speech, BBC Director-General Mark Thompson (2007) committed the corporation to raising network deliveries from Scotland to just under nine per cent in line with its proportion of the UK population, although promised that this

should be regarded as ‘a floor rather than any kind of ceiling’. Thompson’s goal was warmly, if warily, received by industry insiders. The public perception of the opening night was somewhat cooler, as the 6.30pm news bulletin, *Reporting Scotland*, was made inaudible by the sound of partying backstage. There have been some teething problems with the technology at Pacific Quay, and while these have sometimes been embarrassingly obvious, they generally appear to be proportionate with those that could be anticipated by any large organisational move. Other concerns have been raised about the differences between the building’s image and the reality of working in, and with, BBC Scotland. Many BBC staff were positive about Pacific Quay. Others, inside and outside the corporation, referred to the building itself as remarkable, but one which is in a position which is difficult to access and lacks any contact with the outside world. These remarks raised questions over the legitimacy of claims that Pacific Quay had made the BBC more accessible. One interviewee referred to the building as ‘a fantastic twenty-first century digital monastery... the rest of us are serfs outside the monastery walls with an allotment’, and noted that, ‘it’s emblematic that they used to be at the end of Glasgow’s most vibrant road, the Byres Road, and now they’ve got their own street inside where they’re just even more inward-looking’ (Producer, 2008). Consequently, Pacific Quay’s effectiveness as a media cluster has been disputed, and there is further research to be done before clustering can be determined to be an effective strategy (Pratt, 2004 in Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 143). Work specific to the film and television industry in Scotland suggests that its dependence on London-based commissioners and channels means that it simply does not function as a creative cluster (Turok, 2003). In addition, the digital facilities available in places like Pacific Quay and MediaCity:UK are challenging the need for proximal working habits. The impact of changing working practices is discussed further in Chapter 6. Finally, while the cost of establishing Pacific Quay was seen by some as indicative of a real commitment to broadcasting in Scotland, others feared that it was a symbolic gesture which has done little to improve the film and television infrastructure. These concerns were summarised by screen industries consultant Mike Kidd:

There's a view that the Scots have had their slice of the cake... The phrase going around the BBC after it was agreed to build the new state-of-the-art studios in Pacific Quay in Glasgow was that “Scotland is sorted.” (Vass, 2007d)

Pacific Quay may not have sorted Scotland’s infrastructure, but it certainly established significant technical facilities north of the border. Consequently, while McDowell’s (1992) history of Scottish broadcasting argues that a lack of resources, autonomy and finance consistently put BBC Scotland at a disadvantage to London, since 2007 it is no longer possible to blame minimal industrial growth to deficient resources. The work now



turns to the latter point, with an examination of BBC Scotland's commissioning and funding practices.

### ***Commissioning and funding***

The process of centralisation at the BBC outlined earlier has been mirrored in the metro-centric positioning of network commissioners. BBC Scotland has never had a network commissioner on site, and in order to be reflected UK wide, Scottish producers need to attract the attention of network commissioners who were until recently wholly based in London. This situation has affected BBC in-house production and the independent sector.

Julie Light (2004: 73) identifies three purposes of commissioning. The first role is to examine the quality of a programme, its possible audience, and its place in a schedule. The second is to monitor and ensure compliance with internal and external quotas, and the third to manage budgets and resources. The role of the commissioner is therefore seen as a powerful one, in which producers are required to come up with creative ideas for innovative programming which meets the requirements, preferences, and whims of commissioning editors (Preston, 2002). To date, a central argument on broadcasting in Scotland says that the nation is not adequately reflected on UK television because nobody at BBC Scotland has the role of sourcing programmes for the network. The lack of network presence in Scotland results in a downward spiral, where minimal opportunities for producers to meet and establish relationships with a network commissioner result in fewer opportunities to get a network show commissioned, which means less visibility on the network, hence less willingness for network commissioners to source productions from 'unknown' Scottish producers, and so on. In Chapter 6, the case study of The Comedy Unit further examines the relationship between the indies and BBC Scotland. Here, a brief recent history of the broadcasting sector in Scotland illustrates how some of the debates on commissioning have come to the fore.

Calls for more network commissions from Scotland grew alongside calls for a greater level of devolution in broadcasting, and were evident in the submissions to the Annan Committee (McDowell, 1992: 223-235). Over the course of the 1980s, the growth of the independent sector was met with moves by the BBC to more adequately reflect the whole of the UK. The new BBC policies aimed to increase the amount of network output from the nations and regions and build sustainable network production bases out of London. The argument that a commissioning presence at BBC Scotland would necessarily result in a greater number of network commissions is well founded, and relies on research

suggesting that relationships with commissioners are the key to getting work produced (Preston, 2002; The Research Centre, 2003). Managing Director, SMG TV Productions, Elizabeth Partyka (2006) sees network productions as the only real way of growing and retaining talent, while the audit of the screen industries in Scotland also noted,

A commissioning operation brings many benefits, both to producers, from regular access to buyers and distributors, and to the local infrastructure and skills base, since commissioning departments employ the kind of senior managers and top talent that now tend to migrate to London. (David Graham & Associates, 2003: 89)

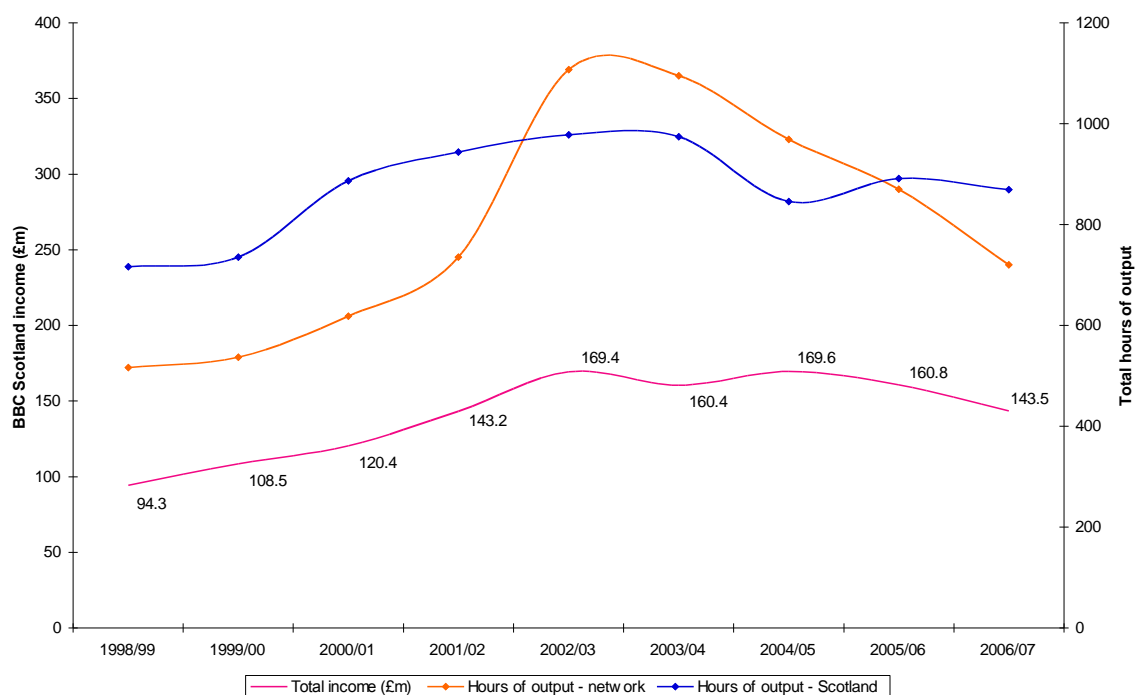
However, in practice this equation is not quite so simple. The move towards a broadcasting marketplace has resulted in pressure on commissioners, and so pressure on producers, to come up with programmes that will attract a large audience, but larger audiences may mean losing a distinctively Scottish voice on network television and consequent worries about the homogenisation of culture. There have equally been some concerns raised that a network commissioner based at Pacific Quay might give in-house producers an advantage over the independent sector. In 2004, Ofcom required the corporation,

... to demonstrate that it has clear plans to introduce a commissioning system, outside news programming, which has fair access for independent suppliers and which commands widespread confidence across the sector. (Ofcom, 2004c: 9)

In response, *Building Public Value* (BBC, 2005) committed the BBC to locating 20 per cent of the value of its commissioning decisions outside of London over the course of its next Charter, although prior to 2008 there was no corporate policy to move a commissioner to Scotland. Attempts to base a commissioner at BBC Scotland have not been successful, with the lure of London proving too enticing a media hub for ambitious commissioning talent to move further north. By 2007, the number of networked productions from Scotland remained so small that the Scottish Broadcasting Commission was launched in order to investigate it further. In the same year, the BBC appointed a dedicated regional commissioner whose success was measured on the amount of network commissions they achieved from the regions. As a further symbolic gesture, the commissioner was based in the BBC's new outpost at MediaCity:UK, but this has resulted in a catch-22 situation for Scottish indies. While the commissioner is closer to Scotland, producers travelling to London can make appointments with other London-based commissioners. Travelling to Manchester from Glasgow takes just as long, costs just as much, and offers no opportunities to meet commissioners from other channels.

The amount of production sourced from Scotland is also reliant on funds available at the BBC, where the assumption is that more money results in more programmes being made, and the greater the quantity of programmes, the more chance producers have of reflecting Scotland in all its diversity. While it might be assumed that BBC Scotland's income would increase incrementally every year, this is not the case, as Figure 4 shows. The corporation's income for television and radio increased and reached a peak in the financial year 2004/05, but has dropped since that time.

**Figure 4 BBC Scotland's income and output hours**



Over the financial year 2001/02 to 2002/03, a significant rise in the number of network hours broadcast was attributable in part to the concurrent productions of *Monarch of the Glen*, *Two Thousand Acres of Sky* (BBC, 2001-2003), *Tinsel Town*, *Chewin' the Fat* (BBC, 1999-date) and *Raven* (BBC, 2002-date). Since that time, the hours of output for both network and Scottish programming have been on a downward trajectory that far exceeds that of the comparably minor, but substantial, drop in BBC Scotland's income. Network productions have significantly fallen.

Two further illustrations indicate the effect that BBC Scotland's income has on the creative sector of which it is a cornerstone. Independent producers, discussed further in Chapter 6, look to BBC Scotland as a major source of their commissions. However, Figure 5 shows that independent productions for broadcast in Scotland have consistently grown since 2000/01, with particularly notable increases in 2001 and 2003. The decline in BBC

Scotland's income since 2004/05 does however, correlate with a drop in the number of in-house productions broadcast in Scotland.

**Figure 5 BBC Scotland's income and output for Scotland**

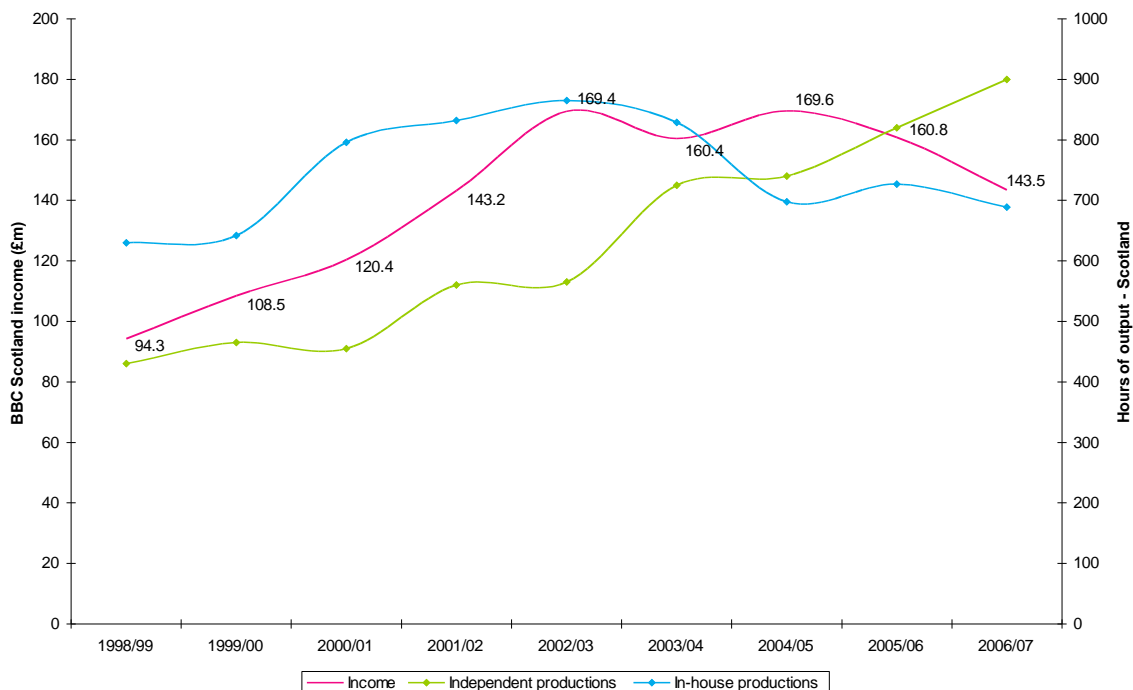
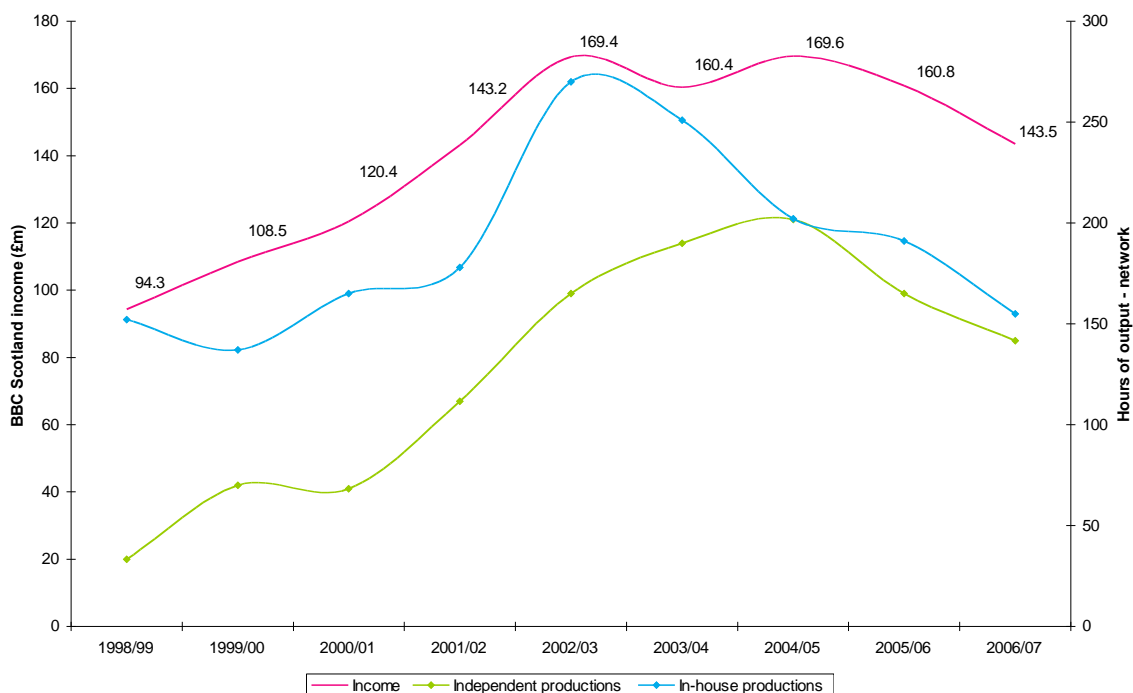


Figure 6 shows a different picture for network productions, where both in-house and independent productions are in decline.

**Figure 6 BBC Scotland's income and output for network broadcast**



It is too simplistic to draw a direct correlation between BBC Scotland's fall in income and the number of programmes made for broadcast, although this clearly affects both the quality and the amount of shows produced. It does appear that the broadcaster's income more immediately affects in-house productions than those of the indies, to the extent that in 2007, Scottish producers employed within the BBC had only three more hours of airtime on network television than they did prior to devolution.

How to explain the dramatic drop in network commissions? The Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT, 2008: 3) laid the blame on a number of factors: metro-centric commissioning practices, a lack of commitment by broadcasters to create sustainable industrial bases in the nations and regions, and the inherently risky and expensive process of attracting and retaining talent. The Scottish Broadcasting Commission (2008d: 41) (discussed in Chapter 7) similarly argued that the centralisation of broadcasting in and around London resulted in minimal opportunity for Scottish producers to engage with network commissioners. All of these things are true, yet as they have always been the case, none individually quite explains why Scotland should have been so dramatically affected. In combination, they have currently placed Scottish broadcasting in an adverse position.

## Conclusion

Since devolution, BBC Scotland's lack of autonomy has often been read as an attack on the nation, where the corporation's reliance on London results in an enfeebled national institution which is unable to achieve full growth. Nationalists argue that this maturity can only be achieved by an independent institution, but independence should not be seen as the natural or inevitable result of BBC Scotland's expansion.

This chapter noted that the news and current affairs output of BBC Scotland has been a source of frustration for many within and outside the corporation, where the lack of a Scottish Six has become emblematic of a lack of autonomy at BBC Scotland. The public debates over the Six have frequently obscured wider debates about the role that broadcasting plays in everyday life in Scotland. The chapter has argued that the early years of devolution brought little structural change to BBC Scotland; this lack of modification was at odds with the increased political autonomy of the nation. In 2007, devolution resulted in intergovernmental conflict and the smaller nations of the UK began to pull further apart from Westminster. The effects of this process on broadcasting are considered in Chapter 7.

Despite BBC Scotland's significant contribution to the creative industries in Scotland, the institution is perceived by many to take a disproportionately small role in the growth and sustenance of the film and television industries and the cultural life of the nation. Simple equations are proposed which argue that Scotland makes up just under nine per cent of the population and so BBC Scotland should contribute the same percentage of programmes to the UK network. This proposition relies on an overly simplistic notion of Scotland as a geographical territory, which does little to reflect the reality of communications media. It also suggests that Scotland has a 'national right' to network commissions – a situation which has been contested by producers within and outside Scotland, anxious to prove their worth on merit alone. National rights also pose problems for the UK - what national rights does England have in the BBC, and are these adequately served by the London hub, or by the London-Salford thoroughfare? Furthermore, the proposal that Scotland's population should be equated to its media output can be reversed - Scotland contributes 8.6 per cent of the licence fee, but receives considerably more than this in return. It is clear that the simple equations proposed are rarely that simple. To date, nations and regions policy has set targets for BBC Scotland to meet, but these goals have not been realised. The building of new premises at Pacific Quay is symbolic of how the BBC serves Scotland. The site is a classic example of what one interviewee termed 'big box thinking', where the imposing building acts as a visible reminder of BBC Scotland's presence in the nation. Although Pacific Quay is highly visible, there is little indication that BBC Scotland is thinking outside the box. The premise's placement on the banks of the Clyde serves to make BBC Scotland more insular than it was at its previous base, and the lack of nearby facilities force staff inwards, rather than out. Equally, as noted in Chapter 3, while the building might appear see-through from the outside, my research suggests that this transparency has yet to work through to the machinations of the corporation.

There is no policy requirement for BBC Scotland to source programmes from Scotland to the network, and this has a huge impact on the growth of talent and on the sustenance of the creative infrastructure. While BBC Scotland has a visible presence in Pacific Quay, the move of several key BBC genres from London to MediaCity:UK has brought some elements of the BBC geographically closer to Scotland. Ironically, this appears to have distanced Scottish producers from any real power, as Scotland's visibility as both a nation and a region has been destabilised in the push toward competitive regionalism within the corporation. The case studies of *The Comedy Unit* and *River City* in Chapter 6 broaden the discussion of BBC Scotland's contribution to the creative infrastructure of the nation. Now, the thesis turns to an institution which exists on an entirely different scale to that of the behemoth BBC, in an examination of Scottish Screen.

## Chapter 5. Scottish Screen

Scottish Screen is the national screen agency for Scotland. This chapter begins by outlining the historical context in which the body was established, examining moves in UK government policy, and research that influenced governmental thinking. It goes on to explore how and why Scottish Screen was founded and what its initial structure, aims and remit were. The chapter proceeds to examine a key focus of Scottish Screen in its early days - the establishment of a Scottish film studio - and how this became tied in with attempts to generate a Scottish film fund and training school. By exploring Scottish Screen's role in the studio venture the work extrapolates some of the key concepts that have been posited in studies of national cinema and the role of national screen agencies. Scottish Screen's existence as a single body effectively spanned only six years, 1997-2003, before talks of a significant re-structure began to affect the daily workings of the organisation.

### Historical context

Despite overwhelming dissatisfaction in Scotland with the UK government during the Thatcher years, there were some useful moves made toward promoting and sustaining an indigenous film production industry. Between 1976 and 1989, Scottish filmmakers launched the first public event of the Scottish independent film sector, established the Scottish Film Archive, the Scottish Association of Independent Producers, the Scottish Film Production Fund and the Scottish Film Training Trust. Conferences celebrating 'Cinema in a Small Country' and critiquing the state of national cinema were hosted in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and film and video workshops established in Edinburgh in the mid 1970s and Glasgow in 1982. In 1986, the possibility of setting up a Scottish Screen Commission was discussed in the House of Commons, but this was eventually rejected in 1989 when the Scottish Film Television and Video Working Party argued that developments in the Scottish independent sector should follow commercial lines and be based on industrial demands. Although by the late 1980s there was relatively little indigenous production, explorations into ways in which the television and film industries could support each other were taking shape, and the period witnessed significant growth in the independent sector, discussed further in Chapter 6. In 1990, research undertaken by the Policy Studies Institute concluded that the involvement of UK television companies in film financing was the only way in which to sustain a viable production industry (Hill, 1996: 154).

By the mid 1990s, it was clear that newer digital technologies were having a profound impact on what was meant by film and filmmaking. Reports by the DCMS and the DTI noted that referring to the film industry was increasingly nebulous, and this began to be replaced by the more inclusive screen industries. Over the course of the decade the screen industries were claimed as one of the creative industries. But despite the shifting terminology, several factors combined to renew calls for support for film and television in Scotland. Tax concessions introduced by the Major government (1990-1997) to help film production had helped to resuscitate the flagging domestic film industry (Magor and Schlesinger, forthcoming). The international successes of *Braveheart*, *Rob Roy* and *Trainspotting* had provided a boost to Scottish filmmakers and drawn political attention to the benefits that could be gained from the worldwide visibility of Scotland as a brand. These factors should be considered alongside the strengthening calls for devolution of the UK, which made it look increasingly likely that Scotland would face the millennium with renewed autonomy.

## The launch of Scottish Screen

Scottish Screen was established in Glasgow on 1 April 1997 as the national body for the promotion of the screen industries in Scotland. It was the effective merger of four bodies, The Scottish Film Council (SFC), the Scottish Film Production Fund (SFPPF), Scottish Screen Locations (SSL), and Scottish Broadcast and Film Training (SBFT), that had previously overseen various sectors of film production, location shooting, training and film finance. The merger of these bodies had been under consideration for several years but was explicitly proposed in *Scotland on Screen* (Hydra Associates, 1996), which suggested that the creation of a 'one-stop-shop' would provide a single centre of knowledge and expertise on the screen industries, help to develop a sustainable indigenous production industry, and promote and nurture film culture. A report by auditors KPMG also stressed the importance of Scottish Screen being identified both in Scotland and abroad as the 'central and unified focus' for activities in the screen industries, which would take responsibility for resolving any 'political and infrastructural issues which may impede film-making' (KPMG, 1997a: 48). Scottish Screen was established under Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, and was the first agency to be established in the drive to create a regional film culture in the UK in the 1990s, although the absence of 'film' from Scottish Screen's title acknowledged the increased convergence of media. Forsyth established an interim board in order to decide on the new body's main purposes and functions. The board was clear that Scottish Screen's remit should encompass film, television, production for video, and



new media, noting that few people working in the industry in Scotland were dependent solely on one medium to make a living. The board also felt that if Scottish Screen were a charity it would enable public recognition of the role of film in education and as a public service, as well as providing useful tax advantages. The activities of the Scottish Film Production Fund and Scottish Screen Locations did not fall within the Inland Revenue's criteria for a charity, so the assets and liabilities of those two companies were transferred to Scottish Screen (Enterprises) Limited.

As a NDPB, Scottish Screen was established to carry out administrative, commercial, executive and regulatory functions on behalf of the UK government, and after 1999, the Scottish Executive. As an arms-length body, the daily decisions of Scottish Screen were independent and it employed its own staff. When it was set up in April 1997, Scottish Screen was made up of 34 full time and two part-time members of staff who had all worked in the previous four bodies. Daily running of the organisation was the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) John Archer, former Head of Arts at BBC Scotland. He was aided by the senior management team and fourteen people on the board of directors. The board was made up of a combination of filmmakers, broadcast managers, financiers and academics, who were appointed by ministers. The Chair of the interim board (and first Chair of Scottish Screen's board of directors, which came into effect in May 1997) was Allan Shiach, a filmmaker and former Chair of the Scottish Film Council, who held position until tendering his resignation with effect from the end of March 1998. From that time Stephen Foster took on the role of Acting Chair until he was replaced by James Lee in June 1998. As a public agency, Scottish Screen followed the guidance of the codes of practice for public bodies laid out by the Cabinet Office. Although not legally binding, the guidance notes inferred a public service duty on to the agency, stressing that it should be impartial and objective in allocating public funds and accountable to Parliament and individual citizens for its actions. The board of Scottish Screen were very aware of issues over funding that had been encountered by the Scottish Film Production Fund (discussed further below), and there was a definite emphasis on making the workings of the board as transparent and accountable as possible.

The agency was grant funded with approximately £2.5 million, a figure which almost doubled in 2000 when it took over Lottery funding for film, which had previously been the reserve of the SAC. This money went towards developing and promoting Scotland's screen industries, supporting company growth, developing and producing shorts, feature films and television pilots, promoting and supporting audience initiatives, encouraging skills development, and supporting experimental media platforms.

Although *Scotland on Screen* (Hydra Associates, 1996) was influential in establishing the agency, Scottish Screen did not follow all of its recommendations. In particular the report had suggested that support of exhibition should be reduced and even phased out, but Scottish Screen argued against this, noting that the relatively small subsidy given to exhibition greatly increased the quantity of films on show and benefited both the Scottish and UK industries. In addition, the report had noted the shift in emphasis away from the cultural aspects of film, which had previously dominated debates about public funding, towards re-assessing the commercial possibilities inherent in the film and television industries. Scottish Screen did not initially have a cultural remit as part of its strategic objectives, but sought rather to encourage and facilitate filming in Scotland, build and develop an indigenous screen industry, and maximise foreign screen investment in Scotland. Nonetheless, as it had assumed the role of film bodies with an explicitly cultural remit - most notably the SFC - and the nature of the screen industries 'demanded' a cultural focus, in practice, Scottish Screen effectively assumed a dual function, operating as both an enterprise agency and a cultural body. Additionally, although Scottish Screen was conceived of under the Conservative government before Scottish devolution, its announcement as a national body led inevitably to calls for the agency to serve a remit which would recognise Scotland's changing political status. On a cultural level, it was hoped that Scottish Screen would nurture work which would 'play an important role at the heart of a revitalised national culture' (Petrie, 2000: 226). But the commercial imperatives of Scottish Screen's remit had been a founding principle behind the body, and it was equally charged with supporting the kind of productions, often location shoots, that would help to boost the national economy and have positive knock-on effects on tourism. With some early teething problems ironed out, by June 1998 the mood in Scottish Screen was optimistic and a lobbying agenda was prepared for the new Scottish administration. This set out the arguments for the screen industries being seen both as an area of substantial industrial growth and one of key cultural importance in 'reflecting and mediating Scottish national identity' (McIntyre, 1998).

Scottish Screen was officially launched at Cannes Film Festival on 13 May 1997, alongside the newly established Glasgow Film Office (GFO). The six weeks between its establishment and launch had witnessed Labour's election victory of May 1997. The Cannes launch of Scottish Screen was thus attended by New Labour's Tom Clarke (Minister for Film and Tourism) and Sam Galbraith MP, rather than Michael Forsyth, who had been succeeded as Secretary of State for Scotland by Donald Dewar. A few months later Scottish Screen agreed to act as a sponsor for the Edinburgh International Film

Festival (EIFF).<sup>24</sup> Together, Cannes and EIFF provided a high profile marketing launch for the agency, although this was somewhat blighted by a public and acrimonious dispute between the body and some well-known filmmakers, discussed further below.

## Scottish Screen and the film studio

One of the key strategic aims of Scottish Screen in its early days was an attempt to establish a film studio in Scotland. Central to this idea was the belief that a film studio would provide a foundation stone in creating a sustainable screen infrastructure. It would provide an area where indigenous film companies could work and offer facilities for attracting larger companies working on bigger budget features to Scotland. It was anticipated that a studio could be part of a development which housed a national film school, and that it could run in conjunction with wider initiatives into developing a national film fund. Any site was likely to be used by the television industry, and would also provide a home for Scottish Screen, which until July 1999 was based in unsatisfactory temporary accommodation. The joining of these sectors in one area would provide a centralised, high profile hub for the screen industries in Scotland.

Small studio facilities had existed in Scotland for many years, with occasional pleas for these to be complemented by larger facilities better equipped to serve big-budget productions (Bruce, 1990). By the latter half of the 1990s, the success of Scottish feature films and changes in UK film funding prompted further calls for a Scottish studio. In November 1996, the Arts Council of England (ACE) announced plans to establish four commercial film franchises which would run from 1997 to 2003. By providing additional funding which would be matched by funds from other film financiers, it was anticipated that the ACE initiatives would have a considerable impact on UK film production and increase demand for facilities, locations, scripts and talent in Scotland and the English regions. In England's south-east, Pinewood and Shepperton studios were already operating at capacity levels, and Scotland, it was argued, could capitalise on this by providing alternative studio facilities (KPMG, 1997a). At Scottish Screen's Cannes launch John Archer outlined plans for a feasibility study to be undertaken in conjunction with Scottish Enterprise to consider the costs, risks and benefits of a studio and post-production facilities. The press speculated that a film studio would be 'welcomed by everybody in the industry' (Laing, 1997a), but this was not the case. Even at this early stage many filmmakers suggested that a long lease on a shipyard or warehouse conversion into a basic

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<sup>24</sup> Scottish Screen stepped in when the festival's main sponsor Drambuie pulled out of its agreed deal.

studio would more adequately meet the cyclical needs of the small film industry than a new-build studio development (KPMG, 1997a: 71). Scottish Screen's focus on establishing a studio met with complaints from filmmakers arguing that while a studio was important it was not as useful as 'real' support for filmmaking (Mowe, 1997).

In June 1998, Archer began a comparison of all the sites under consideration for the proposed studio. Particular emphasis was given to two propositions: one from the Scottish Film Studio Trust, and the second by the Glasgow Development Agency (GDA). The former proposal argued the case for building on existing studio facilities at Nine Mile Burn in Penicuik, while the GDA suggested that modifications could be made to create a studio at the old Harland & Wolfe Shed at Govan, adjacent to Pacific Quay. Scottish Screen concluded that its support would go to the Glasgow project, and a working group consisting of representatives from Scottish Screen, GDA, Glasgow District Council, Scottish Enterprise and other interested parties was established to take the proposal forward (Scottish Screen, 1998c). The decision to build in Glasgow was not received well by the Scottish Film Studio Trust, where the Nine Mile site, having already been granted planning permission, was the only bid that was ready to go. Nonetheless, Archer backed Chairman of the Board James Lee in his pursuit of the project, a quest which Lee acknowledged was of primarily symbolic importance:

Strictly speaking, as a pure business proposition, [a Scottish film studio] doesn't make sense. If we went to a banker we couldn't raise the money because no-one would do it. The rentals wouldn't justify building it. But I want to do it for very intangible reasons. If there's a centre of gravity, around which people can coalesce, I think we'll create a lot of positive momentum. (Kinnes, 1998)

In August 1998, concerns that the studio was not commercially viable were confirmed when no private investors showed any interest in becoming involved in the project. By the time Scottish Screen held its Annual General Meeting in September 1998, further problems with the proposed studio were beginning to surface. There were doubts raised over the suitability of Pacific Quay as a base for a five-stage studio and suggestions that European funding might not support development at the site. The working group had concluded that a three-stage studio would be too large for most indigenous productions and too small to attract significant mobile productions to Scotland. In light of these concerns, Scottish Screen reversed their earlier decision on Pacific Quay and gave their support to *all* development initiatives until further notice, a decision which ran counter to the suggestion by Deloitte & Touche (1999) which recommended that industrial support should focus on one project only, in order to prevent potential funding sources being compromised by

multiple applications. By this stage it was clear that the proposals on the table would offer a two tier approach as recommended by *Scotland on Screen* (Hydra Associates, 1996), with Nine Mile Burn operating as a studio back-up to location-oriented production, while Pacific Quay would specifically target major inward-investing movies.

In July 1999, BBC Scotland announced its provisional intention to relocate to Pacific Quay, and the declaration gave new focus to the prospect of creating a media cluster in Glasgow. Scottish Screen lent itself to fully supporting Pacific Quay as the favoured site for a studio. In October, Scottish Screen's response to the *National Cultural Strategy* noted the benefits of film and television collaboration and suggested that in order to increase cultural outputs the strategy should provide incentives to stimulate commercial interest in areas of cultural activity (Scottish Screen, 1999b). In November 1999, James Lee urged the Scottish Screen board to put their weight behind the Pacific Quay development and prepare a three year plan to fund the film studio. Concerns over what role Scottish Screen as a publicly funded body should play in the funding and construction of a film studio were raised by several board members and questioned by the press. After lengthy discussions, the board requested a £6 million public subsidy for the studio from the Scottish Executive (Scottish Screen, 1999c), but this request was refused in June 2000, when Culture Minister Rhona Brankin MSP suggested Scottish Screen look toward Scottish Enterprise instead. James Lee was not prepared to give up the fight, and in a bid to generate public support, he went to the press in August, arguing that intervention by the Executive would generate a 'virtuous spiral' which would benefit filmmakers, broadcasters and the public (Lee, 2000). Despite these efforts, the impetus to build a Scottish film studio was fading amid serious doubts over whether it was needed (Adamson, 2000). Instead, attention had splintered between interested parties, and by 2000 there were rumoured to be at least four proposals for a national film studio variously based at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perthshire and Inverness (McVeigh, 2002). Of these, the most promising alternative to Pacific Quay had arisen in 1998, with a proposal from a new company provisionally called Castle Studios who put forward a deal in conjunction with Sony Pictures. This was a big-budget, big-names affair, running at an estimated cost of £60 million and proposing to build a studio as part of a wider property development complex outside Edinburgh. The associations of Sir Sean Connery, Sir Angus Grossart, David Murray and Iain Smith with the project assured a good deal of publicity was attached to it, but despite proposals, business plans and planning permissions, the Castle Studios project had collapsed by October 2002. By the end of 2000, it was clear that there were real concerns that a studio was unfeasible, but it remained a key aim of Scottish Screen under James Lee until it was shelved the following year.

Although the plans for a large-scale studio at Pacific Quay never came to fruition, the Glasgow Television and Film Studio at Maryhill was going from strength to strength. Established in 1998, the studio had been used to film the feature length *Gregory's Two Girls* (Forsyth, 1999) and was enjoying considerable success as a television production space, notably for The Comedy Unit. Other smaller scale production facilities were also established in close proximity to the Pacific Quay site in order to overcome the lack of editing and other post-production facilities that posed problems for many indigenous filmmakers (KPMG, 1997a: 23). Film City Glasgow, a collaboration between Sigma Films and GFO, was a more successful attempt to bring these facilities together with a small studio.

### ***Film City Glasgow***

Film City Glasgow was inspired by the Danish initiative Filmbyen ('Film Town') in Avedøre, Denmark. Filmmaker Gillian Berrie, Managing Director of Glasgow-based Sigma Films, had made a number of visits to Filmbyen in the 1990s, on the back of a particularly successful collaboration formed between Sigma and Denmark's film production company Zentropa, which saw them working together on a number of feature films. In 1998, a study conducted for Scottish Enterprise identified Govan Town Hall, a listed unused building less than a mile away from Pacific Quay, as a potential site for a studio development. Govan Town Hall was not just proximal to the Pacific Quay regeneration. In addition to the large broadcasters and independent production companies that were examining bases nearby, Scottish Enterprise had proposed a digital media campus for the area and Govan Initiative provided training in business development that could be accessed by developing companies. The ramshackle building of Govan Town Hall was also very much in keeping with the Filmbyen 'structured anarchy' ethos that had inspired Berrie, and offered substantial development for a number of sectors operating on varied budgets. Explorations into the Govan development led to John Archer and Kevin Kane of the Scottish Enterprise Film Unit (SEFU) going on a fact-finding visit to Copenhagen in February 2000 to explore Filmbyen and the Danish Film Institute as comparators to the Scottish sector. In 2002, Gillian Berrie, Simon Mallinson (head of production company Mallinson Television Productions), and entrepreneur John Boyle forwarded a business plan for a three-stage studio complex to Scottish Enterprise (Staples, 2002). Film City Glasgow was opened in 2004 at a cost of £3.5 million, funded through Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, the Scottish European Partnership, the European Regional Development Fund, Film City Glasgow, and the private sector media industry. Crucially,

as a small industry-led initiative, the project appears to have had the backing of the Scottish independent sector since its inception. Film City Glasgow is home to the facilities used in the production of *Red Road*, a feature film discussed in the following chapter.

### ***The Scottish Film Fund***

Many of the attempts at setting up a film studio were seen as working in partnership with a film fund developed specifically to promote indigenous feature filmmaking. As noted earlier, funding for Scottish filmmaking had existed in various forms prior to the establishment of Scottish Screen. In the 1990s, much of the progress made towards film financing was the result of work undertaken by the GDA, later known as Scottish Enterprise Glasgow.

In 1990, Kevin Kane joined the Glasgow Development Agency as Head of Knowledge and Cultural Industries. His research identified that Glasgow had two areas of relative strength: higher education and the arts, both of which had enjoyed a resurgence of interest following Glasgow's accreditation as European City of Culture 1990. The cultural impetus at this time acknowledged that the arts were crucial in sustaining jobs and providing wealth – the cultural industries. In 1992, Kane set up Glasgow Film Fund Limited (GFF) as a source of indigenous finance to filmmakers using Glasgow as a location or a source of talent (Kane, 1998b). The fund aimed to encourage Glasgow based filmmakers and increase job opportunities for local crews and supplies, in the hope that in this manner the GDA would begin to nurture and support a film industry. GFF was funded entirely by the public sector through Glasgow City Council and the GDA, with matching European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) provided by the Strathclyde European Partnership. Having total funds of less than £1million, GFF invested sums of between £150,000 and £250,000 in commercially viable feature films intended for theatrical release. GFF scored an immediate winner in backing its first feature *Shallow Grave*, a critical and commercial success. The triumph of GFF and ensuing optimism in the cultural industries sector were halted in 1994, when the shooting for *Braveheart* relocated to Ireland. This move prompted a study into the Scottish film industry by Scottish Enterprise, which resulted in *Scotland on Screen* (Hydra Associates, 1996). In 1996, Kane directed the Scottish Enterprise Film Unit (SEFU) to take forward the recommendations of this report, and eventually handed over the responsibilities of SEFU to Scottish Screen in March 1998. Between 1997 and 1998 Scottish Screen relied on SEFU for business expertise, including support and advice on setting up a Scottish Film Fund (SFF) and securing funding for a film studio.

In November 1997, the 'Venturing into Film' conference, organised by Scottish Screen and SEFU, provided a launch for a working party to investigate the possibility of a film fund. Jonathan Olsberg, managing director of Hydra Associates, was contracted by GDA, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise, to prepare a report on the potential for a Scottish Film Fund, which was published in July 1998. The working party identified that lack of access to equity-related production finance and the absence of a Scottish distribution entity were negatively affecting the growth of the industry, and argued that establishing a film studio at a base which housed a Scottish National Film School and Scottish Screen, would make 'one of the most active focal points of film activity outside London' (Scottish Film Fund Steering Group, 1997). Although the group were agreed on the need for a SFF, there remained disputes about its scale, scope and function. Filmmaker Peter Broughan was unhappy that the major broadcasters were represented on the working party but that there was no-one from the independent film production sector (Scottish Screen, 1998b). Kane felt that Archer's aims for the SFF focused too heavily on the cultural aspects of film; James Lee's proposed aims were distribution-led, a strategy which was beginning to be the focal point for the structural changes at the British Film Institute (BFI) (Scottish Screen, 1998a). Over the course of 1998, the shape and structure of the proposed SFF was thrashed out, but the impetus for the fund had begun to waver. By 1999, Scottish Screen's attention focused on developing relationships with the new Scottish Parliament (Scottish Screen, 1999e), and the following year Lottery funding for film was transferred from the SAC to the screen agency. Consultations on the SFF finally floundered and to date there is no national film fund. Various forms of channelling funding to filmmaking in Scotland continue through the GFO, and are discussed in relation to *Red Road* in Chapter 6.

### ***A Scottish Film School***

Although neither the SFF or film studio featured in Scottish Screen's 1999 Operational Plan, neither vanished completely from the board's agenda. By March 1999, the agency was arguing that if a film studio was to be built near Edinburgh, then Glasgow should consider building a film school (Scottish Screen, 1999d). Reports into the film studio suggested that its success would be inextricably linked to the development of the industry as a whole through training and enterprise programmes to enhance the skills and strength of the local workforce (Deloitte & Touche, 1999). Calls for improved training in the screen industries had been around for many years and had also taken on renewed vigour with the prospect of Scottish devolution. *Scotland on Screen* (Hydra Associates, 1996) had



emphasised that real growth in the screen industries would not happen unless the infrastructure was made sufficiently strong, and after its publication it was widely speculated that Scotland would build a training school in order to create and maintain a base of talent and skills. *Scotland on Screen* recommended establishing a Scottish Screen Industries Business School (SIBS) to train producers in the commercial aspects of film, and SEFU in collaboration with Scottish Screen Training (formerly SBFT) commissioned Hydra Associates to undertake a viability study into establishing a SIBS in Scotland. The Hydra report (1996) led to the setting up of an approved Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) assessment centre, for qualifications in film and television, in Glasgow in May 1997. This achievement, coupled with the Labour election victory and devolution referendum, led to renewed arguments for a Scottish National Film School (Bell, 1997), but the impetus for the initiative faded along with the SFF and film studio. Further progress was however later made at Edinburgh, where the UK Film Council's film skills strategy *A Big Future* helped to establish the Screen Academy in 2004.

## **The national film studio and national cinema**

Although the plan for a national film studio was never realised, the concept resurfaces occasionally in the press, where it is totemic of what Scottish cinema *could* be, if only enough resources were devoted to it. Often, it is viewed as a chance to increase inward investment (Miller, 2007), a prospect which is usually situated in opposition to calls for a greater celebration of, and support for, indigenous filmmaking (Cousins, 2007). Rarely is a full sound studio considered to have the potential to support both Hollywood productions and Scottish filmmakers. The arguments for a studio fire up sporadic displays of support, but ultimately are less valid now than they were a decade ago. In 1997, film was changing as a medium, with both large and small-scale filmmaking increasingly using digital formats rather than celluloid. By 2007, the improved sharing, storing and manipulation capabilities of digital media diminished the need for large-scale studio facilities. These technologies resulted in substantially decreased costs for independent producers, but did not come without a downside. As Robin MacPherson, Director of the Screen Academy, notes, while the diminishing cost of short film production increased the number of people able to make them, this trend was counterbalanced by a constraint on the number of short film schemes available (Director, Screen Academy, 2007). Consequently, fewer people are supported through schemes that have an adequate level of resources to allow progression to a higher level. In addition, as noted in the previous chapter, the establishment of Pacific Quay has offered substantial studio facilities which can be hired

by independent filmmakers and television producers outwith BBC Scotland. These facilities do not include a sound stage, but given the relatively small size of the film production sector, the Pacific Quay studios, along with those at Film City Glasgow and the Maryhill Film and Television Studio, are sufficient to meet the demands of most indigenous filmmakers and provide many pre and post-production resources for inward investors.<sup>25</sup>

Although a film studio was never realised and is unlikely now to achieve the same degree of lobbying support that it did in the 1990s, Scottish Screen's involvement in the initiative reveals a number of things about the central issues that have faced film in Scotland, and how nationality is articulated in Scottish Screen as an institution. These factors are considered below under three broad and interrelated headings: ownership, scale and scope.

### **Ownership**

Scottish Screen occupied a curious place in the devolutionary developments of the UK. It was a quango set up by the Tories, an administration which had been profoundly unpopular in Scotland. The agency's status as a body set up under the UK Conservative government prior to devolution initiated some arguments about national identity, with critics noting the extent to which board members were born, lived, or worked in Scotland (Kinnes, 1998). While these comments were intentionally provocative, their visibility in the press inflamed arguments about the national status of Scotland's public bodies and over-simplified debates on the role of the cultural institutions.

Scottish Screen inherited a number of problems by being an amalgam of its predecessor bodies. When it had been set up, it was anticipated that the creation of a single screen body would fill the gaps that had been noted in the provision of screen services by separate agencies. While this was the case, the inherited legacy of Scottish Screen, coupled with the small and often highly personalised nature of the sector, proved difficult from the outset. The remits of Scottish Broadcast and Film Training (to support good industrial practice), and Scottish Screen Locations (to promote film shoots in Scotland), were relatively easily absorbed into the new body. Far more complicated were Scottish Screen's relations with the Scottish Film Council (SFC) and Scottish Film Production Fund, which in turn impacted on Scottish Screen's relationship with the Scottish Arts Council. The SFC had been established in 1934 although had been unable to dispense funds for

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<sup>25</sup> BBC Scotland's *River City* set in Dumbarton, discussed in Chapter 6, is also hired out to the independent sector.

filmmaking in Scotland until the early 1980s.<sup>26</sup> In 1982, the Council successfully argued for a grant from the Scottish Education Department in order to establish the Production Fund. This new body was established by joining these funds with monies from the Film Committee of the SAC, which had been set up two years earlier. Together, these ensured that in its first year the Scottish Film Production Fund was able to allocate £80,000 to film funding. Over the course of its tenure it secured further resources from Channel 4, BBC Scotland, Grampian Television and the Scottish Office. By 1996, the Fund provided nearly £463,000 for film development and short film production (KPMG, 1997a: 20). When in the same year money from the Lottery became available for film funding, the Scottish Film Production Fund took on the role of main advisor to the SAC, which channelled over £8 million of project support to filmmaking. This situation continued during the lengthy process of Scottish Screen becoming fully operational.

Although it provided funds for filmmaking, the Production Fund was predominantly concerned with film as culture, and took a lofty approach toward 'industry-led initiatives' which it saw as being inherently less worthy of public funding (Lockerbie, 1990: 172). In early 1997, board member Bill Forsyth, at the time one of Scotland's most successful directors, resigned from the Scottish Film Production Fund and made a series of public complaints about the body, initially levelled at its Director Eddie Dick. Forsyth took issue with funding that had been allocated to *Regeneration* (MacKinnon, 1997), a film which Scottish Screen Chair Allan Shiach (under the name Alan Scott) had written and produced. That someone on the board should have applied and received funding was not in itself unusual. Former Chair of the Fund Ian Lockerbie noted,

From the start, the Fund was anxious not simply to wait for applications to come in, but to initiate its own projects and choose its own partners to carry them out. (Lockerbie, 1990: 175)

The new board of Scottish Screen however were anxious to distance themselves from these practices, which board member and filmmaker Peter Broughan (1997) saw as, 'a classic sign of decadence and imminent collapse... when the institutions which are supposed to serve and support become self-serving and self-supporting'. Broughan's concerns were supported by Bill Forsyth (1997), who optimistically pointed out that the ability for a member of Scottish Screen's board to voice such concerns publicly was itself an

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<sup>26</sup> Until 1982 Scottish filmmakers looking for funding applied to the BFI Production Fund or National Film Finance. See CLARK-HALL, S. (1976) 'Scotland's film industry', *New Edinburgh Review*, 34(2), pp. 11-13. and LOCKERBIE, I. (1990) 'Pictures in a small country: the Scottish Film Production Fund', in Dick, E. (ed.) *From Limelight to Satellite: A Scottish Film Book*, London: Scottish Film Council and BFI, pp. 171-184.

improvement on the ‘demonic regime of the Scottish Film Production Fund’, before going on to accuse both the Production Fund and Scottish Screen of cronyism. Further allegations were made by Palm Tree Productions, about Scottish Screen Head of Development (and former Scottish Film Production Fund member), Catherine Aitken. The accusations appeared in the Scottish press, the UK papers and *Private Eye*. The spat raged publicly well into September, involving comments from many Scottish filmmakers, Scottish arts minister Lord Lindsay, and Sir David Puttnam. Although all allegations were eventually dismissed by the Scottish Office, the damage was done. Scottish Screen’s reputation was soon tarnished further by a dispute with the SAC over Lottery award procedures.

The National Lottery began distributing funding for film through the Arts Councils in 1996, in an act which immediately dramatically increased the availability of film financing. Applicants for Lottery funding needed to show that the proposed project would benefit the ‘public good’, with priority given to submissions which could demonstrate a viable distribution plan. In responsibilities absorbed from the Scottish Film Production Fund, Scottish Screen assessed film projects that applied for Lottery awards of £250,000 or less, and passed on these recommendations to the SAC. Larger applications were assessed by the SAC. From the outset, Scottish Screen had sought to become the distributing body for film funds from the National Lottery, arguing that decisions over film funding should rest with the national screen body rather than the SAC.

In May 1997, the SAC began to review its procedures for allocating Lottery monies to film, and this review, claimed to be partially motivated by the alleged loss of confidence in Scottish Screen, coincided with the disputes over cronyism at the Scottish Film Production Fund. The following month the review was leaked to the press, and the two bodies once again publicly battled it out. In September 1997, the SAC concluded that film applications should be assessed by appointing expert staff in the Arts Council, and that awards would be made directly through its own Lottery Film Committee. Scottish Screen’s response to these recommendations was openly hostile. In a series of aggrieved communications Scottish Screen rejected outright the SAC review as flawed, incompetent and libellous. Although it seemed that the review would secure the SAC’s procedures for managing film funding, in fact the pressure for Scottish Screen to gain control of these powers gathered strength when the rationale of the SAC’s decisions was called into question after it refused to fund Pelicula Films’ production of *Cinderella*. The film had been the unanimous choice of the Scottish Screen Production Panel in August 1997, which had recommended a grant of £900,000 be given to the production. When it was turned down by the SAC the project,

which had attracted £3 million of outside investment, swiftly transferred to Ireland. Now it was the turn of the SAC to endure a high profile resignation as Mark Cousins, the film industry's representative on the SAC, left in protest. Although the resultant publicity of the ill-will between the SAC and Scottish Screen drew the rebuke of the Scottish Office, Scottish Screen remained determined to become the distributing body for Lottery film funding. In November 1997, the SAC announced that a new panel, the Lottery Film Production Committee, would have responsibility for approving funding of up to £250,000 for feature films as well as providing recommendations to the SAC for larger applications (Laing, 1997b). The first meeting of the Lottery Film Production Committee in December agreed £900,000 for *Cinderella* (now known as *The Chieftain's Daughter*). By this time, it had already been noted that the SAC had less money for film financing than had been estimated in August 1997, a situation which was proving very unpopular with funding applicants (Scottish Screen, 1997a). The SAC was criticised further at a committee meeting in the House of Commons in December 1997 when it was condemned as secretive and elitist, and in January 1998, a body of MPs launched an enquiry into how the SAC were distributing funds. Scottish Screen's response to this enquiry politely requested that it take control of Lottery funds for film production (Scottish Screen, 1998e), but more direct requests came from the GFF and Scottish Enterprise, which unequivocally stated that the SAC had no business allocating film funds when Scottish Screen was the NDPB for the screen industries (Kane, 1998a; b).

The disputes with the Scottish Film Production Fund and the SAC were damaging for Scottish Screen, which had sought to establish itself as a new and transparent body and now found itself tarred with the same brush that had tainted its predecessor. The wider Scottish filmmaking community was drawn into taking sides in the debate and the negative publicity adversely affected all involved in the small screen industries sector in Scotland. In May 1997, a group of independent filmmakers joined together to form 'Scottish Stand', a lobby group protesting that Scottish Screen was failing to serve its function. Scottish Stand were concerned that Scottish Screen reflected the commercial bias of its instigators too widely, and supported inward investment (including that from the UK) at the expense of indigenous filmmakers. Scottish Stand's claim that the agency was 'based on now defunct imperatives imposed by the previous government' (Cowle, 1997) received some support in the Scottish filmmaking community who were critical of Scottish Screen (as well as Scottish Enterprise and the SAC), for failing to adequately consult with industry practitioners. By August 1997, Scottish Stand had held four meetings in Glasgow, each attended by more than 70 people. Scottish Screen was warily accepting of Scottish Stand's concerns, and gave the body a small grant to cover its early expenses and the printing of its

first policy document *Opening the Doors* (Scottish Screen, 1997c). By the end of the year, Scottish Stand had largely disbanded, and the concerns that it had voiced as a collective body were instead raised on a personal basis through the press. In October 1997, Channel 4 inserted an annual clause into their promise of development funding in recognition of the 'perception problems' that had blighted Scottish Screen. Before the year was out, Allan Shiach had announced his intention to resign as Chair of Scottish Screen, a declaration which was predictably seen as a reaction to the feuds over cronyism and SAC Lottery funding. Catherine Aitken also resigned and returned to work at BBC Scotland. Notes on declaring conflicts of interest were issued to the board of Scottish Screen to ensure that its procedures would be seen as transparent. Given the small nature of the film and television sector and the necessity of having industry insiders on funding boards, it is perhaps inevitable that similar disputes have resurfaced several times, with various players, since.

In December 1997, PACT Scotland began lobbying Donald Dewar to appoint James Lee as Chair of Scottish Screen, and he later took over the role.<sup>27</sup> Over the next six months, the SAC and Scottish Screen continued to thrash out the handover of Lottery film funding. Magnus Linklater, Chair of the SAC, was reluctant to delegate decision-making responsibility to Scottish Screen, as it would leave the SAC accountable for matters which were outwith its control. Instead, he favoured Scottish Screen becoming the single designated distributor for Lottery film funds (Scottish Screen, 1998d), and by July 1998, the two bodies were well on the way to achieving an amicable shift of Lottery monies. In October, Jim Faulds, Chair of the SAC Lottery Film Committee, announced the Council's intention to transfer funding responsibility to Scottish Screen, a decision which John Archer welcomed with unequivocal approval (Scottish Screen, 1999a: 3). Responsibility for Lottery film funding was eventually transferred to Scottish Screen in May 2000.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, questions over ownership were also raised in concerns over who Scottish Screen's board were meant to represent, what their knowledge base was, and what their relationship was to the UK, and later the Scottish governments. Public perception of the extent to which the Scottish Screen board was serving its function sometimes unavoidably depended on whose interests were being served. The board were required to have sufficient industry expertise and skills to formulate strategy, but also to possess objectivity and knowledge of policy formation. Achieving this balance of skills led to clashes between what filmmaker

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<sup>27</sup> Stephen Foster took on the role of Acting Chair after Shiach's resignation.

<sup>28</sup> Scottish Screen eventually withdrew the award made to *The Chieftain's Daughter* in 2002, after the project had 'timed out'. The agency noted that the filmmaking team were inexperienced and that the project had eventually become too large to handle. SCOTTISH SCREEN (2002) *Minutes of the Scottish Screen National Lottery Committee Meeting held on 3 May 2002*, Glasgow: Scottish Screen.

Peter Broughan (1997) referred to as ‘the passion and mad determination of creatives’ and ‘salaried people in suits’. Given the size of the industry, it was inevitable that many of the same people that would be considered knowledgeable enough to make funding decisions would also be in a position to be requesting funding for their own projects. In addition, members of the board felt that the organisation was poorly led. Press reports of these disputes often led to a negative public perception of the body.

It is easy with hindsight to conclude that the studio venture was doomed from the outset. Given the small scale of indigenous film production, the associated problems of theatrical distribution for local films, and the inherently tenuous nature of what constitutes a Scottish film in the first instance, the project, and the role of Scottish Screen as a publicly funded body within it, would always be problematic. But it is equally evident that a film studio *could* have the potential to recoup and return skills and capital to Scotland, and, like Pacific Quay, act as a visible symbol of an infrastructure (Bruce, 1990: 80-82). A Scottish film studio would potentially have a symbolic value which reflected the privileged positioning of film in the wider screen industries, warranting public support and intervention and being credited with a key role in promoting Scottish culture. But its capacity to do this could be disengaged neither from its ownership nor from its actual use (or lack of). A Scottish owned studio could never attract the same level of financing that a Hollywood one could, while an American owned studio might retain industrial importance but contribute little to the local economy or culture.

## **Scale**

The Chair’s drive for the film studio highlights another case in point - in a country that is home to only five million people, Scotland’s size means that individuals play a real role in creative policy and practice. Any study of film and television throws up the same names providing impetus and backing for some initiatives and opposing others. Within this small environment the existence of a charismatic leader can play a far greater role in getting things done than government aided resources. The existence of key players in the film and television industries, which is highlighted further in the case studies of *Red Road* and The Comedy Unit in the following chapter, has emphasised certain voices, and has made it difficult for Scottish Screen to avoid allegations of cronyism.

Despite the size of the sector, the studio venture stalled in part because of the lack of collaboration between the various screen industries to get it off the ground. Scottish Screen’s remit of serving the screen industries, a wide brief with a limited budget, would

invariably mean a focus on some sectors to the detriment of others. Scottish Screen was often seen as being primarily a film agency. This was at least in part a result of its creation as an amalgamation of the four bodies that had served the film industry, but the lack of strategic clarity was also inscribed in the agency's early policies. Furthermore, there was a tendency for 'film' to be read as film production. Initial energies devoted to the film studio inevitably meant that other strategies were not given priority (Buie, 1997). In 2004, Scottish Screen aimed to redress the imbalance between film and the other screen industries by adopting a change in strategy that would more fully recognise its diverse remit. This refocus has sometimes has distinct advantages. Technological changes have made it increasingly difficult to separate film from the screen industries more widely, and policy moves toward reaping the economic benefits of creativity have sometimes made it difficult to distinguish the screen industries within the broader creative industries. Having a body with a wide remit has also afforded Scottish Screen some its most successful collaborations with broadcasters, games manufacturers and independent exhibitors.<sup>29</sup> However the remit also necessarily made Scottish Screen's area of concern very broad, and put great financial pressure on its limited resources.

The importance of scale is also evident in the optimistic train of thought that underpinned much of the studio venture, the belief that the process of building a sound stage would attract further investment. It is difficult to grow the industry without a sound infrastructure to begin with, and the project became caught in the circular arguments about whether it was best to build an infrastructure and hope that industry would be attracted to it, or whether a critical mass of industry was needed before further investment could be warranted. Eventually, the lack of critical mass hindered the studio project, as it became impossible to consider the studio without film finance, finance without a film school, a school without a studio, and so on. A stand-alone studio might be financially profitable, potentially pumping wealth, talent and skills back into the sector, while an integrated studio/fund/school venture would create, sustain and promote Scottish film culture and produce more organic growth.

## **Scope**

The debates over which type of studio development would best serve the industry also highlight Scottish Screen's problematic role as an economic agency that supports cultural

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<sup>29</sup> These include the short film schemes Tartan Shorts and New Found Land, the New Entrants Training Programme to provide technical skills for the screen industries, and exhibition in the form of the Screen Machine, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Glasgow Film Festival and the Dundee Centre for Contemporary Arts.



products. Discussions about how Scottish Screen could or should function in these dual roles are premised on the notion that as a national body, the organisation should promote a distinctive Scottish culture. It is clear that for Scottish Screen nationhood makes a difference, as the English regional film bodies are not charged with this national cultural remit.

Although Scottish Screen always had a dual function in practice, in principle it was established as an economic agency. This role was at the forefront of early policy documents, where it was assumed that the national film culture would grow as a natural result of Scottish Screen fulfilling its commercial function. In 1997, Scottish Screen noted that the existence of the SEFU ‘helped to identify Scottish Screen’s primary role of economic and industrial development’, arguing in addition that: ‘Scottish Screen is more properly part of the Industry Department in the Scottish Office with Scottish Enterprise rather than Education and Culture with the Scottish Arts Council.’ (Scottish Screen, 1997b) Although *Scotland on Screen* (Hydra Associates, 1996) stipulated the need to focus on film primarily as a business, early minutes show that Scottish culture was seen as vitally important in decision-making, a situation which continued throughout 1998. By 1999, the Corporate Plan was explicit that the body should strike a balance between the cultural and industrial aspects of filmmaking, although by this time promoting Scottish culture had become a prominent aim of the new Scottish Parliament. Early strategic direction for Scottish Screen had suggested pursuing a line of modern dynamism in order to avoid the ‘tartan and shortbread’ association (KPMG, 1997b: 53), but the Bonnar Keenlyside (2000: 20) report noted that the same image in films such as *Braveheart* had a transformative effect on tourism. Simultaneously, economic policies were articulating how the screen industries would fulfil a role in the development of the nation. In the Scottish Executive’s (2000c) framework for economic development, high and sustainable levels of fiscal growth were sought through governmental interventions in filmmaking enterprises. Further reports by the Executive put creativity at the centre of best business practices, stressing that the economic development of the nation was dependent on the creativity of its people and that entrepreneurs were ‘creative catalysts’ for wealth generation (Scottish Executive, 2001a: 5). This creative industries rhetoric, which saw creativity as a natural spur to financial growth, gained further foothold the following year in the Executive’s review of Scottish Screen (2002b), which argued that the production of visual media would enable the growth of talent, technological skills, and the development of a shared language - concepts which would stabilise the notion of Scotland as a community and increase the international visibility of Scotland as a brand. In doing this it was hoped to recoup the economic benefits of the film industry into related industries such as tourism. The report

noted the fiscal benefits of the creative industries, and stressed the cultural importance of the screen industries, in offering ‘a powerful vehicle for the collective stories we tell, to ourselves and to the world’ (Scottish Executive, 2002b: 9). The following year, an independent audit of the screen industries in Scotland identified that it was impossible to expand and sustain the screen infrastructure in the absence of a television channel or network commissioning department based in Scotland (David Graham & Associates, 2003). The report noted that the UK Film Council (UKFC) had taken a more commercial approach to production support and film subsidy, and suggested that Scottish Screen could follow suit. The findings of the audit were discussed at a Screen Industries Summit for Scotland in November 2003, a convention which spawned the formation of Scotland’s Screen Industries Summit Group. This was a collective of broadcasters, independent producers, public organisations and private companies, which aimed to increase network and international presence and production growth across the screen industries in Scotland. The Summit Group was charged with delivering concrete action points for developing the screen industries that could be delivered in partnership with the Scottish Executive. The creation and continued work of the Summit Group can also be seen as indicative of a real enthusiasm and vigour for the screen industries in Scotland. This has often found a voice not through governmental policy and support but through a huge number of collectives, programmes and initiatives, often running concurrently and with overlapping remits.<sup>30</sup>

It has been difficult for Scottish Screen to reconcile the co-existence of commercial and cultural priorities and inevitably attempts to meet one of them leads to angry cries that the other is being disregarded. Here lie some inherent problems over when film is cultural and commercial, what is culturally viable and valid, and how to know what will be a commercial success. These questions, and associated ones of whether to allocate limited resources to projects which may stand little chance of being commercially successful but are demonstrably ‘Scottish’, or those which may recoup commercial benefits but have little cultural relevance, have dogged Scottish Screen. While these arguments are most often framed in terms of which films should be funded, they are similarly evident in discussions over whether a film studio would be predominantly serving indigenous filmmakers or geared up to facilitating inward investing companies. There was a widespread lack of agreement over whether or not a studio facility was needed, and ambivalence over whether

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<sup>30</sup> For example, in 2006, training and skills for the Scottish screen industries were provided by a number of industrial and enterprise bodies and the HE sector, operating on a Scottish and UK wide basis. These included but were not limited to: Careers Scotland, Future Skills Scotland, the Sector Skills Development Agency, Learn Direct Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, the Fresh Talent initiative, the Determined to Succeed initiative, Creative and Cultural Skills, Skillset Scotland, and the Screen Academy.

or not to attract location shooting. A studio facility large enough for Hollywood companies would be too big for indigenous indies, while one small enough to suit the latter would rule out the larger scale investment and global visibility of the former. The reason for some of the filmmakers' unwillingness to back the studio project may also be due to the film studio being seen as important primarily in terms of economic development, rather than fostering creativity and nurturing Scottish culture.

In 2001, Scottish Ministers began their review of all NDPBs and energies at Scottish Screen were focussed on this until March 2002. The review made no mention of a film studio although it did moot the prospect of converging the arts and cultural agencies to form a single body, 'Creative Scotland'. By 2003, this idea had become more of a reality, and Creative Scotland looked set to be formed from a merger of Scottish Screen and the SAC. This is discussed further in Chapter 7.

## Conclusion

What does this chapter on Scottish Screen reveal about the organisation, and about the creative industries in Scotland? From its inception, Scottish Screen was hampered by being a body that was established by a government that was unpopular in Scotland. By the time that Scottish Screen had been set up, that administration had not only been removed from office, but political governance of the UK was soon to change drastically. Consequently Scottish Screen inherited a legacy both from the political background of the era in which it was established, and its constituent bodies.

Scottish Screen's involvement in the film studio illustrates some of the peculiarities of the small size of the film and television sector in Scotland. It shows the importance of individuals – how one person can be a driving force for particular goals and ends, and how the extent to which this is welcomed is aligned to whether the individual is representative of the consensus. (In Chapter 6, the importance of individuals is discussed further in the case studies of *Red Road* and The Comedy Unit.) It shows that collaboration between sectors is necessary to get things done. It illustrates that it is necessary to think differently for a small industry than it is for an even nominally larger one, such as the British film industry.

So far, the thesis has introduced a framework in which to explore Scottish film and television, analysed developments in cultural and creative industries policy since devolution, and explored the positioning and role of BBC Scotland in the Scottish creative

industries. This chapter has examined the establishment of Scottish Screen, and noted that from the outset the agency was troubled by a lack of clear policy direction. This meant that it wavered in its roles as both a cultural and economic development body, a position which reflected negatively on its perception by the public and its acceptance by the industry. The work has charted the course of Scottish Screen's involvement in establishing a film studio, and argued that the pursuit of this initiative was seen primarily as having a symbolic importance to the screen industries in Scotland. The following chapter uses three case studies to link movements in creative industries policy with creative practice.

## Chapter 6. Case studies

Three case studies form the focus of this chapter. These have been chosen to further examine the way in which policies and people interact in the film and television industries, and to shed some light on the production of creative content. Two of these case studies are of media products, and one a study of an independent production company. The first study explores the feature film *Red Road*, a critically acclaimed film supported by, among others, Scottish Screen and BBC Films. The second case turns to The Comedy Unit, an independent production company based in Glasgow and specialising in single genre media products. The final study examines the only current Scottish soap opera, *River City*, a BBC Scotland production. The chapter's conclusion reflects on what the studies illustrate about the policies and practices of creativity in film and television.

### Case study 1: *Red Road*

The feature film *Red Road* is a co-production between several parties. Each of these played a pivotal role in shaping the film from pre-production to exhibition, setting down various rules, provisos and stipulations that not only ensured the film was made in the first place, but also affected the film's aesthetic, distribution and ultimately, audience response. Examining *Red Road* as a case study helps to explore how these production factors determine and shape the type of national films that are available, supported and sustained.

Although *Red Road* did not achieve a theatrical release until 2006, the study outlines how the early stages of the film's production can be traced back to the late 1990s, with attempts to broker connections between the Scottish and Danish filmmaking communities. The work begins with a synopsis of the film and moves on to an examination of the roles of the co-producers and the premises which outlined the project. It gives an explanation of the role of the financiers and their reasons for investing in the film, explores the process of distribution, and notes the film's critical reception. The work concludes by examining the role that national identity played in the process of getting *Red Road* made.

#### ***Film synopsis***

Set in Glasgow in the present day, *Red Road* follows Jackie (Kate Dickie), a closed-circuit television (CCTV) operator who monitors Glasgow's streets. She lives alone and is grieving the loss of her husband and daughter. At work on a CCTV monitor Jackie

is startled to see a man she recognises. She begins to follow him and we later know him as Clyde (Tony Curran). Jackie engineers to meet him, they have sex and she immediately reports him to the police as having raped her. Clyde is arrested. Jackie drops the charges and confronts Clyde as being responsible for the death of her family. Clyde concedes that he did kill them accidentally when he was driving a car high on drugs. They reach an uneasy reconciliation. Jackie visits her in-laws and agrees to scatter her late husband and daughter's ashes on Loch Lomond.

### ***Producing Red Road***

*Red Road* was the result of a collaboration of efforts and funding from several bodies: Sigma Films, Zentropa, Glasgow Film Office (GFO), Scottish Screen, the UK Film Council (UKFC), and BBC Films. The film's distribution was handled by Trust Film Sales and Verve Pictures. The creative process was overseen by the Advance Party project, and while the provisos of that initiative may have been unusual, the production process itself was relatively uncomplicated. This first section examines the role of each of the co-producers.

### **Advance Party**

The role of Advance Party is one of the more well documented aspects of the film's production, initiating a series of interested press reports both before and after the film's theatrical release. Advance Party is an initiative devised by Danish filmmakers Lars von Trier and Sisse Graum Jorgensen, most renowned for their roles in the Dogme 95 movement (Hjort and Mackenzie, 2003). The initiative stipulated that three directors and three producers who had only previously worked in short filmmaking would make three feature films which used a set of seven characters. The production of all films was further governed by five rules.

1. The scripts can take their starting point in one or more characters or they may be subjected to an external drama. The characters can also participate in a form that is governed primarily by neither characters nor plot.
2. The films take place in Scotland but apart from that the writers are free to place them anywhere according to geography, social setting or ethnic background. Their back-stories can be expanded, family relations can be created between them, they can be

given habits good or bad, and secondary characters can be added if it is proper for the individual film.

3. The interpersonal relationships of the characters differ from film to film and they may be weighted differently as major or minor characters. The development of the characters in each story or genre does not affect the other scripts.
4. All of the characters must appear in all of the films.
5. The various parts will be cast with the same actors in the same parts in all of the films. (<http://www.vervepics.com/redroad.shtml>)

The character outlines were created by fellow Dogme filmmakers Lone Scherfig and Anders Thomas Jensen. Together they developed brief sketches of seven characters - Alfred, April, Crispin, Jackie, Avery, Clyde and TT - which became known as the 'bible' characters. The Advance Party initiative was realised over a series of meetings between Gillian Berrie of Sigma Films and Lars von Trier and Sisse Graum Jorgensen at Zentropa Productions in early 2003. It was felt that in predetermining the characters and actors who played them, the writer/director teams would enjoy a degree of creative liberation within an established structure, a kind of mentored development process. After consultation the three chosen directors picked different lead characters and genres, and during the course of development, two further characters were added to the seven bible characters. Initial plans suggested that all three films would be filmed on digital video using six-week shooting schedules. *Red Road's* location shoot was five weeks, with a further week spent filming the CCTV material.

Advance Party's involvement did not just determine rules for the filmmaking process. Like the Dogme films, the structure of Advance Party allowed the film to be sold to funders on the technical aspects of the filmmaking process rather than the basic story idea (Christensen, 2003), and is all the more remarkable given that *Red Road* was wholly reliant on subsidy financing which was provided even though very few people in the early stages knew what the film would be about. The initiative also provided a useful marketing strategy. Awareness of *Red Road* was enhanced by publicity which stressed that it was part of a wider initiative, and the inclusion of three films under the Party banner made for a cost effective method of promoting interest in the trilogy in one initial swoop. The involvement of Advance Party also meant that all three films were ensured a UK

distribution deal prior to their production with Zentropa's distribution arm, Trust Film Sales. The two co-producers were Sigma Films and Zentropa.

## **Sigma Films**

Sigma Films is a Glasgow-based company established by Gillian Berrie in 1996 with director David Mackenzie and his brother, actor Alastair Mackenzie. Sigma produces independent films which nonetheless aim to be 'internationally appealing' (<http://www.sigmafirms.com>). Although Sigma initially concentrated on producing short films, in recent years it has achieved critical success with, among others, feature length project *Young Adam* (Mackenzie, 2003). In addition to production work, Gillian Berrie and Sigma have played an important role in establishing Film City Glasgow, a project which is a direct attempt to improve the talent and skills base of the area and ensure the creation of a sustainable film industry in Scotland.

## **Zentropa**

Sigma produced *Red Road* in collaboration with Zentropa, a film production company established by Lars von Trier and Peter Aalbæk Jensen in Avedøre, Denmark, in 1992. Based in Filmbyen, Zentropa and its affiliated companies cover a number of remits in film, television and new media, script development, training and marketing. Von Trier made a deliberate move from direction to production in establishing Zentropa, realising that this would ensure a greater degree of creative control as well as offering enhanced financial and professional security (Jäckel, 2003: 39-40). Zentropa is conceived of as 'an open-ended, collectivist and multifaceted project' (Hjort and Bondebjerg, 2001: 209-10).

Von Trier, whose own work had benefited from the financial support and development of training and skills offered under the European Commission's MEDIA II programme (Jäckel, 2003: 73-4), also influenced the wider ethos behind the film's production. His calls for the democratisation of film culture were an influencing factor on Sigma and the establishment of Film City Glasgow when the Scottish/Scandinavian connection was brokered in the late 1990s (Hjort and Bondebjerg, 2001: 27). As with all of the production team, von Trier brought a range of valuable connections to the project, notably with Cannes festival director Gilles Jacob. Zentropa was aware that the importance of a screening at Cannes in the main competition had been a crucial part of the success of the Dogme films, a forum which allowed distributors to observe how audiences and the press would respond to the film. The ability for Zentropa to link production to exhibition through



Trust Film Sales was crucial to *Red Road's* success, ensuring that it was not only made but that it achieved an audience. As an established production facility, Zentropa Productions' ability to position themselves as a company of 'genuine artists' allowed the film to carry 'a seal of artistic quality' (Christensen, 2003: 193-194) which was crucial to the assumed arthouse audience for the film. Further advice, development support and funding was given by GFO and Scottish Screen.

## Glasgow Film Office

GFO supported *Red Road* by providing development and production funding and logistical advice about filming in Glasgow.

In the mid 1990s, attempts to boost the indigenous film industry went hand in hand with economic regeneration initiatives. Early research into the strategic direction for Scottish Screen had examined six foreign film commissions which had been particularly successful in attracting inward investment for location shooting. The New York Film Commission, visited by Glasgow's Lord Provost Pat Lally in 1996, was highly praised for its ability to attract and facilitate location shoots (KPMG, 1997a). The KPMG report stressed that successful film commissions could be attributed to three factors: extensive and successful networking, excellent communication and information flows, and a first class reputation and standing within the industry. Trying to create this 'film friendly' environment was central to the creation of both Scottish Screen and GFO, with the latter body also being established in 1997 as the agency supporting film, advertisements and television in Glasgow. GFO built on the success of the Glasgow Film Fund (GFF), and was set up as a department of Glasgow City Council with the explicit intention of helping indigenous production companies to develop, supporting location shooting in the city, and providing a range of skills and expertise in support of film production. In doing this GFO aimed to promote Glasgow as a recognised media centre and so contribute to the development of a sustainable national film industry. GFO is supported by Scottish Enterprise Glasgow and until 2007 received European funding through Strathclyde European Partnership.<sup>31</sup> Although a very small body with just five full time members of staff, GFO has contributed to a range of conspicuous feature film successes, television drama series and high profile commercials. In 1997, GFO was launched as part of 'Scottish Day' at Cannes Film Festival, showcasing critical successes *Mrs Brown* (Madden, 1997) and *Bent* (Mathias, 1998) which were both nominated for awards at the festival. GFO's high profile launch

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<sup>31</sup> In 2007, cutbacks at Scottish Enterprise resulted in a curtailment of funds to GFO. This meant that the matched funds provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) were lost.

alongside Scottish Screen was slightly marred by rumours of disputes between the new GFO and the Edinburgh and Lothians Screen Industries Office (Garavelli, 1997).

In 2000, GFO piloted a Winter Work scheme, an initiative aimed at providing work for film crews in Glasgow during a traditional lull period. The scheme aimed to help directors make the step from shorts to feature films. As the fund required shooting to take place during the winter months when daylight was limited, it lent itself well to low budget filmmaking. The first project undertaken was in collaboration with Channel 4, *Late Night Shopping* (Metzstein, 2001). Although this proved relatively successful, further collaborations were jettisoned when Film Four was restructured as an internal department of Channel 4. The second attempt, *Solid Air* (Miles Thomas, 2003), was initially conceived in collaboration with the BBC. Although the BBC pulled out of the scheme prior to production, the film went ahead on a reduced budget and was tremendously lauded, winning three BAFTA Scotland Awards in 2000. It did however suffer from a lack of exposure which might have been afforded it had the BBC remained in partnership. From the combined experience of the first two projects, GFO concluded that further risks could be minimised by working in collaboration with a partner with access to production funds as well as distribution expertise. The success of *Solid Air* had also made it apparent that exploiting the cost savings allowed by digital filmmaking would enable the GFO to strengthen the commercial base of the films and so attract outside investment.

GFO's involvement in *Red Road* was first instigated in November 2002, when it approached Gillian Berrie with the offer of development funds that could be made available toward a series of signature pieces by emerging directors. Following successful negotiations between Sigma and Zentropa, and further development of the project, GFO committed to a total spend of £100,000 on Advance Party in July 2003, with £33,000 in development funding being given to each of the three films on the agreement that all of them would be made in Scotland. In March 2005, following Arnold's Academy Award win for her short film *Wasp* (Arnold, 2003), GFO committed a further £125,000 production funding to *Red Road*. Shooting took place in Glasgow from October to December 2005. A further £30,000 Infrastructure Support Funds that GFO provided in August 2005 ensured that post-production services were delivered by Savalas, based in Film City Glasgow.

## **Scottish Screen**

Scottish Screen's involvement in *Red Road* began at Cannes Film Festival in May 2004, when Carole Sheridan, then Development Executive at Scottish Screen, was approached by

producer Carrie Comerford with a pitch for the Advance Party project. Scottish Screen aimed to offset the huge costs involved in film production by intervening at the development stage, in order that a well-developed project would stand more chance of attracting production funding from the market. Scottish Screen's investment in development particularly aims to support projects that have a significant chance of being realised and distributed through television or cinema, making Advance Party an appealing prospect as distribution for the resulting films was assured. After Sheridan and Comerford's initial meeting, Scottish Screen became involved in the development of the Advance Party project and it emerged that *Red Road* was the first project off the blocks. In September 2004, the first draft of the script resulted in Scottish Screen awarding £25,000 in development funding to the film. Thereafter the body was involved in further development and financing, eventually making three payments totalling just over £90,000 toward *Red Road* and providing development guidance for the production. Further funding was allocated by the UK Film Council and BBC Films.

## UK Film Council

The UKFC made the largest financial contribution to the film, awarding funds of over £537,000 to the project. £10,962 of this came from the UKFC's Development Fund which, like Scottish Screen, aimed to increase the number of quality scripts being 'green lit' into production. A further £436,144 went into production financing, with funds from the New Cinema Fund, while the Prints and Advertising (P&A) Fund awarded Verve Pictures an extra £90,000 to distribute the film more widely and increase its spend on publicity.

In 1999, Chris Smith, Secretary of State at the DCMS, announced the rationalisation of existing structures for supporting the UK film industry and created the Film Council (later the UK Film Council). The UKFC was established in 2000 as the UK government's strategic film agency, distributing around £27 million from the National Lottery and £27 million from the government each year to support all areas of the film industry, from development, through distribution, to film education and media literacy. The UKFC is actively involved with film policy, providing advice on industrial, economic and cultural issues and working closely with the government and the film industry. Unlike Scottish Screen which assesses funding applications through a panel process, all decisions over funding allocations at the UKFC are made by the heads of the individual funds. Each UKFC fund works independently of each other, and monies allocated can provide a maximum of 50 per cent of a film's budget. Any investment from the UKFC is often sufficient to act as leverage in gaining funding from other sources.

The Development Fund, overseen by Jenny Borgars, aims to raise the quality of screenplays deriving from the UK through targeted development initiatives, build focused relationships with key talent, and help UK film companies grow sustainable businesses. The fund awarded *Red Road* £10,962 in June 2005.

The New Cinema Fund, under the leadership of Paul Trijbits, awarded *Red Road* two payments, £390,857 in August 2005 and £45,287 in October 2005.<sup>32</sup> The fund is aimed at ‘financing films with passion and verve that connect with a broad range of audiences’ (<http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk/funding>). In particular the fund criteria specify the promotion of ‘diverse, innovative, new and “cutting-edge” filmmaking talent,’ as well as films that use digital technology in their production, have secured a director, and have a clear distribution strategy - preferably a theatrical exhibition. The New Cinema Fund will usually contribute between 15 and 50 per cent of a feature film’s production budget by way of an equity investment, and has considerable conditions attached to the allocation of monies. These include stipulations that the UKFC has the ultimate right of approval over all matters relating to the film, from pre-production to marketing, including the final cut. These rights also include contractual opening and closing credits and a share of copyright in the film. The New Cinema Fund assesses the creative merits of the project before allocating finance. This is generally based on a fully-developed script, though in the case of *Red Road* it was based on the extended treatment of the Advance Party initiative as a whole. In allocating investments, the fund also assesses the director’s previous work, the type of project, the film’s other financing partners, the film’s likely audience and the projected return on an investment.

An additional payment of £90,000 was made to Verve Pictures in October 2006, from the P&A (Prints and Advertising) Fund, led by Head of Development and Exhibition Pete Buckingham. The fund, launched in 2003, supports more commercial British films which nonetheless might be ‘difficult to market’ (<http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk/prints>).

## **BBC Films**

By the time that the production team approached BBC Films, financing for *Red Road* was already in place. BBC Films was predominantly interested in Andrea Arnold’s involvement with the project, as staff were aware of her directorial talent in short filmmaking and had been tracking her progress prior to her Oscar win for *Wasp* in 2003.

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<sup>32</sup> In September 2006, Paul Trijbits left his post as Head of the New Cinema Fund at the UKFC and was replaced by Lenny Crooks, former Head of GFO.

In October 2005, BBC Films acquired the rights for *Red Road* for UK television, and became an equity investor in February 2006. When BBC Films agreed to pre-buy the film for £250,000, Verve Pictures, who liked Arnold's work but lacked financing for P&A, used the money for the film's distribution.

### ***Collaboration and clustering***

Collaborations between new producers and experienced executive producers who had already established familiarity and trust with financiers enabled the skills base of the film to grow organically. Key relationships were already in place between Sigma and Zentropa which enabled the Advance Party initiative to develop.

Carole Sheridan at Scottish Screen was a Development Executive on *Red Road*, but in a previous role had freelanced on the BBC Scotland series *Monarch of the Glen*, where she had worked extensively with Martin Compston who played 'Stevie' in the drama. The director Andrea Arnold had worked her way through the ranks of the screen industries, working as a presenter and writer in children's television and studying film at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. Prior to *Red Road*, two short films she had written and directed received a significant amount of critical acclaim. *Dog* (Arnold, 2001) screened at Cannes Critics Week in 2002, and *Wasp* won a host of awards including the Academy Award for Best Short Film in 2005. Arnold was selected for the Sundance Screenwriters' Lab in January 2005, where she workshopped the script for *Red Road*. Three of the crew that Arnold had worked with on *Wasp* remained on the creative team for *Red Road*: cinematographer Robbie Ryan, editor Nicolas Chaudeurge and production designer Helen Scott. In addition the star of *Wasp*, Natalie Press, had a small role as 'April' in *Red Road*. Kate Dickie had several years experience working in television, and both she and Tony Curran trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) in Glasgow. Curran also had several years work experience in television and some success in Hollywood. The skills base working on the film meant that each financier had a different reason to be involved in the project. Both the producer and director had evidence of a slate of acclaimed shorts which had won awards, and these visible successes, along with those of the wider creative team, were important in financing the production and marketing the film successfully.

*Red Road* developed quickly in a small creative hub. The vast majority of staffing and resource allocation came from within a five mile radius of the location shoot. Development support was provided from two key bodies with a sound knowledge of the

local talent and skills base and immediate available production resources. On a micro scale, the skills base at Film City Glasgow alone greatly contributed to the project, with Sigma, Kahleen Crawford Casting and Savalas (post-production facilities) all based at the site and all fully involved in *Red Road*. Conversely, while proximity played an important role in some instances, in others it was necessary to be immersed in part of the wider filmmaking community. In this instance, Cannes Film Festival was crucial in establishing early enthusiasm for the project, even though Sigma and Scottish Screen are less than two miles away from each other at their Glasgow sites.

### ***Distribution and exhibition***

Distribution for *Red Road* was secured through the involvement of Trust Film Sales and Verve Pictures. Trust Film Sales was founded in 1997 as an independent branch of Zentropa, and is the exclusive representative of Zentropa Productions outside of Scandinavia. Trust Film Sales handle worldwide distribution rights for Nordic and international feature films but remain a relatively small company, distributing some twenty feature films each year through a global network. Trust Film Sales achieved international renown with the success of the Dogme films, and later with *Show Me Love* (Moodysson, 1998), *Dancer in the Dark* (von Trier, 2000), *Dogville* (von Trier, 2000), *Together* (Moodysson, 2001), *Elling* (Naess, 2001), and *Lilja 4-Ever* (Moodysson, 2002). Although it focuses on international releases of arthouse films at festivals around the world, Trust Films Sales also has a separate television label which handles more commercial films. Trust secured Verve Pictures, an independent UK distributor which handles British and independent films, in October 2005, before principal photography had begun on the film. Following *Red Road's* success at Cannes, Trust Films were able to sell the film to distributors worldwide, including a deal with Tartan Distribution for the US market.

*Red Road* premiered at the 59<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival in May 2006, where it won the *Prix du Jury*. On its initial screening most critics were agreed that the film was likely to be a success on the independent/arthouse circuit, but in fact its eventual distribution was much wider than that, reaching many multiplex cinemas and featuring in the line-up for several international film festivals. On hearing about the *Prix du Jury*, Culture Minister Patricia Ferguson MSP claimed it as proof positive that 'Scotland has a wealth of creative film talent', while Ken Hay, Chief Executive of Scottish Screen, noted that *Red Road's* success demonstrated that 'with a relatively low budget you can take on the best in the world' (Scottish Screen, 2006). It was generally acclaimed as both a 'quality' film and a

culturally important one, was critically well received, and won seventeen major international awards.

### ***National identity***

A co-production of this kind raises obvious questions over authorship and national identity. The film was received as a Scottish success by Scottish critics, and was recognisably Scottish to international critics, who suggested that the cinematography made Glasgow 'look more sinister than it may already be' (Calhoun, 2006) and that its success was at best a 'backhanded compliment' to the city (Mullen, 2006). The imagining of Glasgow as a place of urban deprivation also played a significant role in the marketing of the film, where the crew claimed a knowledge of the real flats' violent reputation while also stating that they experienced a warm reception from local residents.<sup>33</sup> Loss of personal identity is a feature of the text and characters frequently question each other over whether they're from 'round here' or from outwith the development, region and nation. Unusually for a Scottish production, *Red Road* is a very female cinema: ponderous, anti-climatic and sexually transgressive - an alternative vision of national gender and identity which ensured that the film was the focus of much academic attention (see for example, Murray, 2008; Neely, 2008; Sillars and Macdonald, 2008).

It was noted above that the film was a collaborative, small scale project. However the marketing for the film largely ignored the team effort by attributing the director as the film's author, billing *Red Road* as 'a film by andrea arnold'. As a first-time feature director this claim was relatively meaningless, as Arnold had not developed a signature style, much less an oeuvre. The marketing strategy can therefore be seen as specifically designed to appeal to an arthouse audience familiar with the promise of director-as-author (Lay, 2002: 102-3). This billing was further substantiated by the involvement of von Trier, a familiar name to the arthouse circuit. Having von Trier's name associated with the film allowed a form of branding to be attached to *Red Road* which would be the focus of many press reports. It is also worth reiterating that the Advance Party concept, founded by established and experienced filmmakers, was the key enabling factor in securing funds for the project. Margaret Dickinson and Sylvia Harvey (2005) suggest that the majority financier exerts

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<sup>33</sup> Benedict Anderson introduced the idea of the nation as an 'imagined community' in which face to face contact with others of the same nation was not necessary, but that nations existed by collective acts of imagination expressed through the mass media. Through this process each member of the nation holds an imagination of the space in their own mind and considers themselves part of it. The imagined community is also dependent on the existence of the 'other' beyond the boundaries of that community. ANDERSON, B. (2006) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (revised edition), London: Verso.

the strongest influence over a film, if only in so far as the decision has been made to finance this work rather than any other. In this instance the majority financier, the UKFC, does not appear to have exerted this power. Rather, the structure provided by the initiative enabled the UKFC to give Arnold 'huge support' and a 'huge amount of flexibility to do what she wanted' (Casting Director, 2007).

National boundaries are often the organising principles behind cultural policy decisions, and the intervention of the governmental bodies involved in this project used this as a basis for their intervention. The UKFC uses the cultural test of British films as the premise for its investment, and since 2002 has pursued a distribution-led strategy aimed at increasing the sustainability of the UK's film industries. This strategy envisioned cinema as 'an immensely powerful medium at the heart of the UK's creative industries' (Parker, 2002: 2). Scottish Screen, with its interest in supporting the economic and cultural value of the Scottish screen industries, requires that applicants for funding must fulfil set criteria on an eligibility scorecard which examines the cultural, creative, business and market interests of the project in order to determine the relative value of the film in terms of the agency's investment. Generally speaking, location shoots score poorly on the criteria for cultural and creative relevance, but are likely to make a significant impact on the Scottish economy, with additional positive benefits on short-term local employment and increased global visibility of Scotland as a location. In contrast, a film such as *Red Road* which had a sturdy but relatively low impact on the local economy, scored more highly on the cultural and creative side, being recognisably Scottish and supporting indigenous production companies. Scottish Screen's involvement in *Red Road* was therefore in support of Sigma Films and the team surrounding the Advance Party project.

Like the Dogme manifesto, the limitations that Advance Party imposed on the creative approach offered a set of guiding principles which structured the creative process. For the production of *Red Road* this appears to be a useful and facilitating factor, but it is also notable that this framework was wont to change from its inception. In pre-production for the first Advance Party film, the seven bible characters were amended to constitute nine characters, a process described as, 'choosing when to break rules as well as when you've really got to be forced to keep within them' (Casting Director, 2007). During the course of Advance Party, a creative process which may take up to ten years, the structure is likely to be prone to further changes. In March 2008, it was announced that Andy Armour (who played Alfred in *Red Road*), had been dropped from the second film of the Advance Party trilogy, *Rounding Up Donkeys* (McKinnon, in production), and replaced by another actor, James Cosmo. It was speculated that this may have been down to financier pressure,



although Berrie argued that it was simply that Cosmo could more adequately play the role required by the second film (Pendreigh, 2008). These anomalies raise questions over the 'rules' of Advance Party. Notably, if they can be changed then what are the rules? What would constitute creative success or failure by these principles? And at what point would they cease to be valid criteria for public finance?

## **Case study 2: The Comedy Unit**

We like to think that comedy's actually a very important part of the Scottish cultural economy if you like, of all the different things that Scotland produces... It's as important as film, probably far more people watch comedy on the telly than ever go and see films, go and see *Red Road*, do you know what I mean? (Managing Director, The Comedy Unit, 2007)

This case study explores an independent production company based in Glasgow, The Comedy Unit. Although The Comedy Unit is involved the production of radio and television programmes, live shows, and undertakes personnel management, this section is predominantly concerned with its television production and in particular its interaction with BBC Scotland. The work includes an exploration of the historical context in which The Comedy Unit was established and an overview of the launch and development of the company. In examining The Comedy Unit as a case study this section explores the independent production sector in Scotland and its relationship with BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen.

### ***The independent sector in Scotland***

Earlier, it was noted that the growth of the independent sector in Scotland has been heavily reliant on the national broadcasters which commission programmes, provide industrial training for developing talent and skills, and operate as substantial employers in their own right. Consequently, Chapter 5 noted that the broadcasters act as a core component of a creative cluster, around which other parts of the industry gather. The history of the independent sector in Scotland, and more specifically, The Comedy Unit, is therefore inextricable from the wider debates about the role and function of public service broadcasting. For the indies, one of the central arguments about PSB equates to whether the national broadcasters should have to retain commissions from the UK's nations and regions through a quota system, or whether they should be allowed a free reign over which commissions they choose, regardless of location. Those in favour of the former point out the role that PSB plays in sustaining local economies, reflecting regional diversity and

providing industrial training in the screen industries. Those in favour of the latter argue that it is only through open competition that public service broadcasting is encouraged to maintain its high standards, and that a competitive market enables talent and excellence to thrive. A brief recent history of the indie sector in Scotland illustrates how some of these arguments have come to the fore.

Prior to the 1980s, Scotland had a small number of independent producers who worked across both film and television and came together as a unified voice in a number of professional bodies.<sup>34</sup> The relatively small scale of the indigenous film sector meant an almost total reliance on BBC Scotland, which constituted a significant source of employment for independent producers (Bruce, 1996: 151-155). The relationship with the BBC sustained independent commissions, supplied requisite training and skills, and provided work for freelance independent staff. The founding of Channel 4 in 1982 resulted in substantial growth for the independent sector. Channel 4 broadcast programmes made wholly by independent producers, with a remit to encourage and develop innovative and experimental programming and content. Over the course of the 1980s, the impact of Channel 4 was evident in a number of successful Scottish feature films made for the Film on Four slot. Further growth opportunities for Scottish indies arrived with the report of the Peacock Committee (1986), which recommended that BBC and ITV should source a minimum of 40 per cent of their productions from the independent sector. The rapid growth of the independent sector during the 1980s, with Channel 4 providing the bulk of commissions for small indies, meant that by the early 1990s there were over 1000 independent production companies operating in the UK and an estimated 61 producers based in Scotland (Paterson, 2002: 138). The decade presented further cause for optimism in the independent sector, when the Broadcasting Act 1990 required all the terrestrial broadcasters to source 25 per cent of their production hours from the indies – a policy which came into effect in 1993. In the same year, under the management of Director-General John Birt, the BBC introduced an internal marketplace in which producers chose whether to source their programmes and facilities from BBC suppliers or the independent sector. This strategy, ‘Producer Choice’, was described by Birt (2003: 330) as ‘the biggest devolution of power and decision-making in the organisation’s history’. Two years later, indie production had grown substantially, with the UK indies producing 268 hours in 1983, over 2000 hours in 1989, and more than 4500 hours in 1995 (DCMS, 1998: 106).

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<sup>34</sup> These included the Independent Filmmakers Association (IFA), the Scottish Association of Independent Producers (SAIP), and the Independent Programme Producers Association (IPPA), which merged with the Producer’s Association to form the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT).

In addition to the demands of policymakers, technological advances over the 1990s had a profound effect on the independent sector. The advance of digital technologies, cable and satellite broadcasting, and increased media convergence, opened up new possibilities for independent producers. With a broadcast landscape that was no longer dominated by scarcity of provision, independent producers found a new market for their supplies and the established broadcasters vied for their products. Channel 4 alone increased its Scottish spend from £3.3 million in 1997 to £16.3 million in 2000 (David Graham & Associates, 2003: 17). As digital technology progressed, so too the cost of production dropped for indies. Between 1998 and 2001, the number of people employed in the independent sector in Glasgow increased by over 150 per cent (David Graham & Associates, 2003: 73) and by 2002, 27 per cent of all large indies outside London were based in Scotland (ITC, 2002: 16-17). Unlike the English regions which had a wide geographical spread of independent production, the vast majority of Scottish companies were based in Glasgow. Socio-cultural changes over the course of the decade also played a key part in boosting confidence, creating a more buoyant independent sector, and bolstering the belief that Scotland could compete on a world stage. Conspicuous television and feature film successes (outlined in Chapter 1) received international renown, were popular with audiences, and contributed to Scotland's visibility as both a location shoot and a tourist destination (Bonnar Keenlyside, 2000: 4; Martin-Jones, 2006; Olsberg SPI, 2007: 4).

In conjunction with the changes in policy, technological advances and socio-political reforms, was the further factor of considerable changes in the UK's political structure. In 1999, devolution resulted in two lots of increased funding for BBC Scotland in order to more adequately reflect the changing face of the UK. The first phase of funding, known under the title 'Autumn Vision', was £11 million. This was approved by the Board of Governors in 2000, and was used specifically for improving radio and television coverage of the new political system and structures, including providing programmes devoted to the constitutional procedures of the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood, Edinburgh. The second phase of funding, £14 million in 2001, was intended to redress the imbalance that resulted from this. That is, those sectors of the audience interested in news and current affairs were now being over-served, with a surfeit of programmes directed at their needs. This revealed a lack of drama and entertainment which catered specifically for a Scottish audience. Autumn Vision led to the Scottish soap *River City* (discussed in the next case study), and provided further opportunities for the small independent sector in Scotland which, it was felt, was able to use its local base to produce programmes with a distinctly Scottish flavour.

By 2004, Scotland's independent sector was made up of around sixty independent production companies which were largely based in Glasgow. Together they employed approximately 250 full time staff and generated annual revenues of over £500 million (Broadcast, 2005). Glasgow's independent sector was populated by three types of indies.

1. Local start-ups and small indies, often small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which actively chose to stay small. As the above figures show, employment in the sector was minimal, with companies averaging four employees. Many of the independent firms that were established over the course of the 1980s were tiny, consisting of only one or two people. Examples of these very small indies included Synchronicity and Finestripe.
2. Inward-investing companies which had opened premises in Scotland. Over the late 1990s many small indies were bought out by larger ones in the process of mergers and takeovers facilitated by the Broadcasting Act 1996. Later, the Communications Act 2003, which aimed to stimulate regional production, brought further acquisitions of the small Scottish indies. The 'super-indies' established in this process were often charged with brass-plating, that is, establishing a base in Scotland in order to show that they had met the requirements of the Act, but retaining their power base in London or continental Europe, producing little which was culturally specific to the area, and through a process of retaining intellectual property rights (IPR), contributing little to the local economy. Inward-investing companies raised some concerns due to their assumed instability for the area, as if something changed with the parent company the regional outpost could be the first to be affected in a damage-limitation bid. Inward-investing companies in Glasgow have included Endemol Scotland, Lion Television and Mentorn.
3. The third type were large indigenous indies which had grown from a Scottish base and emerged into the sector as serious players. These included Tern TV, IWC and The Comedy Unit. The latter company forms the basis of this study.

### ***The launch of the Comedy Unit***

The Comedy Unit was established in December 1995 by April Chamberlain, Colin Gilbert and Ian Pattison, all of whom had previously worked together at BBC Scotland. Chamberlain was appointed Business Manager of the Comedy department of BBC Scotland in 1993, where Colin Gilbert already worked as Head of Comedy. Ian Pattison

was a writer at BBC Scotland. In 1995, their decision to leave the corporation and set up as an independent was the cumulative result of a number of factors. Gilbert had twelve years experience in the BBC in a creative role which was fast changing to a managerial role under the directives of Producer Choice (Harvey, 2002). This corporate policy to create an internal marketplace coincided with the growing move into sourcing programmes from the nations and regions, and the decline in the real value of the licence fee. This combination of factors meant that production gains for the nations and regions came at the expense of London production departments, a process which made London staff much more keen to attempt to 'control' what Scotland was doing (Managing Director, The Comedy Unit, 2007). The structural changes of Producer Choice therefore affected BBC Scotland's relationship with the BBC and producers' attitudes to BBC Scotland. The tipping point for Gilbert was when he was given leave of absence to work on *The Baldy Man* with another independent, Working Title. After considerable work on the project BBC Scotland eventually refused to commission the series and it was sold instead to ITV. By this time, the increasing pressure at the BBC for creative staff to take on managerial roles led Gilbert to believe that opportunities to retain creative control of programming might lie in the independent sector. The Comedy Unit was established using revenue from the income stream generated by two programmes that Gilbert had developed at BBC Scotland, *Rab C. Nesbitt* and *Athletico Partick*, as well as money earned from being subcontracted to work on *The Baldy Man*. Under the old terms of trade, the BBC retained IPR to the first two programmes and Gilbert was paid a fee for making them which was deducted from the 'back-end' sales.<sup>35</sup> IPR was retrospectively awarded to Gilbert under the new terms of trade, which resulted in an equitable split for The Comedy Unit when the

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<sup>35</sup> The new terms of trade stipulated that producers should retain IPR, and that the primary rights that broadcasters did routinely acquire should consist only of 'transmission on wholly-owned public service channels' and not overseas sales or packaged media. OFCOM (2004a) *Guidelines for Broadcasters in Drafting Codes of Practice for Commissioning Programmes from Independent Suppliers*, London: Ofcom. Producers at The Comedy Unit admitted to being baffled by the complexities of the rights process, which ensures that the company owns the IPR for *Rab C. Nesbitt* while Ian Pattison retains the copyright on Rab's character. The BBC did own the DVD rights to the first four series of *Chewin' the Fat* although they were awarded to The Comedy Unit on 'first refusal'. Brett Christophers explains part of the procedure:

Full funding was and remains essentially a low-risk option for the independent producer, whereby the broadcaster agrees upfront to meet the full costs of production and pays the producer a production fee on top, sometimes supplemented by a minority share in the back-end. This model traditionally gave the commissioning broadcaster all rights to exploit the resulting programs, not just in primary (free-to-air terrestrial) domestic markets but in secondary markets (such as pay-television, packaged media, and new media) and overseas. For the producer, it meant a low-risk, guaranteed income, but also, more negatively, a very limited ability to accumulate and exploit capital assets. CHRISTOPHERS, B. (2008) 'Television's power relations in the transition to digital: the case of the United Kingdom', *Television and New Media*, 9(3), pp. 239-257.

In the 1980s, almost all independent productions were fully funded, and in 1999, fully funded productions made up over 70 per cent of indie output. DAVID GRAHAM & ASSOCIATES (2000) *Out of the Box: the Programme Supply Market in the Digital Age. A report for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport*, Taunton: David Graham & Associates.

three staff left the corporation. *Rab C. Nesbitt*, discussed further below, was particularly popular on BBC Scotland and continued for a further two series before being concluded in 1999. Its success was a key factor in enabling the team to attain a 'negotiated exit' from BBC Scotland, which enabled The Comedy Unit to continue the mutually convenient relationship that it had established with the broadcaster. By ensuring that the initial financing of the company would sustain it for over two years, The Comedy Unit was able to function relatively risk-free in its early days, a position unlike that of many other indies who were very aware of their precarious positions in the broadcast environment. In establishing The Comedy Unit, Chamberlain and Gilbert respectively assumed strict business and creative roles, and made a point of heavy investment in the development and retention of talent.<sup>36</sup> The company name 'The Comedy Unit' is a tongue-in-cheek reference to what they had collectively been called at the BBC, and the loss of the two was a blow to the broadcaster which responded by re-structuring and setting up a new comedy department. As yet, no BBC Scotland in-house comedy has met with the same degree of acclaim as The Comedy Unit productions.

The company initially set up base at a studio in Charing Cross, Glasgow, and moved to the Glasgow Television and Film Studio in Maryhill in 1998. The site was in close proximity to what was then BBC Scotland's base at Queen Margaret Drive, and is about three miles away from its new home at Pacific Quay. Many of The Comedy Unit's signature programmes are filmed in warehouses on site and location shooting takes place within a mile of the studio. In addition, the company rents out the studio for feature films and network television productions. In October 2007, The Comedy Unit expanded its core business to new offices in Glasgow city centre. It retains the Maryhill studio for productions. The Comedy Unit employs seventeen full time staff and approximately 400 contractors on an annual basis. In the 2006 financial year, the company had a turnover of £6.2 million. About 20 per cent of this was generated through sales of DVDs.

### ***Talent and skills***

From the outset Chamberlain and Gilbert saw that the development and retention of talent was crucial to The Comedy Unit's success. Of The Comedy Unit staff, four people have maintained a particularly high profile in the industry in Scotland: April Chamberlain, Colin

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<sup>36</sup> Ian Pattison left the company in 1997 and moved to London, where he continues to work as a writer.

Gilbert, Ford Kiernan and Greg Hemphill.<sup>37</sup> Chamberlain and Gilbert are seen as a particularly successful combination of business sense and creative skills (ITC, 2002: 28; Wootton, 2006). Actors Ford Kiernan and Greg Hemphill are recognisable primarily for their on-screen personas of Jack Jarvis and Victor McDade in one of The Comedy Unit's more successful productions, *Still Game*. In 2007, they set up their own production company Effingee and bought a studio in Hillington Park, Glasgow, which they rent out for film and television productions. Effingee continues to work closely with The Comedy Unit although it is keen to stress its credentials as an independent in its own right.

### ***National identity***

With devolution I actually think it becomes more important than ever to show that we are a kind of strong, confident sector and to think, 'Well, we're only bothered about pleasing people in Scotland,' is slightly patronising, because what makes you think that something that does a 45 per cent share in Scotland is not a mainstream programme? (Managing Director, The Comedy Unit, 2007)

Chapter 1 argued that national television can be seen as operating in three ways: television in, for and reflecting the nation. This section examines the role of national identity in the media products of The Comedy Unit. The following section on ownership and size considers the impact and influence of media ownership on questions of national identity.

Based in Glasgow, The Comedy Unit clearly produces television in Scotland. As such it contributes to the Scottish national economy, creates jobs, increases the talent pool, and contributes to the formation of a creative cluster which since 2007 has been dominated by BBC Scotland's base at Glasgow's Pacific Quay. The Comedy Unit also produces television for Scotland, a culturally specific television which, regardless of where it is made, aims to address the particular demands of the Scottish audience. As outlined in Chapter 1, since the late 1970s, the focus of the BBC has shifted towards being a public service broadcaster operating and competing in a marketplace. This impacts on the nature of discourses produced, as there is some necessity to produce programmes which present a recognisable image of Scotland which can be sold to a global market (Caughie, 1982: 114). By 2002, most indies were moving away from producing just for their regional sector toward producing programmes for national and international sales (ITC, 2002: 18). Nonetheless much of The Comedy Unit's success can be attributed to it producing a very distinctively Scottish style of comedy. As Managing Director April Chamberlain argues:

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<sup>37</sup> Ford Kiernan and Greg Hemphill were employed by The Comedy Unit on a freelance basis, rather than being retained as full time staff at the company. They have worked closely with The Comedy Unit for over ten years.

I have always felt that comedy is best when it has a sense of place. Having said that, I don't think we make programmes that only appeal to Scottish people. We just make good comedy and I believe that if you make fantastic programmes it shouldn't matter where you are based. (Rogers, 2006)

The Comedy Unit productions almost entirely comprise Scottish actors, are filmed on location in Glasgow, and make heavy use of regional accents and Scottish phrases. Getting this right is a tricky business. Stuart Cosgrove, Director of Nations and Regions, Channel 4, notes a tendency for Scottish writers to be 'over-fixated with Scottish subject matter, which doesn't always translate too well into English audience figures' (Burns, 2007a). Similarly if programmes are perceived as being 'too' Scottish in content they are often derided as parochial and introspective.

When we're doing stuff for BBC Scotland we're constantly thinking of the Scottish audience. And you're not thinking, 'Oh, if this goes well in Scotland we'll maybe get it run in England,' because then you're trying to please two places and you end up pleasing none. So even if it means putting in Scottish references or Scottish slang, or whatever just because the Scottish audience will get it, then that's what we do. (Senior Producer, The Comedy Unit, 2007)

One of The Comedy Unit's more successful programmes, *Rab C. Nesbitt*, was first produced by Colin Gilbert when he worked at BBC Scotland. The eponymous Rab is a drunk, foul-mouthed, sexist misanthrope played by Gregor Fisher, based on a character who first appeared as a sketch on *Naked Video* in 1987. A seasonal special was shown on BBC Scotland in 1988, and repeated on a network broadcast in 1989. The following year *Rab C. Nesbitt* was granted a television series which ran for six seasons. Another favourite, *Chewin' the Fat*, began as a sketch show on BBC Radio Scotland in 1997, and was commissioned for television by BBC Scotland in 1998, where it has run for five series. One of the more popular sketches on *Chewin' the Fat* followed the misadventures of pensioners Jack and Victor, played by Ford Kiernan and Greg Hemphill. This sketch was launched as a spin-off series for BBC Scotland, *Still Game*, in 2002, and by 2004 it was commanding 1.11 million viewers per episode (BBC, 2004: 7). In 2004, BBC2 screened a selection of repeats from the first two series to a network audience of 1.36 million and this success led to a network commission from BBC2 for its fourth series in 2006. To date, *Still Game* has run to over forty episodes over six seasons, all written by Kiernan and Hemphill. Although the network series was successful, the decision to broadcast more widely was met with consternation in some quarters by those who feared it would lose its distinctively Scottish voice (Broadcast, 2004). This concern was not mirrored by the staff of The Comedy Unit, who were aware that the BBC had long had a public image synonymous with a perceived British national identity, an image which held at best a limited and at



worst a loaded meaning for a Scottish audience. The distinctively Scottish voice of The Comedy Unit's productions was therefore crucial to BBC Scotland's attempts to recapture a declining audience share and ensure that it retained relevance for its national audience. Ofcom (2006b: 55) noted that in 2005, programmes made by The Comedy Unit constituted three of the top ten most popular programmes in Scotland. These were *Chewin' the Fat* (no. 3), *Still Game* (no. 7) and *Only an Excuse?* (no. 9). Although three out of the top four programmes were soaps, *River City*, the Scottish soap discussed in the following case study, did not feature in this list. Despite their popularity, many of the representations of Scotland offered by The Comedy Unit have been contested, with *Rab C. Nesbitt* particularly being cited as a derogatory vision of the country and its citizens (Mowatt, 2008; Robinson, 2002). The concerns recognise that many of The Comedy Unit's programmes are seen by audiences outwith Scotland, a situation which is reliant on the process of commissioning for the UK network discussed in Chapter 4. Although the arguments for a commissioning base at BBC Scotland are well versed, the lack of commissioning presence has not affected The Comedy Unit, at least partly because of the connections and relationships established when its founder members worked there. A source at The Comedy Unit noted that a network commissioner based at Pacific Quay might even work to the indies' disadvantage, giving BBC Scotland an 'in-house advantage' over the independent sector (Senior Producer, The Comedy Unit, 2007).

When the company was first established in the mid 1990s, The Comedy Unit would aim to screen its products on one of the five terrestrial channels. This necessarily affected the form and content of the programmes. Since then, the expansion of digital television has affected the nature of the programming offered and allowed the company to produce programmes that are 'a bit quirkier' for the digital stations, and the 'popular stuff that everybody will like' for BBC Scotland (Senior Producer, The Comedy Unit, 2007). As the expansion of digital media continues, The Comedy Unit are fully able to produce, distribute and exhibit content without the intervention of the major broadcasters. The era of media plenty (Ellis, 2000b) has begun to alter the power balance between the indies and the broadcasters, and staff at The Comedy Unit report easy relationships with commissioning editors who they can approach with ideas via YouTube, desktop editing and burning DVDs. In 2007, the BBC appointed a dedicated regional commissioner based at MediaCity:UK, whose success is measured on how many network commissions they achieve from the nations and regions. The Comedy Unit reports a useful working relationship with this commissioner and is sympathetic to the problems that BBC Scotland faces in establishing a network commissioning presence at Pacific Quay.

## ***Ownership and size***

By the late 1990s, the number of medium-sized indies had begun to decline, and the sector became increasingly polarised between small niche operations and much larger indies (David Graham & Associates, 2003). A report by the Independent Television Commission (ITC, 2002: 7) concluded that independent producers faced a turbulent future in which the sector would only be sustained by ‘the survival of fewer, larger companies with national and international clout’. While the ITC were wary of these implications, many welcomed the influx of big indies to Glasgow as an opportunity to benefit from increased commissions (Burns, 2007b). David Frank, Chief Executive of RDF Media, also looked favourably on the consolidation of indies into larger players, and in August 2006, The Comedy Unit was acquired by RDF for £6.5 million. The RDF group creates, acquires and distributes television content, and particularly invests in content which has a life beyond its initial broadcast, whether in the form of ancillary revenue or overseas format sales (Mediatique, 2005: 11). The purchase raised questions over the perceived Scottishness of The Comedy Unit and had further implications for the Scottish indie sector. On its acquisition RDF promised to ‘aggressively’ grow The Comedy Unit, establishing a base for the company in London, hiring new comedy talent and developing opportunities in the US through its American branch. The acquisition offered The Comedy Unit immediate London and global connections, but also brought problems of its own. Prior to its buyout, The Comedy Unit had been one of the most successful indigenous indies. RDF’s involvement raised questions over the nature of ownership of the company and the extent to which it was now seen as a company in Scotland which had been bought up as a process of inward investment. Two issues clarify this situation. First, The Comedy Unit’s involvement with Scottish Screen, and second, RDF’s involvement with the BBC.

### **The Comedy Unit and Scottish Screen**

From 1995 to 2007, The Comedy Unit’s considerable achievements meant that it was almost universally championed as a Scottish success, but following its buyout by RDF, staff reported that Scottish Screen no longer considered it to be a ‘Scottish’ company and was consequently resistant to working with it. In contrast, Scottish Enterprise was seen to be ‘much more keen to develop the industry’ than Scottish Screen, prepared to support the move of larger companies to Scotland in order to promote and sustain the infrastructure (Managing Director, The Comedy Unit, 2007). The Comedy Unit’s expansion and acquisition therefore raises questions over the role and limitations of national bodies.

Which companies or individuals do they support and how do they define and attach provisos to their national status? At what stage does their intervention stop? Staff at The Comedy Unit implied that the singular economic remit of Scottish Enterprise enabled its continued support, while the dual economic and cultural remit of Scottish Screen was an inhibiting factor in its intervention. The second issue over ownership concerned the extent to which the growth and expansion of The Comedy Unit was good for the company, and had further implications for the growth of the sector in Scotland.

## **RDF and the BBC**

In July 2007, an issue was raised regarding an RDF programme which had been commissioned by BBC1. The trailer for *A Year With the Queen* had been found to be edited in such a way that it misrepresented the Queen's actions. The event came at an unfortunate time for the BBC. On 18 July, Ofcom published a report which raised doubts over the veracity of premium phone lines used for phone-in competitions by all the broadcasters (Ayre, 2007). One of the guilty programmes was trusted BBC children's programme, *Blue Peter* (BBC, 1958-date) (Ofcom, 2007a). In Scotland, the doubts over the extent to which the BBC could be trusted were further weighted by the socio-political climate of the time, which had among other things, recently seen the SNP elected to office. The events quickly turned into a scandal, resulting in several high profile suspensions, resignations and investigations in the broadcasting industry. The issue of broadcasting trust dominated the events of the Edinburgh International Television Festival, the Royal Television Society lectures (Sir Michael Lyons, 2007) and persisted well into the following year (Thompson, 2008). In response to the events, the BBC announced that it would not accept any commissions from RDF until a report was published in the autumn. This decision immediately led to concerns that RDF's loss of commissions would effectively mean a shutdown of the Scottish independent sector - as both The Comedy Unit and IWC were owned by the larger company (Macwhirter, 2007b).

In the short term, the incident did not have the feared predicted impact. Due to the nature of commissioning cycles and the long lead-in time for comedy, many programmes by The Comedy Unit were already in the early stages of production or had been agreed prior to the RDF suspension. The Comedy Unit went ahead with an ambitious expansion of its core business in October 2007, and secured a straight to network commission with a six-part sitcom, *Empty*, for BBC2 the following month. But by late 2008, with a global economic crisis looming, the two seasons of commissions that RDF had missed had begun to take its toll. No new series by The Comedy Unit had been acquired by the BBC and it looked as

though this would significantly affect the company's growth for the following three years. In addition, a personal dispute between The Comedy Unit and Effingee had led to BBC Scotland siding with the talent rather than the producers, resulting in commissions for the newer company while The Comedy Unit was left without. By November, many of The Comedy Unit staff were being laid off and short-term freelance contracts were not being renewed.

The *Queen* incident displayed some of the problems that could arise from the takeover of small Scottish indies by larger multinationals. As an indie, The Comedy Unit enjoys some maverick, rebellious associations which are a useful adjunct to the comedy genre. But the company name also implies the industrial, compartmentalised, labour intensive and genre-specific nature of production. The incident between RDF and the BBC acted as a reminder that the success of The Comedy Unit is contingent to the economic climate in which it operates.

### **Case study 3: *River City***

The genesis of *River City* was as much as anything because we felt there was no contemporary drama conversation that was happening that reflected "a version" of a contemporary Scotland, and soaps are always just a version. (Controller, BBC Scotland, 2007)

It is easy to be deceived by the apparent banality of soap opera. Unlike politics, with its rich and lofty symbolism of unnerving potency, soaps seem to be little more than lowly and ephemeral simulations of the relentlessly ordinary. (Coleman, 2008: 201)

Disputes over the level of devolution in broadcasting have frequently centred on news and current affairs broadcasting, as Chapter 4 outlined in relation to the Scottish Six. The concern that exists over fictional works tends to focus on two areas. First, fictional programmes make up a proportion of those works that are made in Scotland and commissioned, or not, for network television. These debates over commissioning decisions and the proportion of production allocated to the nations and regions have run throughout this thesis. Second, fictional works are also seen as having a cultural role which is absolutely taken for granted, that is, the rhetoric that the stories that we tell ourselves and others are important in constructing and maintaining a sense of self in relation to the other. This argument most frequently boils down to discussions on representations of nationality in fictional media, where *Monarch of the Glen* (BBC, 2000-2005) is seen as portraying a 'heather and highlands' image of Scotland which is stereotypical but nonetheless appealing, and *Taggart* (STV, 1983-date) a hard-man image

of Glasgow which is stereotypical but nonetheless popular. As Richard Dyer (1993: 1) argues, 'much image analysis seems only to demonstrate that everything is the same and it's all awful'. The recognition and reception of these images also highlights the paradox that representations of Scotland which are not stereotypical run the risk of being invisible. These are not unimportant arguments but do not form the basis of the discussion here. What is at the heart of this case study is the importance of Scottish indigenous production and the extent to which this has been affected by devolution. The study looks at *River City*, a BBC Scotland soap opera and an in-house production intended for transmission within Scotland. Examining *River City* enables an exploration of policy initiatives responding to devolution and their impact on the Scottish film and television infrastructure.

### ***Historical context***

The history of the television soap opera is bound up with the history of women's consumption. Here, the sponsorship of US soaps by advertisers selling domestic products in the early half of the twentieth century gave the genre its name. The targeting of products at a female audience was one of the factors which ensured that soaps were seen as domestic, and consequently, trivial. In addition to their sites of reception, the narrative form of soaps were argued to have more feminine traits, being open ended, multi-layered and heavily reliant on dialogue, gossip and character events. In the late 1970s, academic attention began to shift from studying television texts towards examining how television audiences responded to them. This shift recognised that 'the audience' did not exist as one homogeneous mass, but was made up of many interrelated, overlapping and diverse groups. Although soaps were, and sometimes still are, regarded as inconsequential fodder, academic studies of audiences have allowed reclamations of the genre by postmodernist and feminist scholars highlighting the importance of studying popular drama (Ang, 1989; Geraghty, 1991; Hobson, 1982). Further studies into the complexities of the ways in which viewing context affects audience interpretation of, and interaction with, television, have made soaps a serious object of study (Storey, 1999).

In the UK, an influx of American dramas over the 1980s witnessed *Dallas* (CBS, 1978-1991) and *Dynasty* (ABC, 1981-1989) targeting audiences with unashamedly escapist material. The popularity of these was supplemented by daytime Australian series such as *Neighbours* (BBC, 1986-2008; Five, 2008-date) and *Home and Away* (ITV, 1988-2000; Five, 2001-date). The success of these soaps however, was reliant to some extent on the history of British soap operas, a genre which is inextricable from the history of public service broadcasting. In this chronicle, the first broadcast of *Coronation Street* witnessed

the birth of the regular television soap and ensured that it was firmly rooted in a social realist aesthetic which would provide the basis for audience understanding of, and broadcaster approach to, *Crossroads* (Carlton, 1964-1988; 2001-2003), *Emmerdale* (Yorkshire, 1972-date), *Brookside* (Channel 4, 1982-2003), *EastEnders* (BBC, 1985-date), and *Hollyoaks* (Channel 4, 1995-2001; E4 2001-date). The roots of British soap are therefore concomitant with public service ideals of reflecting the cultural diversity of its audience. The soap, however fantastical, is considered to serve a social function in a way that does not apply to other genres.

The social purpose of soaps has been explored in a discourse examining how the genre functions within broadcasting institutions. This history brings together the role of institutions with that of the audience, noting that individual readings of, and engagement with, soaps is intertwined with their perceived role as a form of social documentation. For broadcasting institutions, soap operas are relatively low-cost to produce, albeit that this is within the most expensive genre of drama. The same settings and cast members are used repeatedly, while the open-ended narrative structure allows different characters to come in and out of prominence, affording cast and crew time for rehearsals and holidays with minimal disruption to the narrative flow. Multiple narrative strands offer the opportunity to capture different audience groups, and allow the soap to be watched in a secondary, casual fashion, often while undertaking other activities (Tunstall, 1983). Everyday 'social issues' re-surface over time as they do in real life, and so increase audience identification with the characters (Branston and Stafford, 2003: 45). For these reasons, soaps have generally been regarded as the genre most likely to enter everyday life. As Gill Branston and Roy Stafford identify, the everydayness of soaps does not mean that they are necessarily a more 'realist' genre, as limitations on realism within the text exist. Soap characters for example, rarely discuss which soaps they watch, or refer to contentious political issues. Nonetheless their ability to permeate normal existence through media synergy - in news comparisons with real events, star exposure in celebrity magazines, and storylines which cover 'social issues', allow soaps to transgress the boundaries between fact and fiction. Soaps therefore offer ample opportunities for broadcasters to fulfil a public service remit, at once informing, educating and entertaining their audience.

Prior to 2002, Scottish soaps had some short-lived success. STV produced *High Living* (STV, 1968-1971) and subsequent spin-off *A Place of Her Own* (STV, 1971), an urban soap, *Garnock Way* (STV, 1976-1979), and Gaelic soap, *Machair* (STV, 1993-1998) (O'Donnell, 2008). Network success was achieved with *Take the High Road* (STV, 1980-2003), re-named *High Road* in 1992 - to date Scotland's longest-running soap. Continuing

dramas in the form of *Hamish Macbeth* (BBC, 1995-1997) and *Monarch of the Glen* (BBC, 2000-2005) proved very popular with audiences north and south of the border and global sales providing a lucrative source of revenue. While popular, both series were also criticised for their bucolic portrayal of Scotland, the same censure that had often been applied to *High Road*. *Taggart*, on air since 1983, is the longest running police drama series in the UK.

### **Digital soap**

Many of the works on soap operas referred to above are studies a pre-digital age, which nonetheless provide a useful structure for viewing soaps and their audiences within a particular social and historical context. As media change and audiences become more fragmented, the role and reception of soap opera, like that of PSB, is changing. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, it can be difficult to determine where a soap ends and series begins, as narrative formats and scheduling habits are becoming increasingly blurred. Demands that broadcasters compete in a multi-channel environment has meant that larger soaps such as *EastEnders*, once broadcast twice a week, now occupies four evening slots as well as an omnibus weekend edition. The success of weekly drama *Casualty* (BBC, 1986-date) enabled the BBC to launch spin offs *Holby City* (BBC, 1999-date) and *Holby Blue* (BBC, 2007-date), which although stand-alone series, together create a meta-diegesis that takes place at least three nights a week. In addition, like all television series, the web is increasingly becoming a site for audiences to watch and interact with soap opera. All of these factors, as well as the genre's history and audience outlined above, have impacted on producers' preferred terminology for discussing soaps, which are sometimes referred to as 'continuing dramas'.<sup>38</sup>

### **The format**

*River City* draws on the social realist aesthetic integral to UK-produced soap operas, following the lives of around forty characters in the fictional urban neighbourhood of Shieldinch. Glasgow is not referred to directly in the soap, although the opening sequence uses recognisable images of the city. The first programme was broadcast on 24 September 2002, and until 2008 continued in a twice-weekly, half hour format. *River City* is not filmed on Pacific Quay, but on a set built especially for the show at the former J&B whisky

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<sup>38</sup> Christine Geraghty notes that Granada did not refer to *Coronation Street* as a soap, in GERAGHTY, C. (1991) *Women and Soap Opera. A Study of Prime Time Soaps*, Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 4.

plant in Dumbarton, near Glasgow. Here the soap is shot on a small industrial estate immediately surrounded by residential housing. The set consists of four tenement blocks, a pub, a boatyard, some shops and a subway exterior. Location filming additionally takes place around Glasgow.

In February 2008, following successful trials, BBC Scotland began to offer tours of the *River City* set. On the tour in June 2008, staff made a point of emphasising the series' realness against *EastEnders*, and how much they had achieved in comparison with the longer running soap. This included noting that the *EastEnders* set is built to scale where *River City*'s is full size, that *River City*'s horseshoe-shaped bar is more amenable to multiple angles than that of the *Eastenders*' Queen Vic's single strip bar, and that the cigarette packets in *EastEnders*' corner shop never look as though they have been accessed, compared to the more ramshackle display in *River City*. A questionnaire following the tour included the questions: Do you feel that *River City* reflects modern Scotland? How long have you been watching the programme? Are you more likely to watch other BBC programmes as a result of visiting the set?

*River City* is accompanied by a website which features background information about the characters and actors, behind-the-scenes information on the filming of the show, frequently asked questions (FAQs), interviews, competitions, a chat forum, and gossip about forthcoming episodes. It also offers people the chance to audition for a part on the show and to visit the set in Dumbarton.

NTL Digital customers in the Greater Glasgow area can watch episodes of the soap 'on demand' for up to one week after its broadcast transmission. Subscribers to Sky and NTL Digital can access it on BBC1 Scotland at its normal time. It is not available on Freeview, so once missed, the programme can only be seen on television by viewers accessing satellite or cable services through a commercial provider rather than the BBC. From January 2008, programmes were made available on the iPlayer,<sup>39</sup> and in May 2008, the launch of Freesat offered further opportunities for increased digital coverage.

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<sup>39</sup> Figures for people accessing *River City* through the iPlayer were not available. In 2008, research by Ofcom found that 30 per cent of the Scottish population had used the Internet to watch television. This statistic showed little variation between rural and urban populations, with the exception of Glasgow, where the number was significantly lower. OFCOM (2008b) *The Communications Market 2008: Nations and Regions. Scotland*, London: Ofcom. p. 29.



## ***Aims and impact***

*River City* will continue to highlight issues of social concern in an accessible format and audiences will be guided to advice and support where appropriate. (BBC, 2006: 92)

Although staff at BBC Scotland had been arguing for a Scottish soap since the early 1990s, it was only made possible with the second influx of money from the Autumn Vision funding, referred to in the previous case study on *The Comedy Unit*. The devolved nations used their monies for different purposes.<sup>40</sup> In establishing a Scottish soap, BBC Scotland had two key aims for *River City*. The first was that by creating a stable base of regular, steady employment, the soap would contribute to the maintenance and sustenance of the Scottish film and television infrastructure. This included increasing the talent pool in Scotland, acting as a talent ladder for staff in front of and behind the camera, and stopping the talent drain to London - a factor which had long been acknowledged to be a problem for the Scottish screen industries. The second goal was that *River City* would speak specifically to a Scottish audience. For BBC Scotland, this allowed an opportunity to redress the paucity of Scottish representation on screen and helped the corporation to respond to the calls in the Charter Review for a greater variety of voices and accents on television.

## ***The creative economy***

In creating a Scottish soap, BBC Scotland could show a commitment to a steady, regular output which would more accurately reflect the cultural diversity of its audience. A scheduled peak time broadcast on a terrestrial channel ensured it was available to the entire Scottish audience. The regularity of a soap format offered BBC Scotland the chance to meet other objectives, including a commitment to a long-term project and a proved interest in developing the Scottish creative industries. The project was also firmly situated in ideas about the BBC as 'the most creative organisation in the world' that had found resonance under Greg Dyke (Ford, 2002).

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<sup>40</sup> With its extra funding, BBC Wales sought to improve the amount of shows produced for the network, and to return talent to the area rather than grow it outwards. The outcome of this was most evident in the filming of *Doctor Who* in Cardiff, a success which produced the spin-off series *Torchwood*. The 'Doctor Who effect' infused Welsh broadcasting with confidence, although the series' success has proved divisive in Wales, where it is seen as failing to produce something identifiably 'Welsh'. I am indebted to Professor Kevin Willams, Swansea University, for this information.

BBC Scotland commissioned Simons Priest & Associates (2001) to undertake audience research into the parameters for the new soap. The aims of the primary research were threefold: to help guide and develop the most popular television soap drama for a Scottish audience, to define how the storyline, character and location of a Scottish soap should reflect, celebrate and connect with Scotland's television audience, and to explore viewers' needs and expectations regarding various output specifics. The respondents to the research were already viewers of at least one of the 'big four' soaps (*Coronation Street*, *EastEnders*, *Emmerdale* and *Brookside*). The research found that BBC Scotland's initial vision for the new soap and the audience appetite for it were closely linked in many respects. In particular, there was high approval for the idea of a drama about contemporary life in urban Scotland, with a defining style and wit of its own. The Glasgow setting was viewed as particularly important, placing the soap among the big four by being based in a major city. Although it was acknowledged that there would be some 'jealousy' from Edinburgh, the respondents felt that Glasgow was the trendier and more appropriate setting. The research found real antagonism toward the prospect of a rural setting, with *Take the High Road* being frequently cited as a stereotypical and irrelevant view of Scottish life. Respondents were equally keen to avoid other national clichés, such as: 'the drunk, violent, unfit, over-weight, dour, kilt/tartan wearing, haggis eating, thrifty, English hating, drug addict' (Simons Priest & Associates, 2001: 27). The research identified four things that would particularly resonate with the Scottish audience: humour, football, accents and references to Scottish life. Humour was felt to be of particular importance in defining the cultural specificity of the soap, with *Chewin' the Fat* being cited as a programme which had achieved the right level of banter and sardonic wit. Football was considered to be so integral to Scottish life that several respondents noted that the lack of it in other soaps frequently struck them as peculiar, although it was also suggested that football should be referred to in a non-partisan way, with references to 'our team' and 'the game', rather than Celtic or Rangers.<sup>41</sup> Other programmes were criticised for the use of English actors using poor Scottish accents, and for the use of any Scottish accent without regard to whether it was true to regional specificity. While the focus groups used in the research were anxious that the soap should be entertainment rather than 'issue heavy drama', references to Scottish politics and racial diversity were felt to be important to reflect the 'real' contemporary Glasgow. With this in mind, it was also decided that the programme should contain location shooting and not just be set bound. BBC Scotland were encouraged by the positive audience approval for the suggested soap. There was optimism among respondents that the BBC was taking Scotland seriously enough to devote significant

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<sup>41</sup> The inclusion of football proved a little difficult as it was argued that soap's traditionally female audience enjoyed the programmes as football-free territory.

resources to such a project, and expectations that the involvement of the BBC would result in a higher-quality drama than an ITV production (Simons Priest & Associates, 2001).

Staff at BBC Scotland said that *River City* was not specifically intended to be an in-house production, but was eventually considered to be too large a project for an independent. The project required major input to achieve the base and scale of investment which was anticipated to make a marked difference to the sector. Approximately £50 million over five years was devoted to *River City* in order to start up, including money to build the Dumbarton set. Writer Stephen Greenhorn, who had an established relationship with BBC Scotland's drama department after working on an earlier series, *Glasgow Kiss* (BBC, 2000), was charged with developing the original treatment. Greenhorn led a team of fifteen writers.

*River City* enabled BBC Scotland to achieve some of its public service objectives, being variously cited in annual reviews as an example of how the institution connects with audiences and enhances the BBC's reputation. Over the years of its production, a series of public events have included educational exhibitions on the making of *River City*, the cast have appeared for various charity appeals, and Asian characters and characters with disabilities have helped BBC Scotland to meet its targets for reaching all audiences. In response to findings that the soap was particularly popular with 16-24 year olds, screenwriters targeted several storylines aimed specifically at this demographic, many of which were developed in conjunction with another BBC Scotland multi-media initiative, *Teen Commandments*. Social issues such as drug use, teenage pregnancy, bullying, racism, domestic violence and suicide have been credited with being handled in a realistic and sympathetic way. Helplines for viewers that might have been affected by the storylines are broadcast at the end of particularly sensitive programmes and the web site offers further advice and information on the issues raised (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/tv/rivercity>).

In addition to its public service remit, *River City* was always intended to make an impact on the Scottish creative economy. The Dumbarton set was built at an estimated cost of £12 million, with BBC Scotland staff hopeful about the prospect of having another visible base outwith Pacific Quay. The soap also aimed to act as a training ground for talent on and off camera. From the outset, BBC Scotland staff were aware that as a dedicated programme, *River City* would be unlikely to attract high-end acting talent (Controller, BBC Scotland, 2007). It was nonetheless anticipated that the show would boost the talent and skills base of the area. At the launch of the soap, Ken MacQuarrie, then Head of Programmes, BBC Scotland, saw *River City* as the first step in 'developing a star factory' that would work for

the long-term benefit of the creative industries and economy in Scotland (Ford, 2002). In interviews for this research, staff at BBC Scotland were keen to stress the achievements of those *River City* actors who had gone on to appear in network shows and feature films after appearing in *River City*, and Appendix C lists the most notable achievements of a selection of the actors, directors and writers. Although BBC Scotland claimed that a key role of *River City* was the development of talent, it does not operate a formal talent tracking process and it is consequently unclear how talent, and indeed the success of the show, is measured.<sup>42</sup> A senior source at BBC Scotland identified that the lack of monitoring was because ‘we have no pressing business need to know where staff have moved to’, and later argued that,

[*River City*] is absolutely about attracting talent with the potential for development - the point about the tracking process is that the success of the programme is measured by audience reaction, the impact it has, its value for money, its cultural representation, etc. rather than by where those who work on it move to next. That it does develop staff is inherent to its existence and the fact that many go on to work on other productions is evidence of the quality it can and does produce behind the scenes (as well as in front of the camera) - but, nice as that is for us to know and be aware of, to loosely track and occasionally celebrate, for us to start formally tracking the career progress and paths of its staffing would require resourcing and would not return value to audiences against tight resource budgets. (Confidential source, BBC Scotland, 2008)

As noted in Chapter 3, BBC Scotland released limited data for this research and the audience figures that were revealed are discussed further below. The data did not include Appreciation Index (AI) statistics,<sup>43</sup> economic figures, or any details about cultural representation. The methodological problems associated with obtaining data from the BBC are discussed further below.

### ***The audience***

I think one of the things that was marked with *River City* was that it had been many years since people had heard Scottish voices, Scottish accents, Scottish dialect on the airwaves talking to them, on the BBC. (Controller, BBC Scotland, 2007)

From the outset, the significant expenditure accorded to the series necessitated that *River City* build up a loyal and committed following, estimated by the press to constitute a 33 per cent share of available viewers (Gallagher, 2003). As noted above and in Chapter 3, some

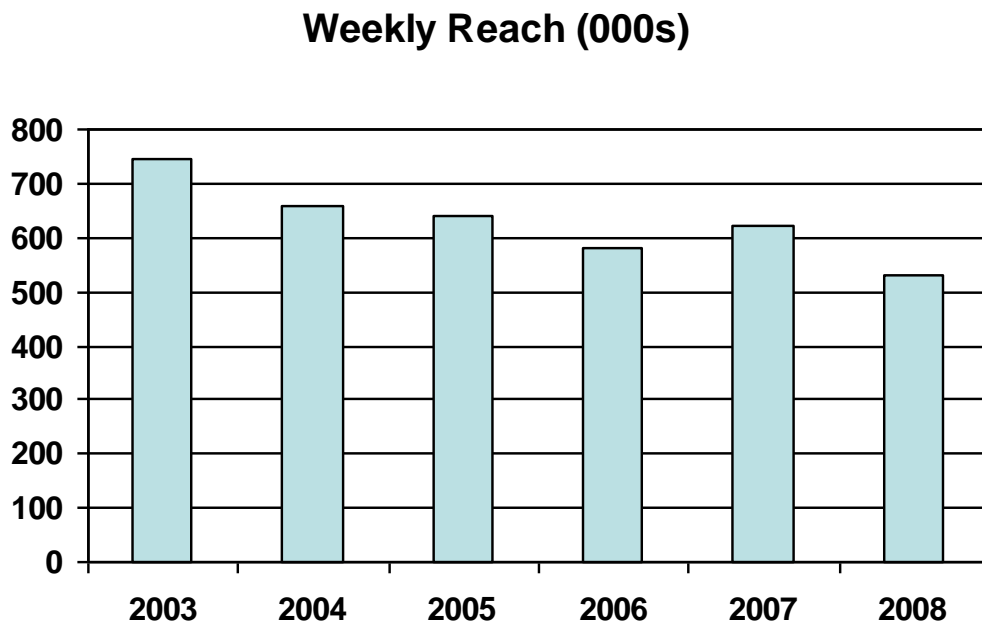
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<sup>42</sup> Following the advice of the Controller, BBC Scotland, requests for information on talent tracking were made to the Head of Talent and Change Director, Commissioning Editor and the Producer of *River City*, but no information was forthcoming. The Head of Drama, BBC Scotland, declined to be interviewed in relation to this research.

<sup>43</sup> AI figures are a BBC in-house measure of how much audiences value programmes.

problems were encountered in obtaining data from BBC Scotland on *River City's* performance. Through the course of this research, 23 requests were made to the corporation for viewing figures for *River City*, before BBC Scotland released four tables of information which are discussed below. I obtained the BARB viewing figures for *River City* elsewhere, and they are provided in Appendix D (Figures 11-19). These BARB statistics have been adjusted to reflect *River City's* weekday audience only, and do not take account of viewing figures for the series' omnibus edition, launched in 2003.<sup>44</sup> *River City* was launched amid a high profile publicity campaign which helped the first episode achieve an audience of 953,200. After its honeymoon period, viewers of the soap quickly dropped away (Figures 11 and 12, Appendix D). By May 2003, the soap experienced its lowest average audience. Figures 7, 8 and 9, obtained from BBC Scotland, refer to *River City's* weekly reach and audience share, both averaged on an annual basis.<sup>45</sup>

**Figure 7 *River City's* Weekly Reach (000s), 2003-2008**



*Source: MC&A for BBC Scotland*

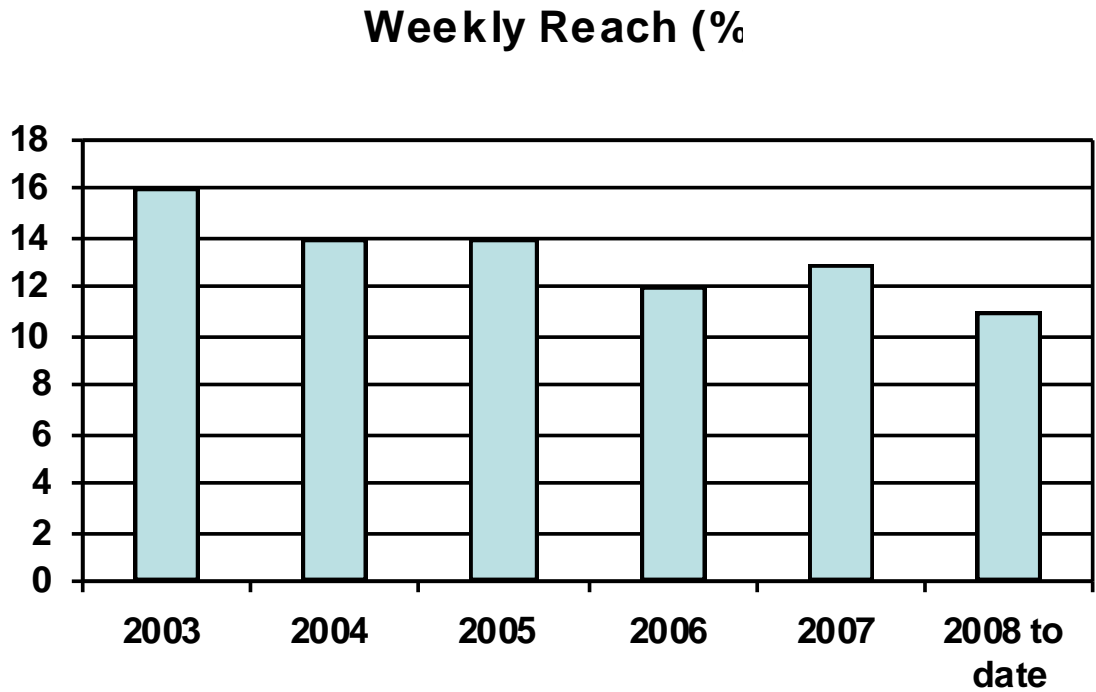
<sup>44</sup> *River City's* omnibus audience:

	Average annual audience (000s)	Average annual share (%)
2003	116.22	14.54
2004	106.63	13.10
2005	94.49	12.42
2006	93.17	11.81
2007	94.39	11.53
2008	88.45	9.98

The 2003 average is compiled from data since 18 May 2003. 2008 figures refer to the period from 1 January – 14 September. It is likely that the drop in viewing figures for the omnibus edition in 2008 is in part due to the change in schedule with effect from January 2008 (see page 136).

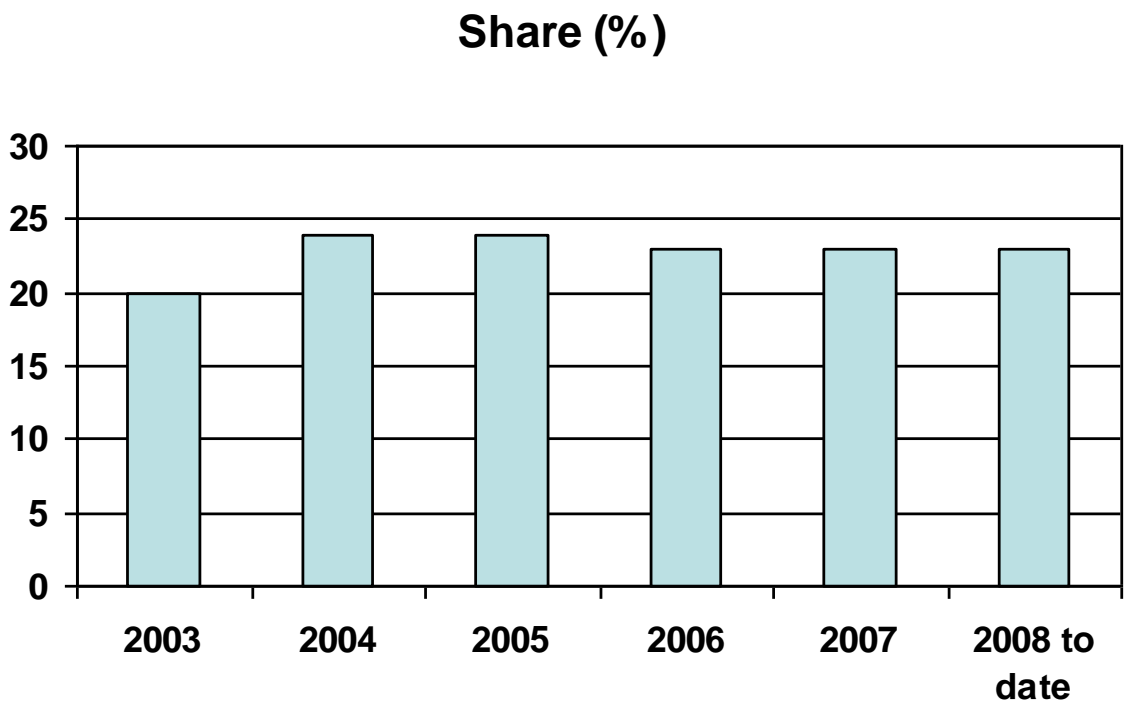
<sup>45</sup> Audience reach refers to the percentage of the viewing audience accessing a broadcaster service in a given week.

**Figure 8 River City's Weekly Reach (%), 2003-2008**



*Source: MC&A for BBC Scotland*

**Figure 9 River City's Audience Share, 2003-2008**

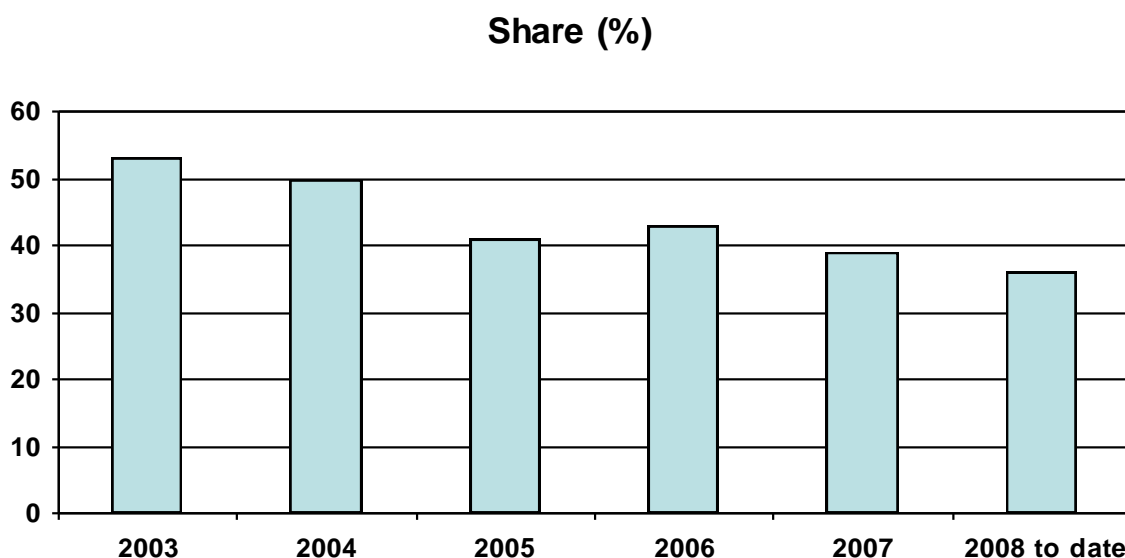


*Source: MC&A for BBC Scotland*

As Figures 7 and 8 indicate, over the years, audiences for *River City* have steadily declined. (This decrease in viewing should be seen against a more general drop in television viewing habits, as noted by Ofcom.) The notable exception to the decrease is 2007, the year when viewing statistics for the soap increased. Comparing Figures 7 and 8, which indicate *River City*'s annual reach, with Figure 18 (Appendix D), which shows its annual audience, is revealing. The statistics given for the series' reach (Figures 6 and 8) suggest a much more stable audience for the soap than that revealed by the actual number of people tuned in to the programme (Figure 18, Appendix D), although all three figures indicate an audience increase in 2007. In Appendix D, Figures 13 and 16 illustrate that 2004 and 2007 were the only years when viewing figures did not fall below 400,000. Figure 16 (Appendix D) indicates that from August 2007 viewers for *River City* were gradually increasing.

In Figure 9, the viewing percentage of the available audience for *River City* is steady, with the soap achieving a 20 per cent audience share in 2003, and a consistent 23 per cent share from 2006 to 2008. This can be compared with a steadily declining, but substantially higher audience share for *EastEnders*. As Figure 10<sup>46</sup> indicates, the established soap's lowest audience (in 2008) constitutes a 36 per cent share of the available audience in Scotland.

**Figure 10 *EastEnders* Audience Share in Scotland 2003-2008**



*Source: MC&A for BBC Scotland*

*River City* initially received a sorry critical reception, with critics complaining of poor acting, shaky sets and incredible storylines (Adair, 2003). Further doubt was expressed

<sup>46</sup> Figure 10 was released by BBC Scotland.

over whether investment in a soap was indicative of the BBC dumbing down at a time when 25 per cent of peak time hours were already taken up with the genre (Gallagher, 2002). While *River City* was slow to engage audience approval and loyalty this was not initially considered of major concern (BBC Scotland, 2003). BBC Scotland were aware that achieving a committed and regular audience for a soap took considerable time, and had allowed the series eighteen months before making any judgements on audience figures. By 2006, the soap had begun to garner some critical acclaim and received its first Scottish BAFTA nomination for Best Drama. In September 2007, BBC Scotland ensured a saturation release of information to the press for the week preceding the series' fifth anniversary, and the soap celebrated its birthday amid what staff referred to as 'unbelievable coverage', with spreads in the *Scottish Sun*, the *Mirror*, the *Express*, features in the *Sunday Mail* and *Big Issue*, and a cover story in *Scotland on Sunday's* magazine.

## **Scheduling**

I don't think it's any secret that we were later into the market with *River City* than we would have liked to have been, we first started talking about a soap in the early nineties... I think there is a loyal audience now for *River City* who like it very much. I think there's also a section of the audience that had a look in the early days, were horrified by what they saw and have never come back. And I think there's also a section that have probably decided some time ago that they have their soaps, that they watch *Coronation Street* and they watch *EastEnders* and that life's too short to embrace another soap. (Head of Commissioning and Sport, BBC Scotland, 2007)

When it began broadcasting in 2002, *River City* was shown on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. In June 2003, an omnibus edition was launched on Sunday afternoons. This omnibus followed the demise of *High Road* which was last broadcast on 13 April 2003, at which point it was achieving an average UK audience of 695,000 viewers a week (Allardyce, 2003). In January 2005, responding to poor ratings for the Thursday slot, the schedule was changed to 8pm on Tuesdays and 8.30pm on Fridays. Here, both performances benefited from following established BBC soap *EastEnders* in the schedule (Ellis, 2000a), but as Figures 14 and 19 (Appendix D) illustrate, audiences were slow to stabilise. Figures 15 and 16 (Appendix D) show that from August 2006, viewing figures for *River City* settled at around 400,00, and by 2007, the soap appeared to be steadily gaining viewers. Figure 17 (Appendix D) suggests particularly high audience figures during the first few months of 2008, when *River City* began broadcasting its two shows back-to-back. By April, these figures had returned to their previous levels.



Because BBC Scotland broadcasts in opt-out slots from the main network schedule, there are a limited number of opportunities to show programmes solely intended for a Scottish audience. Consequently, throughout its first six years, *River City*'s schedule was moved relatively frequently in order to accommodate other events such as the football. It can only be assumed that the continued scheduling lapses impacted on audience engagement with the programme (Branston and Stafford, 2003: 178). The soap's lowest viewing figures to date have been incurred at those times when the series has been moved to accommodate other programmes.<sup>47</sup>

In 2007, *River City* was piloted in England with a view to taking a place on the daytime television schedule. On 4 January 2008, BBC Scotland announced that *River City* would be shown as a double bill on Tuesdays for two weeks. At the end of the month, an announcement on the chat forum of the website stated that the show had moved to a one hour schedule at 8pm on Tuesdays indefinitely. Hostility to the move was evident on the show's Internet message board, where viewers complained about the relative lack of services afforded to licence fee payers in the nation, and read it as indicative of a lack of autonomy at BBC Scotland. It was only in April 2008 that the Sunday edition of the show stopped being referred to by BBC Scotland as an omnibus edition and started being called, more accurately, a repeat. In August 2008, BBC Scotland announced its intention to 're-launch' *River City* as an hourly, weekly drama, which would make little reference to previous storylines (English, 2008b).

When it was shown twice a week, *River City* had a filming schedule of four episodes over two weeks. Since changing to an hourly format the shooting schedule is two episodes over two weeks, and cast and crew, employed on fixed term contracts, have ten weeks off twice a year. In 2008, *River City* was filmed three months in advance of its broadcast, with twenty episodes 'banked' for future transmission.

The likely reason for *River City*'s move to an hourly format was in response to the change of *Coronation Street*'s schedule, which began to broadcast two episodes on Friday evenings, at 7.30pm and 8.30pm, in January 2008. No BBC staff were prepared to go on

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<sup>47</sup> The five worst weekday viewing figures for *River City* were recorded on days where the schedule had been changed. These were:

	Audience (000s)	Audience share (%)
Monday 27 December 2004	105.5	11.89
Wednesday 12 March 2003	158.2	6.94
Wednesday 13 November 2002	185.9	8.77
Monday 27 December 2004	195.9	21.46
Wednesday 10 August 2005	216.9	12.72

the record to confirm that *River City's* move was in response to ITV's decision. In June 2008, staff on the *River City* tour claimed that 'they' (BBC management) preferred it that way, though recognised that some viewers missed the twice-weekly format. Other BBC staff attributed the scheduling change to a desire for the soap to achieve a more regular slot that would not be moved as a consequence of the football. As the change was made in January 2008, half way through the domestic season and clashing with STV's screenings of the UEFA Champion's League, this seems implausible - particularly in light of the lack of football coverage on BBC Scotland, a position which later drew the ire of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission (discussed further in Chapter 7).<sup>48</sup>

In April 2008, a high profile advertising campaign was launched for the soap. Billboards and television trailers emphasised the gritty drama of the programme, with shock images of the main characters alongside the slogan: '*River City*: Dangerously close to real life.' There was some irony in this, as the increasingly melodramatic tone (Gripsrud, 1995: 242-248) and hourly format made it more divorced from 'real' life than had previously been the case.<sup>49</sup>

### ***The future of River City***

If the floating schedule of *River City* as a half hour soap was problematic, its permanent placement as a weekly hour long drama, still only broadcast to a Scottish audience, creates other predicaments. The hourly format decreases the likelihood of reading *River City* without the sense of narrative closure and makes it more difficult to form a casual and repeated attachment to the characters. The scheduled slot compresses the screen action and so makes it more difficult to blur the time difference between the soap and real life. The format necessitates more self-contained narratives, and characters are less able to shift in and out of narrative function, a position which impacts on actors' abilities to acquire skills. In short, a continuing series which is on for an hour a week is not a soap, and as this was what *River City* was meant to be, it must be concluded that in this BBC Scotland has not met its aims.

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<sup>48</sup> European Cup football was shown on terrestrial television during peak hours in June 2008.

<sup>49</sup> A comparison with the Welsh soap opera *Pobol y Cwm* (BBC 1974-1982; S4C, 1982-date) is imperfect, as it relies on differentiating Scotland's newest English language soap from the UK's longest running minority language soap. But it is worth briefly noting a difference in tone: *Pobol y Cwm*, shot on the day it is broadcast, is as current as fictional media can be. O'DONNELL, H. (1999) *Good Times, Bad Times. Soap Operas and Society in Western Europe*, London and New York: Leicester University Press. This allows it to be relatively radical in breadth, with characters sometimes even expressing political views. COLEMAN, S. (2008) 'The depiction of politicians and politics in British soaps', *Television and New Media*, 9(3), pp. 197-220.

There are clear strengths and weaknesses in envisioning a Scottish soap, as the genre serves several purposes that cannot be met by other kinds of programming. This includes the chance to use the programme, narratives and cast to serve public service functions, principles which are central to the BBC's role as a publicly funded broadcaster. The introduction of soaps such as *EastEnders* have boosted viewing figures and bolstered arguments for the continuance of the licence fee (Born, 2004; Branston and Stafford, 2003: 44). The regularity of the format offers an investment into growing the infrastructure and provides steady work for a large number of people. In turn, a stable infrastructure impacts on the ability of the Scottish sector to build, promote and attract talent. But equally, each of these opportunities poses problems. It is almost impossible now, as it was in 2002, to target a national audience, particularly with a genre that is so heavily entrenched in the principles of PSB, an ethos which is itself under question. Hugh O'Donnell (1999: 194) notes that in the 1990s, the astonishing hold of the four main soaps relegated any new contender to minority viewing, and this predicament was inflated for a soap broadcast only to five million people. Actors in soaps might enjoy steady work but are faced with typecasting and an inability to move on, and the significant financial outlay into building an infrastructure demands some kind of recoupment.

In 2008, the re-launch of *River City* as an hourly weekly drama changed the 'rules' of the series. As funding was allocated to BBC Scotland for the production of a Scottish soap for a Scottish audience, it is remarkable that *River City's* change in schedule has warranted little public or press attention. The change in format, and consequent change in production processes, will likely impact on the talent and skills base of the area, and employment practices of BBC Scotland. Before proceeding to conclude the case studies as a whole, this chapter turns to an analysis of how the 'national' poses problems for *River City*, for the BBC as an institution, for the audience, and for the genre.

## **BBC Scotland**

BBC Scotland's positioning in the BBC exacerbates the questionable role and relevance of *River City* as an institution. Because BBC Scotland broadcasts on an opt-out basis from the main network schedule, there are a limited number of slots available for Scotland-only programming. In the case of *River City*, the lack of hours available to BBC Scotland has resulted in a floating schedule, which has impacted on audience engagement with the programme.

Although BBC Scotland claim that *River City* could have been outsourced to an independent production company, given the scale of investment it is difficult to imagine that this would ever have been a viable proposition for an indie. It is similarly unclear whether the independent sector benefits from *River City*. In interviews, staff at BBC Scotland were keen to stress the achievements of the series, but no-one outwith the institution mentioned *River City* as impacting on the talent and skills base or providing regular income. The soap has achieved more success in creating more resources at the Dumbarton set, although this has little discernible impact on the immediate local economy which is made up of residential housing. A source at BBC Scotland confirmed that no economic impact studies relative to Dumbarton have been undertaken.

It says something about both the transparency and (lack of) branding of BBC Scotland that it offers a tour of *River City*. This is one of a selection of tours that the BBC offers, though to date is the only available tour of a programme set rather than an institutional building.<sup>50</sup> Because the soap is filmed on a purpose built site away from BBC Scotland headquarters at Pacific Quay, it is not possible to incorporate the tour within a trip to BBC Scotland, though separate tours of Pacific Quay are available. A crude comparison can be drawn with Granada, which offers a tour of Granada Studios, of which the visit to *Coronation Street* is one feature in a half day package of entertainment. On the *River City* tour, the comparisons between the soap and *EastEnders* were ambiguous. The comments essentially usefully promoted two BBC programmes - there was notably no mention made of *Coronation Street*. Yet the comparisons with the larger soap inadvertently highlighted the difference in scale and scope, funding and production values between the two series.

Finally, although BBC Scotland staff talked with some pride of how *River City* was never intended for a network release, this appears to have limited the aspirational values of the programme, as the same personnel acknowledged that attracting and retaining the highest end talent could not be achieved by a non-networked programme. The rationale behind producing a programme which assumes that national identity is the primary definer of its audience must surely be questioned.

## **A national audience**

*River City* has clearly been an attempt to meet the perceived audience needs of a devolved nation. As a concept, the idea of a national audience clearly has some meaning, as when a programme like *Rebus* (SMG, 2000-2007) - made in Scotland – enjoys a comparatively

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<sup>50</sup> *EastEnders* offers a virtual tour on-line.

larger Scottish audience than it does a UK one (Ofcom, 2007b: 89).<sup>51</sup> But it also raises immediate questions - what constitutes a Scottish audience, and is it really so different to a UK audience? In its early audience research for the programme, SPA (2001: 60) noted that while there was a clear desire for non-stereotypical representations of Scottishness, much of the anxiety about stereotypes was the result of having few dramas which contained Scottish characters, consequently single characters were 'left in isolation to be representative of the whole nation'.<sup>52</sup> Overall though, respondents to this early research in fact saw national identity as being largely irrelevant - they just wanted a good programme. Nonetheless, BBC Scotland's attempts to conceive of the Scottish audience as an identifiable mass burdens the characters of *River City* with the need to be recognisably 'of' Scotland. BBC Scotland's strategy, an 'inevitable turning inwards to focus on its home audience' (Cook, 2008: 119), has resulted in charges that *River City* has a 'claustrophobically parochial range' (O'Donnell, 2008: 130).

Further, as a nation of five million people, a Scottish audience will always be a small audience, a fraction of whom will tune in to a Scottish soap. As a PSB, the BBC does not have to rely on large audience figures in order to justify its existence or its funding, but it is clear that they serve a monitoring function and remain massively important to the BBC as a measurement of success (Light, 2004: 184-187). The audience for *River City* is sufficiently small that it raises questions over the very significant level of BBC Scotland's investment in the series - an outlay which appears to be limiting the development of new drama projects (Vass, 2007c). Low audience figures also impact on the role of soaps, where part of the joy of watching the programme results from being able to discuss the trials and tribulations of the characters with other people. It is not possible to discuss *River City* with someone who does not receive BBC Scotland transmissions.

The series' limited transmission impacts on the ability of the soap to improve the talent and skills base. Several of the actors have gone on to appear in *Taggart* and *Rebus*, two networked Scottish productions, but there has been relatively little movement beyond this and most of the actors remain based in Scotland. At best, this position could be seen as indicative of stopping the talent drain to London, at worst, could suggest that talent is unable to move up the ladder. It is perhaps no accident that one of *River City*'s biggest incoming stars, Stefan Dennis, migrated from a daytime soap (*Neighbours*), a sub-genre

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<sup>51</sup> Ofcom estimates that the Scottish audience for *Rebus* is 45 per cent higher than its UK audience.

<sup>52</sup> This anxiety was also noted by Scottish audiences of *Rab C. Nesbitt*, who voiced concerns that English people would not 'get' the character as there were so few other representations of Scots on the network. ROBINSON, R.G. (2002) *Scottish Television Comedy Audiences*, Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, University of Glasgow.

commensurate with lower production values. The limited visibility of the programme is compounded further by a lack of media synergy. Scotland has one celebrity gossip magazine, *No. 1*, but this largely focuses on Hollywood stars.<sup>53</sup> As *River City* is not shown network wide, the actors rarely appear in soap magazines, gossip columns, celebrity-based programming, or the tabloids. The lack of celebrity press impacts on the lack of familiarity of, and audience involvement with, the characters. This low profile is also evident in the Scottish tabloids. Other than previews for programmes, in the three months between April and June 2008, the Scottish newspapers featured six mentions of *River City* actors. It is questionable whether the soap's audience understand that this lack of wider media coverage is attributable to the series' lack of network coverage.

## Genre

Some of *River City*'s problems are those posed by its genre. Even in its heyday, the soap was often charged with presenting a 'nostalgia for community' which was largely unrepresentative of how people actually lived (Bignell, 2004: 189). By the time that BBC Scotland began producing *River City* in 2001, the soap landscape was hugely congested. When it began broadcasting in 2002, viewing figures for all of the favourite soaps were declining and it must be assumed that *River City* is unlikely to ever play as large a role in everyday, national life as *EastEnders* or *Coronation Street*, established institutions which are themselves under threat from 'new' media. As a soap, there is little opportunity for BBC Scotland to benefit from *River City*'s sales of other media, an outlet which, in the case of The Comedy Unit, provided branding for the products, company and actors, as well as proving financially lucrative.

Direct comparisons of the success of *River City* with other soaps are difficult, as all of the other current offerings are broadcast network wide. Consequently, while examining the viewing figures of *EastEnders* gives an indication of audience numbers in Scotland, it fails to take account of the different 'network' climate in which *EastEnders* is situated and which audiences are privy to. A telling comparison can be drawn with the Gaelic language soap *Machair*, which in the late 1990s reached audiences of over 300,000 (Cormack, 2008: 218-220) a figure well in excess of the number of Gaelic speakers and approximately 12.5 per cent of the available audience. It is interesting that BBC Scotland chose to release figures referring to *River City*'s audience reach and share, rather than its AI or BARB statistics. BARB figures are the most commonly used data for judging the success or

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<sup>53</sup> *No. 1* was launched by PSP Publications in 2006.

failure of programmes and determining scheduling decisions (Ellis, 2000a: 35; 2007: 183; Light, 2004: 113).

The 2008 change to an hourly episode raises further questions over *River City*'s genre and consequently its functions, its interaction with audiences, and the intentions of BBC Scotland. Hugh O'Donnell (2008: 129) notes that in 1994 STV's plan to axe *High Road* was withdrawn in the face of protests from fans. Eventually, the soap continued production for a further six years, although on a reduced schedule of one rather than two episodes a week. This had a number of effects, including a 'yawning gap' between its production and broadcast which created a backlog of episodes. This excess meant that the soap continued to be broadcast for three years after it had ceased production. The advance shooting schedule of *River City* poses some problems over how to maintain the secrecy of storylines, particularly in the digital age. BBC Scotland appears to be addressing this problem by sanctioning interviews which reveal the following week's key plots (English, 2008a). O'Donnell (2008: 128) concludes that the schedule changes to *High Road* were indicative of a fundamental transformation, in which '*High Road* no longer thought of itself primarily as a UK soap'. The same conclusion can be drawn of the decision to re-format *River City*, which again raises questions over how BBC Scotland perceives and measures the success of the series.

In some respects it must be concluded that *River City* aimed to correct a history of broadcasting and representational neglect. As a new soap starting in an era in which the role of soap opera - as everyday life, as social artefact, as public service - is in question, *River City* may have arrived too late to be of any real importance to either the public or BBC Scotland. In creating a soap opera which would reflect contemporary Scotland, *River City* is part of a concerted effort on the part of BBC Scotland to address a Scottish audience in the light of devolution. But this attempt to address national viewers *en masse* is evidently premised on too simplistic a view of media audiences. The problems of connecting creative industries policy with the practice of creativity is now considered in relation to all three case studies, in the chapter's conclusion.

## Conclusion

An overriding feature of this study has been an examination of how ideas about the national are articulated in the policy framework. The three case studies show how ideas of nationality are articulated, and how they help or hinder the process of media production.

What role does nationality play in producing media? For *Red Road*, much of the Scottishness of the film emanates from the GFO's insistence that Scotland be used as the location for the shoot in order for funds to be released. Beyond this, crew on the film appear to view the national setting as largely irrelevant – any urban location would have sufficed. Staff at The Comedy Unit acknowledge that a key strength of the company lies in its ability to use Scottish talent and skills but not be seen as a Scottish company. This makes the characters identifiable and draws on the cultural knowledge and experience of the creative team, but does not have a limiting effect on the company's growth or remit. The Scottishness of The Comedy Unit's products emerge intuitively, instinctively and unforced.<sup>54</sup> *River City's* intention to be 'of' Scotland necessarily limits it to some degree – placing a requirement on the series to be representative of a contemporary view of the nation. But these factors cannot be isolated from ideas about the role of media. As a soap, *River City* is tasked with fulfilling a public service that does not apply to feature films or television comedy, and this public service role is multifaceted. It includes for example, the support of the independent sector, and here *River City's* impact is not clear because it is not measured.

How to measure the performance of the three cases is another point. *Red Road* was certainly a critically acclaimed film, which received many awards in the festival circuit. While it has not been possible for this study to determine its commercial success, box-office is not one of the criteria used to warrant funding from the UKFC's New Cinema Fund, which instead justifies funding on 'qualitative performance indicators' such as awards, critical acclaim and screenings at festivals (Magor, work in progress). In these terms also, *Red Road* was a success. The success of The Comedy Unit's programmes is based on audience figures, and so implicitly, on their transfer to a network audience. In the simplest terms, poor viewing figures will result in a lack of further commissioned series – as was the case with an early series of The Comedy Unit, *The Creatives*. As a PSB, the BBC does not have to rely on substantial audience figures in order to justify its programming as a small audience may be being served in a way that would not be met by the market (as is the case with Gaelic). Here again, the question of how to measure the success of *River City* remains problematic. In this instance, quantifying 'success' becomes less important than the process of measurement itself – as the series' ability to sustain independent production, contribute to the local economy, act as a talent ladder, or achieve particular proportions of the available audience, cannot be gauged in the absence of a measure. It is clear also that success breeds success. *Red Road* was in part made possible

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<sup>54</sup> David Miller notes that national identity may be unarticulated and implicit but still influences people's behaviour, in MILLER, D. (1997) *On Nationality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.



by Arnold's success with *Wasp*, and the popularity of The Comedy Unit's productions has led to further commissions.

How does media ownership affect ideas of the national? *Red Road* was released amid publicity which placed it securely within a framework of transnational (i.e., non-Hollywood) film culture. Arthouse marketing strategies attributed the 'author' of the film variously as Andrea Arnold or Lars von Trier, and a further grounding for the film was provided in publicity which stressed the prior achievements of the Sigma/Zentropa collaborations. The Comedy Unit's expansion led to its acquisition by RDF Media, with consequent questions raised over the extent to which it was any longer a 'Scottish' company. Its acquisition has jeopardised its relationship with Scottish Screen, the national screen agency, but not with Scottish Enterprise, the national development agency. RDF's involvement has proved a source of celebration to those who see the acquisition of smaller indigenous indies to be a 'natural' source of growth. The acquisition of companies like The Comedy Unit by larger super-indies operating on a multi-national basis calls into question the national identity of indigenous production and poses quandaries over what constitutes an 'independent' production company. In the 1980s, Richard Collins et al. (1988: 12) noted of the indie sector that, 'In fact independents are producing "to order" and their "independence" refers to their ownership status rather than their product.' In the 2000s, independently owned companies are rare, and the extent to which their products are creatively autonomous is debatable. On the one hand, increasingly freed from the need to think about television broadcast as the only means of distribution, indies are at liberty to produce content more creatively. Conversely, the introduction of national production quotas (see Chapter 7) may create a climate in which Scottish indies are compelled to produce more formulaic product for television broadcast, hence stifling their creative output. In the 1980s, the practice of fully funded productions skewed power relations away from the indies in favour of the broadcasters (Christophers, 2008: 243). In the 2000s, as the production of content becomes increasingly divorced from traditional methods of television distribution, power appear to be shifting towards the indies.

It is accepted that the attribution of an author to a media text is 'often a fiction and pretty much always a simplification' (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 201) which disregards the collaborative nature and teamwork of cultural production by project teams. Nonetheless, all three case studies also raise some interesting questions over perceived authorship of media products. As stated above, authorship proved to be a key selling point for *Red Road*. The success of The Comedy Unit has become synonymous with its founders April Chamberlain and Colin Gilbert, and the authors of many of the company's products are

equally well known – writer Ian Pattison and actor Gregor Fisher in *Rab C. Nesbitt*, and writers and actors Ford Kiernan and Greg Hemphill in *Chewin' the Fat* and *Still Game*. These names feed back into useful branding for The Comedy Unit. Attributing authorship to *River City* is again more complex. Writer Stephen Greenhorn, though no longer involved with the series, is still the titular ‘creator’ of the programme. A few of the actors are familiar faces in Scotland (notably Stephen Purdon and Sally Howitt), and the BBC Scotland staff involved in the series make the trade press relatively frequently. This is particularly true of the BBC Scotland Heads of Programmes. The often ailing nature of the series has led to several producers being referred to as the ‘soap’s saviour’. *River City* is rarely referred to as an authored product, unlike for example, the new series of *Doctor Who* (BBC, 2005-date), which is synonymous with Russell T. Davies.

In considering relative proximity and clustering, it is notable that *Red Road* made excellent use of small scale local facilities and networks, being developed, shot and financed almost wholly within a five mile radius of Sigma’s base. This allowed significant cost reductions to be achieved by the use of a micro-cluster at Film City. Sigma and Zentropa had already established a relationship, and drew on familiar resources and staff for much of the production, but this alliance across national boundaries, sharing creative philosophies, aims and financing, is more akin to developing theories on social networking than it is to discourses of creative clusters. Interviews with staff at The Comedy Unit showed the company to be unfazed about the prospect of travelling to London to meet with commissioners, and equally ambivalent about BBC Scotland’s placement in Glasgow. Much of its production work is based a short distance away from the main media hub, although crucially, its relationships with London commissioners were already secure and established. The production of *River City* similarly takes place away from BBC Scotland’s main site at Pacific Quay. In the public eye, a lack of branding on the Dumbarton set gives no indication that it is part of BBC Scotland.

Each study has impacted differently on the creative economy. As a single, low-budget feature film, *Red Road’s* impact on the local economy was financially negligible in the long run, although its warm critical reception might have repercussions for the sector which balance out its minimal spend. The Comedy Unit’s acquisition by RDF indicates that some revenue generated by The Comedy Unit will be recouped furth of Scotland, although IPR for individual series remains with the creators. It is difficult to determine how much impact *River City* has had on the independent sector, although none of the indies interviewed during the course of this research mentioned its influence. (Series which were mentioned without fail by the indies were networked programmes *Monarch of*

*the Glen* and *Hamish MacBeth*.) As noted, it is equally difficult to gauge its impact on talent and skills or the local economy.

The level of autonomy ascribed to creative products has often been seen as a key factor in their vision and success. The creative structure of Advance Party was clearly a significant enabling factor in creating *Red Road*, which allowed finance and distribution to be secured and provided a framework for developing the film. The same considerations might also be applied to the genre as a structure for *River City* and The Comedy Unit productions.

Many policies have not grasped the complexities of how views about the audience affect media products. *Red Road* was to some extent freed of audience constraints because the Advance Party process assured distribution from the outset. However the need for films to achieve a 'theatrical audience' is still a key consideration for the policies of Scottish Screen and the UKFC. Staff at The Comedy Unit spoke of the importance of comedy having a 'sense of place', but were clear that their ultimate goal as an independent was for their products to achieve as wide an audience as possible. There is an evident point of tension in the extent to which programmes and services are seen as benefiting Scotland and/or the rest of the UK. Staff at BBC Scotland spoke about having no 'intentions to grow' *River City* (or *Chewin' the Fat*) to the network, and the language used here is telling – implying as it does that Scotland is a nursery from which talent will grow, and ultimately grow out of. BBC Scotland see it as a good thing to have the specificities of a Scottish audience firmly in mind, while the indies referred to the same idea as 'small scale thinking'. With *River City*, BBC Scotland targets 'the Scottish audience' as an identifiable group.<sup>55</sup> This proves immediately problematic – what is a national audience? Aiming for a Scottish audience also necessarily means a small audience – how then to justify a soap which, even if it achieves a small audience, needs to establish a crossover into real life in order for it to take a foothold as a genre? As a feature film, *Red Road* avoids the problem of national audiences by virtue of its medium. It might be anticipated that a film will play particularly well with a national audience, but no English language film is produced with a view to reaching a single audience.

All of these case studies indicate something about collaborative working practices. Both *Red Road* and The Comedy Unit demonstrate the importance of a handful of people in

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<sup>55</sup> It could rightly be argued that *Coronation Street* or *EastEnders* similarly targets a UK audience with little detrimental effect. I would contend that in these instances, the histories of the soaps, and their birth in a *relatively* uncomplex UK national structure, delineates their audiences on the basis of class and gender far more heavily than they are conceived of as a single national entity, though the 'Britishness' of the characters is implicit.

getting things done. In these two case studies, individuals have had a positive effect, where the contributions of Sigma and The Comedy Unit and the impact of Film City Glasgow and the Maryhill Film and TV Studio, have added to the visibility of Scottish screen culture. The Comedy Unit are not affected by the lack of commissioning presence at BBC Scotland because its key relationships have already been established and have recently been increased by the buyout by RDF which facilitated immediate growth. Sigma and Zentropa similarly had a known alliance. It is clear that relationships continue to play a role in the large-scale production of *River City*, as for example, when casting director Kahleen Crawford was acquired for the series on the basis of a previous working relationship with producer Sandra MacIver, or writer Stephen Greenhorn commissioned on the basis of his previous work at BBC Scotland on *Glasgow Kiss*.

Audiences use nationality as a way of making meaning of media texts. Critical reception to *Red Road* acknowledged that the Glasgow location provided a useful and effective *mise-en-scène*, and Scottish audiences of *Still Game* and *Rab C. Nesbitt* see the programmes as recognisably 'ours'. As a soap, *River City* has a more complex relationship with viewers, where its success with audiences appears to be inhibited by operating on a Scottish, rather than a UK, level. Time will tell whether a Scottish weekly, hourly drama, will prove more effective.

Finally, all of the case studies feature 'rules' of production, such as the Advance Party formula, the simple imperative that comedy should be funny, or the need for *River City* to be recognisably Scottish. In all these cases, the rules are variously conceived, compromised, and sometimes, creatively overlooked by media producers in order to comply with or disregard creative industries policy.

The work so far has largely been concerned with the period from 1997 to 2007. Before concluding, the thesis turns to a chapter summarising the key events since 2007, and examining the future of creative industries policy in Scotland.

## Chapter 7. Policy developments: looking forward

During the course of this research, 2006-2008, the culmination of several events conspired to create a very different political and policy environment in Scotland than had been the case when the study was planned in 2004. Some events already referred to in the text might have been deemed relatively minor to anyone not researching film and television policy in Scotland – such as the buyout of The Comedy Unit by RDF, the change in *River City's* schedule, even the establishment of the Gaelic Digital Service – but were of sufficient import to warrant a re-think of several sections of this study. Other major events, notably the onset of a worldwide recession, would likely threaten any further investment in the risky creative industries, but were well beyond the scope of this work. Two things however, had a notable impact on creative industries policy, warranted a good amount of public attention, and directly affected this research. First, the Scottish Executive's push to create a single body from the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) and Scottish Screen as 'Creative Scotland'. Second, the incoming SNP government of May 2007, and consequent establishment of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission in August the same year. A full analysis of these ongoing developments is the work of another thesis, but before concluding, it is useful to summarise the changes and determine how they have impacted on the course of the research and my interpretation of events.

### Creative Scotland

In 2005, *Our Next Major Enterprise* (Cultural Commission, 2005: 233) recommended that Scottish Screen's role and remit be reconsidered. The Commission noted that the Scottish cultural sector was dominated by a surfeit of quangos, and recommended that two limited liability companies be established in a bid to slim down the crowded bureaucratic landscape. The first, 'Culture Scotland', would be a development agency which brought together all parts of the cultural sector in a single representative voice – this included the merger of Scottish Screen and the SAC into a single body. The second, 'Culture Fund', would develop financing for the sector and disburse grants from Culture Scotland. Although the Commission's recommendations were not taken forward as proposed, a revised version of the single body structure was evident in the publication of *Scotland's Culture* (Scottish Executive, 2006). Here, the Executive announced the amalgamation of the SAC and Scottish Screen into 'Creative Scotland'.

The suggestion to form a single body was not a new one. In 1987, a merger between the Scottish Film Council and the SAC had been mooted, but the SFC eventually secured its status as a NDPB in 1990. As Chapter 4 showed, the establishment of Scottish Screen in 1997 provided an opportunity to merge four bodies into one, and the transfer of SAC Lottery Funds to Scottish Screen in 2000 gave further strength to its role as the single strategic agency for the screen industries. In December 2002, the Scottish Executive's review of Scottish Screen suggested:

Ministers may wish to explore further a radical option to restructure existing agencies to form an agency with responsibility for the Creative Industries including screen...

As a first step towards a focus on the needs and potential of the creative industries and the scope for joint working between agencies, Ministers should convene a forum of the key players for debate and development of 'Creative Scotland' to give a general guide to further policy development. (Scottish Executive, 2002b: 8)

Scottish Screen was broadly welcoming of the review's conclusion, and further clarification over the precise role of the joint agency was negotiated in a series of reviews, amendments and action plans between the Executive and the agency. In September 2003, Steve McIntyre, Scottish Screen's Chief Executive, advised the board that Ministers hoped to have Creative Scotland in place for the public funding round commencing in 2005/06 (Scottish Screen, 2003). By this time, references to the new body featured regularly in Scottish Screen board meetings, where members were reminded of the need to think ahead to the merger and respond 'appropriately' to reviews and consultations. To some extent, the knowledge that Creative Scotland would replace Scottish Screen served to immobilize the body from that point forward.

In 2004, Scottish Screen was re-structured in an attempt to re-focus the energies of the board on the agency's role in supporting the whole of the screen industries, rather than just film. The new CEO, Ken Hay, looked forward to reporting on 'the emergence of a new Scottish Screen: one that knows what it does, why it does it, where it does it, and how it does it' (Scottish Screen, 2005: 5), but the public announcement of the establishment of Creative Scotland in *Scotland's Culture* in 2006 soon overtook all other considerations. Initially, there was little response to the document. But five months after the announcement, a group of 45 filmmakers wrote to *The Herald*, questioning the rationale of placing film within the operational remit of broader cultural policy, and arguing that the loss of a single screen body would have a detrimental effect on the Scottish film industry (Miller, 2006). The letter was followed up with further remonstrations from filmmakers

complaining about the lack of consultation with industry insiders prior to founding Creative Scotland (Griffin and Young, 2006). At this late stage, the argument that more money should be given to film production and less to setting up new bureaucracies never stood a chance - Creative Scotland was already envisioned as an agency which would contribute to the growth of Scotland's creative industries as a whole. But in November, when it was revealed that the draft legislation would include provisos for ministerial control over the new quango and so erode the arms-length principle, alarm bells began to sound in the creative communities. The press was quick to fan the flames, arguing:

Part of the reason for governments establishing [the arms-length] principle was to protect the arts from the kind of policies practised by Nazi leader Adolf Hitler in Germany in the 1930s. (Hutcheon, 2006)

Consequently, it was hardly surprising that the vast majority of respondents to the Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill, published in the week before Christmas 2006, voiced concerns about the ministerial directions over the body (Scottish Executive, 2007). There were also calls that Creative Scotland should be based in Edinburgh rather than Glasgow, with the former city argued to be the true 'cultural capital' of Scotland (Jamieson, 2007). But if the publication date of the draft bill was a deliberate attempt to bury these concerns, it was a strategy that was soon superseded by other events.

In May 2007, the Scottish parliamentary and constituency elections caused consternation. A single ballot paper provided for voters to enter their choices for the regional list and for their constituency led to widespread confusion over how to register a vote. Although the election turnout was 51 per cent, the electoral muddle led to over 142,000 papers being rejected as spoiled ballots. Eventually, it was agreed that the SNP had won 47 seats, one more than Labour. However, the party was unable to convince the Liberal Democrats to form a coalition government. The start of the new parliament was temporarily postponed, until the SNP finally assumed the position of a minority government in partial coalition with the Green Party. Alex Salmond took on the role of First Minister, and on 22 May 2007 the first official meeting of the new SNP cabinet took place.

Under the Labour/LibDem government, culture, tourism and sport had been overseen by one person, latterly Patricia Ferguson MSP. The new cabinet split these areas into three separate briefs. Linda Fabiani MSP became Minister for Europe, International Affairs and Culture. She had responsibility for Europe, external affairs, culture and the arts, architecture, built heritage, Historic Scotland and Lottery funding, major events strategy, and Gaelic. Sport was the responsibility of Stewart Maxwell MSP, Minister for

Communities and Sport, and tourism was overseen by Jim Mather MSP, Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism. The division of these responsibilities immediately raised doubts over whether the SNP would keep the Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill, a document which saw the three briefs as a single concern, as they had been envisaged by the former administration. Following the SNP's victory, the media speculated on which elements of the legislation would remain intact and which would be dropped – a pertinent debate as the minority government required support from across the board to ensure any legislative progress.

On 10 May 2007, Prime Minister Tony Blair announced his intention of standing down. Gordon Brown became leader of the Labour Party on 23 June, and took over at Number Ten four days later. On 15 August, Jack McConnell resigned as Leader of the Scottish Labour Party. By this time, the attention of the Scottish media had already begun to focus on the possibility of changes to the devolutionary settlement that might result from Salmond's leadership.

## **The Scottish Broadcasting Commission**

Three weeks after the SNP's victory, Ofcom (2007e) published its annual report into the communications market in Scotland, which found that the proportion of network budgets spent in Scotland had halved between 2004 and 2006. Scotland now contributed a paltry 3 per cent of programming hours to network television. At ITV, the proportion had dropped from 3 per cent to 2 per cent, while the BBC showed a decline from 7 per cent to 4 per cent. Channel Five's Scottish spend had dropped from its already very low base, and although Channel 4's proportion had marginally increased (from 2 per cent to 3 per cent), it was also sourcing very few hours from Scottish producers. Ofcom's report, arriving on the heels of the SNP's victory, immediately provoked speculation about the state of broadcasting in Scotland. By June 2007, the press featured regular calls for a Scottish Six.

The SNP was soon drawn into the debate on broadcasting. In June 2007, the BBC Trust authorised the corporation's plan to move several BBC genres to a new base in Salford. MediaCity:UK was officially launched at the end of the month. The news that around 1,500 London-based positions would relocate to Salford Quays by 2011 was announced at Ofcom's Nations and Regions conference in Cardiff, but this was overshadowed by other comments made at the event. By far the greatest amount of press attention in Scotland was afforded to Michael Grade, Chief Executive of ITV. Responding to questions on the lack of commissions from the nations and regions, Grade commented that commissions



followed talent, hence, the lack of talent in Scotland explained the lack of commissions (Vass, 2007a). Both Grade and BBC Director-General Mark Thompson argued that quotas were a restrictive intervention in increasing national and regional production, and called on Ofcom to examine ways in which to foster talent out of London. Grade's comments predictably provided some cause for concern. Media commentators worried that Scotland was being increasingly neglected in the face of competition from the English regions (or at least the north west), and Wales, where 'the Doctor Who effect' had promoted confidence in the Cardiff-based industry. BBC Scotland's former Head of News and Current Affairs, Blair Jenkins (2007), argued that more commissioning power was needed in order to improve Scotland's television infrastructure. Journalist Iain Macwhirter (2007b) called for a regulator with less 'metro-centric blindness' than Ofcom. Stuart Cosgrove, Head of Nations and Regions, Channel 4, countered that a more sustainable industry might well result in less culturally recognisable 'Scottish' media (Sunday Herald, 2007). A few weeks after the Nations and Regions conference, the publication of BBC Scotland's Annual Review confirmed the gloomy picture painted by Ofcom's earlier report, stating that the corporation was operating on its lowest income and delivering fewer network deliveries than at any time since 2002 (BBC Scotland, 2007). The review showed that BBC Scotland had lost more than £21 million over two years due to a drop in commissions for the UK network, and recognised that this loss of income had adversely affected both BBC Scotland and the independent sector. The news proved too much for the Saltire Society, which two days later launched a campaign to investigate 'Why Scottish Broadcasting Matters'. This urged the UK and Scottish governments to produce a strategy that would secure and strengthen the broadcasting industries in Scotland, and was overt in its attempts to:

Transfer responsibility for broadcasting regulations from Westminster to Holyrood, as a cultural and therefore an unreserved (*sic*) matter and seek the eventual creation of an autonomous BBC Scotland financed by licence fees paid in Scotland. (Scott, 2007)

The campaign featured a series of essays from interested parties, posted on allmediascotland.com, which ensured that the statement posed by the Society remained in the public eye. Most often, attention focused on calls for a Scottish Six, a push which threatened to obfuscate the more complicated issues of what might be meant by the Saltire Society's calls for broadcasting regulations, an autonomous BBC Scotland, or indeed any level of devolution in broadcasting. The SNP manifesto had promised to 'push for the devolution of broadcasting powers to the Scottish Parliament' (SNP, 2007: 56) but beyond this vague statement it was not clear what the party's intentions were. In an article in the *Sunday Herald*, Philip Schlesinger (2007) called for the debate to be widened. Should

devolution in broadcasting be concerned with indigenous production, greater control over the broadcast schedule, devolved regulatory powers, or a combination of all three? What role should the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament play in a devolved broadcasting regime, and would the public want, or trust them to be, hands-off? These concerns were all the more prevalent as the Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill (2006), as yet untouched by the new administration, had advocated a degree of ministerial control over Creative Scotland (Hutcheon, 2006).

By summer 2007, debates on the role of broadcasting were a frequent feature of the Scottish press, and the role of television was further questioned in the UK news when several of the broadcasters were found to have faked phone-in competitions (Ayre, 2007). The BBC suspended several editorial staff and BBC Deputy Director-General Mark Byford was summoned to the House of Commons to give evidence on the scandals. Consequently, when First Minister Alex Salmond (2007) announced his intention to establish a Scottish Broadcasting Commission on 8 August, it could not have been more warmly received. Two things were notably absent from Salmond's announcement. The first was the scope of the enquiry, which was outlined as an examination of the economic, cultural and democratic importance of broadcasting, but made no reference to the role of the media in entertainment or as education. The second omission was any mention of Creative Scotland.<sup>56</sup>

The Scottish Broadcasting Commission was set up as an autonomous body in order to 'conduct an independent investigation into the current state of television production and broadcasting in Scotland and define a strategic way forward for the industry' (<http://www.scottishbroadcastingcommission.gov.uk>). The Commission was chaired by Blair Jenkins, and comprised nine other members who were deemed to have no conflict of interests with its investigation.<sup>57</sup> Jenkins was a popular choice in the lead role and his credentials as Chair were undisputed. However, there were also suggestions that his sudden departure from BBC Scotland in July 2006, and prior resignation as Director of Broadcasting at STV, might mean that he had scores to settle (Vass, 2007b). Similar doubts were raised over the other members of the Commission, who were variously cited

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<sup>56</sup> Linda Fabiani MSP was on holiday when the Scottish Broadcasting Commission was launched.

<sup>57</sup> The Scottish Broadcasting Commission members were: Baroness Michie of Gallanach, former Vice-Chairman of the Scottish Liberal Democrats; Chris Ballance, playwright and former Green MSP for South of Scotland; David Wightman, Chief Executive of games creator Edgies; Elaine C. Smith, comic actress; Murray Grigor, writer, film-maker and exhibition designer; Norman Drummond, former BBC National Governor and Chair of the BCS; Professor Seona Reid, Director of Glasgow School of Art and former Director of the Scottish Arts Council; Rt. Hon. Henry McLeish, former First Minister; and Rt. Hon. Lord Fraser of Carmyllie QC, former Lord Advocate and leader of the inquiry into the Holyrood overspend.

as having well known views on broadcasting and/or Scottish Nationalism, or being so removed from broadcasting as to lack any requisite skills for the job. Aside from Jenkins, the Commission members were unpaid<sup>58</sup> and the body was granted £500,000 to proceed with its enquiry. It set out acquiring evidence and holding public summits, and the minutes of its six meetings and its publications were made available on the Scottish Broadcasting Commission website. The Commission was charged with investigating the importance of broadcasting in three overlapping areas: in terms of its significance for the Scottish economy, culture, and democracy. Three published reports presented its preliminary findings in these areas.

The Scottish Broadcasting Commission's first interim report on the economic phase of its enquiry was published at the end of January 2008. It noted that the centralised nature of broadcasting posed a challenge for the Scottish sector, and suggested that mandatory quotas for nations and regions production, policed by Ofcom, might become necessary. The report suggested that while a commitment to increased network commissions from the BBC 'could bring £40-50 million into Scotland's creative economy', the sector was unlikely to be able to meet the demands of a 9 per cent network commission quota – a figure in proportion to Scotland's population, and so often cited as the 'national right'. The report also noted that Creative Scotland could play a role in providing 'leadership in the industry' where the roles and responsibilities of the other public support bodies were not clear (Scottish Broadcasting Commission, 2008c: 2, 3).

While the first paper was relatively non-committal in its recommendations, the second report on the cultural phase (Scottish Broadcasting Commission, 2008a), was more forthright. The Scottish Broadcasting Commission charged BBC Scotland with displaying an 'insufficient level of ambition' in both commissioning and production, and noted that much of the onus of PSB would fall on the BBC after digital switchover (DSO) in 2011. The report was also heavily critical of BBC Scotland's lack of coverage of major sporting events, noting that the Scotland v Italy European qualifying football match of November 2007 did not qualify as a 'protected' event by the BBC and so was not shown on free-to-air television. As this report was published at the end of March 2008, it followed on the heels of a speech to the Royal Television Society by Alex Salmond, in which the First Minister had also been critical of the lack of live coverage of Scotland's international football matches. Salmond (2008) argued that for Scottish viewers, being able to watch England's matches but not those of their home team was indicative of 'a carelessness in the attitudes

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<sup>58</sup> Blair Jenkins received £387 per day in his role as Chair of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission.

of some broadcasters to their wider responsibilities'. The speech was widely reported by the media, which picked up on the fervour surrounding Scotland's nail-biting match against Italy, a near-miss for European qualification made all the more compelling when viewed in comparison with the lacklustre performance of the England team.<sup>59</sup> In July 2008, the BBC Audience Council for Scotland called on the DCMS to add Scottish international qualifiers to the list of high profile sporting events which must be made available for free-to-air terrestrial broadcasters (Bussey, 2008).

The third report on the democratic phase of the Commission's enquiry (Scottish Broadcasting Commission, 2008b), was published on 30 May 2008. It was predominantly concerned with assessing the extent to which Scotland was served by news and current affairs reportage, and noted from the outset that a similar study for the UK had been commissioned by the BBC Trust and was to be published imminently. (This study, the King report, is discussed below.) The findings were predictable, with respondents noting that it was often difficult to determine which news stories were relevant to the UK and which were specific to Scotland. The question of the Scottish Six was once again surveyed, and the Scottish Broadcasting Commission found that 53 per cent of respondents preferred the idea of a single integrated news bulletin, as opposed to the current situation. Despite Blair Jenkins' best attempts to ensure that the report was seen as neither for nor against the Scottish Six, the findings of the Commission were warmly received by the SNP as evidence that:

The Scottish people want a news service that reflects their everyday experience. They want international, national and local news from a perspective relevant to them. It is no surprise that they want news produced in Scotland. (SNP, 2008)

The Scottish Broadcasting Commission's final report was published in early September (Scottish Broadcasting Commission, 2008d). This made 22 recommendations for improving Scotland's television infrastructure, the most significant of which was the suggestion that a Scottish digital channel be established, operating as a public service, at an estimated cost of £75 million. The Commission concluded that there was little benefit to be had from devolving broadcasting, but did recommend that debates over broadcasting take a higher profile in the Parliament's agenda. The report also backtracked on the findings of its first interim report, by recommending that 8.6 per cent of network

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<sup>59</sup> Most press reports overlooked the section of the Commission's report which stated that the Scottish Football Association was clear that restricting bidding to the terrestrial broadcasters would result in a loss of income which would adversely affect the development of the national side.

productions be sourced from Scotland, a target to be enforced by quotas. Finally, the Commission looked to Creative Scotland to:

... take the leadership role in bringing together broadcasters, production companies, economic development bodies, skills agencies and further and higher education to work collaboratively in delivering what is required to ensure a thriving creative content sector. (Scottish Broadcasting Commission, 2008d: 11)

In setting up the Scottish Broadcasting Commission, the SNP must be credited with finally opening a public debate on broadcasting in a devolved Scotland, a call for which has been evident since the first national cultural strategy. This was the first time since devolution that the government had so directly addressed powers which were reserved to Westminster, and so explicitly questioned the terms of the devolved settlement. The setting up of the body prompted immediate debate. Inevitably, and accurately, the establishment of a cross-party Commission was viewed as a shrewd political move which put more pressure on Westminster than a minority SNP government ever could. Some commentators suggested that merely opening the debate was a sign that SNP broadcasting policy was not thought out, perhaps not an unreasonable suggestion as the SNP - as with all the Scottish parties - had no broadcasting policy beyond pushing for 'the devolution of broadcasting powers to the Scottish Parliament' (SNP, 2007: 56). The manifesto pledge was adamant (although unclear) about what the SNP's intentions for 'broadcasting powers' Holyrood might want to claim. It was slightly more clear that culture could be used for economic gain, and called on programme makers to 'do more to market and promote Scotland's distinctive culture internationally'.

The independence of the Commission was something that its representatives were keen to stress on every public occasion. However, Salmond's delight at having instigated the debate so effectively could barely be contained, and there were instances where his enthusiasm to be involved threatened to obfuscate the Commission's enquiry and turn it into a familiar trope of pro- and anti-union sentiments. The Commission's conclusion that there was little benefit in devolving broadcasting powers might have been a disappointment to the SNP, and the proposal for a Scottish digital channel was received warily received by some industry insiders. Some commentators noted that the premise of a channel which used nationality as a genre was an 'oddly parochial concept' (Hjul, 2008). Others argued that the Commission's recommendation that 8.6 per cent of network commissions be sourced from Scottish indies would - as its earlier report had noted - be almost impossible to achieve, and lead to poor quality programmes being produced *en masse* in the clamber to meet the requisite targets (Meiklem, 2008a). The overriding

concern, given that the Commission had no power to enforce its proposals, was whether *anything* would happen as a result of its research.

## Looking ahead

Speculation that the SNP would disregard the Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill altogether was eventually quashed when the proposed law, now known as the Creative Scotland Bill (2008), was announced in the SNP's first legislative programme in September 2007. The paper had lost its proposed 'cultural entitlements', and amendments had been made to clarify the position of ministerial control to ensure that ministers were not empowered to make artistic or cultural judgements. The bill received relatively little comment, at least partly because the establishment of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission had firmly caught the media's attention. The proposed changes were relatively minor, but appeared to assuage doubts that had previously existed over the role of Creative Scotland. The public may have been reassured, but the bill met with further obstacles on its passage through Parliament. In April 2008, a Holyrood Finance Committee heard that the setting-up costs of Creative Scotland could range between 'a few hundred thousand pounds to over a million' (BBC News, 2008). The following month, an Education, Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport Committee criticised the paper as the weakest and most confusing piece of legislation that had been presented to Parliament (Macleod, 2008). On 18 June, MSPs voted down the financial provisions underpinning the bill, effectively scuppering its progress. This was the SNP's first defeat, but it was a Pyrrhic victory for the opposition with the realisation that this 'had actually brought down a piece of legislation that all parties supported' (Dinwoodie, 2008). With the summer recess looming, it was clear that the establishment of Creative Scotland, once imagined as being in situ by 2005, would run on and on. Interviews with people in the industry confirmed that this delay had been anticipated from the outset, with some suggestions that 2014 was the most optimistic date for establishing a new body. In September 2008, it was announced that Creative Scotland would be established without further parliamentary debate, by becoming part of the Public Services Reform Bill. The body was hoped to be in place in 2009.

Despite the slow legislative progress, the early stages of Creative Scotland were overseen by a joint board made up of members of the boards of the two merger agencies. The 'coterminous board', chaired by Dr Richard Holloway, Chair of the SAC, was established in November 2006 to oversee preliminary discussions on the role and formation of the new

NDPB.<sup>60</sup> As noted in Chapter 3, in March 2007, the CCPR creativity project's Principal Investigator was approached by the SAC to run a series of seminars in order to inform the thinking of this joint board. My participation in these seminars (conducted under the Chatham House rule) affected my understanding of the process of policy development and legislation formation, and hence my interpretation of events laid out in this study.

Several arguments were raised against the establishment of Creative Scotland. First, the merger of Scottish Screen and the SAC disregarded many of the other creative industries defined by the DCMS, and as such, the fusion of these two quangos was a relatively arbitrary choice. As a development agency, Scottish Enterprise provided much of the financing for the creative industries, and the delineation between what would be the role of Creative Scotland, and what should fall within the remit of Scottish Enterprise, was the subject of much debate at the SAC/CCPR seminars. There was a need for the merger to serve some real purpose, but a lack of clarity about what this purpose should be. A failure to grasp the body's *raison d'être* might result in little more than an expensive change of name for both agencies, which would effectively continue to function independently of each other. These concerns were mirrored in anxieties about where Creative Scotland should be based – Edinburgh, the cultural capital, or Glasgow, Scotland's media hub?

Second, it was felt by many working in the film industry that the merger might result in feature film taking a low priority on the necessarily enlarged agenda served by the larger body. Filmmakers feared that while Scottish Screen had sometimes failed to address the needs of the filmmaking community, it was nonetheless necessary to retain an independent film body, and that the 'Scottish Screen' name alone served an important branding function (Miller, 2006). This concern had particular validity in the digital age, where web searches for the keywords 'film and Scotland' might lead to the vaguely named Creative Scotland.

Third, it was noted that because Scottish Screen and the SAC were created in different circumstances, with different functions and different budgets, Creative Scotland would not be a merger of equal partners. As an amalgam of several areas, indeed, as a body serving many (but not all) of the creative industries, Creative Scotland might be pushed toward

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<sup>60</sup> SAC board members who joined the coterminous board were Ben Twist, freelance theatre director and producer; Jim McSharry, writer, director and performer; John Mulgrew, Chair of Learning and Teaching Scotland; Rab Noakes, songwriter and recording artist; and Steve Grimmond, head of community services at Fife Council and board member of SportScotland. From the board of Scottish Screen came Barbara McKissack, independent producer and former Head of Drama, BBC Scotland; Charles Lovatt, Managing Director of Cacophony, a London-based music publisher; Dinah Caine, Chief Executive of Skillset; Donald Emslie, Chief Executive of SMG Television; Iain Smith, producer and member of the UK Film Council; and Ray McFarlane, Chair of Scottish Screen and co-Chair of BAFTA Scotland.

most supporting those sectors which could be harnessed for their economic benefits, and so neglecting the support of culture for its own sake. As Richard Holloway noted,

Creative Scotland is going to have to pull off the difficult feat of trying to forward the Government's agenda for growing the economy by unleashing Scotland's creativity, without taming the anarchic energy that lies at the heart of the creative act. (Holloway, 2008: 12)

In June 2008, the publication of the King Report (BBC Trust, 2008) ensured that these concerns over Creative Scotland faded once more from the limelight while the Scottish Broadcasting Commission came into focus. The BBC Trust had commissioned Professor Anthony King in October 2007 to investigate impartiality in the BBC's coverage of news and current affairs, and the report's findings were damning of the BBC's ability to adequately represent the 'new UK'. The King Report added further fuel to the fire for those calling for greater levels of devolution in broadcasting, a commissioning presence at BBC Scotland, and a Scottish Six. In August 2008, the BBC announced its intention to base three new commissioning executives at Pacific Quay, who would report to commissioning editors in London and managers in Scotland. Linda Fabiani MSP welcomed the news as evidence that the BBC had been 'galvanised into action' by the Commission (Meiklem, 2008b). By September 2008, it was evident that any initial excitement over Creative Scotland had dissipated. The costs of setting up the new body, which was far from being established, were already being criticised as a waste of resources which could be better spent on cultural production (McCracken, 2008; Sweeney, 2008a). Perhaps with this in mind, Jenkins was adamant of the need for immediate action on the Scottish Broadcasting Commission's recommendations, urging that all proposals should be implemented within four years, with progress checks taking place in Parliament in 2009, 2010 and 2011 (Scottish Broadcasting Commission, 2008d: 55).

As Creative Scotland is in formation and the Scottish Broadcasting Commission has recently reported, at the time of writing it is not yet possible to assess the level of impact that they will have on the screen industries in Scotland. If Creative Scotland takes on some of the recommendations of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission it will be one of the first bodies to explicitly merge cultural and media policy, traditionally separate areas of concern. This suggests that the SNP government, for all that it has claimed to follow a different party line than its Labour/LibDem predecessor, had fully taken on board the economic benefits of creative industries policy. As David McCrone (2001: 189) argues, modern Scottish nationalism, it seems, 'owes far more to the pocket-book than to the prayer-book'.



## Conclusion

How has Scottish devolution affected film and television policy? The question can be answered by examining the three major themes which emerge from this study. These are nationality, autonomy and scale. The first, overriding, theme is concerned with how ideas about ‘the national’ affect institutions. The varied ways in which the national media industries articulate their Scottishness influence their growth, affect their abilities to attract talent and audiences, and determine their interactions with other agencies. The second theme relates to how the autonomy of governments, institutions and individuals impacts on the process of policy formation and the practice of creativity. The final theme is concerned with considering the importance of Scotland’s scale. In Scotland, media managers, creatives, politicians and policymakers all inhabit the same circles; companies and individuals seek the same small amounts of available finance; the press plays a disproportionate role in airing views and opinions. These three interrelated themes illustrate the specificity of Scotland and its positioning in the UK, and indicate the extent to which devolution has affected the film and television industries.

## Nationality

The first theme of nationality is embedded in every aspect of this study. Institutions become emblematic of those principles and beliefs that are aligned to national identity – variously Scottish or British - and representative of all that these labels imply. Media ownership threatens the ‘true’ national authenticity of independent companies, and affects how wealth is channelled to Scotland or further afield. Scottish agencies offer or withdraw support for demonstrably Scottish ideas, or withhold funds if media content is considered so nationally specific that it cannot function in a market-driven creative sector. Organisations function on a Scottish and a UK level with overlapping and contradictory remits, and individuals are left to navigate where and how to source funds and resources.

Given the complexities of negotiating how national identity should affect policy decisions, it is no wonder that determining a policy for promoting ‘Scottish culture’ should have so vexed the first Scottish Executive, 1999-2007. Politically allied to its counterpart at Westminster, the Labour/LibDem administrations set themselves a difficult task: creating cultural policy for Scotland in a way which celebrated cultural diversity but minimised political difference; and creating cultural policy in the absence of television, the most popular cultural form. The Executive’s disregard for broadcasting - the institution where

culture, media and politics intersect most clearly - hampered its ability to formulate either a national cultural strategy or a coherent creative industries policy. The interdependence of film and television in Scotland made it unfeasible to conceive strategies for the one without considering the other. Consequently, over the first eight years of devolution, creative industries policy was adopted by the Scottish Executive with relatively little consideration of its appropriateness for a small nation with a semi-autonomous government, and the strategy had little impact in Scotland. In May 2007, the change of Scottish government increased the political disparities between Holyrood and Westminster. Since that time, the recommendations of independent bodies have stressed the need for policy initiatives to recognise the synergy that exists between communications media and the arts. With the SNP's enthusiasm for cultural nationalism, and the establishment of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission, discussions about broadcasting became unlocked. Although this thesis has not been able to analyse the latter developments, the different approaches adopted by the Labour/LibDem and SNP governments are notable, and seek diverse levels of autonomy in order to articulate national identity.

## **Autonomy**

On an institutional level, the autonomy of Scotland's screen institutions affects their daily functioning, the public perception of them as agencies, and audience response to the content they produce. Both Scottish Screen and BBC Scotland have a limited amount of autonomy and are still heavily reliant on decisions, funding and policies decided on a UK level in London, which have varying degrees of awareness of the needs of Scotland. However, while there are particular problems posed by BBC Scotland's lack of autonomy in the BBC, it is both insufficient and inaccurate to 'blame London' for the shortcomings of the Scottish film and television industries, because barriers to further development also exist on a Scottish level. The introspective policies adopted by BBC Scotland since devolution focus on the importance of representing the nation to itself, rather than growing products and talent out to the network. This has done little to expand the industrial infrastructure and limited the opportunities for talent to develop. The broadcasters' strategies to target a Scottish audience exist in part to proclaim a new national autonomy and in part to redress a history of broadcasting which has often overlooked and under-served Scotland as a nation. But producing programmes for a Scottish audience carries a high financial and cultural cost, as they must negotiate the boundary between protecting national culture and preventing it from further expansion. In the absence of network commissions, Scottish talent is rendered invisible and the creative infrastructure struggles

to draw in ambitious personnel. *River City* exemplifies these difficulties, and in 2008 the series had effectively backed BBC Scotland into a corner. Sustaining the series as a one off weekly drama would do little to grow the infrastructure, but withdrawing it would take something else away from an already neglected Scottish audience.

A further problem is presented by the influence of the indigenous Scottish print media, where the interventions of the press play a role in skewing the creative industries agenda. Nowhere is this more evident than in the disputes about the Scottish Six, where the lack of an integrated news service is presented as emblematic of BBC Scotland's lack of autonomy. While it is true that relevant news plays a crucial role in creating an informed populace, it is also the case that a Scottish Six would do little to improve Scotland's screen infrastructure and nothing to increase the amount of Scottish network commissions. The press's focus on the Scottish Six therefore reveals something more about the ways in which Scottish claims to difference are legitimised. Often, the BBC's nationality is flagged (Billig, 1995) in the Scottish papers, with stories about how the corporation fails to serve Scottish licence fee payers, recognise or reward Scotland's sporting achievements, or fulfil a 'national quota' of productions. Such partial and condensed statements make for good copy but rarely reflect the full complexities of the situation. More frequently, the stories cloud the debate on the role of broadcasting, rather than elucidate it.

Media practitioners seek creative autonomy within the framework of support and funding offered by the national agencies, and it is clear that creative autonomy affects the extent to which practitioners are able to take risks. But this study found a real deficit in quantifiable data which enables this support to be targeted appropriately. In other words, defining the creative industries, much less assessing their size, contribution or cost, is difficult on a UK level; on a Scottish level this task is impossible. Perhaps because of this ambiguity, many creatives were unaware of policy strategies, and saw policy as largely confined to the working practices of government. When awareness of policies was evident, it was often viewed as having little practical application or validity, at best irrelevant and at worst a hindrance to creative practice. Creative autonomy was seen as compromised by policy directives which stressed the need to think about distribution and audiences – central tenets of the market. Many creatives took a 'tick-box' approach to policy, arguing that promises agreed to on funding forms could later be disregarded over the course of the creative process. Guiding principles existed on many levels – governmental, institutional and individual – and were applied and disregarded almost at will. While it would be erroneous to suggest that creatives are not interested in making money, the study finds a fundamental divide between the intentions of policymakers and practitioners. Policy rhetoric stresses

the potential of the creative industries as a source of economic gain and urban regeneration, and does little to promote the process of creativity in and of itself.

The lack of creative industries strategy has contributed to Scotland's inability to attain a critical mass of film and television production. This lack of aggregation means that policy initiatives, however welcome, often fragment and run out of steam. The interdependence of film and television in Scotland mean that developments and downturns in any one institution immediately influence those around it and affect the creative economy of the nation. These challenges are of enormous importance to Scotland where the loss of a single network programme can profoundly affect the Scottish creative infrastructure. On a UK level, where Scotland makes up one of the many 'nations and regions', these changes are barely perceptible. Key policy debates in Scotland are often invisible in the UK media. The continued diminution of the scale of the Scottish press in the hands of a small number of media owners increases the likelihood of this lack of visibility, and poses further problems for the Scottish creative industries. The indigenous press impacts on policy formation and development, offers a forum for airing public opinion and sways public interest. It is pertinent to wonder how the marginalisation of the Scottish press might affect the creation of effective Scottish policy.

The larger institutions analysed in this study showed a trend of reacting to policy rather than proactively pursuing growth strategies. When harnessed for economic regeneration, creative industries policy has meant some attention has been focused on visible symbols of growth and infrastructure, such as Pacific Quay. This research found that many creatives saw the quest to 'build big boxes' as strategies which eventually served only to attract funds away from the creation of media products. But these policy initiatives exist in a symbolic realm which attempts to counterbalance their industrial significance. For BBC Scotland, Pacific Quay provides a demonstrable presence of the corporation's relevance to the nation; its cost and technologies give little indication of the comparatively small impact that Scotland has as a network presence. Many reports have suggested that BBC Scotland's move to Pacific Quay has exacerbated its insularity as an institution. It is likely that the corporation's initiative to move production out of London to MediaCity:UK will pose a significant threat to BBC Scotland, and there is further research to be undertaken in order to gauge the impact of Salford on the Scottish infrastructure. That BBC Scotland exists at the beginning of the twenty-first century in much the same way as it always has is a curiosity. It is pertinent to wonder why an institution that shows creativity in so many ways should so stubbornly resist a re-structure which would align it more coherently with the changing face of the UK. Overwhelmingly, BBC Scotland's lack of autonomy means

that to date, Pacific Quay is best regarded not as a creative cluster but rather as an agglomeration of creative spaces, each functioning as separate units.

## Scale

The research has also noted the small size of Scotland's screen industries and argued that while Glasgow's media hub is significant in Scotland, it is relatively minor in UK terms. The close network of people working in the screen industries in Scotland does however offer some strengths. People and resources tend to be known and utilised, and this can result in efficacious creative hubs. On an individual basis there is evident enthusiasm to create film and television, and in Scotland, individuals have a real impact and are often the key drivers of strategies and initiatives. In some circumstances this solitary perseverance has had transformative effects. Conversely, the small number of people working in the industries results in a limited amount of expert and objective viewpoints. The discussion of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission's public enquiry demonstrates some real problems over what constitutes expertise, when to engage public opinion, and what is meant by 'evidence-based data' – in this instance it constitutes little more than talking to a few people. Despite the consultation culture, policy debate is very restrictive and there are recognised suppliers of ideas who are favoured. The same people that apply for funds are often in the position of allocating resources, and this insularity, coupled with the role of the press, has often meant that personal disputes have become public, politically charged, and further fragmented the industry.

Those that are anxious that policymakers should refrain from interference in the creative process are less likely to participate in the policy process. Nowhere was this more evident than in the process of forming Creative Scotland, an elaborate and as yet unconcluded procedure which is indicative of the close alliance of media and policy in Scotland. By the end of 2008, the prolonged disputes over setting up Creative Scotland were threatening to obfuscate the remit of the agency, and establishing the body had become little more than a bid to rationalise the sector and reduce the number of government bodies. In this respect, the act of setting up Creative Scotland itself harked back to the drive to cut the quangos that had been so integral to the establishment of Scottish Screen.

Given the small size of the industries, limited available resources, and knowledge of immediate networks, it is easy to see why clustering should have been considered an enticing part of the creative industries rhetoric. However, considerable further research is needed before it can be concluded that clustering is an effective strategy in Scotland.

Glasgow does function as Scotland's media hub, and key staff based there demonstrate creativity, talent and a sound knowledge of local networks. These are crucial factors to success in film and television, but the industry is still heavily reliant on London-based commissioners, and cheap and frequent flights to London which enable producers to meet commissioners are dependent on a favourable economic climate. This was not the case as this study drew to a close, and the financial crisis looked set to raise further issues over the level of governmental involvement in the 'risky' creative industries.

## **Concluding thoughts**

This study provides an analysis of creative industries policy and practice at a particular time, in a particular place, and it is evident that this presents two key limitations. It is therefore worth reflecting on how the specificities of time and place affect this study and suggest areas where further research is needed.

First, as is evident from Chapter 7, the politics of devolution entail a constant re-negotiation of boundaries between state and nation, and this state of constant flux presents some problems for policy research. The study inadvertently caught Scottish communications policy at a time of particular change, and consequently revealed much about the entwined nature of policy and politics. Although the Scottish Broadcasting Commission (2008d) did not eventually endorse the devolution of broadcasting, its recommendations were warmly received by all parties and regarded seriously by the industry regulator Ofcom (2008a). The Commission's suggestion that a new Scottish channel be established played into politics between Westminster and Holyrood. There are real questions to be raised about whether the proposed Scottish channel would alleviate or exacerbate broadcasting introspection, offer any more opportunities for Scottish indies, increase indigenous production, or reach a viable audience in an era of media plenty. If a Scottish digital channel does go ahead, both it and Creative Scotland will be tasked with addressing the convergence of film, television and digital media – areas in which policies have traditionally taken different paths. As media products, film and television are becoming less distinct; as industries both rely on similar skills, working practices, and often share creative staff. Broadcasting is a national institution in a way that film is not, but film has a cultural and economic nationalism which warrants it public support - an ability to project the nation, be recognisably national, and return funds to the country.

The second area of further investigation relates to how this study of Scotland can be applied elsewhere. It is useful to examine the specificities of Scotland as a small semi-

autonomous nation and these findings provide a framework for thinking about other small nations. But it is clear from the study that within the national framework, Scotland's media are centred around a Glasgow hub. Indeed, given the concentration of the media industries in the city, a study of the Scottish creative industries which did not involve Glasgow would surely produce a distorted result. While the centring of the infrastructure in one region is indicative of the size and density of the population, it does little to reflect the diversity of Scotland as a whole and provides few opportunities for talent to develop outside the central belt. This lack of representativeness might not be problematic were it not coupled with the industry's reliance on London and lack of network presence. As it stands, the metro-centric nature of the UK media is mirrored on a Scottish level by a reliance on Glasgow-based media, and presents similar problems in mis-representing the rest of nation. The establishment of a Gaelic channel and the evident willingness of both the Scottish and UK governments to support Gaelic broadcasting, may result in further diversification of the sector.

Does Scotland have a national right to a creative infrastructure? At the time of writing, the inequitable split in which media is governed by Westminster and cultural policy by Holyrood results in an untenable situation which fails to grasp the complexities of either culture or broadcasting and telecommunications. It is necessary for the Scottish and UK governments to join more fruitfully in considering the needs of Scottish culture and creativity. The relative size of Scotland's film and television industries on a UK scale may suggest that as a nation, Scotland is simply unable to sustain an independent creative industries infrastructure.

## Appendix A. Interviews

People who agreed to be interviewed for this research are listed here. Job titles given refer to roles at the time of interview.

Ewan Angus, Head of Commissioning and Sport, BBC Scotland. 14 August 2007

John Archer, Managing Director, Hopscotch Films. 17 July 2008

Donald-Iain Brown, Head of Talent and Change Director, BBC Scotland. 6 September 2007

April Chamberlain, Managing Director, The Comedy Unit. 8 January 2008

Rab Christie, Senior Producer, The Comedy Unit. 15 August 2007

Kahleen Crawford, Casting Director, Kahleen Crawford Casting. 1 August 2007

Colin Gilbert, Managing Director, The Comedy Unit. 15 August 2007

Ken Hay, Chief Executive, Scottish Screen. 7 September 2007

Steve Inch, Executive Director, Glasgow City Council. 6 September 2007

Mike Kidd, Director, Mike Kidd Associates. 14 August 2007

Robin MacPherson, Director, Screen Academy. 13 September 2007

Ken MacQuarrie, Controller, BBC Scotland. 13 September 2007

Wendy Morgan, Press Officer, BBC Scotland. 26 June 2008

Carole Sheridan, Head of Talent and Creativity, Scottish Screen. 19 April 2007

Ian Small, Head of Public Policy and Corporate Affairs, BBC Scotland. 13 September 2007 and 4 February 2008



Lynne Hibberd, 2008

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Helena Ward, Project Manager: Researcher Development Programme, The Research Centre. 4 April 2007

Jenny Williams, Acting Director, Glasgow Film Office. 24 April 2007

Jane Wright, Head of Rights and Commercial Affairs, BBC Films. 20 June 2007

## Appendix B. The Scottish Broadcasting Commission public forum

This appendix contains edited notes made following my attendance at the Scottish Broadcasting Commission's public forum in Stirling, Tuesday 8 April 2008.

The event was presented by Pennie Taylor, freelance journalist and former health correspondent at BBC Scotland. The Commission panel was made up of Norman Drummond, Seona Reid, Elaine C. Smith and Wendy Wilkinson. Four other Commission staff were in attendance. The evening was attended by eight members of the public, although apparently twenty had registered. This included someone who was attending as a carer and scribe, someone who was there by accident (having thought the evening was a chance to complain about the licence fee), and myself. I had noted when registering that I was attending from the CCPR, and it became clear throughout the evening that all Commission members were aware of this. Pennie introduced the event as a chance to look at 'what's being given to us and is it what we want' on television and radio. Participants were asked to tick yes/no responses to four questions:

1. Are you satisfied with what's on television?
2. Can you see enough about Scotland on television as you would wish to?
3. Is it important to you that television presents a Scottish perspective on the UK and the rest of the world?
4. Would you want to watch a local television channel?

Responses to these questions were collated and fed back at the end of the session as percentages, (i.e., '100 per cent of people said that they can't see enough about Scotland on television as they would wish to.')

The eight people were split into two small groups, in which individuals were asked to list things they wanted to keep, or change, with the current broadcasting situation.

Commission members were at pains to point out that it was an independent body. National identity was, however, forced in what I thought was a very unhelpful way, and audience responses to questions were filtered to fit this agenda. For example:

‘I want nicer things, happier endings.’ *More Scottish comedy and light entertainment?*

‘I don’t like the *Newsnight/ Newsnight Scotland* split – I want either/or.’ *Which would you prefer?* ‘Well *Newsnight* is better presented. It looks better.’ *Yes, but it’s better funded. If Newsnight Scotland were better funded, slicker and well presented, then you’d want Newsnight Scotland?*

‘I want to see more women on TV.’ *Right - you want more representations of Scottish women.*

‘I want more sport, not just football.’ *So things like shinty, curling?*

I found many aspects of the evening bewildering. The yes/no questions were confusing - the first question was qualitative and gave no indication of whether the respondent had access to four channels or 304, or what the correlation was between satisfaction and viewing habits. In questions two and three, the words ‘Scottish/Scotland’ could have been substituted for women/Pakistani/older people/students etc. and my responses would have remained the same. The fourth question was used as local equating to Scotland – some might watch local television but wouldn’t necessarily tune into a Scottish locale – so for me the question referred to access rather than content. In short, I failed to see how the questions – which referred respectively to quality, diversity, plurality and access – cornerstones of PSB - fed into the Commission’s investigation of broadcasting democracy, as opposed to Ofcom’s review of the role, purpose and funding of PSB. There was no differentiation made in the meeting between Scottish representations and Scottish productions, and I was confused over whether the Commission was questioning the role of Scottish representations, (presumably produced from within and outwith the nation), or number of Scottish productions (which may well not look Scottish, to any audience).

Feeding back the responses of seven people as percentages made me laugh at the time, although raised more serious questions over the validity of the Commission’s findings, particularly when average attendance at the public meetings was not noted on its website. It was notable that the habits and history of broadcasting played an obvious role in current perceptions of television. Most participants referred to frustration at BBC reporters handing over to ‘news in the regions’, when for many years it has been corporate policy to refer to ‘news where you are’. Overwhelmingly, in my opinion, the Scottish Broadcasting Commission’s (definitive) need to see the debate in national terms, was both unhelpful and unrealistic.

## Appendix C. *River City* talent

[*River City* is] about drawing in the talent both in front of the camera and of course obviously behind the camera as well, the technician, writing and craft skills that go behind it. (Head of Public Policy and Corporate Affairs, BBC Scotland, 2007)

How to measure the success of *River City*? One way of doing this is to consider the extent to which the series acts as a springboard for talent to go on to further work. This appendix outlines some of the more prominent moves of people who have worked on *River City*, though the list is not exhaustive.

Barbara Rafferty won some acclaim for her role in the feature film *The Last King of Scotland* (Macdonald, 2006), although she had appeared in several other features, including *The Wicker Man* (Hardy, 1973), prior to appearing in *River City*. Gray O'Brien has achieved considerable success in *Coronation Street*, although prior to his appearance in one episode of *River City* in 2006, O'Brien had appeared in several episodes of *Casualty* and *Peak Practice* (Central, 1993-2002). The actors that have gone on to further network work are largely those people that starred in the early episodes rather than more recent ones.<sup>61</sup> Shabana Akhtar Bakhsh appeared in *River City* in 2002 and went on to *Doctors* (BBC, 2000-date), *Taggart*, *Waterloo Road* (BBC, 2006-date), and feature *Ae Fond Kiss* (Loach, 2004). Similarly Kriss Dosanjh, 'Karim' in *River City* in 2002, progressed to *Holby City*, *Doctors*, *Wire in the Blood* (ITV, 2002-date) and feature *This Is England* (Meadows, 2006). Duncan Duff appeared in two episodes of *River City* in 2002 and went on to *The Bill*, *Doctor Who* and *Skins* (Channel 4, 2007-2008). Kari Corbett and Gordon Kennedy both featured in *River City* in 2002, and have gone on to work in *The Royal* (Yorkshire, 2003-date) and *Robin Hood* (BBC, 2006-date) respectively. Carmen Pieraccini appeared in two episodes of *River City* and continued to work in Scotland with The Comedy Unit, in *Dear Green Place* (BBC, 2006-date). For Jenny Ryan this situation was reversed - she worked on *Dear Green Place* from 2006 to 2007, (after appearing in *Rebus* and *Taggart*), and starred in one episode of *River City* in 2008. Two actors, Michael Nardone and Maurice Rooves, were mentioned by BBC Scotland staff as having appeared in *River City*, and boast a considerable portfolio of work in film and television on the Internet Movie Database (<http://www.imdb.com>). The IMDB does not list the series among their achievements. Reliable (if anecdotal) evidence gathered during the course of this research suggests that for some actors, deleting *River City* from their curriculum vitae

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<sup>61</sup> This may reflect the length of this study and long lead-in time for drama.

has proved to be more beneficial than detrimental.

A few incoming actors have provided particular kudos for *River City*. Former *Deacon Blue* singer Lorraine McIntosh, having appeared in feature film *My Name is Joe* (Loach, 1998) joined the cast in December 2002. William Ruane had also worked with Ken Loach, starring as 'Pinball' in the critically acclaimed *Sweet Sixteen* (Loach, 2002) before appearing in four episodes of *River City*. He has continued on to further television and feature film work, notably in *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* (Loach, 2006). The appearance of Stefan Dennis, a recognisable face after years of appearing on *Neighbours*, was a coup for the programme in April 2003. In 2008, the announcement that *River City* would be re-launched as an hourly drama brought promises that there would be a shake-up of acting staff. This also followed the appointment in 2007 of a new casting director, Kahleen Crawford.<sup>62</sup>

*River City* has had more success attracting behind the scenes talent, often featuring people who have worked on soaps and continuing series elsewhere. *Emmerdale* and *Brookside* provided opportunities for directors Jeff Naylor, Garth Tucker and Philip Wood prior to their experience on *River City*. Naylor and Tucker had also worked on *EastEnders*, a training ground for Haldane Duncan and Jim Shields. The same names were variously employed on *Coronation Street*, *Eldorado* (BBC, 1992-1993), *Crossroads*, *Byker Grove* (BBC, 1989-2006), *Taggart* and *The Bill*, prior to working on *River City*. Haldane Duncan and Philip Wood have since moved on to directing *Emmerdale*.

Of the writers, Mark Cairns used *River City* as a stepping-stone to *Family Affairs* (Channel Five, 1997-2005) and *Holby City*. Ann-Marie di Mambro continued working on *Casualty* while pursuing *Doctor Finlay* (STV, 1993-1996), *Holby City*, *Taggart* and *River City*. From there she moved on to *EastEnders* and back to *River City*. David Robertson moved from *River City* to *Casualty* and *The Bill*.

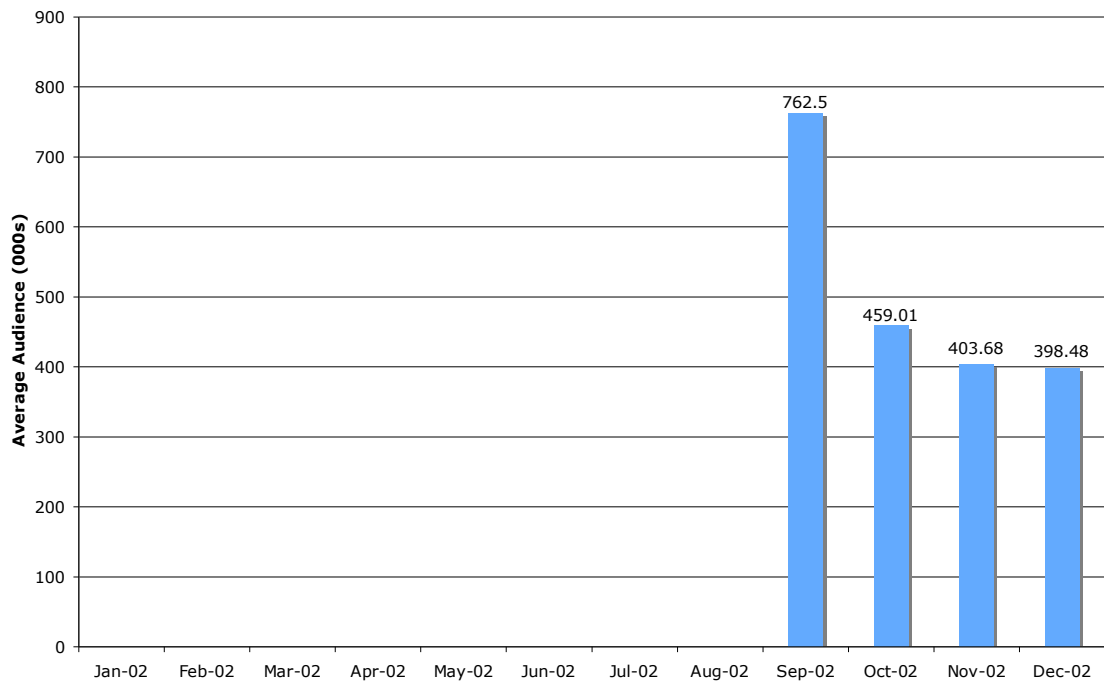
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<sup>62</sup> Kahleen Crawford has worked with Ken Loach on three feature films, and was the casting director on *Red Road*. Her practice is based in Film City, Glasgow.

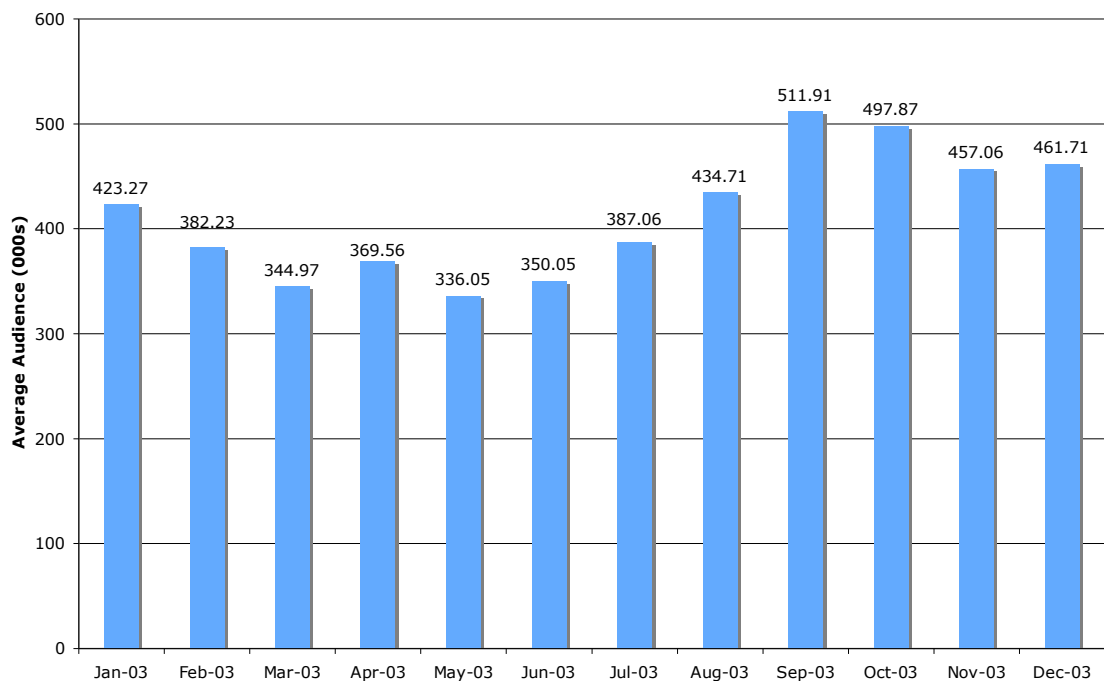
## Appendix D. *River City* viewing figures

The data below refer to BARB viewing figures for *River City*, where numbers have been calculated on an average basis per month. Figures for 2002 and 2008 should be treated with caution: *River City* did not begin broadcasting until 24 September 2002, and the average viewing figures for this month and year are disproportionately high due to the large audience for the first episode. 2008 data were only available until 14 September.

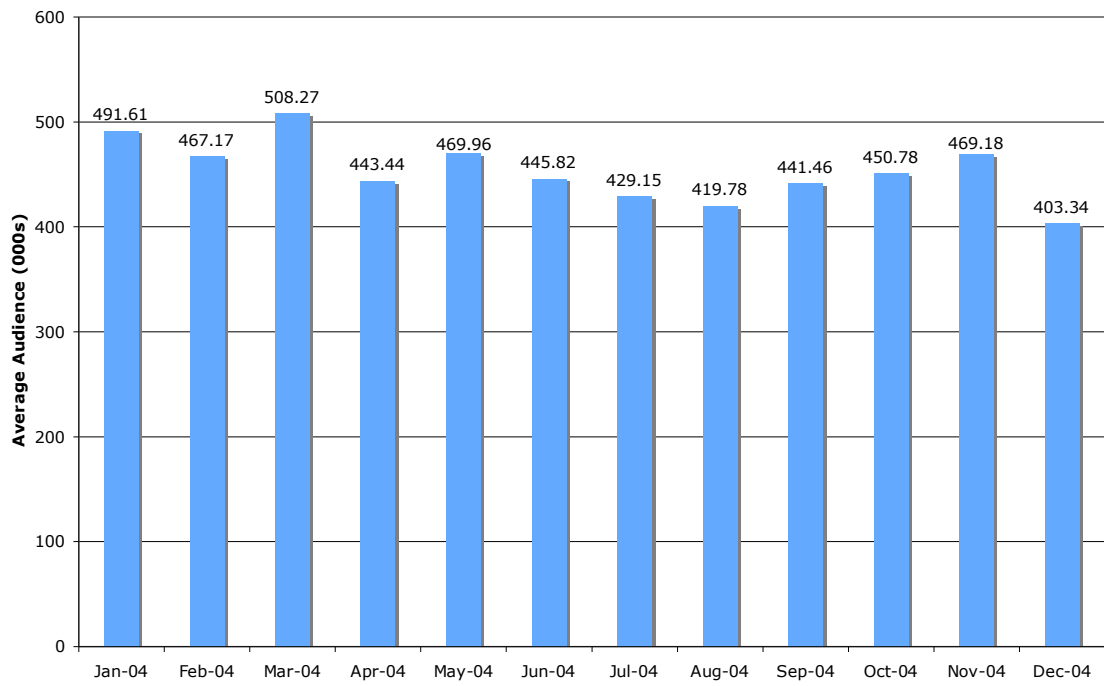
**Figure 11 *River City's* Audience 2002**



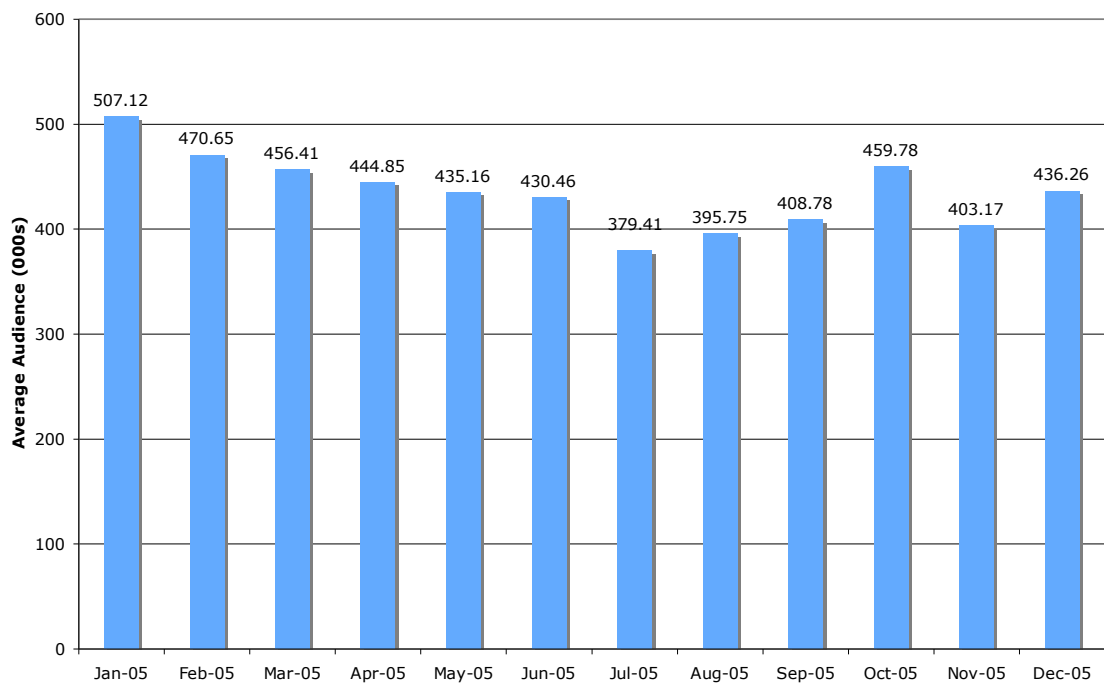
**Figure 12 *River City's* Audience 2003**



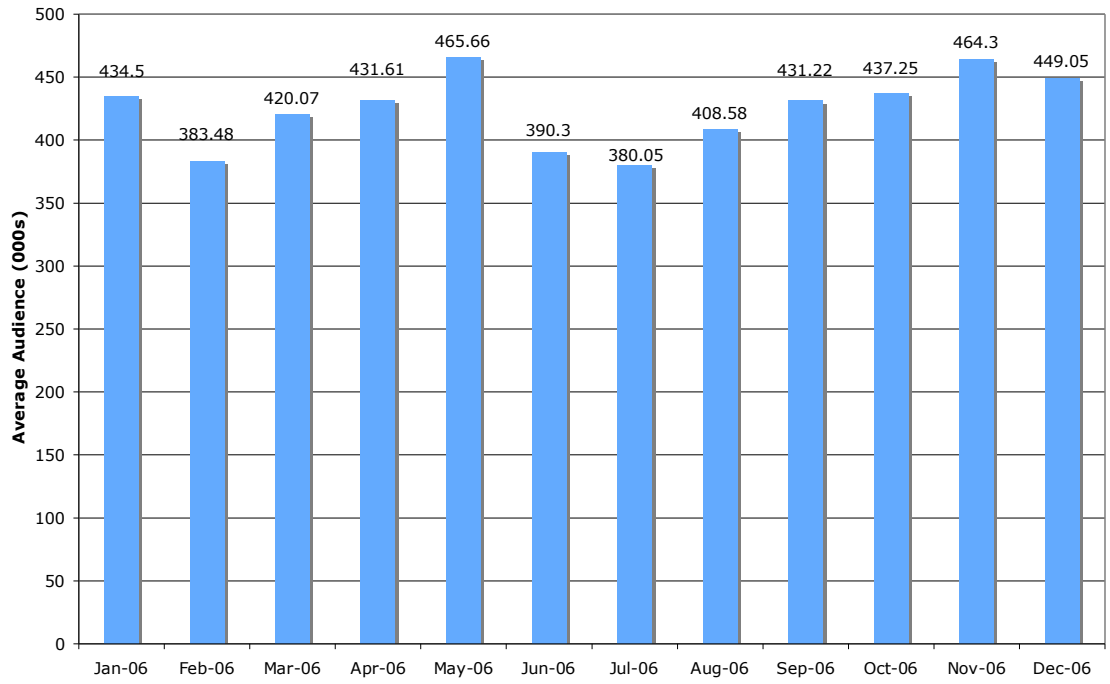
**Figure 13** *River City's Audience 2004*



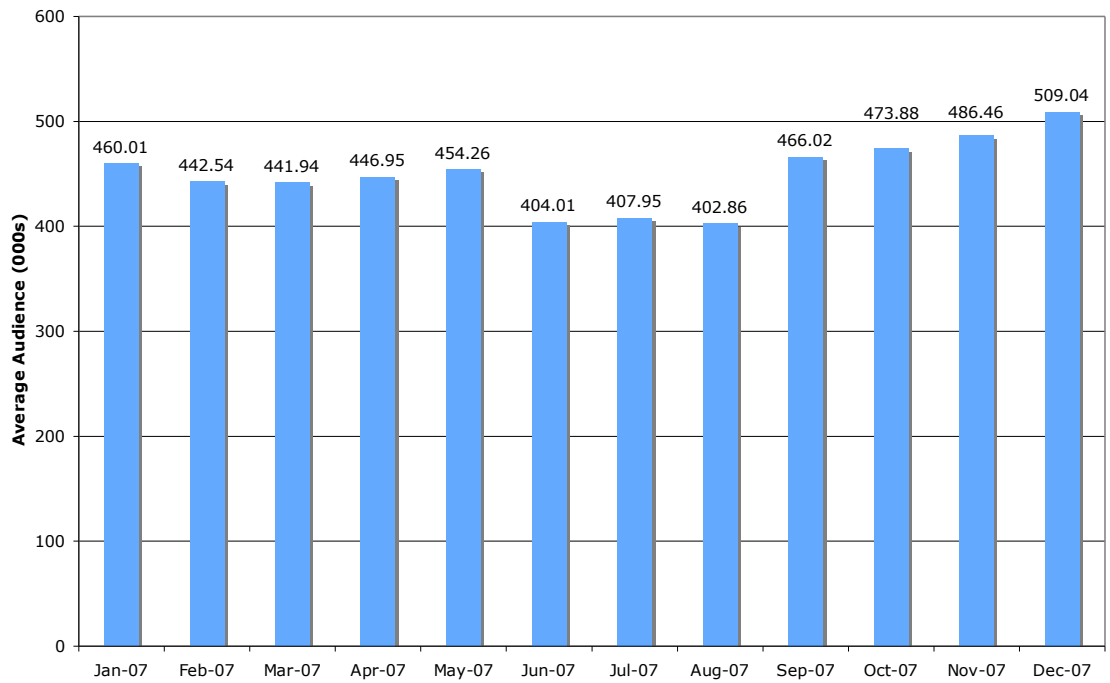
**Figure 14** *River City's Audience 2005*



**Figure 15 *River City's* Audience 2006**

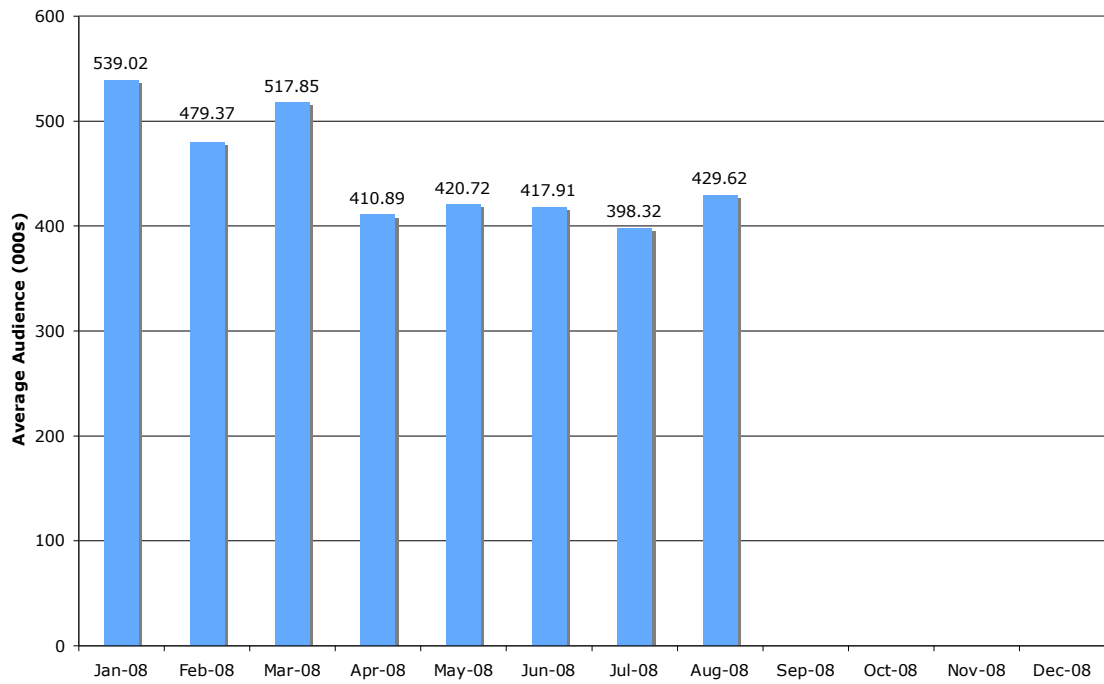


**Figure 16 *River City's* Audience 2007**

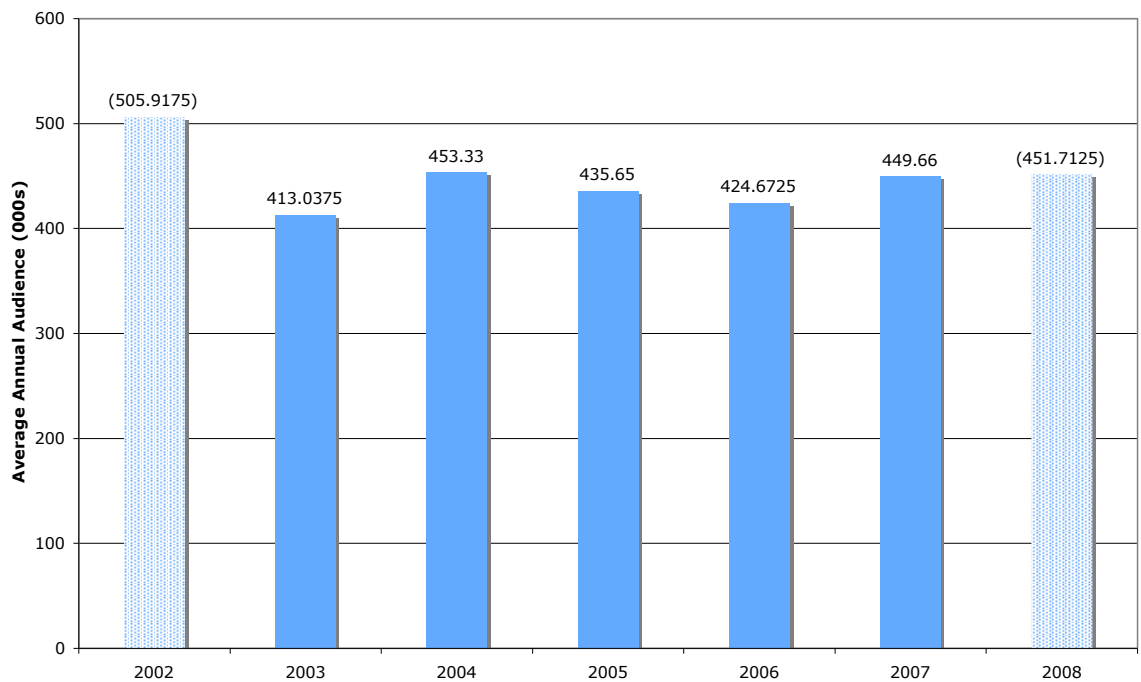




**Figure 17 *River City's* Audience 2008**

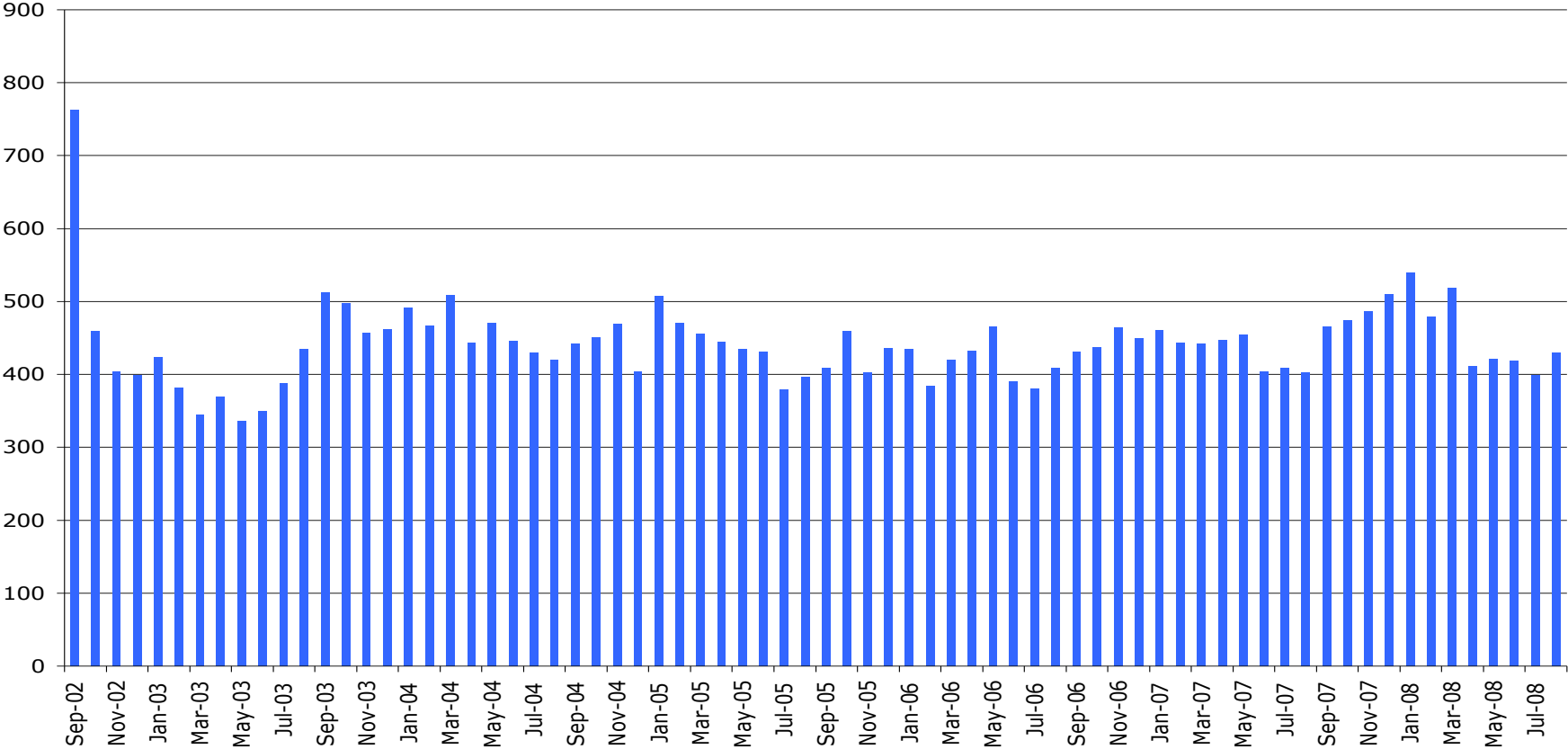


**Figure 18 *River City* Annual Viewing Figures, 2002-2008**



(The 2002 figure refers to the period from 24 September to 31 December. The 2008 figure refers to the period from 1 January to 14 September.)

**Figure 19 River City's Average Audience, 2002-2008**



## Filmography

*Ae Fond Kiss.* (2004) Directed by KEN LOACH. UK; Belgium; Germany; Italy; Spain: Sixteen Films [film: 35mm].

*Bent.* (1998) Directed by SEAN MATHIAS. UK: Channel Four Films [film: 35mm].

*Braveheart.* (1995) Directed by MEL GIBSON. USA: Icon Productions [film: 35mm].

*Dancer in the Dark.* (2000) Directed by LARS VON TRIER. Denmark: Zentropa [film: 35mm].

*Dogville.* (2000) Directed by LARS VON TRIER. Denmark: Zentropa [film: 35mm].

*Elling.* (2001) Directed by PETTER NAESS. Norway: Maipo Film [film: 35mm].

*The Flying Scotsman.* (2006) Directed by DOUGLAS MACKINNON. Germany; UK: ContentFilm International [film: 35mm].

*Gregory's Girl.* (1981) Directed by BILL FORSYTH. UK: Lake Films [film: 35mm].

*Gregory's Two Girls.* (1999) Directed by BILL FORSYTH. UK; Germany: Channel Four Films [film: 35mm].

*The Last King of Scotland.* (2006) Directed by KEVIN MACDONALD. UK: DNA Films [film: 16mm].

*Late Night Shopping.* (2001) Directed by SAUL METZSTEIN. UK: Ideal World Productions [film: 35mm].

*Lilja 4-Ever.* (2002) Directed by LUKAS MOODYSSON. Sweden; Denmark: Memfis Film [film: 35mm].

*Local Hero.* (1983) Directed by BILL FORSYTH. UK: Goldcrest Films International [film: 35mm]

- The Magdalene Sisters.* (2003) Directed by PETER MULLAN. UK; Ireland: PFP Films [film: 35mm].
- The Maggie.* (1954) Directed by ALEXANDER MACKENDRICK. UK: Ealing [film: 35mm].
- Morvern Callar.* (2002) Directed by LYNNE RAMSAY. UK: Company Pictures [film: 35mm].
- Mrs Brown.* (1997) Directed by JOHN MADDEN. UK; Ireland; USA: Ecosse Films [film: 16mm].
- My Ain Folk.* (1973) Directed by BILL DOUGLAS. UK: British Film Institute [film: 35mm].
- My Childhood.* (1972) Directed by BILL DOUGLAS. UK: British Film Institute [film: 35mm].
- My Name Is Joe.* (1998) Directed by KEN LOACH. Spain; Italy; France; UK; Germany: Parallax Pictures [film: 35mm].
- My Way Home.* (1978) Directed by BILL DOUGLAS. UK: British Film Institute [film: 35mm].
- Orphans.* (1999) Directed by PETER MULLAN. UK: Antoinine Green Bridge [film: 35mm].
- Ratcatcher.* (1999) Directed by LYNNE RAMSAY. UK; France: Holy Cow Films [film: 35mm].
- Red Road.* (2006) Directed by ANDREA ARNOLD. UK; Denmark: Sigma Films [film: 35mm].
- Regeneration.* (1997) Directed by GILLIES MACKINNON. UK; Canada: Rafford Films [film: 35mm].
- Rob Roy.* (1995) Directed by MICHAEL CATON-JONES. USA: Talisman Productions [film: 35mm].

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## Glossary of abbreviations

3G	Third Generation Mobile Technology
ACE	Arts Council of England
ACS	Audience Council Scotland
AI	Appreciation Index
BAFTA	British Academy of Film and Television Arts
BARB	Broadcasters' Audience Research Board
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCS	Broadcasting Council for Scotland
BFI	British Film Institute
CCPR	Centre for Cultural Policy Research
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSG	Consultative Steering Group
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DSO	Digital Switchover
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
EIFF	Edinburgh International Film Festival
ERDF	European Regional Development Funding
EU	European Union
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FPRG	Film Policy Review Group
GDA	Glasgow Development Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	Gaelic Digital Service
GFF	Glasgow Film Fund
GFO	Glasgow Film Office
GMS	Gaelic Media Service
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IFA	Independent Filmmakers Association
IPPA	Independent Programme Producers Association
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
ITV	Independent Television

Labour/LibDem	Labour/ Liberal Democrat
MP	Member of Parliament
MP3	Moving Picture Experts Group Phase 1 (MPEG-1) Audio Layer 3
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
MTP	Mallinson Television Productions
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
Ofcom	Office of Communications
OOL	Out of London
P&A	Prints and Advertising
PACT	Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television
PM	Prime Minister
PSB	Public Service Broadcasting/ Broadcaster
QC	Queen's Council
RSAMD	Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama
Rt. Hon.	Right Honourable
SAC	Scottish Arts Council
SAIP	Scottish Association of Independent Producers
SBFT	Scottish Broadcast and Film Training
SEFU	Scottish Enterprise Film Unit
SFC	Scottish Film Council
SFF	Scottish Film Fund
SFPF	Scottish Film Production Fund
SIBS	Screen Industries Business School
SISG	Scottish Screen Industries Summit Group
SMG	Scottish Media Group
SMRI	Stirling Media Research Institute
SNP	Scottish National Party
SPICe	Scottish Parliament Information Centre
STV	Scottish Television
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
TRC	The Research Centre
UCL	University College London
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UKFC	UK Film Council

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