

MADE IN WALES:
A STUDY OF THE REALITIES OF WORK IN A
SUPER INDEPENDENT TELEVISION PRODUCTION
COMPANY

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ABSTRACT

The PhD study provides an assessment of TV production work in context, examining the impact of the consolidation of the independent television sector on the experience of work. The recent consolidation of the sector in the UK has led to the emergence of super independent television production companies, more commonly known as ‘super indies’. Super indies are organisations formed by multiple takeovers, grouping together independent television producers into larger companies. Whilst the rise of super indies is well-documented, the realities of work in super indies have yet to be explored. The thesis addresses this gap by assessing the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the experience of work in television production.

Based on an in-depth case study of a Welsh super indie, *Oaks Productions Ltd (Oaks)*, the research draws on 63 semi-structured interviews with both Oaks’ managers and employees to evaluate the experience of work in this context. In doing so, the research investigates firstly, how the nature of television production work is impacted by key features of the super indie structure in the Welsh context, and secondly, how creative work is experienced in this setting. Fundamental to the study is the identification of a *creative worker typology*, relating to the ability of creative workers to access and mobilise a variety of different resources to navigate creative work in this setting. Finally, the thesis explores the meaning of television work, highlighting the important role of individual creative work features, as well as social, relational and non-work factors in the experience of meaningful work.

The thesis contributes to the TV production literature, illustrating the diversity of TV production experiences in a single organisational context. Moreover, it contributes to the creative labour literature by demonstrating the entrenched power hierarchies in creative work settings, and the importance of embedded resources in shaping the experience of television production work.

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	11
1.1 Introduction.....	11
1.2 The changing structures of TV production.....	11
1.2.1 The rise of the UK's super indies.....	12
1.3 Studying the realities of work.....	14
1.4 Research aims and questions.....	14
1.5 Thesis overview.....	15
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Creative industries and creative labour: key themes and concepts.....	18
2.2.1 Features of creative labour.....	20
2.2.2 The management of creative labour.....	22
2.3 Working in television: key features and debates.....	24
2.3.1 Management and control of TV production.....	24
2.3.2 Autonomy and discretion.....	26
2.3.3 Multi-skilling.....	28
2.3.4 Theoretical debates.....	29
2.4 Navigating work in television: social capital and resources.....	32
2.4.1 Social capital as a means of coordination.....	33
2.4.2 Social capital as an exclusionary mechanism.....	34
2.4.3 Lin's network theory of social capital.....	35
2.5 Assessing experiences through meaningful work.....	38
2.5.1 Defining key concepts.....	39
2.5.2 Theorising meaningful work: dominant perspectives.....	41
2.5.3 Towards a sociological approach.....	44
3. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS.....	49
3.1 Introduction.....	49
3.2 Critical realism as a philosophy of science.....	49
3.2.1 Ontology and epistemology.....	49
3.2.2 Critical realism and the study of TV production.....	52
3.3 Research strategy.....	54
3.4 Case study research.....	55
3.4.1 Case study methodology.....	55
3.4.2 Selecting the case study.....	58
3.4.3 Research setting and access.....	59
3.4.4 Assessing case study research in context.....	60
3.5 Research methods.....	62
3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews.....	62

3.5.2	Selecting interviewees	63
3.5.3	Interviews at Oaks	64
3.5.4	Supplementary observational data	69
3.6	Conducting the fieldwork	69
3.6.1	Using a gatekeeper	69
3.6.2	Welsh language barriers	70
3.6.3	Role of the researcher	71
3.6.4	Other fieldwork issues	72
3.6.5	Ethical considerations	73
3.7	Analysing research data	73
3.8	Limitations	74
3.9	Conclusion	75
4.	CASE CONTEXT: OAKS PRODUCTIONS LTD	77
4.1	Introduction	77
4.2	Building a super indie in Wales	78
4.2.1	Establishing Oaks and the Welsh television context	78
4.2.2	Acquisition strategy	79
4.2.3	Sector consolidation and the rise of the super indies	80
4.2.4	Oaks: the super indie	81
4.3	Key organisational features	82
4.3.1	Embedded in the Welsh context	83
4.3.2	Use of a staff workforce	86
4.3.3	Streamlined development process	87
4.3.4	Availability and centralisation of resources	89
4.4	Conclusion	93
5.	WORKING IN WELSH TELEVISION PRODUCTION	94
5.1	Introduction	94
5.2	Examining the nature of work in TV production	95
5.2.1	Multi-skilling and fluid role boundaries	95
5.2.2	Work intensification	100
5.2.3	Routinisation of work	102
5.2.4	Inclusion and exclusion in ideas development process	105
5.2.5	Varied progression opportunities	107
5.3	Creative worker typology	110
5.3.1	Enhanced creative workers	111
5.3.2	Restricted creative workers	113
5.4	Conclusion	116
6.	NAVIGATING CREATIVE WORK IN THE SUPER INDIE WORKPLACE	118

6.1 Introduction	118
6.2 Exploring how creative workers navigate TV production.....	119
6.2.1 Understanding the Welsh television landscape.....	120
6.2.2 Knowledge of upcoming programmes	122
6.2.3 Access to decision makers.....	126
6.2.4 Diverse skillsets	130
6.3 Discussion: social capital, resources and the creative worker hierarchy	135
6.4 Conclusion	137
7. SEARCHING FOR MEANING IN TV PRODUCTION WORK.....	138
7.1 Introduction.....	138
7.2 Diverse sources of meaningful work	139
7.2.1 Enhanced creative workers	140
7.2.2 Restricted creative workers	144
7.2.3 Technical workers.....	150
7.2.4 Summary: diverging and converging sources of meaningful work	153
7.3 The role of Welsh identity and Welsh culture.....	153
7.3.1 Working in the Welsh language	154
7.3.2 Shared sense of Welshness	155
7.3.3 Contribution to Welsh culture through Welsh TV production.....	157
7.4 Conclusion	159
8. DISCUSSION.....	161
8.1 Introduction.....	161
8.2 The super indie structure and the reality of work.....	162
8.2.1 Tensions and trade-offs.....	162
8.3 Creative worker hierarchy	165
8.3.1 Social capital and resources	167
8.3.2 Sources of meaningful work.....	169
8.4 The significance of the national context.....	171
8.5 Towards tensional meaningful work	171
8.6 Conclusion	172
9. CONCLUSION.....	173
9.1 Introduction.....	173
9.2 Inside the super indie workplace.....	173
9.3 Rethinking creative trade-offs	174
9.4 Hierarchies of creative work.....	174
9.5 Using resources to capture social capital and creativity	175
9.6 Negotiating the meaning of creative work.....	175
9.7 Theorising creative work	176
9.8 Made in Wales: the significance of the Welsh context	177
9.9 Limitations and further research	177
REFERENCES.....	180

APPENDICES	193
Appendix 1: Glossary of television production terminology	193
Appendix 2: Invitation to take part in research study email	195
Appendix 3: Example senior management interview guide.....	196
Appendix 4: Example employee interview guide	198
Appendix 5: Ethical approval letter	200
Appendix 6: Participant information sheet	201
Appendix 7: Informed consent declaration for research participants	202
Appendix 8: Profile of job roles: traditional versus changed roles at Oaks.....	203

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Participants interviewed	66
Table 2: Welsh-broadcast division: production portfolio	83
Table 3: Post-production services portfolio	90
Table 4: Creative worker typology.....	117
Table 5: Summary of data themes by creative worker typology.....	160

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Expansion of Oaks' employee workforce by significant years.....	81
Figure 2: Oaks Organisational Chart	82

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The PhD research is an investigation of the realities of work for television workers in the context of a super independent television production company (super indie), following the consolidation of the independent television production industry. The consolidation of the sector in the UK has led to the emergence of ‘super indies’. Super indies are organisations formed by multiple takeovers, grouping together independent television producers into larger companies. Whilst the rise of super indies is well-documented (Faulkner et al. 2008; Lee 2011; Sweney 2014; Ofcom 2015), the realities of work in these organisations have yet to be explored. The thesis responds to this research gap by seeking to assess the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the experience of work in television production. This chapter introduces the research area, sets out the research aims and questions, and provides an overview of the subsequent chapters in the thesis.

1.2 The changing structures of TV production

Independent television production has become increasingly synonymous with precariousness in the literature. This stems from theoretical debates that position creative work as both emancipatory and enslaving (McRobbie 2002b; Löfgren 2003, p.251; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010), drawing on research that associates creative work with a new era of insecurity, where uncertainty and ambiguity are claimed to be common features of the working lives of contemporary creatives (McRobbie 2002a; Ross 2004; Banks 2006; Lee 2011). In particular, these studies have focused on the expansion of the independent television production sector in the UK, where the dominance of freelance working in the sector is thought to facilitate a “constant churn” of individuals fleetingly entering and leaving the labour market, with work often described as a “constant roller-coaster of feast-or-famine modality” (Paterson, 2012: 97). Consequently, workers in the sector are said to regularly experience unpaid work (Dex et al., 2000; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012); “who you know” cultures (Blair et al. 2001; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2009), irregular working hours and no guarantee of future income (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010; Paterson 2012).

Recent changes in the broader context of independent TV production have signalled a change in the structures of the industry, with the rise of large, consolidated companies referred to as ‘super indies’ dominating the landscape of TV production in the UK. The predominant focus on freelancing in the industry as a lens to examine the insecurity and precariousness of work, however, distracts attention from the organisational features associated with these organisations, and their potential implications for working in television production. Following on, no empirical studies have assessed super indies at both the organisational and individual level, with existing insights based on studies of

freelancers, contracted by super indies on a temporary basis (e.g. Lee 2011; Morris et al. 2017). The present research positions itself in this gap, aiming to provide insights into the experiential outcomes of the super indie institutional structure on the working lives of television workers employed by a super indie company.

An investigation of the way in which super indies have emerged within the UK is crucial for grounding understandings of the nature and experience of work in such entities. As such, the discussion that follows provides an overview of the evolution of the UK's independent TV sector and the rise of the 'super indie phenomenon' (Douglas 2016), attending to calls from labour process theorists for assessments of creative labour that "reconnect" changes in creative labour to the broader market, and social, production and political environments within which it is situated (Thompson et al. 2016, p.329). Such an overview is crucial to contextualising debates around television production and creative labour in contemporary society.

1.2.1 The rise of the UK's super indies

The landscape for television production has undergone a series of changes over the past thirty years that have transformed the nature of work and employment in the sector. Up until the 1980s, the television sector in the UK was defined by the 'cosy duopoly' of the BBC and ITV (Saundry 2001, p.24), in what was referred to as 'the golden age' of television (Lawson 2013), based on a system of stability and predictability, partly due to guaranteed funding through TV licence fee funds. These companies were largely bureaucratic and vertically organised (Davis and Scase 2000), employing large workforces of permanent, salaried workers, situated within a highly regulated national level collective bargaining framework, ensuring the provision of in-house training, significant rewards, retention of staff, and clear internal labour markets (Saundry 2001).

However, major changes over the past thirty years triggered the fragmentation of the sector; a combination of technological advancements, digitalisation, globalisation, privatisation and deregulation, facilitated the diversification of the sector, allowing the emergence of a substantial independent TV production sector in the UK (Paterson 2001; Morris et al. 2016). This was partially as a result of the creation of Channel 4 as a publisher-broadcaster as part of a broader process of deregulation by the Thatcher government, that aimed to "set business free" from bureaucratic, essentially government controls... [and] to "let the market decide" (Crisell 2005, p.222-223, cited in Bennett 2015, p. 79). Alongside this, the marketisation of the BBC and the assumption that creativity, talent and innovation lay with genre-focused independents, led independent producers to become the favoured means of programming in the industry (Born 2002; Bennett 2015). Such changes transformed the nature of work and employment in the sector, essentially through a

process of 'de-bureaucratisation' which led to a move away from permanent, salaried staff with clear career ladders, to a sector comprised of independent producers and freelancers, and effectively, the casualisation of the industry (Starkey et al. 2000; Smith and McKinlay 2009b). This casualised industry was marked by insecurity and precariousness for its workers, with market-based conditions also weakening the power of trade unions and eroding employment legislation in the sector (Born 2002; Bennett 2015). At its peak in 1996, it is estimated that this 'cottage industry' was composed of around 1000 production companies, producing a range of genres for TV broadcast (Pact 1996; Starkey et al. 2000).

Fundamental to the expansion of the independent TV production sector in the UK were two pieces of legislation introduced by government that aimed to strengthen the sector; the 1990 Broadcasting Act requiring that 25% of qualifying broadcast television be outsourced to independent companies, and the Communications Act 2003, providing independents with intellectual property rights over their programmes (Mediatique 2005). These regulations triggered the consolidation of the sector, giving independents opportunities to develop their assets, resulting in significant merger and acquisition (M&A) activity, and substantial consolidation within the sector (Morris et al. 2016). As a result, by 2014 the number of independent TV producers in the UK had dramatically reduced to around 300 companies (Pact 2014). The consolidation of the sector, which continues today, saw the rise of the 'super-indie phenomena' (Douglas 2017); the development of large commercial entities, formed by independent producers through M&A activity, (Mediatique 2005) defined by Ofcom as 'industry heavyweights' and 'diversified companies working across multiple genres for almost all of the major broadcasters, and exploiting key rights and brands in the global market' (Ofcom 2005, p.14). Many of these super indies are internationally-owned by US media giants, and in 2014 accounted for 52% of independent commissions by public service broadcasters (Ofcom 2015). As such, the consolidation experienced by the UK's TV sector transformed it from a cottage industry of small independent producers into a 'global powerhouse' (Douglas 2016), with revenues of over £2.5billion in 2016 (Pact 2017).

Despite the success of super indies on a global scale in the sale and distribution of their content, some have warned that super indies may be the 'victims of their own success' (Sweney 2014). Industry professionals, for example, have shown concerns over the 'domination' of the TV production sector by a small number of 'super-producers' (Tony Hall, BBC Director General, cited in Sweney 2014). David Abraham, CEO of Channel 4, has also cautioned of the potential stifling of creativity in super indies where cost pressures result in the reformatting of ideas as a key strategy for increasing profits, as well as the possible threats to British public service broadcasting from the

widespread ownership of UK broadcasters and producers by US media companies (RTS 2014; Douglas 2016).

Likewise, within academic research, super indies have been criticised for prioritising commercial values and for instilling “a formulaic and monotonous commercialised production culture, where new ideas are arguably unable to find space in the dominant commercial landscape of television” (Lee 2011, p.562). While enabling the amalgamation of resources and expertise, super indies have been described as “format factories” driven by the production of low cost and repeatable formats (Bennett 2015, p.87), based on a business model focused on retaining control rights whilst producing high-volume, mass market products with low input costs (Faulkner et al. 2008). In super indie settings, the centrality of formats has been suggested as leading to a “race to the bottom” as the focus shifts from creative freedom, diverse stories and editorial independence to one premised on financial motives and low-cost programming (Faulkner et al. 2008; Bennett 2015, p.86). This situation arguably “fits uneasily with any idea of creativity involving the non-routine, the novel and the disruptive” (Faulkner et al. 2008, p.307), however no empirical studies have examined the realities of working within super independent production companies for creative workers, and therefore relatively little is known about the impact of such settings on the nature and experience of creative labour in TV production.

1.3 Studying the realities of work

The research investigates the realities of work to gain a holistic understanding of work from the employee perspective, given the scarcity of empirical research studies focused on the super indie context. To do so, the research develops an approach based on three areas of inquiry that together critically analyse the realities of work in television production. First, by exploring the nature of work, the research establishes the structures and features associated with television production in the super indie setting, and its implications for the content, organisation and management of work (Jenkins and Delbridge 2013). Second, the thesis analyses how television workers navigate the nature of work through using resources (Lin 1999). Finally, the research analyses how television workers respond to working in television production, through negotiating the meaning of work (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017). As such, the research brings together an assessment of the nature of work, resources, and meaningful work.

1.4 Research aims and questions

The research aims to explore the realities of work in a super independent television production company (super indie). The thesis seeks to uncover the implications of the super indie structure on

the nature of work in television production, and how this is experienced and responded to by television workers. As such, the research is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What is the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the nature of work and creativity for television workers?
- 2) How do creative workers navigate the super indie workplace, and why are some more successful than others?
- 3) How do television workers find their work meaningful following the development of the super indie institutional structure?

1.5 Thesis overview

The thesis attempts to address these research aims over the course of the following chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the creative labour and TV production literature. This review highlights the dominance of studies that look at freelancing in the industry as a lens to examine the insecurity and precariousness of work (Dex et al. 2000; Paterson 2012; Lee 2012; 2013; Wing-Fai et al. 2015). On this basis, TV production is portrayed as self-exploitative, leading to trade-offs in terms of the acceptance of insecure and precarious work for the potential of creative, autonomous work (Ursell 2000; McRobbie 2002b). While research has begun to move away from these post-Foucauldian, totalising perspectives to emphasise the importance of ethics and agency in creative work and TV production debates (Banks 2006; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Lee 2012), the review finds that this area of research is under-developed, with a continued focus on freelancing in the TV production industry as a whole at the expense of in-depth studies of TV production in different organisational contexts. Given the prevalence of socialised working practices in TV production, the literature review then explores the function of social capital in the coordination and control of creative work. The review points to the merits of a resources approach for assessing the role of social capital in creative contexts (Lin 1999), to highlight the hierarchies and inequalities of opportunities in such settings. The final section of Chapter 2 considers how the concept of meaningful work can also enhance the understanding of the realities of creative work. Therefore, this chapter concludes by presenting the value of sociological perspectives of meaningful work that recognise the tensional and dynamic nature of work meanings (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017; Symon and Whiting 2018).

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and methods of the PhD study. First it outlines and explains the philosophical and methodological choices shaping the research, explaining how the research draws on critical realism as a philosophy of science in its investigation of TV production and creative labour. The chapter then explains the qualitative exploratory approach adopted in the research and details the organisational case study that forms the basis of the research. The chapter explains and justifies

this approach, before outlining the use of interviewing as the primary data collection technique. The chapter then accounts for how the fieldwork was encountered, methodological reflections and issues encountered during the fieldwork process.

Chapter 4 begins to set the scene for the data analysis, introducing the case company Oaks Productions Ltd (Oaks) and tracing its development from a small independent producer into a super indie. This also illuminates the crucial role of the Welsh TV context in the company's development. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the findings of the research. Chapter 5 assesses the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the nature of work for different television workers, with the analysis focusing on differences between creative and technical workers and within these groups. This chapter also outlines a creative worker typology, distinguishing between '*enhanced*' creative workers and '*restricted*' creative workers to capture the impact of the super indie expansion on the nature of the creative work experience for different workers. Chapter 6 builds on this typology, critically examining the variations between creative workers to investigate how and why the experience of creative work varies across groups in this organisational setting. This reveals the crucial role of resources in navigating creative work in the super indie workplace. The chapter shows how enhanced creative workers have been more successful than restricted creative workers in accessing and mobilising these resources, showing the significant role of social capital in shaping the experience of work in the super indie setting. Following on, Chapter 7 focuses on the theme of meaningful work. This chapter draws attention to the different ways that television workers find their work meaningful depending on how their work has been impacted by the super indie context and their position within the creative worker hierarchy (for creative workers). This chapter considers how work is found meaningful by television workers, and how the changes to their work and creativity impact on how meaningful work is experienced. This also includes a consideration of the role of the Welsh culture in meaningful work accounts.

The discussion chapter (Chapter 8) brings together the findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to discuss the relevance and significance of the findings to the existing research on TV production, creative labour, social capital and meaningful work. This includes an overview of how the three components; the nature of work, embedded resources and meaningful work, are interrelated, and what this means for existing debates in the literature. The final chapter concludes by synthesising the main findings of the research, and overviewing the limitations of the research and potential areas for further study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The research is based on three areas of inquiry that together critically analyse the realities of working in television production. First, by exploring the nature of work, the research establishes the structures and features associated with television production in consolidated settings, and its implications for the content, organisation and management of work (Jenkins and Delbridge 2013). Second, the thesis analyses how television workers navigate the nature of work through using resources (Lin 1999). Finally, the research analyses how television workers respond to working in television production, through negotiating the meaning of work (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017). Together, this analysis contributes to the TV production and creative labour literature, using multiple theoretical concepts to illuminate the diversity of TV production experiences in a single organisational context.

To provide an integrated assessment of the realities of work, the PhD draws on social capital theory (Lin 1999) as well as sociological perspectives of meaningful work (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017) to review and expand the current literature. While TV production studies are widespread, scarce research has provided an in-depth and overarching theoretical evaluation of the various elements that influence the diverse experience of work. The present research therefore combines a number of interrelated areas of the TV production and creative labour literature, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the realities of working in TV production. The realities of work therefore refer to the diverse experiences of work from the employee perspective (Noon and Blyton 2006), encapsulating differences in how work is done, how work is understood and responded to.

The literature review provides a theoretical backdrop for the study. This chapter reviews the TV production and creative labour literature and presents the merits of social capital theory and sociological perspectives of meaningful work for advancing the understanding of the experience of work in contemporary television production. Firstly, the chapter establishes the key themes and concepts in the creative industries and creative labour literature. The chapter then evaluates debates, paradoxes and tensions within TV production research more specifically, showing how the changing nature of work and employment in the sector has been researched in terms of how creative labour is organised and experienced. Whilst the implications of the casualisation of the television industry on features of creative labour is well understood, relatively little is known about how the consolidation of the industry has impacted on TV production on the front line. The next section explores how diverse experiences in the television industry can be explained with reference to social capital theory. The review then suggests that the concept of meaningful work can help us

to better understand the ambivalence and diversity of creative labour experienced in the television production process, advocating the benefits of adopting a sociological approach. To conclude, the different sections of the literature review are united through discussing how these theoretical tools together can contribute to understanding the realities of work in TV production and creative work settings.

2.2 Creative industries and creative labour: key themes and concepts

The creative labour literature has largely been driven by claims that ‘creativity’ in the 21st century represents something new and unprecedented from previous eras of capitalist development. Social and economic theorist Richard Florida once proclaimed the beginning of a new era of creativity, with creativity as “the *decisive* source of competitive advantage” and “the defining feature of economic life” (Florida 2002, p.5, emphasis in original). At the heart of this positive portrayal of the creative industries is the assumption that creativity possesses the potential for wealth creation, and social, economic and cultural regeneration and change (Leadbeater 1999; Florida 2002), playing a central role in attempts to reposition advanced capitalist societies as ‘knowledge-based’ economies (O’Doherty and Willmott 2009). Such accounts have informed claims by policy-makers and academics alike who buy into the unique value of creativity in the so-called ‘creative industries’.

The positioning of the creative industries in the UK as “national commercial champions” (Smith and McKinlay 2009a, p.9) took off during the mid-1990s under the remit of the New Labour Government. As part of attempts to map out the size and scale of the sector, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) conceptualised the definition; “*those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property*” (DCMS 2001, p.5, emphasis in original)¹. This definition brought together traditional sub-sectors, such as the performing arts and theatre, with new sectors that emerged in the context of technological developments, such as new media and interactive leisure software (Hartley 2005). Whilst the conceptualisation of the ‘creative industries’ as part of policy intervention rather than rigorous academic research has attracted controversy around the use of the category, it has proven useful for establishing the economic value and global potential of media, culture and design (Hartley et al. 2013) as well as contextualising the creative arts within broader technological changes such as digitalisation and the development of interactive media forms (Hartley 2005). To this day, policy-makers celebrate the potential of the

¹ The DCMS’s definition identified thirteen creative industry sub-sectors including: “*advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio*” (DCMS 2001a, p.5).

creative industries for the UK economy, with the Creative Industries Sector Deal 2018 describing them as “an undoubted strength of our economy... at the heart of the nation’s competition advantage” (HM Government 2018, p.2). Valued at £91.8 billion and creating nearly 2 million jobs in 2016 according to government figures, the deal emphasises the importance of the creative industries as a critical strategic sector in exiting the European Union and building a “Global Britain”, central to the creation of “good jobs” and “prosperous communities” (HM Government 2018, p.2-3). Film and high-end television are identified as particularly central to this strategy, bringing in £2 billion of inward investment in 2017 to the UK (HM Government 2018).

Academic attention has similarly been drawn to these government-sponsored industries, often described as the “vision of the future of work” (Leadbeater and Oakley 1999, p.14), “an exemplar and signifier of future industrial change” (Blair 2001, p.149) and the “vanguard of future employment” (Blair et al. 2001, p.171). Such claims reflect the emphasis on cultural production and creativity in the ‘informationalism’ of society, where immaterial goods and knowledge become the key source of competitive advantage (Castells 1996), often resulting in the conflation of creative work with knowledge work, and related discussions surrounding the potential of such work to provide high quality, knowledge-intensive jobs (Blair and Rainnie 2000; DeFillippi et al. 2007). Moreover, this shift towards the importance of symbolic goods for social and economic life within the broader economy has laid claims for the creative industries as providing a “model for transformations in other industries” (Lash and Urry 1994 cited in Lee 2013, p.1), and as “relevant for reflecting on post-industrial forms of work to which future sociological analysis will, in all probability, be increasingly directed” (O’Doherty and Willmott 2009, p.945).

Critical accounts however have speculated on the legitimacy of the “creativity script” at the centre of ‘new’ knowledge economy discussions, claiming that employment growth in the sector has been overemphasised as part of “hipsterization strategies” (Peck 2005, p.740; p.749). Critics claim there is a “complacency surrounding creative and new media work on the part of policy-makers” as well as the “academic cheerleaders who extol the benefits of creativity and entrepreneurship” (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, pp.70-71). Elsewhere, the accuracy of positive portrayals of the creative industries has been questioned, given the inherent difficulties involved in providing coherent measures of a somewhat fluid and contested category of work (O’Doherty and Willmott 2009; Warhurst 2010). While critical accounts like this warn of the dangers of glorifying an industry based on assumed “paradigm breaking characteristics in ‘exemplar industries’”, it is nevertheless acknowledged that the creative industries and the creative labour within them are an important source of value within the contemporary economy (Thompson et al. 2016, p.330). As such, it has been argued that the “conceptual myopia” around the creative industries does not warrant its

dismissal as an area of research, but rather “signals the need for better analysis of the jobs and management of those jobs categorised as creative” (Warhurst 2010, p.232-233).

2.2.1 Features of creative labour

Perspectives that glorify the potential of the creative industries stem from accounts that frame creative labour as possessing a unique set of discernible features that set it apart from work in other industries. Such mainstream accounts, for example Florida’s ‘creative class’, emphasise the high levels of autonomy and flexibility in creative labour, since the primary asset of creative workers is their “creative capacity” which is valuable through its intangibility, “because it is literally in their heads” (Florida 2002, p.68). Approaches focusing on the content of creative labour in this way have however been scrutinised, since arguably “*all* labour contains a creative element” in the sense that all labour “possesses a conceptual side” involving the “*envisioning*” of work before its execution (Smith and McKinlay 2009b, p.32, emphasis in original). These labour process theorists contend:

There is a misconception connected with the idea of ‘creative labour’: that somehow the act of creativity and occupations associated with creative work such as art, writing, music or film, are fundamentally different from the labour involved in other occupations (Smith and McKinlay 2009b, p.32).

This exemplifies the problems associated with a focus on ‘creativity’ as a social or economic category inherent in perspectives that conceptualise creative labour based on its content alone (Smith and McKinlay 2009a; 2009b; Thompson et al. 2009; Warhurst 2010). Instead, a different approach has been to identify the specific features surrounding work in the creative industries as opposed to focusing on the characteristics of creativity, in particular accounting for the uncertainty associated with creative sectors. Much of this literature draws on economist Richard Caves’ (2000) assessment of the specific properties of production within creative sectors, where “the product or service contains a substantial element of artistic or creative endeavour” (Caves 2000, p.vii), with a focus on the economic properties associated with the commodification of the arts. He argues:

Creative goods and services, the processes of their production, and the preferences or tastes of creative artists differ in substantial and systematic (if not universal) ways from their counterparts in the rest of the economy where creativity plays a lesser (if seldom negligible) role. These differences rest on the bedrock properties of these activities that distinguish them from other sectors of the economy, and in some cases distinguish creative activities from one another (Caves 2000, p.2).

These 'bedrock properties' include seven key principles that Caves (2000) contends set creative labour apart. Firstly, the sector is defined by the *nobody knows*² property, or 'inherent unknowability' that relates to the nature of outputs from creative production. Since the predictability of the success of creative products is uncertain, creative markets are marked by high risk and volatility. In this setting *motley crews*, comprised of both creative and non-creative occupations with diverse skills and in differentiated roles, collaborate throughout the creative production process, where time is of the essence in ensuring profits and revenues are realised; *time flies* as time is money once production has begun. These teams also have high levels of personal investment in their work and desires for originality, technical ability and creative harmony, and therefore value *art for art's sake*. Caves notes; "A taste for creative work increases the amount of effort supplied by diverting it from humdrum tasks: the "starving artist" syndrome" (Caves 2000, p.4). This framework also highlights the existence of vertical and horizontal differentiation of creative products, such that artists and consumers alike both experience a "universe of possibilities" or *infinite variety* in terms of production and consumption choices (Caves 2000, p.6). This also relates to the *A list/B list* property, whereby creative inputs are vertically differentiated, and finally the *ars longa* property encapsulating issues relating to durable products and durable rents in the creative industries. According to Caves (2000), these properties, especially the indeterminacy of outputs intrinsic to the creative industries, present difficulties for the management of creative labour, shaping the development of particular contracts within firms and markets that are central to the structure and activities of the creative industries; hence the book's title: *Contracts between art and commerce*.

Caves' (2000) analysis usefully draws attention to the combination of both creative and non-creative occupations that contribute to the production of creative products in the creative industries, often missed in conceptualisations that focus solely on the content of creative labour (Smith and McKinlay 2009a). However, Caves' emphasis on the uniqueness of market volatility as a defining feature of the creative industries has been criticised for overlooking the increasing market uncertainty that underpins many other areas of commodity production in the economy, for example mass confectionary (Smith and McKinlay 2009b). Similarly, the *arts for art's sake* property assumes those workers in 'humdrum' industries have little value for their work beyond the wage it brings and their working conditions, which arguably presents an oversimplification of the differences across creative sector occupations and workers in other 'humdrum' industries.

² Italics used to denote Caves' (2000) own property labels

Other influential accounts of creative labour have emphasised the collective and collaborative nature of the creative process, similar to Caves' (2000) *motley crew* principle. Becker's (1982) *Art Worlds* for example, emphasises the collective aspects of creative production:

All artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people... the forms of cooperation may be ephemeral but often become more or less routine, producing patterns of collective activity we can call an art world (Becker 1982, p.1).

As such, the coordination of creative production is based on "an established network of cooperative links amongst participants" (Becker 1982, p.35) marking the operation of networks and social relations crucial to the sector. This is also important, as 'by accepting the sociological premise that collective activities create worlds that produce and consume art, it becomes necessary to leave behind research activities that focus solely on attempts to define creativity through investigations focused on the individual artistic genius' (Kerrigan and MacIntyre 2010, p.113). This draws attention to the spectrum of workers involved in the production of creative products beyond the notion of the lone artist (Bilton 2007). This is important, as labour process theorists Thompson et al. (2016, p.319) stress;

One of the main problems is undifferentiated notions of creative labour, with a tendency to include non-relevant groups (such as routine workers within creative industries) and masking differences between others – for example artists, computer programmers, internet entrepreneurs – who have little in common.

Similarly, cultural sociologists Banks (2010, p.305) and Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2008) have noted the tendency of research to prioritise artistic and creative roles at the expense of craft labour and the whole array of roles that make a crucial contribution to the production process, but whose work is "hidden" from accounts of contemporary creative work. This means that less is known about the work of craft labourers who arguably are less driven by the features of creative labour (Banks, 2010).

2.2.2 The management of creative labour

As the preceding section alludes, such features lead to complexities and challenges in terms of managing creative labour in a way that extracts value and maximises profits whilst simultaneously providing a work environment where creativity can flourish (Bilton 2007). In creative production, social relations are not only important in regards to the coordination of production teams, but also in the relationship between the purchaser and hired worker, in which an established social relationship is vital for productivity (Smith and McKinlay 2009b). This stems from the value of individual workers in creative sectors that distinguishes creative work from mass or repeat work settings, since the individual worker owns the means of production, rendering high levels of personal

labour power for certain creative workers (Smith and McKinlay 2009b). In this setting it is the role of management to transfer this asset “from heads to balance sheets” (Warhurst and Thompson 2006, cited in Smith and McKinlay 2009a, p.6), leading to complex tensions in terms of the balance of autonomy and control, creativity and routine, flexibility and integrated activities, and the individual and the collective, that together define the labour process in creative work settings (Davis and Scase 2000; Thompson et al. 2009). Management researchers Davis and Scase (2000, p.51-52) emphasise the “ambiguities of the work process within creative organizations” set around solving the “paradox of control and creativity”. They stress: “it is a paradox because the problem of reconciling openness, intuition, personal networks and individual autonomy (which serve ‘creative ends’) with instrumental criteria and rational business methods can never be completely resolved” (Davis and Scase 2000, p.51-52). Therefore, as noted, the challenge for management is employing strategies that provide a balance between releasing creative labour to inspire the generation of innovative ideas whilst simultaneously controlling this labour in the interest of reducing risk, extracting value and maximising profit (Bilton 2007).

However, the identification of tensions between creativity and control is a “somewhat static observation” (Thompson et al. 2016, p.317). Rather, these tensions need to be connected to the broader context of creative labour processes and trends in the management of creative labour (Smith and McKinlay 2009b; Thompson et al. 2009). These researchers draw on a labour process perspective and emphasise the importance of a sector-specific focus, to examine distinguishing features of creative labour that places creative labour within specific sectors and market contexts, whilst also paying attention to the agency of creative workers in these different settings (Thompson et al. 2009). They contend these conflicts and tensions “can be conceptualised as a struggle over the terms of creativity but that struggle always has to be located in specific organisational and social contexts” (Thompson et al. 2009, p.69), since different sub-sectors possess their own logics, structures and reward systems, that fundamentally influence how creative labour is managed and experienced (Miege 1987). As such, a significant feature of their assessment relates to the location of creative labour across the value chain, taking into account the diversity of creative labour and the broad spectrum of work involved in the production of creative products (Thompson et al. 2009; Thompson et al. 2016). Therefore, whilst it can be said that a general feature of creative labour is situated around the experience of competing tensions in the work process and the management of that process, detailed empirical research of the specifics of particular cases of creative labour across the value chain are crucial to the understanding of work in the sector, assisting with demystifying the “mystique” of the sector (Smith and McKinlay 2009a, p.11).

2.3 Working in television: key features and debates

To situate creative labour in context, the review turns to assess the debates, paradoxes and tensions associated with work in television production. Television production displays many of the general features of creative labour (Lee 2012) and has been a popular focus for empirical studies of creative labour because of the structural changes that have transformed the nature of work and employment in the UK's independent sector over the past thirty years (Chapter 1). The fragmentation and later consolidation of the sector has led to a complex industrial structure, comprised of freelance operators, specialist providers, small 'boutique-type' independent producers, and larger consolidated companies, referred to in the industry as 'super indies' (Morris et al. 2016). The existing literature predominantly looks at freelancing in the industry as a lens to examine the insecurity and precarity of work (Dex et al. 2000; Paterson 2012; Lee 2012; 2013; Wing-Fai et al. 2015). The present study however is interested in the super indie setting, and how the speculative high-volume low-cost logic and formulaic, commercialised production environment in such settings impacts on the experience of TV production (Faulkner et al. 2008; Lee 2011; Bennett 2015). While industry professionals and academic researchers presume such settings stifle creativity, reduce creative freedom and editorial independence, and lead to a "race to the bottom" in terms of costs and quality (Faulkner et al. 2008; Bennett 2015, p.86; RTS 2014; Douglas 2016), no empirical studies have examined the realities of work in super indies for television workers. Given the research's interest in the nature of work and creative labour in the marketized context of TV production in a super indie setting specifically, the sub-sections below examine the themes of management and control of TV production, autonomy and discretion, and multi-skilling, before examining key debates in relation to the experience of TV production within the creative labour literature.

2.3.1 Management and control of TV production

Contemporary television production takes place in a marketized context, driven by cost-based competition and efficiency imperatives (Smith and McKinlay 2009b). Consequently, the industry has "an extensive division of labour, a more and less creative occupational hierarchy, formal employment relationships and many other rules taken from capitalist production which are applied to ensure continuous supply of usable products from a 'collective' creative labourer" (Smith and McKinlay 2009b, p.34). This division of labour is extensive, given that the production of a TV programme involves an intricate combination of financial, technical and artistic inputs (Deuze 2008), reliant on a complex variety of roles. The variety of roles involved depends on the specifics of each project and is largely dependent on genre, for example, drama production requires large crews, whereas factual or documentary programming involves smaller teams, depending upon whether the production involves location-based or studio-based film shoots (Davis and Scase 2000). However,

broadly speaking, the division of labour in TV production can be grouped by; 'primary' creative personnel such as scriptwriters, actors and directors; craft and technical workers, such as camera, lighting and sound operatives and studio engineering; creative managers, including producers, production managers and administrators; executives; and unskilled labour (Davis and Scase 2000; Hesmondhalgh 2007).

The predominant form of control in TV production is via contracts (Eikhof 2017). Contracts tend to be open-ended (Smith and McKinlay 2009b) with the success of securing future contracts highly dependent on personal contacts, individual reputation and the use of semi-permanent work groups (Blair et al. 2001; Blair et al. 2003; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2009). For freelance workers, the widespread uncertainty facilitated by this approach has been argued to undermine the creativity of television production work. For example, Paterson's (2001) study of the changing management practices in TV production in the UK found that the uncertainty associated with the use of freelance contracts created tensions for television workers, in managing uncertainty, maintaining contacts, sustaining relationships and for creative opportunities. Drawing on case studies of individual workers from factual television production and survey data, Paterson (2001, p.515) found that "for people on short-term contracts it is the next job that is important and this leads to the holding back of ideas and less creative exchange within companies". This stems from complex tensions relating to securing contracts often through reputational factors, with the short-term nature of contracts undermining trust, and the tendency for workers to moderate their creativity and the ideas offered to different companies. Similarly, in Barnett and Starkey's (1994, p.259) overview of the flexibility of work in TV production, they note how flexible working practices such as the use of freelance contracts may serve to undermine creativity, since "the existence of a large internal staff and continuity of project teams" may be more conducive to the production of "truly creative TV output". They argue that "ironically, functionally departmentalized organisation may actually be a prerequisite for the preservation of the creative space necessary for the quality in cultural production" (Barnett and Starkey 1994, p.259). Barnett and Starkey (1994) and Paterson (2001) conducted their research prior to the consolidation of the UK's independent TV sector. However, their findings suggest that the use of a more stable staff workforce associated with the consolidation of the industry, as opposed to contracting and outsourcing TV production work to freelancers, may actually enhance the creativity involved in the production process and the quality of outputs.

However, more recently, empirical studies of TV production have shown how the use of contracts between commissioning editors and TV production companies utilising a full-time employee workforce can also trigger tensions and restrict creativity. Sengupta et al.'s (2009) study of small creative and media firms including TV production companies indicated the existence of standardised

forms of managerial control associated with adhering to production standards within contracts set by commissioners. Drawing on questionnaire and interview data, these researchers found that stringent standards of control, inflexible deadlines and supervisory controls impeded the creativity of full-time employees in TV production companies. For example, the research found that contracts with ITV were accompanied by a 100-page booklet of guidelines for individual productions. As such, these researchers conclude that the standardisation and bureaucratisation of control in TV production in such settings results in “little room for creative licence or room for manoeuvre for individual employees” (Sengupta et al. 2009, p.48). As such, the existing research is characterised by conflicting accounts of the necessary conditions for enabling creative workers and creativity to flourish in TV production. Furthermore, with the nature of management practices in super indies underexplored, little is known about how the contracts between super indies and broadcasters specifically might impact on the experience of television production, and the nature of creativity in such settings.

Personal control is also argued to be rife in TV production (Ursell 2000). This is largely exercised through relationships developed between television workers through interdependent networks of production (Lee 2012). For example, as noted, the use of semi-permanent work groups is common amongst freelance television production workers (Blair et al. 2001; 2003), where individuals move as a team between projects, with the most experienced and well-known member responsible for finding future projects in attempts to sustain employment for the entire team. In Antcliff et al.’s (2007, p.382) study of the role of networks in UK TV production, these researchers draw on qualitative data from interviews with freelance TV production workers, revealing that networks act as a “powerful force controlling the behaviour of freelance workers”, as behaviour not in adherence to group norms can result in sanctions, such as exclusion from the group, having a negative impact on future employment. Again, such findings relate to the use of freelancers in TV production. Whilst providing useful insights into how networks in the sector operate, there remains a gap in knowledge regarding the mechanisms of control in super indie settings. Though the use of contracts and structural inequalities between commissioning editors and independent production companies is well-known (Sengupta et al. 2009; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Zoellner 2016), how this translates into management practices in super indies, and the role of personal and network forms of control in settings of full-time employment requires further examination.

2.3.2 Autonomy and discretion

Television production work is usually positioned as providing high levels of autonomy for television workers (Ursell 2000; Paterson 2001). However, recent empirical studies that have examined the actual experience of autonomy for television workers present diverse findings. For example,

Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2011) in-depth study of creative work in three cultural industries, one of which being television, reveals the ambivalence of the experience of autonomy for television workers. Drawing on semi-structured interviews and participant observations, these researchers find that the marketized context of TV production and increasing pressures for low-cost productions has eroded the support for creative autonomy, especially within documentary programming and drama productions. Furthermore, the centralisation of control with commissioners has also impacted autonomy for television workers, with pressures for low-risk productions and interventions from commissioning editors found to undermine the creative edge of finished programmes (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). In a separate paper drawing on the same study, these researchers conclude the experience of "a very complicated version of freedom" for television workers due to the blurred boundaries between obligation and pleasure for these workers, intensified by strong cultures of hedonism in such sectors (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010, p. 4).

Similarly, in Sengupta et al.'s (2009) study of professionals in small creative and media (C&M) firms including TV production companies, high levels of autonomy are identified, however this autonomy is restricted by low pay, tight budgets and strict performance demands. Drawing on questionnaire and interview data from full-time employees in C&M firms, these researchers argue that national data overstates the actual levels of autonomy in contemporary jobs, as such data lacks the necessary contextual information to explore the meaning and experience of autonomy in depth in different industry contexts. Instead, these researchers conclude that in reality the nature of work in small TV production companies is defined by its "ordinary character" (Sengupta et al. 2009, p.27), breaking down romantic and overly positive portrayals of creative work, through contextualising the study of TV production and creative work within its market context and examining specific work features. Whilst providing useful insights into the standardisation of managerial control in TV production contexts and its relevance for the experience of autonomy, this study focuses only on full-time employees within small creative firms, with a mean employment size of 9 employees. As such, an investigation into the experience of autonomy within larger firms would provide useful insight into how the marketized context of TV production and structural inequalities in the sector impact on larger TV production companies specifically.

While both Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2010; 2011) research and Sengupta et al.'s (2009) study extend the understanding of the nature and experience of autonomy in specific TV production contexts, these studies do not attempt to capture the broad spectrum of TV production work involved in the TV production or examine the nature of autonomy experienced by workers across the diverse roles involved. Arguably, not all workers involved in TV production have the same material interests for autonomy (Banks 2010). As such, further insights into the experience of TV

production work in the sector could be gained from a focus on the diversity of work roles in TV production, exploring how workers in different creative and non-creative roles experience TV production work in context.

However, researchers within the labour process perspective have attempted to shed light on the diversity of work involved in media production through studying the organisation of creativity in Swedish interactive media production (Movitz and Sanberg 2009). Drawing on organisational and individual level survey data, these researchers draw attention to the illusiveness of creative freedom for media workers due to the organisation of work via projects. This research found that creativity was concentrated in specific activities within the production process, which tended to be controlled by those in senior positions. The use of projects was also found to normalise high workloads of ordinary tasks for media workers lower in the hierarchy (Movitz and Sandberg 2009). Such research highlights the importance of recognising the division of labour in TV production research, drawing attention to the broad spectrum of work and roles involved in the television production process. Whilst Movitz and Sanberg (2009) begin to expose differences in the nature of work involved in different roles in media production, additional research utilising in-depth qualitative methods to collect data could extend this understanding further, by examining the impact of the organisation and management of TV production on the experience of work from the perspective of individual workers in a single organisational context (Thompson et al. 2016).

2.3.3 Multi-skilling

While the production process for television involves workers in diverse, differentiated roles, the existing research suggests a trend towards multi-skilling in the industry (Davis and Scase 2000; Ursell 2003; Born 2002; Lee 2009). Multi-skilling refers to the expectation that television workers possess knowledge of a variety of different skills suited to performing different roles (Lee 2009), and has arguably resulted from the increased competitive pressures within the marketized TV context leading to a focus on low-cost, flexible practices, and advancements in digital technology in the industry (Davis and Scase 2000; Ursell 2003; Born 2002; Lee 2009). The trend towards multi-skilling has been evidenced in a variety of research studies, that have also sought to explore the impact of this trend on the experience of TV production. This was evident in Storey et al.'s (2005) study of freelance media workers and the importance of the notion of enterprise for securing work and working in the industry. Drawing on interviews with 29 freelancers, Storey et al. (2005) found that freelancers adopted an "amoebic-like" ability to be flexible to the demands of the market, constantly refreshing and developing new skills to seize any opportunities for future work. Whilst this enterprising strategy increased the likelihood of securing contracts, it was also found to have negative consequences in respect of freelancers, leading to a lack of skill specialisation and a trend

towards generalist skills, with one respondent describing his skill set as “an inch deep and a mile wide” (Storey et al. 2005, p.1048). Lee (2009) also observed the implications of multi-skilling in his PhD thesis, examining the impacts of transformations in the structures of TV production on the working lives of individuals in independent television production. In this context, television workers were expected to adopt multiple roles, blurring the boundaries between previously demarcated disciplines. For example, camera operators were also expected to be responsible for sound recording, and producers were also expected to direct. Lee’s (2009) findings revealed the negative implications of multi-skilling for creative practice, with workers perceiving the quality of their craft to suffer from the loss of specialist experience and knowledge. While these studies have produced useful accounts of the nature of multi-skilling in the sector, the focus on freelance workers means less is known about how creative and non-creative work comes together in different organisational settings, and what this might mean for the use of skills and the experience of work for different television workers.

2.3.4 Theoretical debates

The preceding section examines key studies specific to television production that have attempted to pinpoint the features of work and creative labour processes that emerge from the changing structures of the television production sector. Given the trend towards casual and flexible working practices in television production, theoretical curiosity in the field has turned to examine issues of subjectivity, individualisation and identity at the individual level. It is to these theoretical debates that the literature review now turns.

The shift towards flexible and casualised working practices in TV production has led some neo-liberal critics drawing on a post-Foucauldian approach such as Ursell (2000) Ross (2004) and Gill (2002), to argue that the intensive capitalisation and commercialisation of creative work is accompanied by “rampant individualization” where market-based rationality in sectors like TV production has led to “a culturalized work process that promises emancipation from the herd but provides only a new kind of individuated tyranny” (Banks 2006, p. 456). This tyranny is thought to be experienced through feelings of isolation facilitated by undermined social relations and extended gaps of unemployment stemming from the flexible and project-based nature of much creative work (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010). Within TV production specifically, such feelings are argued to be further intensified by ‘hedonistic’ and ‘club’ cultures, where pressures for socialising and networking become challenging for individuals less inclined to high levels of sociability (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010).

These post-Foucauldian writers also contend that the way creative labour is organised utilises the self-realisation dynamic, in which workers accept uncertain labour conditions for potential

opportunities for self-realisation and self-actualisation (McRobbie 2002b; Ross 2004). It is contended that the high levels of personal investment in television production reflect an “intensification of the self-commodification process” (Ursell 2000, p.807). “Pleasure in work is closely linked to self-exploitation” (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010, p.9), and therefore creative workers tend to be more willing to accept low pay, irregular hours and insecure work in a trade-off for the potential for achieving self-fulfilment. In such circumstances, attention has been drawn towards the “acceleration of the cultural realm”, facilitated by government de-regulation and the commercialisation of creativity (McRobbie 2002a, p.518). Such contexts are argued to facilitate a culture of self-blame and self-exploitation (McRobbie 2002a) where labour market casualization in many parts of the creative industries shows “how late capitalism associates with a very particular technology of the self” (Ursell 2000, p.806). Technologies of the self refer to the way in which individuals constitute their own subjectivity through various practices (Foucault 1988, p.18), reflecting the strategies of self-governance and contemporary modes of power that penetrate creative work in late capitalism (McRobbie 2002b).

Within TV production, such debates reflect on the trade-offs made by creative workers, tolerating the structural ‘pains’ of insecure TV production work for the intense pleasures it provides (McRobbie 2002b; Ursell 2000). For example, Ursell (2000) notes the passionate nature of television workers, who are often driven by the ability of television production to allow them to “pursue [their] sensual pleasures” (Ursell 2000, p.821). Others have also highlighted creative workers’ desires to find “meaning of life in work, and to identify with work” (McRobbie 2002b, p.110). Such statements reflect upon the notion of TV production as a “labour of love” in which individuals may feel they have a ‘calling’ or ‘vocation’ to which they are geared to fulfil (Menger 1999; Ursell 2000; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010). As such, Ursell (2000, p.819) accounts for the dual motives behind television work; “the willingness of individuals to work in television production is partly to be explained by the tantalising possibilities thereby for securing social recognition and acclaim... and partly [by] the possibilities for self-actualisation and creativity”. Nevertheless, these post-Foucauldian approaches attempt to show the demoralisation of creative work in the context of neo-liberal and market-based principles.

More recently, sociologists with cultural studies have critiqued post-Foucauldian ‘fatalist’ accounts of creative work (Banks 2006; 2007; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Lee 2012). For example, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011, p.221) contend; “For to treat these positive components of creative work as mere sugar coatings for the bitter pill of precariousness is surely too dismissive of the genuinely positive experiences that some creative workers have in their jobs and careers” (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p.221). Furthermore, to position creative workers as blind to their

structural conditions underestimates the extent of creative worker agency (Banks 2006; Lee 2012). As a result, there have been calls for more balanced approaches to theorising the experience of work in creative sectors like TV production, that take into account the role of structures, agency and ethics (Banks 2006; Lee 2012; Hesmondhalgh and Zoellner 2013).

One such attempt is evident in Lee's (2012) study, that examines the material reality of the precarious working lives of television workers drawing on Banks' (2006) work of the moral economy in cultural work and insights from post-Foucauldian perspectives. This approach puts "emphasis back onto ethics, practices, and agency" (Lee 2012, p.482), aspects of creative work that Lee contends are overlooked in purely post-Foucauldian accounts. Reflecting on interview data, Lee (2012) argues that while the industry is a site of insecurity and exploitation, television workers are not "merely 'entranced' by the lure of creative work (and the doctrine surrounding it). Rather, they are highly aware of the negative aspects of their mode of working lives" (Lee 2012, p.482). He instead positions creative workers as ethical, reflexive actors, who have strong values around the quality of the work they do, and the broader social and ethical impacts of the cultural products they produce. Like Thompson et al.'s (2016, p.328) claims of creative workers, "they are neither – victims of capital nor passionate play slaves" (Thompson et al. 2016, p.328), Lee contends television workers are not merely exploited, ideological dupes, and that "the emergent subjectivities within creative labour in television are of sociological interest in their own right" (Lee 2012, p.494). Whilst Lee's (2012) work begins to expose the complexities between creativity, moral economy and subjectivity in how creative workers experience TV production, he contends elsewhere that:

There is a pressing need for grounded empirical sociological research that examines the new economic, structural and material reconfigurations of the cultural industries, yet also is alert to the processes that are particularly noticeable in creative labour markets, around subjectivity, identity, individualisation and affect. (Lee 2013, p.10)

As such, whilst some theoretical perspectives have sought to reaffirm the agency of creative workers through empirical studies that expose the enduring values of these workers in contexts of intense security, this area of research is largely theoretical (Hesmondhalgh 2007; Lee 2013; Thompson et al. 2016). As Hesmondhalgh (2007, p.7) contends, "certain forms of empirical engagement can help qualify – and thereby ultimately strengthen – arguments concerning the nature of creative labour in the cultural industries in modern society". The primary focus on freelancing in TV production work debates also means that the way organisations are influenced by broader contextual changes in TV production and the consequences for this on television workers requires further scrutiny. Furthermore, debates in relation to the realities of work in TV production often overlook the

diversity of roles in the sector and the broad spectrum of work involved. Instead, the tendency is to group workers in diverse roles under the broad label of “creative workers”, concealing important differences in the nature and experience of TV production for different workers (Banks 2010; Thompson et al. 2016). As such, this review points to a prominent research gap in the existing literature on TV production.

2.4 Navigating work in television: social capital and resources

The previous section has shown the key findings of contemporary studies of TV production, and highlights important theoretical debates about the implications of creative labour at the individual level. This chapter builds on this assessment to consider the role of social capital in existing research on TV production. Social capital has gained popularity as a concept in organisational research and within the creative labour literature more specifically. As this section of the literature review will show, many studies of TV production draw on social capital to explain divergent experiences of career development (Tempest et al. 2004; Storey et al. 2005), skill development (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011), social inequalities (Holgate 2006; Holgate and McKay; Willis and Dex 2003) and the implications of networks (Antcliff et al. 2007) in the industry. This section of the literature begins by assessing the importance of social capital in navigating work in TV production as gleaned from the insights in existing studies. This highlights the role of social capital as means of coordination and as a mechanism of exclusion. The review also considers the way in which social capital has been conceptualised in these studies, and the strengths and weaknesses these different approaches bring.

Following on, the review argues that a resources perspective of social capital presents a valuable theoretical foundation for furthering our understanding of TV production work in the context of the changing structures of the television industry. This is because of its integrated analysis of social capital that brings together dualities in existing approaches, for example in uniting the role of structures and agency, and the collective and individual aspects of social capital (Lin 1999). This section of the literature review then outlines Lin’s (1999; 2004) network theory of social capital, particularly focusing on the role of resources in accessing and mobilising social capital. The application of this theory to TV production and creative work is also considered. The main aim of this section is to provide a concise overview of the theory and its potential as a theoretical resource for the study of the realities of TV production work. The review does not claim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the intricacies of the theory. Rather the review highlights those concepts most useful for the purposes of the present study. The discussion of social capital begins in the following sub-section, by considering the role of social capital as a means of coordination and control in existing studies of TV production.

2.4.1 Social capital as a means of coordination

As the above review has pinpointed, the television sector has become increasingly governed by socialised working practices, with the operation of networks and social relations as crucial to the coordination of creative production (Becker 1982). In this setting, studies have explored the role of networks in navigating work in television production (Blair et al. 2001; 2003; Antcliff et al. 2007), and the role of social capital in this process. As Smith and McKinlay state (2009a, pp.18-19), “It has become commonplace to understand the dominant mode of organisation in the creative industries as the network, rather than the ‘market’ or ‘hierarchy’”. Consequently, organisational researchers have sought to explain the mechanics of coordination and control in the UK TV industry, in light of the widespread occurrence of temporary working and networks.

Drawing on 75 interviews with participants across the large broadcasters, independents, and as freelancers, Morris et al. (2016) set out to examine power and control in such neo-bureaucratic forms. Their research shows how social capital is integral to the coordination and control of freelance work, as well as an important tool for freelancers in gaining access to work. Usefully, this study also highlights how large broadcasters attempt to manipulate social capital in controlling temporary arrangements, in attempts to foster some certainty in the creative process, selecting well known individuals based on relationships of trust. In particular, this research reveals the way in which freelancers can leverage their social capital to secure future work, and therefore the importance of social capital for navigating insecure TV production contexts. Elsewhere, Farrell and Morris (2017, p.116) confirm, “access to social capital shapes employment outcomes for freelance workers”. They therefore conclude that social capital has an important role in explaining divergent experiences in terms of employment outcomes in the industry and that social capital therefore has the potential to reduce insecurity for creative workers.

Antcliff et al.’s (2007) study of networks and social capital in the UK television industry also explores the role of social networks as a tool for navigating TV production, and to promote individual competition and co-operation. Drawing on 37 interviews with freelancers, they look at open and closed networks and how workers use them and contend that access to networks is dependent on status, reputation, ability, social and familial connections. This study draws on Burt’s (1992) work on social capital theory, exploring value of network ties in accessing resources that benefit freelancers in navigating the uncertainty of TV production work. However, rather than disperse hierarchies, these researchers contend that networks reinforce hierarchical divisions between workers in TV production. They contend, “there is a distinct hierarchy whereby those members who control access to employment opportunities and broker information across networks (Burt 1992), wield significant power over those workers looking to build their careers” (Antcliff et al. 2007, p. 388). As such, they

argue that this reflects the 'dark side' of social capital and allude towards its exclusionary nature. Nonetheless, these studies point towards the endurance of hierarchy in creative sector settings reliant on networks and social capital, raising questions about who can, and cannot, access and utilise social capital and network relations in navigating and improving their working lives in television.

2.4.2 Social capital as an exclusionary mechanism

There is a growing body of literature in organisational studies and cultural sociology that considers the dark side of social capital and its role in reinforcing a number of negative characteristics in TV sector contexts. For example, Lee's (2011) study looks to examine the role of networking practices in accessing work and developing a career in the UK's independent TV production sector, and in particular how engaging in these practices can provide access to network relationships that prove beneficial in securing future work. Lee's findings draw on data collected from in-depth interviews with 20 freelancers from the sector, and shows how networking can also be a "mechanism of exclusion" as it favours people with high levels of cultural and social capital. This conclusion draws on Granovetter (1973) and Burt's (1995) sociological work on networks, to show how networking leads to "new patterns of hierarchy and discrimination within the ITPS" (Lee 2011, p.550).

Networking is used as a means of communication, finding work and promoting selves and therefore, "in this precarious context, networking becomes *the* means of navigating risk" (Lee 2011, p.550). From a different perspective, Blair (2009) explores agency as an important asset in social networks in TV production. This research sees sociability as a capacity, which refers to individual's ability to adapt quickly to social situations, and is a valuable asset in itself in gaining access to and using the benefits stemming from networks. Nonetheless, both perspectives draw attention to the cruciality of social skills for getting by in TV production. Lee (2011) goes a step further, to consider how the development of social capital is strongly linked to cultural capital. This leads him to conclude of the exclusionary character of networks and labour markets in TV production, given that cultural capital is usually linked to background and education, and therefore is concentrated with middle-class individuals (Holgate and McKay 2007). He concludes that in this sector, "networking displaces not only cultural, but also creative diversity" (Lee 2011, p.562).

Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012) continue the theme of social capital in their study of UK film and TV. This study draws on detailed qualitative research findings from observations and interviews to explore the role of social capital in the industry. They conceptualise social capital as "the resources created and accessed through relationships" (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012, p. 1311), and provide an integrated assessment of the operation of networks in the sector, the nature of the people who constitute them, and the outcomes they deliver. This is an important study for the research area,

demonstrating not only the advantages of social capital, but also its disadvantages. In highlighting the exclusionary nature of these networks, which favour the white, male, middle-class, at the expense of working-class, women and BME individuals, the research draws attention to the engrained structures that underpin access to and mobilisation of resources from networks. Their work echoes the findings of other studies in the area (e.g., Holgate 2006; Holgate and McKay 2007; Willis and Dex 2003) showing how the role of networking and social capital in the industry for securing work and progressing in the industry functions to reinforce inequalities between social actors.

However, as Smith and McKinlay (2009, pp.18-19) point out, “there is little insight into how workers gain access to – or develop their own – resources or how agency operates in such complex, dynamic contexts”. While Lee (2011) and Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012), take a step towards filling this research gap, there is room for additional research that seeks to highlight the specific processes by which individuals access, develop and mobilise resources to navigate creativity in various contexts. The remainder of this section of the literature turns to social capital theory, and highlights how Lin’s network theory of social capital represents a useful theoretical resource in this research endeavour. First, the main points of Lin’s theory relevant for the present research are set out below.

2.4.3 Lin’s network theory of social capital

Lin’s (1999; 2004) network theory of social capital is built out of an extensive review of theories of capital, mapping the evolution from Marx through to the twentieth and twenty-first century. This comprehensive overview enables him to refine an approach to social capital that encapsulates concepts, measures and causal mechanisms. Lin’s theory supposes that individuals are driven by both instrumental and expressive goals, to connect with others, to access the resources of others, to obtain better outcomes (Lin 2004). On this basis, social capital is entrenched in social relation, but also enhanced and restricted by them. He therefore asserts that there is a need to differentiate the causes and processes for underscoring or enhancing social capital, to the valuable asset of social capital itself (Lin 1999).

2.4.3.1 Conceptualising social capital

At the centre of Lin’s (1999; 2004) theory of social capital is the belief that social capital is captured from embedded resources in social networks. Social capital as a concept can therefore be defined as “*resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions*” (Lin 1999, p.35, emphasis in original). On this basis, social capital must be assessed in relation to its origin, and is composed of three intersecting elements of structure and action; embeddedness, accessibility and use/mobilisation. This refers to the embeddedness of

resources in a social structure, individuals' ability to access such social resources, and the mobilisation or use of such social resources in goal-directed actions. Therefore, conceiving of social capital under Lin's network theory involves an integrated analysis of the structural, opportunity and action-oriented aspects of social capital.

Whilst many social capital theorists reflect on these elements of social capital in their perspectives (e.g. Bourdieu 1983; Burt 1992; Flap 1995), the emphasis in Lin's (1999) theory is on how accessing and using embedded social resources can improve an individuals' socioeconomic status. Usefully, this theory also encompasses the role of hierarchies in discussions of social capital. This is in how Lin's theory suggests that the ability to access and use these resources is partly dependent on an individual's position in hierarchical structures, as well as the use of weak ties (Lin 1999). This shows some consistencies with Flap's (1995) approach, accounting for the combination of resources in the network, network size and relationship strength in defining social capital.

2.4.3.2 Embedded resources and network locations

Lin's (1999) social capital theory values the significance of both resources and relations in assessments of social capital. However, other influential social theorists have adopted a different approach, choosing to isolate either resources or relations in their approaches (e.g., Burt 1990; Granovetter 1973; 1974). Existing studies of social capital in television production have also taken this approach, choosing to focus on either the position of individuals within networks, or the role of embedded resources in their approach. For example, Antcliff et al.'s (2007) study of networks, social capital and competitive advantage in the UK television industry shows how an individual's position in a particular network links to social capital. This research draws on Burt's (1992) and Granovetter's (1973) approach, distinguishing between open and closed networks, and strong and weak ties, in how workers are able to navigate networks to fulfil multiple functions (Antcliff et al. 2007). Such perspectives are underpinned by the assumption that location within the network is the fundamental factor in assessing social capital, and are useful for highlighting how the position of individuals in networks can lead to improved strategic positions in terms of accessing useful and valuable information (Lin 1999), such as information about upcoming jobs in TV production contexts. Additionally, they point to important considerations like density, size, and closeness, that arguably play an important role in measuring network locations (Granovetter 1973; 1974).

However, under Lin's (1999; 2004) approach, while network locations are considered important, they are not viewed *as* social capital, as in the aforementioned perspectives (Burt 1990). Instead, network locations are seen to enhance or diminish access to social capital, thus these properties are a mediating factor, as opposed to social capital itself. From this perspective, a dense or closed

network might reduce competition or enable greater access to future work, but it would not constitute social capital in its isolation from the outcome. Nonetheless, network locations are still considered important building blocks for social capital (Lin 1999).

Despite the importance of network locations, it is the embedded resources where Lin puts the most emphasis in terms of the measurement of social capital. These resources can be broken down further, into network resources (referring to those resources individuals already possess) and contact resources (referring to the value that can be attained from other people inside the network) (Lin 1999). “Thus, network resources represent accessible resources and contact resources represent mobilised resources in instrumental actions” (Lin 1999, p.36). Measuring contact resources is straightforward, and involves looking at the occupation and position of contacts, to consider their status characteristics. Lin (1999) also considers the outcomes of resources, and argues there are two kinds of returns possible from social capital; instrumental and expressive. The former refers to the gaining of resources, whereas the latter addresses the maintenance of resources (Lin 1999). In summarising his conceptual approach to social capital, Lin concludes:

Social capital is more than mere social relations and networks; it evokes the resources embedded and accessed. Nevertheless, such embedded resources cannot possibly be captured without identifying network characteristics and relations. Network locations are necessary conditions of embedded resources. In a given study, it is advisable to incorporate measures for both network locations and embedded resources. (Lin 1999, p.37)

2.4.3.3 A model of social capital

Drawing these concepts together, Lin proposes a model for theorising social capital (Lin 1999). This model is based on looking for a casual sequence in which embedded resources contain and enable individual choices and actions. The model includes three areas, that focus on the access, use and returns from social capital. The model also includes a consideration of structural and position variations, such as level of education, which act as precursors of social capital. Accordingly, within a structure, individuals are viewed to occupy different cultural, social, political and economic positions. It is on this basis where an inequality of social capital is established, meaning that some individuals are better able to access and maintain embedded resources. The model also includes the mobilisation of resources, which assesses the use of contact resources, which are those people in the network with information, enhancing power and statistics. In turn, this leads to the instrumental and expressive returns, discussed in the previous section.

2.4.3.4 Conceptual extensions – hierarchical structures

An important conceptual extension to Lin's (1999) initial theory, which is relevant for the present research, is the role of social capital in hierarchical structures (Lin 2004). In developing this part of his framework, Lin considers the access and use of resources in the constrained context of hierarchical organisations. In doing so, Lin highlights the restrictive capacities of structural constraints, showing how individuals may or may not be able to access better social capital through their positions in hierarchical structures (Lin 2004). This conceptual extension therefore highlights how an individual's hierarchical position can have greater effects on social capital than their location within a network (Lin 2004). The theoretical implications of this extension to the framework are important for the present research, given the focus of the research on an organisational setting, and the enduring role of occupational hierarchies in creative work settings (Smith and McKinlay 2009b).

This overview shows the value a network theory of social capital can bring to exploring the role of social capital in TV production. Smith and McKinlay (2009a, pp.18-19) contend that "network research is bedevilled by a false dichotomy between, on the one hand, a rational calculating agent and, on the other hand, agents who are little more than unconscious dupes of established routines and habits." (McKinlay and Smith 2009a, pp.18-19). A resources perspective helps to overcome this false dichotomy, by taking into account both the structural constraints of organisations and the agency of workers in accessing, developing and mobilising resources that enhance the experience of working in television industry contexts.

2.5 Assessing experiences through meaningful work

This final section of the literature assesses the value of a sociological assessment of meaningful work for furthering the understanding of the reality of work in contemporary TV production organisations. Creative work, and TV production in particular, is often positioned as highly meaningful work (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010). While debates identify the trade-offs between insecurity and creativity in such work (Ursell 2000; Lee 2012), it is generally assumed that creative workers are motivated by the meaning of their work, and its potential for transcendence (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010). As such, the concept of meaningful work provides a useful lens within which to assess the experience of TV production. This is particularly the case where a sociological approach of meaningful work is applied. As the remainder of the chapter will argue, a sociological approach offers a holistic understanding of the nature and experience of meaningful work, through drawing together an assessment of the subjective and objective dimensions of meaningful work (Michaelson et al. 2014). Furthermore, more recent tensional approaches have gleaned insights to the contradictory nature of experiences of meaningful work, often negotiated by workers in relation to different aspects of their working lives (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017). Given that TV production is

positioned as inherent with paradoxes and tensions, this approach is particularly apt. This chapter contends that a sociological approach, drawing on an integrated, contextualised assessment of meaningful work and its tensional nature is useful for understanding work in TV production. This is because this approach pays attention to broader changes in the social and cultural contexts of work, which is highly relevant to the setting of TV production in a super indie setting.

Furthermore, meaningful work is topical, with two major systematic reviews of the meaningful work literature having been published in HR journals by Bailey and colleagues in 2017 and 2018, as well as a dedicated Special Issue in the *Journal of Management Studies* in 2018. The conclusion of these publications is that more empirical research is needed to understand the nature and experience of meaningful work. They stress: “Despite the level of interest in meaningful work that has emerged in recent years, there are still important gaps in our knowledge of how a sense of meaningfulness arises, persists, or is challenged” (Bailey et al. 2018a, p.1). One persistent issue highlighted by these reviews of the meaningful work literature is the lack of consistency in definitions and approaches used to understand and investigate meaningful work (Bailey et al. 2017; 2018a; 2018b). The literature is informed by a diverse range of academic disciplines, including psychology, political theory, philosophy, theology, human resources, business ethics and sociology. As a result, meaningful work has been researched from a diverse array of theoretical perspectives, utilising a variety of different methodological approaches, with little consensus over what meaningful work signifies, and how it arises in different work contexts. Moreover, a proportion of this research fails to account for its approach to conceptualising meaningful work, leading to confusion around what is actually studied (Lepisto and Pratt 2017). As such, Lepisto and Pratt (2017, p.101) contend that:

Unearthing basic conceptual differences in meaningful work is important because they imply different kinds of barriers or ‘core problems’ that limit meaningful work in organizational settings. An important upshot of recognizing these different core problems is the ways in which they direct theorizing around solutions by which meaningful work is effectively cultivated. Therefore, our central proposition is that disentangling these different core problems is theoretically significant because it exposes critical blind spots in scholarly understanding regarding effective remedies to develop meaningful work.

2.5.1 Defining key concepts

Until recently, the meaning of work literature was splintered (Rosso et al. 2010), with a diversity of approaches, both theoretically and methodologically, utilised to examine the ‘meaning of’ or ‘meaningfulness of’ work. One central point of contestation within this literature is the interchangeable use of the terms ‘meaning of work’ and ‘meaningful work’. Whilst dominant psychological perspectives and more recent post-structural approaches advocate for the

synonymous use of the terms, perspectives within organisational behaviour and human resource development (HRD) research are critical of conflating these two arguably distinct concepts.

For example, researchers within HRD contend that “the ‘meaning of’ and ‘meaningful work’ are not synonymous” (Bailey et al. 2018a, p.4). Drawing on Chalofsky’s (2003) assessment, also within the HRD field, these researchers argue that the ‘meaning of’ work refers to the narrow assessment of the relationship between individuals and their employer, whereas ‘meaningful work’ (also referred to as ‘meaning in work’), encapsulates “an inclusive state of being” and therefore focuses on “that which gives essence to what we do and what brings a sense of fulfilment to our lives” (Chalofsky 2003, p.73).

Organisational behaviour researchers Rosso et al. (2010), adopt an approach similar to Bailey et al. (2018), demarcating between ‘meaning’ and ‘meaningfulness’ in their systematic review of the meaning of work literature. Building on Pratt and Ashforth’s (2003) work within positive psychology, Rosso et al. (2010) approve the distinction made between the type of meaning workers make of their work, which they refer to as ‘meaning’, and the amount of significance they attach to it, referred to as ‘meaningfulness’. These researchers contend that in the literature reference is made to ‘the meaning of work’, whilst implying that work has significance, and in such cases ‘meaningful work’ or ‘meaningfulness’ would be more appropriate terms (Rosso et al. 2010). They claim that this distinction is important, as work with meaning does not necessitate that work is meaningful, as not all meaning is necessarily positive, as conflating the terms implies. As a result, they argue that distinguishing between the terms acknowledges that “meaningful work is therefore work experienced as particularly significant and holding more positive meaning for individuals in certain contexts” (Rosso et al. 2010, p.95). They acknowledge that ‘meaningfulness’ can represent a meaning of work in itself (Rosso et al. 2010; Bailey and Madden 2017), and therefore the meaning of work for an individual could be that it is meaningful to them.

Conversely, tensional approaches positioned within an interpretivist, post-structural viewpoint, problematise such distinctions between the ‘meaning of’ and ‘meaningful’ work. Instead, they suggest the term “meaning/ful work” to recognise the process of deriving meaningfulness which shifts over time and space, “transcending both micro and macro sites of social experience” (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017, p.595). This approach portrays meaning/ful work as tensional, and therefore detracts from the dominant portrayal of meaningful work as a positive construct.

The present study adopts this later perspective, as this allows a more holistic understanding that examines the aspects of work that are particularly significant for individuals and the way in which they attach meaning to them. Whilst a study of ‘meaning’ refers to the interpretation of a potential

spectrum of diverse meanings attached to work by individuals, a study of 'meaningful work' hones in on the actual experience and consequences of work for meaningfulness for individuals, linking work more closely to broader social and cultural conventions in different contexts, as well as an individual's personal, psychological and ethical needs (Overell 2008). Thereby combining this approach also allows hidden meanings of work to be revealed, as well as illuminating the process by which meanings become meaningful (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017).

This approach appreciates the role of contextual features as well as the intrinsic motivations of workers in contemporary settings, such as a drive for self-actualisation in work. Furthermore, this adoption of the terms is particularly relevant for creative sector contexts, given that this work is often associated with self-fulfilment, self-actualisation and self-expression, intrinsic priorities rooted in the concept of meaningful work. This approach is similarly applied elsewhere, (Symon and Whiting 2018) demonstrating its utility. Furthermore, while considerable sociological research has sought to understand what work means to individuals in contemporary society, (e.g. Sennett 1998; Budd 2011) less focus has been given to meaningful work, and how meaningful work might arise in different contemporary contexts (Overell 2008; Rosso et al. 2010; Bailey and Madden, 2017), especially within creative industry settings.

2.5.2 Theorising meaningful work: dominant perspectives

The organisational studies literature on meaningful work is predominantly influenced by research within psychology, political theory, humanities, business ethics and sociology. The review now assesses these perspectives, concluding with the potential of additional research from a sociological perspective.

The organisational studies literature on meaningful work has largely drawn on psychological perspectives of meaningfulness. These perspectives adopt a subjective view of meaningful work, broadly defining meaningful work as a psychological state of "the degree to which the employee experiences the job as one which is meaningful, valuable and worthwhile" (Hackman and Oldman 1975, p.162). Within this, "work and/or its context are perceived by its practitioners to be, at minimum, purposeful and significant" (Pratt and Ashforth 2003 p.311), and therefore while meaningfulness itself is referred to in a subjective sense, it is assumed that it is amenable to the manipulation of objective work features. Viewing an association between meaningful work and individual and organisational beneficial outcomes, for example personal engagement (Kahn 1990) and behavioural involvement (Montani et al. 2017), research within this school of thought has sought to identify the conditions under which meaningful work might arise to encourage such benefits. As such, positive psychological frameworks and models of meaningful work tend to

consider which aspects of job design, management and leadership style, workplace relationships and organisational factors like culture can foster the experience of meaningfulness at work for individuals (Bailey et al. 2017). Studies in the area are therefore mostly quantitative, drawing on large survey data to demonstrate associations between meaningful work, features of the work context, and beneficial outcomes for both individuals and organisations.

Empirical studies informed by this thinking tend to adopt the job characteristics model by Hackman and Oldman (1975), assuming that work that provides skill variety, task significance and task identity will be experienced as meaningful for individuals, and hence beneficial outcomes will follow. Other researchers drawing on this model have demonstrated links between creative, autonomous and challenging work with higher levels of meaningful work (Kahn 1990) as well as an association between work that allows individuals to realise their potential and higher levels of meaningfulness in work (Boeck et al. 2018). On this basis, we would expect the creative labour of television production to be highly meaningful. As the review above illustrates, television work is associated with autonomy, multi-skilling and task identity through the close involvement in both conceptual and executional aspects of the production process.

However, while these approaches have drawn attention to the general antecedent factors of meaningful work, they are criticised for shortcomings in the multiplicity of approaches used both theoretically and methodological in making conclusions about what meaningful work signifies and how it arises. For example, in Bailely et al.'s (2017) systematic review of the empirical literature, they note that 28 different measures were used to operationalise the study of meaningful work in the area, often containing non-specific items of conflating meaningfulness with other concepts, for example callings, concluding that "some quantitative researchers have not yet fully grasped the potential complexity of how to define and operationalise meaningfulness in empirical studies" (Bailey et al. 2018, p.17). Similarly, many organisational and sociological researchers are critical of these models for failing to acknowledge the "messiness' of meaningful work" (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017, p.597). It is claimed these unitary approaches mask key differences in how meaningfulness is actually conceptualised by researchers (Lepisto and Pratt, 2017), leading to accounts that fail to adequately explain how meaningful work may arise. As such, while there is value in highlighting antecedent factors that support the search for meaningful work, often the search for generalities across occupations in 'one-size fits-all' approaches underplays the role of contextual features in how meaningful work is experienced. As such, sector-specific and national level contextual forces that may shape how meaningful work is understood and the conditions under which it might arise are overlooked.

Political theorists are similarly critical of psychological models of meaningfulness for failing to account for the processual and relational aspects of meaningful work, such as whether employers and national policy-makers have a responsibility to ensure the widespread provision of meaningful work across societies. The starting point for political theorists is the assumption that meaningful work is a fundamental human need (Yeoman 2014), with the search for meaning inherent in the capacity of being a human being. There is also a growing argument in the field of political theory and philosophy that views meaningful work as the moral responsibility of organisational and national policy-makers (Yeoman 2014a; 2014b; Veltman 2014). Yeoman (2014) grounds her argument for the widespread availability of meaningful work for all as a political project “in a normative argument that being able to experience one’s life as meaningful is a fundamental human need, which, under present economic arrangements, is extremely difficult for most people to satisfy if their work lacks the structure for meaningfulness” (Yeoman 2014, p.236). On this basis, the possibility of experiencing meaningful work is dependent on objective features, but the subjective interpretation of them, but that interpretation is also relational as it depends on joint sense making.

Within the humanities, researchers share with political theorists the assumption of the “human’s intrinsic need for meaningfulness” in which “it is a condition of being human to make meaning” (Lips-Werisma and Morris 2009, pp.503-504). On this basis, researchers within the humanities reject the notion that meaningfulness is something that can be manipulated by organisations and management, a core premise of psychological perspectives of meaningful work. Whilst there are diverse perspectives within the humanities on theorising meaningful work, it is generally portrayed as an ethical, moral, social and political issue (May et al. 2004). The focus solely on the subjective experience of work in such accounts has triggered claims that; “there are important gaps in our understanding of how meaningfulness is shaped by the wider political, societal and institutional context, as well as how diversity, power, and resistance may be implicated in the experience of meaningfulness” (Bailey et al. 2018, p.18).

Writers within the business ethics field have also recently propositioned a perspective of meaningful work that takes into account both subjective and objective dimensions. (Michaelson et al. 2014). Similarities to political theory and business ethics research on meaningful work consider what work and different workplaces require in order to make the experience of meaningful work possible (Michaelson et al. 2014, p.81). In this sense, ethicists have been concerned with whether there are specific characteristics of meaningful work which individuals have a moral right to (Bowie 1998; Schwartz 1982). They stress:

We contend that meaningful work always requires some degree of objective autonomy to pursue one’s subjective aspirations for meaningful work; however,

the amount a trade-off between these objective and subjective dimensions of meaningful work may vary from situation to situation and subject to subject. (Michaelson et al. 2014, p.85-86).

2.5.3 Towards a sociological approach

Sociological researchers similarly value both objective and subjective dimensions of meaningful work. Sociological researchers examine meaningfulness within its broader context, taking into account both societal and cultural forces, and questioning the basis “upon which the individual judges their work to be personally meaningful” (Bailey et al. 2018, p.3). For example, Lepsito and Pratt (2017, p.108) highlight that “meaningfulness is not inherent in specific tasks but rather ‘must be interpreted and constructed’ in circumstances that may offer only impoverished opportunities for meaning”. On this basis, meaningful work is viewed similarly to that of Michaelson et al. (2014), in that; “meaningfulness is a subjective assessment, yet it is also grounded in an external, objective context that shapes and legitimizes what may be considered meaningful to the individual” (Bailey et al. 2018, p.11). Furthermore, the meaning of work has been the interest of sociological scholars as far back as Weber, who drew attention to the wider meaning and significance of work beyond its economic necessity, contextualising work ethics and meanings with in political, social and religious contexts. Coining the notion of ‘the work ethic’, Weber highlighted the importance of work for a sense of self-worth and identity, the moral and ethical dimensions of work, and work as a central life activity (Anthony 1977).

Researchers publishing within management studies have recently contended that a more realistic appreciation of meaningfulness is its tensional nature, adopting a tension-centre approach to understanding meaningful work (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017; Symon and Whiting 2018). This refers to meaningfulness as a ‘dynamic and contested negotiation’ (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017 p.594) and moves beyond a positive notion of meaningfulness to take into account the role of paradoxes, contradictions, ironies and dialectics that influence how meaningful work is experienced and negotiated (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017; Symon and Whiting 2018). In their empirical study of sustainability practitioners, Mitra and Buzzanell (2017) illustrate how meaningful work arises through a series of negotiations across work processes, the perceived impact of work, and practitioners’ career positioning, such that meaningfulness is experienced through negotiating tensions in the work context. In this sense, meaningful work arises through meaning-making processes which are inter-subjective. This research usefully draws attention to the role of political, professional and organisational structures in enabling and constraining meaningful work for sustainability practitioners, who have shared similarities with creative workers in terms of the intrinsically motivating nature of this work.

Extending tensional approaches discussed previously, Symon and Whiting (2018) also highlight the important role of materiality in understanding meaningful work. Their position on meaningfulness is “that it is neither an objective facet of certain work nor entirely an individual internal psychological experience, but rather that work is constituted as meaningful within complex social and material interactions in context” (Symon and Whiting 2018, p.4). This appreciation of meaningfulness as a subjective assessment situated within an objective, external context that also shapes what is considered meaningful by individuals, is shared by others (e.g. Bailey and Madden 2017; Bailey et al., 2018a). As well as the material context highlighted by Symon and Whiting (2018), these researchers draw attention to the spatial and temporal nature of meaningfulness in their conceptualisation, which informs their understanding of how meaningful work arises in “transcendent moments in time” (Bailey and Madden 2017, p.15). These more nuanced conceptualisations of meaningfulness illustrate the importance of appreciating the connections between the individual and their broader context in understanding meaningful work. Given the lack of consensus regarding the theoretical understanding of meaningfulness and the many different ways ‘meaningfulness’ has been operationalised, there have been calls ‘for a deeper understanding of meaningfulness within the context of the current socio-political environment’ and “advancement of theory and evidence about the nature, causes, consequences and processes of meaningful work’ (Bailey et al., 2018a: 1).

Lepisto and Pratt (2017, pp.105-106) distinguish between the way that meaningful work has been treated in the literature according to whether research adopts a “realization perspective” referring to “treatments of meaningful work that centre on meaningfulness via fulfilment of needs, motivations, and desires associated with self-actualisation”; or a “justification perspective”, where “meaningful work fundamentally involves accounts that justify the worthiness of work”. This latter perspective, they argue, is less developed in the literature, and is more concerned with the experience of uncertainty and ambiguity around the value of work by individuals. This distinction is particularly relevant in contemporary sociological debates, where Sennett (2006, p.1983) contends that work is lacking in moral “anchors” for justifying the worthiness of their work. These two different perspectives are based on different core problems; from a realisation perspective, working conditions constrain workers’ ability to realise the self, sometimes preventing or suppressing the individuals’ experience of meaningful work via self-realisation. Within a justification perspective the core problem is existential; “it is not so much impoverished and constraining working conditions, but a situation of impoverished and uncertain meanings” (Lepisto and Pratt 2017, p.108). As such, whilst realisation perspectives assume that the meaningfulness of one’s work is, to an extent, predetermined through the objective conditions of work, in justification perspectives, meaningful work is constructed by individuals through their meaning making abilities within social, cultural and

institutional contexts that frame notions of the worthiness of work. They argue that the strength in recognising this distinction means that “scholars and practitioners cannot only solve new puzzles (e.g. the lack of meaningfulness in seemingly enriched work), but can look to new sources (e.g. cultures and accounts) for fostering meaningful work” (Lepisto and Pratt 2017, p.116). Whilst empirical studies are yet to adopt the research agenda proposed by these researchers, such an endeavour seems appropriate for creative sector research, given that cultural researchers have previously illustrated how television workers attempt to justify creative compromises around the broader cultural and ethical value of their work, (Lee 2012) as well as through professional values by reflections on the quality of their output (Zoellner, 2009; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010; Hesmondhalgh and Zoellner 2013).

Within sociological research, Bailey and Madden (2017) and Bailey et al. (2018) have also drawn attention to the spatial and temporal nature of meaningfulness. These workers view meaningful work as arising in “transcendent moments in time” (Bailey and Madden 2017, p.15). This conceptualisation of meaningful work highlights that “meaningfulness is a pervasive sense of the value of one’s work, yet it is also linked with spatial, temporal, and material contexts which may be temporary, partial, or episodic” (Bailey et al. 2018, p.15). This episodic nature of meaningful work has been identified in empirical research by Bailey and Madden (2016) who conducted interviews with workers from ten occupational groups, including stonemasons, soldiers, nurses, entrepreneurs, academics, lawyers, artists, priests, garbage collectors and retail assistants, and attempted to identify sources of and barriers to meaningfulness at work. They found that meaningfulness was not connected to a person’s job as a whole, but rather related to isolated and specific events, for example, feeling a sense of euphoria after the successful completion of a piece of work. From this research they conclude that while meaningfulness is largely down to the individual, meaninglessness at work tends to be linked to organisational factors and management action, illustrating the fragility of and challenges associated with trying to ‘manage meaning’ in the workplace. This study however sought to generalise meaningful work across a wide range of occupational groups, and therefore was not a contextualised assessment of meaningful work. Despite highlighting the importance of relationality and context in their definitions of meaningful work, Bailey and Madden (2016) provide a generalised account of the ‘qualities’ and ‘deadly sins’ of meaningful work across a range of different occupations in this research. As such, little consideration is given to the objective features of work experienced by these different occupational groups, as well as the role of broader cultural influences on how meaningful work is understood. As such, there is scope for a deeper sociological inquiry into the sources and barriers of meaningful work in contemporary settings, which provides a deeper analysis of the relationship between structures and agency in different contexts. Such an approach

is particularly suited to the study of TV production given that this work is project-based, in which the experience of meaningful work is likely to be linked to temporal aspects of the production process.

Elsewhere, Bailey and Madden (2017) have demonstrated the importance of temporality in understanding how meaningful work arises in the work of academics, stonemasons and refuse collectors. This has provided useful insights in illustrating the potential for all work to be experienced as both meaningful and meaningless, at different moments in time. For these researchers, meaningfulness emerges through reflections on meaningful moments in the context of the past, present and future which they refer to as 'temporal recontextualisation' (Bailey and Madden, 2017: 15). Furthermore, the study also importantly highlights the existence of 'different domains of meaningfulness' (Bailey and Madden, 2017: 14), and the tensions that might exist between these different domains, for example between the content of one's job and one's personal life. Whilst the study provides little clarification of these different domains aside from being "wider sources of meaning from their personal lives" (Bailey and Madden 2017, p.14), other research has highlighted alternative sources outside of work, for example, spending time with family, volunteering (Pratt et al. 2013), leisure activities, hobbies, entertainment and social activity (Rosso et al. 2010). The existence of these different domains raises important questions about the balance or contradictions between these different domains, and what workers might be willing to trade in attempts to achieve consistency across such domains (Michaelson et al. 2014).

Sociological approaches also highlight the relational nature of meaningful work, stressing that "meaningfulness arises in the context of self-fulfilment and self-actualisation, yet it is dependent on the 'other' for its realization" (Bailey et al. 2018, p.10). This acknowledges that the "self cannot be understood in isolation from or without reference to the other, without whom the self is 'no-one' alone" (Bailey et al. 2018, p.10). This process is also referred to as 'othering' taking into account how the self is constructed within interactions with others (O'Mahoney 2011). "A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it" (Taylor 1989, p.35). Bailey and Madden also highlight the collective nature of meaningful work, in which the workers in their study often reflect on shared moments of meaningfulness. For example, they note how refuse collectors derive a sense of meaningfulness as a group from the daily "tipping point", "where the team's efforts were officially recognised". However, the majority of research on meaningful work has focused on individuals. "Research has hitherto focused on the individual experience of meaningfulness, but considering meaning in its organizational context opens up the possibility of examining collective meaning-making and managing" (Bailey et al. 2018 p.15). These researchers, however, conclude that:

Given that most research has taken place within the psychology field, there is a dearth of sociologically oriented studies that have focused on meaningful work

and therefore a lack of theorization in the area. Studies that develop the existing focus within sociology on the meaning of work to interrogate further the ontological status of meaningfulness from a sociological and cultural standpoint would help to generate deeper insights (Bailey and Madden 2017, p.16).

This review has detailed the different theoretical positions on the meaningful work, in particular overviewing the subjective versus objective dimensions debate. Sociological perspectives overcome the limitations of approaches either premised in the solely subjective, or objective domain, since sociological approaches locate meanings within their wider context. In doing so, this takes into account the cultural, social and material contexts that influence how work and its meaning is understood. Furthermore, a particularly insightful development in the recent meaningful work literature has been the notion of tensional meaningful work, with meaningful work understood as negotiated through a series of tensions and trade-offs in the work context (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017). Such an approach is particularly suited to the study of creative labour in TV work, given the paradoxical nature of this work (Section 2.2.1). Further, given the underexplored setting of super indie contexts, sociological perspectives offer a more rounded and holistic understanding of work in the sector. Rather than focusing on objective work features of subjective experiences alone, such an approach can glean insights into the realities of work in the sector, and provide insight into the diversity of work in the sector by examining different workers in this setting.

3. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and explains the philosophical and methodological choices shaping the research, and details how the PhD research was conducted. The chapter begins by outlining the research philosophy underpinning the research, before explaining the case study methodology and the choice of research methods. Following on, the chapter discusses the practicalities of the research, including how interviews were conducted, and issues encountered during the fieldwork. This also includes some methodological reflections, such as the role of the researcher and ethical considerations in conducting qualitative research. The chapter concludes by highlighting some potential limitations of the methodology and methods adopted in the PhD research.

3.2 Critical realism as a philosophy of science

This research draws on critical realism as a philosophy of science in its investigation of TV production and creative labour. Critical realism in this sense provides a “general orientation to research practice” (O’Mahoney and Vincent 2014, p.12) rather than prescribed methods. On this basis, the research uses critical realism broadly as an “underlabourer” (Vincent and O’Mahoney 2016, p.207), guiding the ontological and epistemological stance of the study. The sections that follow outline the key principles of critical realism, before considering what they mean for the study of TV production and creative labour.

3.2.1 *Ontology and epistemology*

Critical realism in the social sciences largely originates from the work of Roy Bhaskar (1979; 1986; 1989). As a philosophy of science, it combines a realist ontology, viewing that “the world exists independently of our knowledge of it” (Sayer 1992, p.5); with an interpretivist epistemology, embracing the “socially constructed nature of social phenomena” (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000, p.11). This “double recognition” of objectivity and subjectivity distinguishes critical realism from positivism and constructionism (O’Mahoney and Vincent 2014, p. 3), allowing the dual appreciation that an external world exists in which “the truth can be known” (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000, p.15) but that “our knowledge of that world is fallible and theory-laden” (Sayer 1992, p.5). Acknowledging the fallible nature of knowledge permits the critical realist view that “better and worse forms of knowledge do exist” (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000, p.11). According to Bhaskar (1989) this ‘better’ knowledge can be obtained by researchers on the condition that they possess a sufficient understanding of the underlying social structures that give rise to the phenomena under investigation. This premise highlights the significance of context in the search for explanations of social phenomena in critical realist research. This assumption also underpins the present research,

in which it is viewed that societies and organisations are 'open systems', where "parts of the universe (or entities), which ultimately interact to cause the events we observe, cannot be studied or understood in isolation from their environment" (O'Mahoney and Vincent 2014, p.6).

Crucial to critical realism is its ontological framework, in which several key assumptions shape the distinctiveness of this philosophy. Critical realism assumes a stratified ontology, which embraces a multi-layered reality comprised of the real, the actual and the empirical (Bhaskar 1979). Underlying structures and generative mechanisms at the real level, activate events and regularities in the actual level, which are interpreted by the experiences of the researcher at the empirical level (Bhaskar 1979). It is understood that "deeper structures or mechanisms shape events and regularities at surface level" (Reed 2005, p.1630), placing an important focus on understanding the underlying mechanisms and structures which influence empirical events. On this basis, critical realism holds that "something is real if it has an effect or makes a difference" (Fleetwood 2004, p.29); and tasks the researcher with trying to "penetrate behind the surface of experiences and perceptions and to account for what occurs in terms of an understanding of connections at the level of structures" (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000, p.13). Therefore, for critical realists, causality is established through this stratified ontology, through attempting to identify and explain causal mechanisms.

This stratified view of reality, or 'depth ontology' is one of the strengths of critical realism. Focusing on the connections between structures, mechanisms and power relations allows critical realist researchers to gain a more sophisticated understanding of social phenomena under specific conditions (O'Mahoney and Vincent 2014). The emphasis on appreciating specific conditions in explaining social phenomena also reflects part of critical realism's opposition to positivism. Whilst the two philosophies share the assumption that an objective world exists, critical realism rejects positivism's empirical ontology (O'Mahoney and Vincent 2014). For positivists, for something to be real, we must be able to observe it (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000). On this basis, researchers of the positivist perspective assume that social phenomena exist in closed systems, in which general or 'law-like' explanations can be generated through identifying event regularities, via 'theory-neutral' observations (Sayer 2004, p.16). Critical realism opposes this view, rejecting the existence of closed systems within the social world (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2004). Instead, by viewing reality as "a *stratified, open system of emergent entities*" (O'Mahoney and Vincent 2014, p.6, emphasis in original), critical realist research appreciates the unpredictable and complex nature of the social world, and seeks to explain the underlying causes of phenomena, rather than to just describe empirical events (O'Mahoney and Vincent 2014).

In organisational research, the critical realist recognition of a stratified ontology also helps to overcome some of the ontological issues associated with post-modern/post-structuralist treatments of the nature of organisations. For example, Reed (2005) contends that in extreme versions of these perspectives, “organizations are *discursive constructions and cultural forms that have no ontological status or epistemological significance beyond their textually created and mediated existence*” (Reed 2005, p.1622, emphasis in original). This is problematic, in the sense that epistemology takes precedence over ontology; by prioritising epistemology, post-structuralist perspectives have a tendency to overlook the material components of the world and replace them with fundamentally discursive concepts and categories which then come to define the world (Reed 2005). Such treatments are premised on anti-realism, at the expense of acknowledging any material or social relations that influence discursive elements of organisations in different contexts. Therefore, whilst the discursive and socially constructed nature of the social world is acknowledged by critical realists, the social world is not viewed as purely socially constituted (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000), linking back to the notion that social phenomena are concept dependent, and not concept determined. As such, materialism is a core tenet of the critical realist philosophy, overcoming the ontologically weak and anti-realist nature of certain post-structuralist perspectives (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000). Overcoming such issues is particularly pertinent for the present research, given the prevalence of post-structural perspectives in studies of TV production and creative labour (e.g., Gill 2002; McRobbie 2002b; Ross 2004), as Section 3.2.2 will consider.

Another crucial aspect of critical realism is its concern with how structures and agents interact. The nature of this interplay is conceptualised by Bhaskar (1989) through the transformational principle. At the centre of this principle is the view that “nothing happens out of nothing” (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000, p.14); people do not create structures from scratch but recreate them using structures that pre-exist. Similarly, the endurance of institutions comes as a result of agents’ reproduction of structures via social actions, but each social action depends on agents’ utilisation of pre-existing structures. This perspective of social action is explained by Bhaskar:

People do not create society. For it always pre-exists them and is a necessary condition for their activity. Rather society must be regarded as an ensemble of structures, practices and conventions which individuals reproduce and transform, but which would not exist unless they did so. Society does not exist independently of human activity (the error of reification). But it is not the product of it (the error of voluntarism). (Bhaskar 1989, p.36)

Fundamental to the transformational principle is how structures and human agency transform each other, and the mechanisms and structures that are the ubiquitous condition, but also the persistently reproduced effect, of agency (Fleetwood 2004). Critical realist research therefore

promotes the importance of treating structures and agents as analytically distinct to prevent either element from 'collapsing' into the other, and also to allow the interactions between the two to be more thoroughly explained (Reed 2005). It follows on that critical realists view agents as experiencing ongoing power struggles, from which the dynamics of social change emerge. As Reed (2005, p.1633) explains, "agents are located in structured settings that alternate between opportunities for agential creativeness and structural constraint". This means that an examination of social structures, and how they might enable or constrain individuals, is integral to any investigation of human behaviour within organisations, as well as how individuals might reproduce or transform them. According to Fleetwood (2014), this critical realist treatment of the interplay of structures and agency is arguably the most sophisticated approach within the social sciences.

As a final point, critical realist research is often iterative in its approach to theory development, involving "a movement from consideration of the intransitive world of actual events, mechanisms and structures to the transitive world of measures, descriptions and theories" (O'Mahoney and Vincent 2014, p.13). This reflects the dual aim of critical realist research to both describe empirics and theorise their underlying causes, and also recognises the interplay between the intransitive and transitive domains (O'Mahoney and Vincent 2014). Under such aims, it becomes the researcher's role to 'fit together' data and theory, as a means to explain what is observed (Vincent and Wapshott 2014, p.150). In line with the critical realist sway of the study, the present research adopts an iterative approach to theory development, "weaving back and forth between data and theory" (Bryman 2004, p.10) and "moving between conception and application" (O'Mahoney and Vincent 2014, p.3). On this basis, the present research does not seek to test out explicitly any given theory, but rather draws on existing concepts, such as creative labour, and examines the relevance and significance of such concepts in an underexplored research setting, with the aim to generate new insights and explanations. Combined with the assumption that knowledge is fallible and therefore multiple explanations are possible, this means that the critical realist researcher must attempt to connect ideas (the intransitive) to what is observable (the transitive), "as seamlessly as possible" (Ackroyd and Karlsson 2014, p.22), to find the most plausible explanations of social phenomena and their relation to causal mechanisms in specific settings.

3.2.2 Critical realism and the study of TV production

The critical realist philosophy has several influences on the study of TV production in the context of the present research. Firstly, in acknowledging that organisations and societies are 'open systems', attention is drawn towards the influence of broader structures on how television production is organised, managed, experienced and perceived. For example, as discussed in the introductory chapter, the UK's independent television sector has emerged against a backdrop of distinct

historical, political and industrial changes and trends, which have significantly shaped the dynamics of the industry. Particularly pertinent for the present research are the political interventions that have sought to increase competitiveness within the independent television sector. These interventions, amongst other industrial and technological developments, have facilitated the fragmentation and subsequent consolidation of the industry, in which super independent television production companies have surfaced. In this example, critical realism presents a means to explore and explain the features of TV production and creative labour within this specific setting that appreciates the underlying role of power and politics in the evolution of the industry. Therefore, rather than simply describing 'what' TV production and creative labour looks like in the marketized context of contemporary TV production, a critical realist understanding would also seek to explain 'how' and 'why' it is this way, linking the nature of front-line TV production work to the underlying structures that have contributed to its development. This applies at a macro level, but also at organisational level within specific company contexts, appreciating both the role of structures such as local labour market trends, as well as management strategies, that ultimately contribute to explaining the experience of TV production in particular contexts.

In addition, as the previous section alludes, critical realism can assist in overcoming some of the limitations associated with post-structuralist accounts of social phenomena in organisations. The creative labour literature is dominated by post-structuralist critiques that emphasise the subjectification of creative workers in industries like television production (e.g., Gill 2002; McRobbie 2002b; Ross 2004). This is discussed at length in the literature review (Chapter 2), however relevant here is how such accounts often draw on post-Foucauldian perspectives of power and control. As a result, these post-structural critiques emphasise the role of discourses, especially that of 'creativity', in the governance of individual subjectivities in creative labour settings. While importantly drawing awareness to the structural inequalities inherent in particular creative industry contexts, the preoccupation with discourse in such perspectives comes at the expense of the material and agential aspects of creative work (Hesmondhalgh 2007a; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Lee 2012). A critical realist framing offers a means to refocus attention on the role of worker agency in such settings. This is because critical realism recognises the varying ability of agents to continuously mediate their experiences around the influences of broader structures, institutions and powers (Archer 2000; 2003). Therefore, the critical realist philosophical foundation fosters an investigation of TV production that takes seriously the role of the broader context, the significance of subjective interpretations and meanings for those television workers situated within the television production process, and the specificity of the local and organisational setting.

3.3 Research strategy

Critical realism takes an all-inclusive approach to research design, viewing that research design and methods should be tailored to best address the issues of concern, rather than pre-determined by default of the researcher's philosophical position (Vincent and O'Mahoney 2016). Therefore, the qualitative approach adopted in the study is principally driven by the nature of the overarching research aims, which seek to investigate the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the experience of working in television production. These aims necessitate that the researcher gains an understanding of the specifics of the context where TV production is taking place, as well as television workers' perceptions and interpretations about the nature of work in this setting. Furthermore, the very concept of creative labour itself necessitates that it is studied within context. This point has been emphasised by labour process theorists in particular (e.g., Smith and McKinlay 2009b; Thompson et al. 2009; 2016), who view an examination of the dynamics and logics of different sub-sectors of the creative industries as integral to any understanding of contemporary creative labour. Subsequently, a qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate for the present research.

Qualitative research is characterised by its concern with words, meanings and interpretations (Cassell and Symon 1994; Denzin and Lincoln 2008). This is usually from the point of view of participants, with an emphasis on "seeing through the eyes of the people being studied" (Bryman and Bell 2011, p.404). As such, qualitative research is normally associated with an interpretivist epistemology (which critical realism acknowledges), because of the role of the researcher in interpreting the socially constructed meanings conveyed about the phenomena under investigation by participants (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). In the field of organisational studies, qualitative researchers typically attempt to describe and explain organisational phenomena by examining the phenomena in the local context within which it occurs (Cassell and Symon 1994; Lee 1999). Hence, qualitative data is usually rich and context-specific, providing insights into different aspects of organisational life under certain conditions (Guba and Lincoln 2005; Bryman and Bell 2011). Qualitative research also grants flexibility in the research process in which unanticipated findings can be pursued and interrogated (Bryman 1989; Bryman and Bell 2011). This is particularly well-suited to under-explored research settings, such as super indies, where unforeseen contextual features or interpretations of work in this setting may be uncovered. Therefore, the qualitative approach adopted in the study is reflective of the rich and context-specific data necessitated by the exploratory research aims, as well as the flexible approach sought by the researcher.

While qualitative research allows for contextual, flexible and in-depth research projects, the scope of such research has been criticised, largely by researchers within the positivist domain. This critique

questions the value and scope of qualitative research because of its reliance on small samples in specific organisational contexts, leading to issues of generalisability (Hamel et al. 1993; Seale 1999). However, the present research seeks to provide a detailed account of the role of the specific super indie context on the nature of work from the perspective of workers, as opposed to general and universally applicable claims about the nature of TV production. In addition, the research does not aim to identify “invariable laws” or universal truths as common with the positivist research (O’Mahoney and Vincent 2014, p.4), and therefore, it is the interest in the specificity of the organisational context itself that lends this research to a qualitative approach.

Furthermore, it is vital to good qualitative research practice that the researcher engages in reflexivity throughout the research process. Reflexivity refers to the researcher’s continual process of reflection during the conduct of research, seeking to interpret and reflect on the researcher’s role, values and presence on the research process and outcomes (Haynes 2012; Saunders et al. 2016). Reflexivity is regarded as an integral part of ensuring the credibility of qualitative research findings, as “reflexivity enhances the quality of research through its ability to extend our understanding of how our positions and interests as researchers affect all stages of the research process” (Primeau 2003, p.9). In the present research, the researcher dedicated efforts to reflecting on their presence in the research process; this is recounted in the discussion of the fieldwork in Section 3.6.3.

3.4 Case study research

The thesis uses case study research to investigate the research questions. While critical realism takes an eclectic approach to research design (Brown and Roberts 2014; Vincent and O’Mahoney 2016), it is considered that “the case study is *the* basic design for realist research” (Ackroyd and Karlsson 2014, p.23, emphasis in original). This is because of the merits and opportunities case study design can bring to critical realist research projects. The section that follows considers these merits and opportunities, and discusses the rationale for adopting a case study design for the PhD research. Following on, the process behind the selection of the case is outlined, as well as details of the research site where the fieldwork was conducted. Finally, the chapter concludes by considering the potential strengths and weaknesses of adopting a case study design in the particular context of the present research.

3.4.1 Case study methodology

The research uses a case study research design to explore the experience of work in a super independent television production company because “the interaction between a phenomenon and its context is best understood through in-depth case studies” (Dubois and Gadde 2002, p.554). Broadly speaking, the case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary

phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context” (Yin 2009, p.18) and is defined “by interest in the individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used” (Stake 2005, p.443). It is therefore the broad purpose of case study research to develop as full and detailed an understanding as possible of the ‘case’ of interest, which must be bounded and defined early on by the researcher to ensure clarity throughout the research process (Punch 1998). In organisational research, the ‘case’ tends to refer to an organisation that is of interest to the researcher (Silverman 2017). Therefore, the case study design can be used in organisational research to access substantive and extensive details about the organisation under study, and permits the researcher to access a depth of data that could not be gathered via a design that only permits transient involvement with the organisation under study. Therefore, while being suited to the PhD’s research aims, this approach also answers recent calls within the creative labour literature for more “detailed empirical accounts of actual creative labour in specific industries” (Thompson et al. 2016, p.317). Moreover, case studies are particularly suited to exploring under-researched areas, since an in-depth case study can allow the researcher to generate novel insights through the intensive examination of new settings (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2014). This is also well-suited to the present research, given the dearth of empirical studies focused on the super indie setting and therefore exploratory focus of the research.

The benefit of the case study research design is that it “allows a more rounded, holistic study than with any other design” (Hakim 1987, p.61). This is because the case study is concerned with understanding social phenomena within its real-life context, allowing the researcher to explore events, activities and processes in real-life settings (Stake 1995; Lee 1999). The context specific nature of understandings generated from case study research lend the design to be popular with critical realist researchers, who “want better explanations of broader social mechanisms (class-based, racial, religious, sector, national, cultural, etc.) that operate through a case or class of cases” (Vincent and Wapshott 2014, p.151). The case study is therefore useful for critical realist researchers, as it facilitates the opportunity to determine the contextual factors that lend certain mechanisms to be observed (Vincent and Wapshott 2014). This relates to critical realism’s stratified ontology, in which “case research can, in theory, be used to describe empirical events.... trace out links over time, digging ever deeper, and following through the actual to the real domain” (Easton 2000, p.212). Therefore, critical realist framed case studies must be designed to be “sensitive to the temporally stratified nature of the world” (Vincent and Wapshott 2014, p.151). For example, in the present study, to explore the nature of work inside a super indie, the researcher needs to understand how and why the TV production process came to be constituted the way it is, the inclinations of those individuals involved in the production process, the organisational features of the super indie that surround the process, and ultimately how the combination of all of these factors

shapes the behaviour and interpretations of those in the organisation studied. Case study research is therefore useful in this respect, as it allows the researcher to examine individual cases and attempt to pinpoint causal influences that impact organisations in different ways.

However, given that little is known about the empirical setting of the super indie and its impact on the experience of working in television production, an ethnographic design may also have been suited to the present study (Jorgenson 1989). This is because the ethnography is similarly well-suited to exploring under-researched settings and searching for in-depth, contextualised understandings of phenomena (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). The ethnography places the researcher within the group or culture being studied, allowing them to be immersed within the setting, having close interaction with its members, and participate in the setting under study (Cunliffe 2010). This immersive approach permits the researcher to get involved in the messiness of the social world (Crang and Cook 2007), and possibly unearth research themes inaccessible through less immersive designs such as the case study. This is owing to the ethnography's potential to reveal "in-depth insights into what people and organizations do on a day-to-day basis" (Neyland 2008, p.2), through the researcher's close involvement in the setting. Whilst the use of ethnographic research offers a potential alternative means by which to pursue the research aims, this approach was rejected in favour of the case study for the PhD research. This is because the ethnography is "a storytelling institution" (van Maanen 1995) based on "the direct observation of the activity of members of a particular social group, and the description and evaluation of such activity" (Abercrombie et al. 2000, p.123). Welsh language barriers are discussed later (Section 3.6.2), however practical constraints relating to the researcher's inability to speak the Welsh language meant an ethnography was impracticable for the present study, since the researcher's involvement in, and descriptions/evaluations of, the research setting would be limited and restricted by these language constraints. As such, the case study was judged to be better suited to the present research methodology, given its feasibility within the resources at the researcher's disposal.

Whilst case study research has been deemed most appropriate for the purposes of the present study, there are also issues of reliability, replicability and validity to consider. Critics of the case study doubt the external validity/generalisability of findings generated from case study research, given that findings developed from a single case study are unlikely to be representative of other cases (Saunders et al. 2016). However, such criticisms are based on statistical logic associated with the survey method and positivist paradigm, that often seek to generalise across the population as a whole (Lee et al. 2007). As such, the application of such criteria to the evaluation of qualitative case studies has been deemed inappropriate by several organisational researchers, since "a merit of case studies is that – in contrast to the grail of generalisation sought by survey techniques – they allow

the realisation of particularization” (Gummesson 2000, p.96 cited in Lee et al. 2007, p. 173). Therefore, while acknowledging the importance of quality criteria in evaluating research excellence, the research’s aim to provide a rich, contextual understanding of work in a particular organisational context, as opposed to universal, generalisable findings, as well as its critical realist foundations, warrants the use of the case study on this occasion (Guba and Lincoln 2005; Bryman and Bell 2011). Once more, other measures more suitable to qualitative research are taken to ensure the quality and integrity of the study. For example, the details of the case study are described comprehensively (Chapter 4) to allow for ‘naturalistic’ generalisations, whereby parallels may be drawn with other cases on the basis of identifying similarities of the issues assessed in and out of the specified context (Guba and Lincoln 2005; Stake 2000). Furthermore, the role of the researcher in the conduct, process and analysis of the research is reflected on throughout the discussion of the fieldwork (Section 3.6) and evaluated later in the chapter in the interest of good qualitative research practice (Section 3.8.2).

3.4.2 Selecting the case study

The selection of the case and the specification of its boundaries are crucial aspects of determining the case study research design (Flyvberg 2011) as well as for ensuring the appropriateness of the case for advancing theory (Yin 2014). As the research uses an exploratory case study, with the aim of “discover[ing] the consequences, at a specific level, of a specific organizational development” (Vincent and Wapshott 2014, p.156), the research relies on purposive sampling in the selection of its case. Purposive sampling refers to the selection of a case or cases based on identifying those which are judged most appropriate for addressing the research questions (Saunders et al. 2016). Generally, purposive sampling relies on identifying ‘information rich’ cases, as opposed to cases which may be statistically representative of a target population (Patton 2002). For the present study, this means choosing a case where the organisational development of interest has occurred. Therefore, given that the present research is interested in understanding the ‘super indie’ as an institutional structure, and the nature of work that goes on inside super indies, the research site was chosen based on two main criteria:

- Resemblance to super indie³
- Nature of access available

In order to research the nature and experience of working in television production, the study uses an embedded single case study design (Yin 2018). While the case is about a single organisation (Oaks

³ Super indie characteristics were identified using industry definitions - i.e., large commercial entities, formed by mergers and take overs of independent producers (Mediatique 2005), diversified companies working across multiple genres (Ofcom 2005).

Productions Ltd), it also involves multiple units of analysis embedded within the case company, including television workers such as creative and technical workers, and sub-groups within these groups, that are the embedded sub-units of the case.

The selection of the case was both pragmatic (based on convenience and accessibility reasons) also theoretically grounded. While the empirical setting of the super indie is of interest, this is in relation to the experience of working in television, and the experience of creative labour, and how this differs across different groups of television workers. Therefore, the choice of the case is both intrinsic and instrumental. It is intrinsic as the “case is of interest... in all its particularity and ordinariness” (Stake 2000, pp.437-8), and has been selected on the basis of generating insights and providing a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of the super indie itself (Yin 2014; Stake 1995). The case is also instrumental, “in which a case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue” (Stake 2000, p.437-438 cited in Silverman 2017, p.263). Therefore, by studying the super indie as the case organisation, the researcher can also access insights into issues relating to the nature and experience of TV production and creative labour that can help to develop the understanding of key concepts within the existing literature.

3.4.3 Research setting and access

The research was conducted in a super indie based in Wales, referred to as ‘Oaks Productions Ltd’ (Oaks) for the purpose of this study, between September 2016 and March 2017. ‘Super indies’ are defined by the UK’s communication services regulator as “large producers...usually a conglomeration of different producers who specialise in a particular type of output and operate in a number of markets around the world and typically have UK revenues over £50m per year” (Ofcom 2015, p.11). Internet searches identified that Oaks shared fundamental features of the super indie definition, such as being a production group consisting of different producers, specialising in different genres and offering a variety of production services. The company was therefore initially contacted via email (Appendix 2) in March 2016 to discuss the research, and the possibility of conducting the research within the company. This was followed up with a telephone call and further email conversations, that confirmed the company’s status as a super indie and resulted in an invitation to meet with the Managing Director in June 2016. Following this meeting, access for the fieldwork was granted. This meeting also included a tour of the company’s premises, a detailed overview of the company’s historical development (Chapter 4), and introductions to key people within the business, such as Managing Directors and departmental heads for the company’s different divisions. A meeting with one of the company’s departmental heads was also arranged in July 2016, who agreed to act as the primary point of contact and gatekeeper throughout the conduct of the research.

The very definition of super indies indicates the complexity of the organisational structure of this type of company. This was made apparent during the initial meetings with the company's Managing Director and gatekeeper. The company was comprised of 3 production departments and 4 post-production departments. Whilst the initial tour and introduction to the company involved all departments, it was the preference of the Managing Director and the gatekeeper that the majority of the research be conducted within the Mixed-Genre Productions department and the Children's Television department (Chapter 4). This was because these departments hired workers predominantly on a staff basis, so their time was less strained in comparison to freelance workers on a daily rate in the other departments. This preference also suited the research aims, since the interest is in understanding the nature of TV production work as opposed to the nature of graphic design, games development and other post-production activities that took place in the post-production departments. The two departments studied also produced television exclusively for the Welsh broadcasters, (S4C, BBC Cymru Wales and ITV Cymru Wales) which later turned out to be an integral aspect of the research findings.

The fieldwork took place at the company's headquarters during working hours. The gatekeeper took responsibility for organising the fieldwork and developed a schedule to suit the researcher and research participants. This was largely due to the practicalities of conducting research in a way that corresponded with the company's daily operations. The time-dependent and project-based nature of TV production meant that fieldwork had to be scheduled around filming days, hence explaining this approach. Close contact was kept with the gatekeeper throughout the research, with occasional meetings and catch ups relating to the direction of the research, providing opportunities to specify any ongoing research needs. Whilst physical access to the organisation was granted early on by the company's Managing Director, the interest in obtaining data from workers meant that access was continually negotiated to build trust and rapport with potential participants. The gatekeeper also played a crucial role in gaining access to individual participants, through raising awareness about the research, and introducing the researcher to key people within the company (Saunders et al. 2016).

3.4.4 Assessing case study research in context

The case study design adopted here has several strengths and weaknesses worth noting. First of all, whilst managerial involvement is inevitable in organisational case studies, this also brings potential risks for the transparency and validity of the research. As the nature of the access negotiated in the present research is top-down (Crompton and Jones 1988), the company's management had control over the researcher's access to the organisation, as well as involvement in the logistics of the research process. Where managerial actors are involved in the research process in this way, there is the possibility that they may restrict the access granted to the organisation to present a more

favourable image of the company, or perhaps try to influence the direction of the research to serve their own managerial interests or agenda (Flick 2007). Furthermore, power and politics are also unavoidable features of organisations that may impact on the conduct of the organisational case study. It is therefore important for the researcher to bear in mind management-employee relations when undertaking organisational case studies, which may influence participants' views towards the researcher's presence, and the researcher's association with management (Langley and Royer 2006). Similarly, the role and reputation of the gatekeeper can also have a significant impact on the research process. For example, if the gatekeeper is a particularly prominent, or alternatively inconspicuous, figure within the company, this may influence participants willingness to take part in the research, which could have a knock-on effect on the functionality of the case study research (Flick 2007). As Silverman (2017, p.283) notes, "we are dependent on the whims of gatekeepers". Therefore, it is important for researchers to "doubt everything anyone in power tells you" and "to look for other opinions" when it comes to organisational research (Becker 1998, p,91). The gatekeeper played a key role in the organisation and conduct of the fieldwork in the present study; their role and influence on the research is reflected on in Section 3.6.2.

As noted earlier, the case study design is sometimes criticised due to the inability to generalise findings generated from specific case studies to other examples (Bryman and Bell 2011; Saunders et al 2016). This could also be said for the present research, given that a single research site is used. However, whilst the case is specific, it is also a unique context within the TV sector and creative industries more broadly. As the Literature Review (Chapter 2) outlined, TV production tends to be characterised by high levels of uncertainty and insecurity as an industry, with large numbers of freelancers in the labour market, employed on a job-by-job basis. This was expected to be the case in the research site, however, access interviews revealed that the majority of workers in the Welsh broadcast division were employed on a staff basis, with over 200 staff members employed by the case company. This is extremely uncommon in an industry usually defined by insecurity, and the stability provided to employees later turned out to be a significant feature of the research findings. However, the uniqueness of the case company validates the specificity of the case in this particular context, as it brings valuable insights into the nature of work in this area. Therefore, the researcher does not intend to generalise the case to other examples per se, but instead the findings can be 'extrapolated' to compare theoretically with other cases (Alasuutari 1995).

There is also a scarcity of organisational case studies within the TV production and creative labour literature, largely due to the employment structures of the TV sector. Therefore, many existing case studies tend to focus on creative individuals or networks in their investigations of creative labour (Christopherson 2008; Thompson et al. 2016) or follow the production of a programme or series

from start to finish (e.g., Bechky 2006; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). Whilst producing valuable contributions to the literature, it has been argued that “emphasis on horizontal networks or individual artists rather than firms... tends to remove creative labour from the context of creative industries” (Thompson et al. 2016, p.319). Therefore, the nature of access granted in the present research enables the researcher to examine creative labour within its organisational and industrial context, representing a particular strength of the PhD study.

3.5 Research methods

The chapter so far has provided the details of and rationale for adopting a qualitative, exploratory case study for the purposes of the PhD research. It has also explained the critical realist philosophical sway of the study, and how this has informed the methodological choices throughout the research process. The remainder of the chapter proceeds to discuss the more practical aspects of the research, for example, how data was collected and analysed, and describes the way in which the PhD research was conducted in the field. This discussion begins below with a reflection on semi-structured interviews as a means to collect data for the present study.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

The primary data collection technique for the study is by interview. In qualitative research, interviews are “the primary means of accessing the experiences and subjective views of actors” (Whipp 1998, p.54) and have been identified as “one of the most important sources of case study information” (Yin 2009, p.106). This is because the interview allows the researcher to achieve a deeper level of understanding of a given topic through accessing the participants’ values, feelings and attitudes towards a subject that might otherwise go unknown (Byrne 2011). The basic premise of the interview is to undertake a “conversation with a purpose” (Burgess 1984, p.102), and therefore the interview is interactive, and based on the assumption that “it is possible to investigate elements of the social by asking people to talk” (Mason 2002, p.200). It is thus an effective tool to gather data for the present research, as it offers the researcher “direct access to the *point of view* of interviewees, both in terms of the attitudes they hold and their accounts of their experiences” (Smith and Elger 2014, p.110, emphasis in original).

The interactivity of interviews, however, means that they are not a docile or impartial means by which to collect research data. From a critical realist viewpoint at least, the interview is not merely a documentation of interviewees’ perceptions, but rather involves “an active engagement between interviewer and interviewee” in how those perceptions are represented (Smith and Elger 2014, p.109). Therefore, while the interview is an attempt to access “insider accounts” (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, p.126), the researcher must play an active role in investigating and scrutinising those

accounts, asking probing questions, challenging inconsistencies, comparing experiences and reflecting on their own and their interviewees' presuppositions which may impact on interview data (Smith and Elger 2014).

Research interviews can be rigidly structured, based on pre-defined, standardised questions, or more loosely structured and free flowing (Mason 2002). The present research adopts an intermediary position, utilising semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are synonymous to conversational-style interviewing, and typically rely on an informal list of themes/questions to guide the direction of the interview but do not follow a formal or rigid structure (Saunders et al. 2016; Silverman 2017). Semi-structured interviews were therefore chosen for the PhD research, so that the researcher could address certain pre-identified themes and also adapt the direction of the interview in accordance with the flow of the conversation and any unanticipated themes (Saunders et al. 2016). In total, 63 face-to-face semi-structured interviews were completed in the research site; the details of this are discussed below.

Whilst the exploratory nature of the research questions suits the PhD study approach, there are data quality issues to consider where qualitative interviewing is concerned (Saunders et al. 2016). For example, since semi-structured interviews are not based on standardised questions, the reliability of collecting data in this way is sometimes questioned. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the interview is an interactive process in which the interviewer is highly involved. There may therefore also be concerns about interviewer bias, and the influence that the interviewer's presence may have on interviewees' responses (Saunders et al. 2016). In addition, the success of semi-structured interviews largely rests on the role of the researcher and the relationship between the researcher and interviewee (King 2004). These are important issues to consider and are reflected on in the context of the present study in the discussion of the fieldwork below (Section 3.6.4).

3.5.2 Selecting interviewees

The gatekeeper was used to identify potential participants for the research study. As such, purposive sampling was used to identify "information-rich" and meaningful individuals within the case study company in order to address the research aims (Patton 2002). The research aims to understand the nature of TV production within the case company, as well as the diversity of experiences of different individuals depending on their position within the production process for TV production. As such, the sample was also heterogenous to an extent, choosing participants with diverse characteristics in order to identify key themes to be identified in the case company (Saunders et al. 2016). However, given that participants all worked within the case study company, there was some homogeneity amongst the sample in terms of the different sub-groups of workers in

the company. This allowed for different groups of workers to be explored in greater depth (e.g., creative workers and technical workers), but also allowed for the broad spectrum of work involved in the TV production process to be identified. After specifying to the gatekeeper the relevant participants for the study, the selected parties were contacted by the gatekeeper via email to gauge interest in taking part in the study, and to ask for volunteers for participation. As such, the research also utilised self-selection sampling, publicising the requirement for participants within the case study company, and collecting data from those individuals who responded (Saunders et al. 2016).

3.5.3 Interviews at Oaks

In total, 63 face-to-face semi-structured interviews were completed in the research site (Table 1). From this, 15 interviews were conducted with senior managers and executives such as Managing Directors of the various divisions, as well as the respective chiefs and heads of department for Production, Business Affairs, Creative, Animation, Digital, Technology and Photography, and the Chief Operating Officer. Another 48 interviews were conducted with Oaks' employees, including producers, digital producers, assistant producers (APs), researchers, directors, editors, production managers, production coordinators, production accountants, studio managers, studio operators, camera operatives, sound recordists and broadcast engineers. The majority of these interviews were with individuals from the Mixed-Genre Productions and Children's Television departments (52 in total), with 11 interviews conducted across the Network Division and post-production departments, mostly with senior managers. Whilst the research is predominantly interested in the nature of Welsh TV produced in the Mixed-Genre and Children's Television departments, these additional interviews provided supplementary contextual information for the company and the nature of its development.

All of the interviews were conducted at the company's premises in various meeting rooms that the gatekeeper had booked out beforehand. The interviews were therefore generally conducted in private, though there were sometimes interruptions when there were enquiries about when the room would become free. All of the interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of participants and transcribed by the researcher. Interview participants were anonymised during transcription, and pseudonyms are used throughout the research. Where necessary, some participant details have been amended, in order to protect the anonymity of participants in accordance with the ethical procedures. The duration of interviews ranged from 30 to 90 minutes, amounting to over 44 hours of interview time, and over 400,000 words of interview data (see Table 1 for details). The researcher also kept brief field notes in a notebook to account for additional contextual data.

The interviews were conducted based on semi-structured plans, allowing for the interviews to be guided by predetermined themes but for interviewees to speak openly about the research area (Saunders et al. 2016). For senior managers, interview schedules were designed to gather information about the company's historical development and its expansion into a super indie, and the relation of these changes to the way that work was organised and managed at Oaks (Appendix 3). Examples of these questions include:

- How has the organisation developed during your time here?
- What elements of production have been impacted by this?
- How would you describe the culture of the company? Has this been impacted by the company's development?

Interview schedules with other employees on the other hand, were more complex to define, given the diversity of roles involved within the TV production process. As such, interview schedules were adapted for each participant, but broadly followed the themes of the nature of work, autonomy and control, creativity and meaningful work, organisational culture, and the Welsh context (Appendix 4). The researcher was not aware of each participant's role prior to the interview. Therefore, each interview began with several standard questions to gather details of the participant's role in the company, so that the conversation and questions that followed would be relevant to the participant, and also stay focused on the research aims. For example, questions directed towards workers in director and editor roles involving creativity, would be unlikely to be relevant for someone in a production management or production assistant type role. Similarly, questions about scheduling and managing productions would not be relevant for camera assistants and video editors, who tend not to be involved in these aspects of the production. Consequently, these introductory questions were essential to establishing the direction of the interview that followed. During interviews, a combination of open, specific and probing questions was used, avoiding leading questions in efforts to prevent biases (Saunders et al. 2016).

Table 1: Participants interviewed

Interview No.	Pseudonym	Role(s)	Department	Interview Duration	Interview Word Length
1	Myra	Managing Director	Oaks Group	01:13:12	11,832
2	Warren	Chief Operating Officer	Oaks Group	00:43:12	5,684
3	Theresa	Head of Production	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:48:01	9,153
4	Jack	Adviser	Oaks Group	00:50:44	5,782
5	Jasmine	Executive Producer	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:28:14	3,815
6	Perri	Head of Business Affairs	Oaks Group	01:09:34	8,618
7	Lily	Production Manager	Mixed-Genre Productions and Children’s Television	00:35:53	4,959
8	Tina	Trainee Producer	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:51:15	6,975
9	Pam	Junior Production Manager	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:20:54	3,501
10	Maggie	Production Accountant	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:19:43	3,441
11	Mick	Assistant Producer & Director	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:58:56	7,561
12	Leela	Producer	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:50:39	9,127
13	Ste	Digital Producer	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:39:16	7,296
14	Tegan	Producer	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:25:41	3,702
15	Brendon	Researcher	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:49:24	7,809
16	Mandy	Producer	Children’s Television	00:40:10	6,288
17	Cindy	Assistant Producer	Children’s Television	00:32:21	5,934
18	Dianne	Head of Production	Children’s Television	00:30:15	4,224
19	Darcy	Executive Producer	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:48:06	6,719
20	Adam	Creative Director	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:54:46	8,333
21	Liam	Director	Mixed-Genre Productions and Children’s Television	00:36:37	6,084
22	Maxine	Project Manager	Graphics Studio	00:51:26	9,624
23	Lucas	Head of Production Animation	Animation Studio	01:13:40	11,089
24	Darren	Managing Director	Graphics, Animation and Digital Studio	00:39:56	7,069
25	Shane	Creative Producer	Graphics Studio	00:44:40	9,294
26	Tom	Creative Producer	Digital Studio	00:52:55	8,766
27	Nancy	Assistant Producer	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:38:48	5,632

28	Tiff	Unit Production Manager	Children's Television	00:44:14	6,837
29	Lucy	Researcher & Presenter	Children's Television	00:48:53	8,395
30	Louis	Producer	Children's Television	00:49:49	7,559
31	Zach	Facilities Manager & Trainee Camera Operator	Children's Television	00:42:36	5,502
32	Simone	Studio Operator & Director	Children's Television	00:30:10	4,851
33	Harry	Managing Director	Post-Production	00:41:08	7,451
34	Holly	Junior Production Manager	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:25:58	4,154
35	Danny	Head of Operations	Post-Production	00:58:17	8,134
36	Tony	Technical Lead	Post-Production	00:32:41	6,157
37	Luke	Assistant Editor	Post-Production	00:22:40	3,797
38	Trevor	Junior Production Coordinator	Network Division	00:34:46	6,328
39	Cleo	Human Resources Manager	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:27:56	4,342
40	Dirk	Head of Development	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:24:19	4,137
41	Joel	Sound Recordist	Children's Television	00:44:11	5,729
42	Jesse	Studio Manager	Children's Television	00:31:58	4,693
43	Liv	Assistant Producer	Mixed-Genre Productions	1:08:22	9,693
44	Lisa	Researcher	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:26:48	3,848
45	Ryan	Technology Director	Post-Production	1:21:04	10,969
46	Ella	Junior Production Manager	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:33:43	7,592
47	Daisy	Producer	Mixed-Genre Productions	00:41:46	7,208
48	Alfie	Camera Operator	Children's Television	00:37:35	6,842
49	Hilton	Sound Recordist & Trainee Broadcast Engineer	Children's Television	00:41:06	5,170
50	Kim	Researcher	Children's Television	00:33:50	5,252
51	Ester	Assistant Producer	Children's Television	00:42:21	7,418
52	Marnie	Junior Production Manager	Children's Television	00:40:37	5,893
53	Courtney	Production Assistant	Children's Television	00:56:44	6,897
54	Dawn	Junior Production Manager	Children's Television	00:30:42	4,904
55	Annie	Producer	Children's Television	00:42:36	6,141
56	Sally	Executive Producer	Children's Television	00:32:00	4,884
57	Mac	Head of Production	Network Division	00:47:08	7,305

58	Ross	Director of Programmes	Network Division	00:48:22	7,997
59	Grace	Junior Production Manager	Network Division	00:46:33	8,354
60	Damon	Director	Children's Television	0:34:59	5,903
61	Brody	Video Editor	Children's Television	00:31:38	5,177
62	Rose	Assistant Producer	Children's Television	00:36:53	6,677
63	Toby	Director, Editor, Vision Mixer & VT Operator	Children's Television	00:35:07	6,002
				44:17:48	416,503

3.5.4 Supplementary observational data

The data collected from semi-structured interviews was supplemented by observational data to give further insight into the contextual features of the organisation. Observations are beneficial for allowing researchers to see first-hand the experience of work in specific contexts, as well as for allowing data to be triangulated (Saunders et al. 2016). However, practical limitations prevented observations taking a more prominent role in the research. Whilst interviews were conducted in English, the organisation's operational language is Welsh, a language unspoken by the researcher. As such, small scale observational data was gathered, predominantly through the initial tour of the research setting and during visits to the company to conduct interviews. These observations aided the contextual understanding of the organisation and provided opportunities to build rapport with potential research participants. These observations were also documented via brief notes made by the researcher.

3.6 Conducting the fieldwork

This section considers the practical research issues encountered during the fieldwork and discusses some methodological reflections on the data collection process. This includes issues relating to the use of a gatekeeper, Welsh language barriers, the role of the researcher, and also addresses ethical considerations that arise when conducting qualitative research.

3.6.1 Using a gatekeeper

Once access to Oaks was granted and fieldwork began, the gatekeeper's influence in the research process started to become apparent. As noted (Section 3.5.2), participants were initially selected by the gatekeeper, who identified appropriate informants for the research. Later, an information flyer was circulated via email asking for volunteers. This meant that participants interviewed in the early stages of the research had generally been approached by the gatekeeper directly, and asked to take part in the research. In these early interviews, respondents' attitudes towards the company were typically highly positive. For example, interviewees 5, 7 and 9 commented:

It's a really good company to work for... there's not a culture of them and us. (Jasmine – Executive Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I think management here care a lot about their staff... I think they really value us as staff and we value them as management". (Lily, Production Manager– Mixed-Genre Productions and Children's Television)

There's such a positive energy here. It's a really good culture, everyone respects each other, even the bosses. (Pam, Junior Production Manager– Mixed-Genre Productions)

As the fieldwork progressed, attitudes towards the company deviated, with more diverse attitudes shown towards the company and its management. For example, interviewees 43, 44 and 54 stated:

There's a lot of people on the top hierarchy who do it for the money and nothing else... they don't care much about the welfare of the staff. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I don't feel like they really care about the employees here... there's no relationship between us and the bigger people. (Dawn, Junior Production Manager – Children's Television)

The people that are higher up here, they don't really care about us. (Lisa, Researcher – Mixed-Genre Productions)

These later interviews tended to be with self-selected participants, who had volunteered to take part in the research. While no claims can be made for a definitive distinction between the attitudes of selected participants versus volunteers, the examples above indicate the potential influence of the gatekeeper's involvement in the selection process of participants on the responses and attitudes of participants in the fieldwork. Those participants selected by the gatekeeper tended to portray the company more favourably than self-selected volunteers.

It was also discernible that the top-down approach to securing access in the case company influenced participants' perceptions about how honest they could be during the interviews. For example, several participants confirmed the anonymity of the research before making certain points, whereas others jokingly asked whether management would find out about their responses.

3.6.2 Welsh language barriers

Welsh language constraints also emerged as an issue during the fieldwork. This transpired on the first day of the data collection, as the researcher was greeted by the company's receptionist. This initial greeting was extremely friendly, involving the receptionist saying several sentences in Welsh. The researcher responded apologetically, explaining that she could not understand Welsh, to which the receptionist simply responded, "tea or coffee". Similar encounters happened on occasion, with some participants greeting the researcher in Welsh, however generally speaking participants seemed happy to converse in the English language. On several occasions, participants could not immediately think of the English translation of particular words. However, this was not a hinderance to the research but meant that sometimes there would be a long pause during the interview, whilst the participant tried to think of the correct translation.

The predominant barrier posed by the Welsh language was the inability for the researcher to have a more involved role in the research site. For example, several participants made offers for the researcher to accompany them on set, in the studio and out on location. The researcher did so on

one occasion, during the filming of a feature for a children's studio show. However, as the operational language of the company is Welsh, and participants conversed in Welsh on set, this was judged to be an unfruitful exercise, and was not further pursued in the research.

3.6.3 Role of the researcher

The role of the researcher is paramount in qualitative research and can have serious consequences on the nature and quality of data collected while interviewing (Saunders et al. 2016). Once in the field, the researcher took several steps in attempts to build rapport with participants and to present themselves in a professional yet approachable manner, in order to maintain the integrity of the research but also encourage open and detailed dialogue. For example, after visiting the research site for the initial access interviews, the researcher observed that the company's dress code was largely smart casual, and therefore the researcher mirrored this in their own professional presentation. The researcher also ensured that they appeared prepared to participants, with a sufficient background understanding of how the television sector works to ask relevant questions, but not so much that it restricted the information offered by participants.

During the fieldwork, participants made their own assumptions about the researcher, and as a result, there were mixed responses to the researcher's presence in the organisation. While some participants were curious about the research and asked questions, others were more suspicious, and seemed wary of speaking about the case company to the researcher. On these latter occasions, participants were more guarded in their responses, which led to shorter interviews in some instances. One example of this was Jasmine, an Executive Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions who had worked in the industry for over 30 years. This interview lasted for only 28 minutes, which was unusually short for a participant with this level of tenure and experience in the industry. Sometimes there was also confusion over the purpose of the research. Although this was explained to participants beforehand through information sheets and consent forms, some participants believed the purpose of the interview was for the researcher to gather more information about the television industry, before attempting to pursue a career in television themselves. On these occasions, the real purpose of the research was reiterated to participants.

Overall, it appeared that participants viewed the researcher as nonthreatening and trustworthy. This was evident in the openness of responses from various participants. For example, many participants talked candidly about the case company and their own personal work experiences, both positive and negative. Other participants also talked very openly about their personal lives during the interviews, involving discussions of participants' husbands, wives, children, pregnancy and adoption experiences, and in some instances their current dating lives, using online dating apps and

struggles in finding a partner. These examples are indicative of the high levels of trust that participants felt towards the researcher. On reflection, the personal attributes of the researcher may have been contributing factors to the openness with which many participants spoke during interviews. For example, the fact that the researcher was a student, may have led to participants feeling more comfortable and at ease in discussing their experiences with the researcher and this appeared to be particularly true when interviewing younger participants.

In other instances, some participants were overly positive/negative during interviews. In the former, some participants were extremely positive about their experiences, and were overly optimistic in their responses. One example of this was an interview conducted with Ella, a Junior Production Manager for Mixed-Genre Productions. Ella noted that she 'loved' some aspect of her work 18 times during her 34-minute interview, and was overwhelmingly positive towards her job:

It's a good job to have, I love it, like absolutely love it, other people would say no, it's just TV, but I just love it.... I am really at my happiest, I genuinely do love it, I do love it so much, it sounds sad, but I do love it yeh. (Ella, Junior Production Manager – Mixed-Genre Productions).

On the other hand, some participants appeared to view the interview as an opportunity to air their grievances about the company, their job, and their working lives more generally, and were extremely negative throughout interviews. On these occasions, the researcher was careful not to be side-tracked by the interviewees' immoderate responses (both positive and negative) and tried to keep a neutral stance during interviews and in understanding work in this company.

3.6.4 Other fieldwork issues

An unexpected issue that occurred during the fieldwork related to the facilities made available for interview. While the location of interviews on the whole posed no problems for conducting interviews, there were several exceptions. For example, while interviewing Tegan, a Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, it was an extremely hot day, and the interview took place in a very small box room, with no air circulation. Resultantly, this interview only lasted for 25 minutes, which was relatively short in comparison to other producers interviewed. It was clear that the participant was becoming increasingly frustrated by the temperature and wanted to leave the room. This resulted in extremely short answers to the interview questions, for example:

R: So, what do you think have been the challenges for TV in Wales?

P: Well the budgets really, and also, just practical things like, you know obviously everybody we film, they've gotta be Welsh speaking. Yeh, so. Sorry. I dunno if I'm answering very well. It's just so hot.

This same room was also referred to by Leela, a Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, as the “migraine room” on another occasion. Following the interviews, the researcher requested that this room be avoided for future interviews if possible, which the gatekeeper was able to accommodate.

3.6.5 Ethical considerations

Research ethics are integral to good research practice and were therefore an important consideration in the PhD research. The planning and conduct of the PhD research were therefore underpinned by stringent ethical principles, that aimed to ensure the research adhered to the appropriate standards of ethical behaviour. Prior to undertaking the fieldwork, full ethical approval for the research was obtained from Cardiff Business School’s Ethics Committee (Appendix 5). This process included compiling a research ethics application, which specified the research procedures of the PhD study, and included a consideration of any relevant ethical issues. This application therefore included consideration of gaining informed consent from participants, clarifying the participants’ right to withdraw from the research and ensuring anonymity of participants’ identities.

However, ethical approval of the research project is not the end of the researcher’s ethical responsibilities (McAreavey and Muir 2011). Therefore, throughout the negotiation of access, the gatekeeper was informed of the rights of participants, and provided with a participant information sheet (Appendix 6), to circulate to potential participants before gaining their consent to participate. Prior to each interview, participants were presented with an informed consent declaration for research participants (Appendix 7), in order to gain full consent. The contents of this informed consent sheet were also summarised verbally to participants before their involvement in the research, to ensure their awareness of their right to withdraw, and assure them of the confidentiality of their participation. Throughout the fieldwork, in the interest of avoiding harm to the participants (Saunders et al. 2016), participants were treated with dignity and respect at all times, and were reminded of their voluntary participation in the research. This included reiterating that they were free to withdraw from the research or parts of the research at any time. Given that the content of some interviews was potentially very personal, the researcher was also sensitive to the potential emotive nature of the research topic for participants, respecting their dignity and emotional well-being at all times.

3.7 Analysing research data

The research data collected via interviews was analysed using a thematic approach, seeking to identify themes and patterns in the interview data for further analysis (Saunders et al. 2016). This provides a flexible but systematic approach to data analysis, suitable for analysing large data sets (Braun and Clarke 2006). Analysis began during the initial transcription stage of the research,

leading to familiarisation with the interview data, and was followed by the coding of the data by initial patterns and meanings. Following on, emergent themes were identified, grouping codes into analytic categories, allowing the bulk of the data to be grouped together into broad categories with relevance for the research aims (Saunders et al. 2016). These themes were then refined to allow relationships across and between the themes to be identified. This process was done iteratively, moving between the transcripts and the existing literature on TV production and creative labour to provide a coherent analytical framework whilst also allowing for emergent themes to be identified (Saunders et al. 2016).

Applying this to the data, the first step involved coding data relating to the broad themes of context, content of work, creativity and work meanings and values, in order to break the data down into usable segments. Following this, the second step involved the use of sub-codes within these broad themes, to enable the researcher to identify interrelationships between and across the first stage themes. For example, 'context' was coded again by whether the data related specifically to the organisational context, industrial context or Welsh context. Similarly, 'content of work' was sub-coded according to work tasks, skills and training, progression, organisation of work, project teams etc. In practice, this involved colour coding each theme, and highlighting the relevant text in Microsoft Word documents, with comments added to explain the relevance of each in the side pane. Following on, once all the data had been coded, the researcher used tables to summarise the themes and data for each, to allow relationships between data sets to be identified. This allowed for the emergent theme of 'meaningful work' to be identified, by which aspects of this could be related back to elements from the content of work and creativity sub-themes.

3.8 Limitations

Whilst thorough efforts were taken to ensure the research adhered to the utmost of quality standards, there are several potential limitations of the design of the study. First of all, as noted (Section 3.6.4), the validation of research data can be enhanced through triangulation, supplementing the primary data source with other methods of data collection to reaffirm the credibility and authenticity of the research (Saunders et al. 2016). It was initially intended that observations would take a more pivotal role in the research, including observations of the production teams throughout various stages of the production process. This approach is common in TV production research, gaining insights into the dynamics and coordination of production teams through participant observation (Bechky 2006; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). Given that the operational language of the company was not spoken by the researcher, these additional insights were beyond the scope of the study. To overcome this difficulty, the research sought a large sample size, conducting 63 interviews in order to enhance the credibility of the research findings.

Furthermore, the sampling method adopted in the study could be criticised. Conducting qualitative research within organisational contexts is usually highly dependent on the gatekeeper who controls access to the research site (Saunders et al. 2016), as was the case in the PhD research. Whilst the gatekeeper was a vital asset to the efficacy of the fieldwork, their personal preferences influenced who was invited to take part in the research. As noted, (Section 3.5), there was a preference for permanent staff workers to be invited, as opposed to freelance workers. Incidentally, the interaction with permanent staff workers became an important focus of the study (Chapter 5). However, freelance workers would likely have had a different viewpoint on the issues tackled in the study. Another potential criticism of the sampling method adopted is the risk of self-selection bias. After the gatekeeper selected individual participants for the study, volunteers were sought by the gatekeeper. Therefore, participants chose their own participation, and therefore may share similar characteristics (Saunders et al. 2016). Again, the large sample size used reflects attempts by the researcher to minimise potential biases in the research.

Retrospectively, a comparative analysis of the company's production departments would have produced an interesting point of contrast for the research because the nature of work in the Welsh production divisions of the company is markedly different to the network facing, English production division. Notably, the Welsh production divisions are underscored by a degree of stability, employing a staff workforce, whereas the network division demonstrates the usual features of insecurity associated with TV production contexts utilising a freelance workforce (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010; Lee 2012; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). As such, in hindsight, a comparative study of these two aspects of the business would have provided an interesting and contrasting analysis, and also allowed the research to explore cultural differences between TV production within the Welsh and English broadcast context. However, given the research's exploratory approach, these points of contrast were unknown at the time of negotiating access.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of the methodology and methods of the PhD research. In doing so, it has explained the rationale for adopting a qualitative, exploratory case study design in pursuing the research aims, using in-depth, semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. This also contains a reflection on how the fieldwork was conducted, revealing the practicalities involved in conducting qualitative research in practice and the potential issues encountered by qualitative organisational researchers. Considerations of the quality of research and research data are interwoven within the themes discussed in the chapter, including the reliability and validity of qualitative research, and practices that qualitative researchers can adopt to enhance the credibility of their research findings. The chapters that follow present the findings from

the case study research. This begins in the following chapter, which maps out the contextual terrain in which TV production takes place in the case company.

4. CASE CONTEXT: OAKS PRODUCTIONS LTD

4.1 Introduction

The following four chapters present the findings from the case study research. This chapter details the historical development of the case study company, Oaks Productions Ltd (Oaks), highlighting the key organisational features associated with the company's development as a super independent television production company (super indie), and the importance of these developments in the Welsh context. The aims of this chapter are two-fold; firstly, to contextualise the case by outlining the features of Oaks at the time of the research; and secondly, to conceptualise the transition of Oaks from a small independent company to a large super indie. Super indies have become increasingly widespread in the UK's independent TV sector and have gained some recognition in creative industry research (Faulkner et al. 2008; Lee 2011). Despite these advancements, the working practices associated with these organisations and what they might mean for the nature and experience of TV production remain unexplored. Addressing these omissions, this chapter focuses on the key features of the case company's organisational development that influence the way that television is produced for the Welsh broadcasters. Recent studies of television production predominantly focus on the consequences of the precarious experience of freelancing in the sector (e.g. Paterson 2012; Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012), with the examination of work within super indie contexts hitherto under-researched. An in-depth understanding of how super indies have developed, are structured, and organised is therefore crucial in furthering our understanding of contemporary TV production within this specific industry context.

The chapter builds on insights from the interview data, as well as information from secondary sources, such as Government and industry publications. The first section accounts for how Oaks developed from a small independent producer into a super independent television production company, including an analysis of how wider industrial and political trends shaped its development. The following section focuses on the implications of the development of Oaks into a super indie on the production and management of Welsh television. In doing so, the section explores the key organisational features associated with the Welsh context, as well as the use of a staff workforce, the streamlined development process, and the availability of resources. Building on these sections, the chapter shows how Oaks has been able to build its resources and expertise through consolidating the local market, therefore providing potential opportunities for more efficient ways to manage and produce television in the Welsh context.

4.2 Building a super indie in Wales

4.2.1 Establishing Oaks and the Welsh television context

Oaks was founded in 1994 as an independent production company of Welsh language youth programming. At the time of the company's creation, the Welsh TV industry had experienced an era of growth. By this time, Sianel Pedwar Cymru (S4C), the Welsh language channel, and the indigenous TV sector in Wales was firmly established, with its own facilities and training structures in place across different regions of the country (Williams 2018). Devolution of the Welsh Government in 1998 strongly contributed to the sector's development, equipping the industry with increased powers that enhanced Wales' reputation as a good place to work and live for creative professionals. Running alongside these developments, there were also notable changes in funding sources for S4C. Initially financed by advertising revenue during the 1980s, the expansion of advertiser-funded channels throughout the 1990s saw S4C's funding move to public sources through the HM Treasury, supplemented by S4C's own advertising revenue (Williams 2018).

The broader regulatory context of television production was also transformed during this time, in which the UK Government introduced regulations on quotas. Such legislative measures included the 1990 Broadcasting Act, specifying that 25% of all commissions from the major broadcasters should be outsourced to independent producers (Broadcasting Act 1990). This was later followed by the Communications Act 2003, consolidating broadcasting regulators in the UK through the introduction of Ofcom. This also included the introduction of regional production quotas, specifying that a suitable proportion of production should be based outside of the M25, assigned intellectual property rights to the producer and allowed whole ownership of UK TV companies by non-European entities for the first time (Communications Act 2003). These regulatory changes aimed to strengthen the indie sector in the UK and, along with the arrival of digital media, encouraged the market for independent producers to expand rapidly within Wales and the UK as a whole.

In addition to these developments, support for the sector by the Welsh Government also enabled the Welsh TV industry to thrive during this period. In 2004, the Welsh Government established its own Creative Industries Policy, 'Creative Success', aiming to enhance profitability and sustainability for Welsh creative businesses (nmp 2008). As part of this policy the Welsh TV industry was hailed for its strategic economic importance for the Welsh economy and its cultural significance for Wales, receiving much attention and investment to encourage its further growth (nmp 2008; Hargreaves 2009). This also included the identification of Cardiff as a potential Media Capital cluster, resulting in the provision of tax breaks and incentives for local creative companies (Hargreaves 2009). As a result, production of TV programmes began to move away from England (particularly Bristol), and to

re-locate to South Wales (Sweney 2009; BBC 2010), with public funding and support from the Welsh Government enabling the development of a distinctive television industry in Wales.

4.2.2 Acquisition strategy

Oaks' founders took advantage of the industrial and political changes in the early 2000s and pursued a rapid acquisition strategy. Initially a small boutique-style, owner-run independent, with "lean operations" and "employing a very small core staff" (Morris et al. 2016, p.2286), this strategy allowed Oaks to begin to grow in size and significance. Oaks began by acquiring three local producers, specialising in lifestyle and Welsh learners' content, entertainment programming and television drama. As a result, Oaks became a major supplier of mixed-genre content for Welsh broadcasters; S4C, BBC Cymru Wales and ITV Cymru Wales (known as 'HTV Wales' at the time). These acquisitions also gave the company the capacity to develop its own post-production facility, enabling them to post-produce all content in-house. This further increased the company's purchasing power, boosted their turnover and expanded its workforce to 50 employees by 2007.

In November 2007, the company was launched onto the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) in an attempt to grow its value and to continue its acquisition strategy. Up until this point, Oaks relied heavily on producing content for S4C. However, concerns towards an over-reliance on S4C led to a decision to diversify the company's client base. As a result, Oaks acquired several producers from the English market and diversified into the genres of live sports and anthropological and documentary programming and began to target network channels for future work. This enabled the company to establish its own network division, taking advantage of the regional production quotas introduced as part of the Communications Act 2003, through targeting commissions from the major broadcasters. At this point the company had multiplied its genre spread and expanded to a workforce of 150 staff members. It was also during 2009 when Oaks won a tender from S4C to produce the majority of their children's TV programming, enabling the company to create its own children's television production unit. The post-production facility also vastly expanded during this time, acquiring a local post-production house and grew from 3 to 50 edit suites. As a result, by 2011, Oaks had become the biggest TV facilities provider in Wales and employed over 200 employees across its different production and post-production areas.

In 2012, a decision was made to delist the company from the AIM in order to raise finance to pursue bigger acquisitions. In the wider industry during this time, the financial crash also put pressure on traditional funding patterns for broadcasters, with global access providing new financing models and the digital environment bringing new media markets for producers (Williams 2018). The Welsh-language broadcaster S4C also experienced considerable budgets cuts during this time, with a

reduction from approximately £101.6 million in 2010 down to £82.8 million in 2015; a 36% cut in real terms (Rolewska 2017). This followed on from funding reforms in 2013 that saw S4C's UK Government funding largely replaced by TV licence fee funds, with government grants contributing to only 8% of the channel's budget (Williams 2018).

4.2.3 Sector consolidation and the rise of the super indies

These structural changes sparked a shift in the industry, in which the independent TV sector in the UK underwent significant consolidation, seeing a reduction in independent producers from 1000 production companies in 1996 (Pact 1996) to 300 companies in 2014 (Pact 2014). Notably, the consolidation of the industry and deregulation of the market was coupled with the rise of the super indie phenomena across the UK (Sweney 2014). The super indie phenomena refers to the creation of "large producers...usually a conglomeration of different producers who specialise in a particular type of output and operate in a number of markets around the world and typically have UK revenues over £50m per year" (Ofcom 2015, p.11). Oaks followed this industry trend when merging with an English media group in 2013, expanding its network division and opening up its international distribution network. This merger transformed Oaks into a £30 million powerhouse, placing it as a major super indie within the UK by 2013, employing over 250 staff employees across its departments. This also led to further acquisitions of a large drama company, a comedy company, and a graphics studio, allowing the company to add graphics, motion design, visual effects, animation and digital media to its portfolio. The success of the company attracted attention from the wider industry, and in June 2015 the company was acquired by ITV Studios.

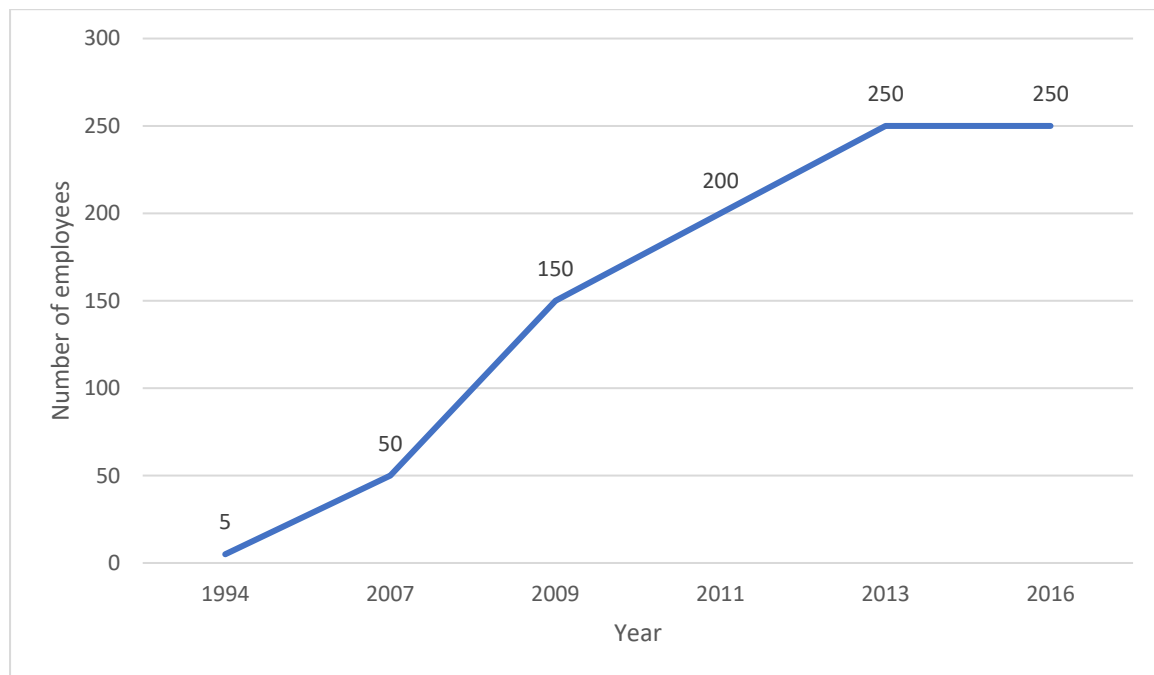
Throughout this growth, the founders and senior management of Oaks worked closely with the Welsh Government, who implemented various initiatives that aided the consolidation of the independent Welsh TV sector and encouraged the emergence of super indie organisations. S4C also played a key role in driving the consolidation of the Welsh TV sector, in which the "lion's share" of the broadcasters' programming is provided by the four largest production companies in Wales, including Oaks (Welsh Affairs Committee 2011, p.7). Oaks received funds from Regional Selective Assistance grants, Strategic Investment grants, Media Investments grants and subsidised rental costs to aid its development. As part of one of the largest production companies in Wales, the founders and MDs of Oaks continue to work closely with the Welsh Government, S4C and representatives from the general industry. This includes local bodies such as the TAC (Teledwyr Annibynnol Cymru) that represents the independent Welsh TV production sector and SkillSet, the national training body for the sector. They also work closely with education institutions within Wales to promote the industry and identify the skills necessary for a career in the sector. As such, these entrepreneurs

have had a key role in developing the sector in Wales and continue to contribute to its ongoing growth and success.

4.2.4 Oaks: the super indie

The evolution of Oaks over the past 25 years shows how the company transformed into a super indie through its acquisitions, taking advantage of industrial changes to power its way forward in terms of value and assets. Oaks is now an anchor media company within Wales, considered to be significant to the Welsh economy, growing from 5 employees in 1994 to over 250 employees across its departments in 2016 (Figure 1). Its multiple acquisitions have expanded the company’s genre scope to include factual, factual-entertainment, entertainment, drama, lifestyle, documentary, anthropological documentary, comedy, sports-entertainment and live events, for a variety of broadcasters, as well as offering post-production services to clients on a global scale.

Figure 1: Expansion of Oaks’ employee workforce by significant years

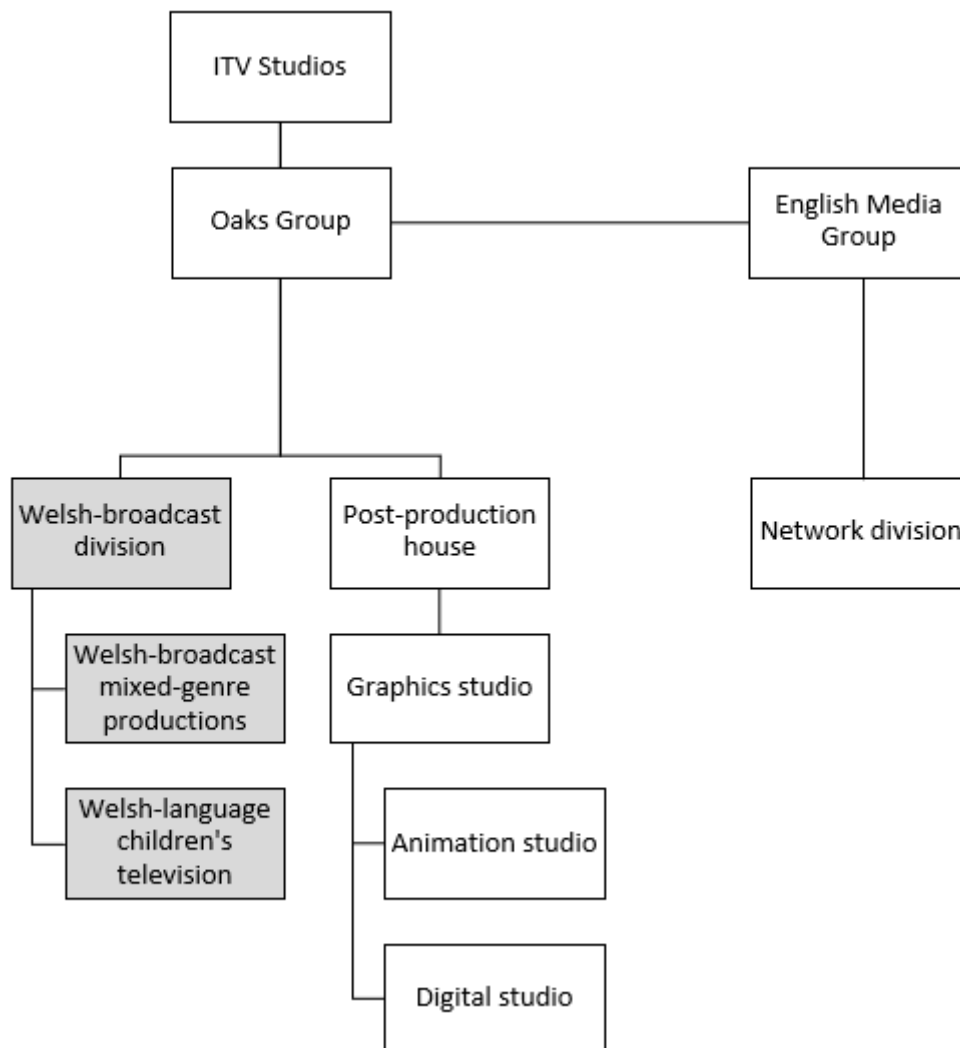


Senior management, who had a key role in the company’s growth, referred to how Oaks had “become a much bigger beast” (Dirk, Head of Development – Oaks Group) as a result of the initial founder’s acquisition strategy. The MD of the Oaks Group who had worked for Oaks throughout its development also accounted for this, stating that:

We're regarded as one of the super indies now because of the might of the company as the result of the acquisitions, we're focused on so many different genres. (Myra, Managing Director – Oaks Group)

Figure 2 outlines the organisational structure of Oaks which has emerged from its acquisitions⁴ as it was at the time of the research. The Figure provides a breakdown of the company's Welsh-broadcast-focused and network-focused production divisions, and the post-production studios at Oaks. The network division, whilst formally part of the Oaks Group, is managed by the English Media Group. This is because the network division has closer affiliations to this side of the business, adopting a similar business model and targeting similar markets.

Figure 2: Oaks Organisational Chart



4.3 Key organisational features

The chapter so far accounts for how Oaks developed from a small independent producer into a super indie, reflecting on wider industrial and political trends that shaped its development. This section sets out the key organisational features associated with the company's development as a

⁴ Also referred to as the company's 'development' and 'expansion' throughout

super indie that influence how television is produced and managed within the Welsh TV context. Whilst the previous discussion overviews the development of the company overall, this section focuses on the Welsh-broadcast division specifically (highlighted in Figure 2). This includes two departments; Welsh-broadcaster mixed-genre productions (referred to as Mixed-Genre Productions throughout) and Welsh-language children’s television (referred to as Children’s Television throughout). Table 1 outlines the production portfolios of these two departments, providing a breakdown of their target market and genre-focus. Whilst the departments target the three Welsh broadcasters (S4C, BBC Cymru Wales, and ITV Cymru Wales), both departments predominantly produce Welsh-language content for S4C, with a smaller quantity of English language content broadcast on BBC Cymru Wales and ITV Cymru Wales. The departments also produce content across multiple genres, enabled by the accumulation of genre-specific expertise from local producers. Whilst these two departments form the focus of the chapter, other departments at Oaks are also referenced where relevant to contextualising and explaining work in Welsh-broadcast television.

Table 2: Welsh-broadcast division: production portfolio

Department	Target market	Genre-focus
Mixed-genre productions	S4C	Comedy; drama; entertainment; factual-entertainment; youth; music; architecture and lifestyle programmes; live coverage of major events; online channel
	BBC Cymru Wales	
	ITV Cymru Wales	
Children’s television	S4C	Game shows; quiz shows; animated series; music videos; drama; comedy; sports
	BBC Cymru Wales	
	ITV Cymru Wales	

The following sub-sections pinpoint key organisational features of the company’s expansion that help to explain the nature of TV production and creative labour in this setting (Chapter 5). This is discussed around four themes; the company’s embeddedness within the Welsh TV context, the use of a staff workforce, the streamlined development process, and the availability of resources.

4.3.1 Embedded in the Welsh context

Oaks’ development as a super indie originates from and is embedded within the Welsh TV context. This has several economic and cultural influences on the company’s organisational features,

particularly in terms of the Welsh commissioning process, budgetary restrictions and the political and cultural significance of Welsh television.

4.3.1.1 *Welsh commissioning process*

The commissioning process for S4C and BBC Wales differs from the UK industry standard. In Wales, programmes are awarded to production companies periodically, typically on a 6-monthly or annual basis. In contrast, the UK industry standard allocates productions based on fluctuating demand, or by 'slots.' The network division's Head of Production described these varying commissioning processes:

BBC Wales and S4C have always done rounds, so they might do a round in February and a round in October for arguments sake, or do one a year, so they dish out everything in a year. Channel 4 they work on slots, so the development guys can go into Channel 4 tomorrow and a commissioner could go I've just had something drop out of four slots in October, have you got anything on this particular subject that you think you can deliver by October you know, it's not a case of, in March we'll decide the next six months of commissioning, and that's how S4C works. (Mac, Head of Production – network division)

As such, the commissioning process used by the Welsh broadcasters has a more long-term focus in comparison to the English context. This is similarly the case for the commissioning of children's television programmes by S4C, in which S4C awards the majority of its children's TV commissions to a single production company on a triennial basis. Oaks has received this contract since 2009, providing the department with a steady flow of work for nearly ten years. The approach to commissioning by the Welsh broadcasters provides a degree of stability and predictability of future work for the Welsh-broadcast division, enabling the company to take a longer-term stance when planning and organising its operations in comparison to the wider industry. At the same time, the marketized context of TV production means winning tenders from commissioners often depends on cost, leading to high levels of cost competition between production companies.

4.3.1.2 *Budget restrictions*

S4C has been predominantly TV licence fee funded since 2013, receiving around 92% of its funding from the TV licence fee and 8% from government grants through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) (Williams 2018). Whilst this enables a degree of stability for Welsh television, with the BBC Trust pledging to dedicate £74.5 million a year to S4C until 2022 (BBC 2016), S4C's funding levels mean that budgets to produce Welsh television are extremely restrictive. In comparison to England, Wales receives much smaller budgets for their programmes. For example, S4C's total budget for 2018 was £84 million, with an estimated 80% spent on content (Rolewska 2017) whereas Channel 4 spent £662 million on content in 2018 (Channel 4 2018). Estimated

figures for single productions range from a minimum of £15,000 per hour to a maximum of £60,000 per hour for factual and entertainment programming for S4C (S4C 2013). These are noteworthy when compared to a maximum of £600,000 per hour for Channel 4's genre equivalent (Channel 4 2010). Similarly, estimated figures for drama series are limited; ranging from a minimum of £100,000 per hour to a maximum of £200,000 per hour for S4C, compared to a minimum of £300,000 cost per hour and maximum of £1,000,000 per hour for Channel 4 (Channel 4 2010; S4C 2013). Therefore, whilst public funding and support has enabled the development of a distinctive Welsh TV industry, it also means that budgets are particularly restrictive in this context, with financial constraints a salient feature of Welsh TV production. These budgetary restrictions put pressure on Oaks' Welsh-broadcast division and have a significant impact on how television is produced and managed in this setting.

4.3.1.3 Political and cultural significance of Welsh television

The role of Welsh television goes beyond economic and entertainment factors, encompassing political, cultural and educational significance to Wales (Rolewska 2017), with S4C positioned as one of the "cornerstones" of Welsh culture (Williams 2018, p.11). Within this context, Oaks senior management often emphasised the importance of the company's Welsh identity and Welsh roots, forming an important aspect of the company's identity and corporate culture. Managing Director Myra, for example, commented that:

Our Welsh identity is really important to us, and we're a Welsh company within the Welsh Government's eyes and so it's a very important factor for us. (Myra, Managing Director - Oaks Group)

Similarly, Harry, Managing Director of the post-production house stressed the importance of the company's contribution to the Welsh language:

Welsh language is something that is another part of our remit of what we do as a creative industry, it also feeds back into the Welsh language and the culture, so you've got your economic effect but the social effect of what we do, I think it's quite key, driving the Welsh language, well it's what S4C was set up to do and it is what Oaks produces, so it goes hand in hand really. (Harry, MD – post-production)

Therefore, whilst the expansion of Oaks involved the acquisition of local English producers, a merger with an English media group and part ownership by ITV Studios (Section 4.2.3), the company's strategy attempts to distance the English side of the business from its Welsh operations (Figure 2). One reason for Oaks' isolation of the Welsh aspect of the business from the wider group is aligned with attempts to maintain a strong Welsh identity for the company for tendering within the Welsh context for contracts by Welsh TV commissioners. The Managing Director of Oaks explained the

political and cultural importance of appearing to be a Welsh company within the context of Welsh television production:

We are now owned by an English company ... its headquarters are based in London... but it's quite politically important that we appear to retain our identity as a Welsh and indigenous Welsh company. So we still say we are a Welsh company, headquarters in Wales, because that's what we are. It's important to appear to be committed to your Welshness and to your sort of indigenous status. (Myra, Managing Director - Oaks Group)

As a result, Welsh-broadcast television and the network division are treated as separate aspects of the business, with the network division having closer affiliations with the English Media Group side of the business. For example, Ross, Director of Programmes for the network division described this divide between the two sides of the business:

We have our targets, we have our goals, we have our way of doing things, they have their targets, they have their goals, they have their way of doing things. (Ross, Director of Programmes – network division).

Nevertheless, the promotion of the 'Welshness' of the company by senior management reflects its embeddedness within the Welsh TV context and the broader cultural and political significance of Welsh television in strengthening the Welsh identity and promoting the Welsh language.

4.3.2 Use of a staff workforce

One significant feature of the company's development into a super indie is the increased stability of the workforce, with a large proportion of workers employed on a staff basis. The mixed-genre department employed 40 staff members at the time of the research, including senior management, production workers and production management, with additional freelance crew (e.g. directors, camera operators) brought in for filming. The children's television department employed 65 staff members across all roles, including crew, with additional freelance crew utilised sparingly during extremely busy periods. The use of a large proportion of staff workers is mainly down to the commissioning process for Welsh television, enabling a degree of stability and predictability for the company in terms of future work. This is particularly the case for the children's TV department, with guaranteed work on a three yearly basis leading to the use of a primarily staff workforce, as the Head of Children's Television explained:

In 2009 we won the contract to supply S4C with most of their kids output... and we've been lucky in that S4C have been able to extend the contract for three years every time and it's on the basis of that that we then have the confidence to be able to run a department that's dedicated for kids TV, otherwise you'd have to have a different model altogether, you'd have to staff up and staff down again you know, as and when you get commissioned... so we're predominantly staff here. (Dianne, Head of Children's TV)

Oaks' expansion into a large consolidated company also enables the company to hire a larger proportion of staff workers in comparison to the industry standard, with the increased size and scale of the company enabling a more holistic overview across the company's production portfolio in the planning of its operations. Ryan, Technology Director for the post-production house, explained this:

That's where the super indies come into place because they can look holistically across productions and therefore there are more staff here so there are people to do the accounts, people to do the clearances, there are production managers on staff, and therefore they are employing more because they've got that more holistic view across multiple jobs really, so it does then allow them to think a bit more about employing people permanently. (Ryan, Technology Director – post-production)

As such, together the periodic allocation of commissions by Welsh broadcasters and the company's size and scale as a super indie foster the necessary security and predictability to enable the use of a more stable staff workforce. This approach reduces risk and provides a more economically efficient way to produce television in the context of a degree of stability. This is because the daily rate of freelance workers is considerably higher than of staff workers in the wider industry; therefore the employment of staff, and limited use of freelancers, makes savings to the bottom line. The employment of staff also reduces risk as staff are always available, whereas freelancers may have other pulls on their time, bringing an element of risk and unpredictability. Jack, an adviser to senior management, explained this situation:

It's remarkable really how they've created a stable environment out of what is essentially a casual labour industry... they've done a wonderful job here of managing that relationship between freelancers, and also the stability which is in their point of view, important in order to get the right quality, so the staff that are on contract, move from one production to another... it ensures that people know how the company works, so there's fewer risks, and it's the only way you can provide value for money oddly enough, because if you were totally dependent on freelancers you really don't know what it's going to cost you cos you don't know what they're capable of, so it's very risky. (Jack, Adviser – Oaks Group)

As well as reducing risk and limiting hiring costs, the use of a staff workforce also has notable repercussions for the nature and experience of TV production in this context, especially in terms of the scheduling of staff time by production managers; a theme discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3.3 Streamlined development process

Another key feature of the company's expansion includes the appointment of an ideas development team by senior management for the development of programme ideas for Welsh-broadcast television. This designated team is responsible for generating and developing ideas, identifying industry trends, liaising and building relationships with commissioners, creating taster tapes and managing pitches and tenders for commissions. This team is led by Creative Director, Adam (initial

founder of one of the acquired production companies), and the Head of Development, Dirk (previously an Executive Producer for one of the acquired production companies). This new approach to the development process was discussed by Perri, Head of Business Affairs for the Welsh-broadcast division:

There's been a change of structure in terms of the... editorial side of things, of coming up with new ideas... there's been a creative director appointed, he's now the head of the creative teams, and then there's been an appointment of a head of development as well... Ideas and programmes and how things are formatted have to go through them now really so there is a kind of point of contact or a place where things are discussed rather than people just going off on a tangent and sending ideas through which haven't gone through the proper people to check well yes this is what we're looking for. (Perri, Head of Business Affairs – Oaks Group)

The purpose of the development team is to increase the likelihood of winning commissions from Welsh broadcasters through channelling the development process through two senior figures with substantial previous expertise and experience in securing commissions. This team also attempts to win more commissions from Welsh broadcasters through conveying the company as multiple boutique, specialist producers. As part of the company's acquisition strategy, the three locally acquired production companies were integrated into the mixed-genre productions department. These companies previously specialised in lifestyle and Welsh learners' programming, entertainment and television drama. While these companies no longer exist in a formal capacity, the ideas development team continues to use the companies' names as 'brands' to assist with pitches to commissioning editors to increase the likelihood of securing commissions, given their respective reputations for these genre specialisms within the Welsh TV production community. This strategy aims to give the impression that Oaks is a number of small, boutique, specialist production companies, rather than one large corporate production company. The MD described this strategy:

It's an impression that we like to give the outside world, that we're a number of small, boutique, genre-focused companies within the group. That's how we've played it. So we still use the brand names, [Lifestyle and Welsh Learners' TV Company], [Entertainment TV Company], and [Drama TV Company]... even though we've consolidated fully... we still have you know, 'Drama TV Company' still produces drama for us, and we brand the programmes with 'Drama TV Company' end-holders because we feel it's important that people feel that we've got divisions that are focused on particular genres and they're strong in those fields and so we still use the brands [Lifestyle and Welsh Learners' TV Company], [Entertainment TV Company], and [Drama TV Company]. (Myra, Managing Director – Oaks Group)

This strategy, as well as the appointment of a designated ideas development team, reflects the competitive nature of winning commissions in the Welsh context. Competition for commissions is often cost-based, and therefore these practices are aimed at developing more cost-effective programme ideas in line with the commissioning editor's preferences. Whilst this is reflective of the

broader marketized context of TV production, it also has implications for the nature of producing television, shifting ideas development from an inclusive, collective process, into an exclusive activity reserved only for certain workers at Oaks.

4.3.4 Availability and centralisation of resources

Another fundamental aspect of the company's development is the increased availability of resources which have been centralised in its Welsh broadcast division. As a result of bringing together the resources of local producers, the company has been able to diversify into new markets and provide additional support to its Welsh-broadcast division, through expanding its post-production facilities, producing an online channel and creating a dedicated children's television production unit.

4.3.4.1 Expansion of post-production services

The acquisition of a local post-production house and a local graphics studio (Section 4.2.2) has enabled Oaks to expand its operations to include a full-service post-production house specialising in broadcast media and film (Table 2). This allows all content from the Welsh-broadcast division to be post-produced in-house, reducing costs associated with outsourcing post-production activities. Post-production services include editing, sound mixing, grading, finishing, dubbing and technical services such as archiving and media management. As well as providing services in-house, the post-production department works with other production companies and broadcasters, with a portfolio of work in sport, drama, factual and entertainment programming, and adverts and promotional content for corporate clients.

Separate to the main post-production house, Oaks also features a graphics studio, an animation studio, and a development studio making games, websites and applications (Table 2). The graphics studio specialises in motion design and visual effects, creating visuals for TV, film, advertising and music. The animation studio specialises in the development, design and technical execution of content for broadcast series, commercials, games and the web, and the development studio specialises in creating interactive content, experiences and animated games. Due to their technical focus, the studios sit under the post-production arm of the business. The expansion of post-production services at Oaks means all content can be produced and post-produced in-house, providing technical expertise to the production departments and reducing costs, as well as allowing the company to diversify into different broadcasting platforms including online and digital services.

Table 3: Post-production services portfolio

Department	Services	Portfolio
Post-production house	Editing, sound mixing, grading, finishing, dubbing and technical services including archiving and media management	Broadcast media and film, sport, drama, factual, entertainment programming and advertising and promotional content
Graphics studio	Motion design and visual effects	TV, film, advertising and music
Animation studio	Development, design and technical execution of content	Broadcast series, commercials, games, websites
Development studio	2D and 3D projects	Global focus
	Web and game design	PC, mobile, TV
	Interactive content and experiences, animated games, websites. Design, animation and VFX	

4.3.4.2 Creation of online channel

The expansion of the company's post-production resources has enabled the company to produce an online channel for S4C. This is facilitated by the in-house post-production studios that provide the relevant expertise and technological services for the production and distribution of this online content. The online channel targets the youth Welsh-language audience and features a series of topical vlogs and video clips on different trending topics such as cookery, fashion, travel and comedy. This development has been highly significant in the Welsh context, given that the regular distribution of online Welsh content was markedly absent from the market prior to the channel's creation:

Clearly the industry is now moving very quickly... and Oaks got to be not just following on but actually there at the beginning and trying out different things, so the [online channel] is a pretty substantial step in taking things into different forms of distribution... it's a particularly interesting development which is done with S4C and for S4C for the young Welsh people, it's a channel of its own... and before that there was no video content being shared online regularly in Welsh. (Jack, Adviser – Oaks Group)

This development reflects the digitalisation of television and changing viewing trends in the wider industry, as a greater proportion of viewers turn to digital and online services to consume content (Williams 2018). It also opens up new opportunities for television production workers in the Welsh-broadcast division, providing opportunities to produce online, digital content as well as traditional television.

4.3.4.3 Dedicated children's TV production unit

Oaks' expansion also enabled the creation of the children's TV production unit. This is one of the largest producers of children's TV content in the UK, producing the majority of S4C's children's TV programming after winning a continuity services contract in 2009. The expansion of the post-production facilities allows this department to function as a self-contained unit, given its access to in-house studio facilities and a variety of post-production services. The children's department produces Welsh-language children's television programmes in a variety of genres, including game shows, quiz shows, animated series, music videos, children's drama and comedy. The department also broadcasts a twice-weekly live magazine show from its in-house studio for 30 weeks of the year. Again, the wider changes of the company are also impacting the delivery of children's TV, with these services being supported by digital content on websites and applications that have been provided by the post-production department and studios. Whilst budgets are scarce for Welsh-language children's television by default of receiving funding from S4C, the continuity services contract awarded to the department by S4C guarantees commissions for the department on a three-yearly basis.

4.3.4.4 Centralisation of resources

Another key feature of the company's expansion includes the relocation of its operations and resources from separate locations to one central hub. Oaks now occupies a purpose-built Welsh Government-owned building in a cosmopolitan area of Wales, surrounded by other media companies and regional broadcasters. The company relocated in 2014, benefiting from a significant rent-free period as part of the Welsh Government's efforts to develop the Creative Economy Enterprise Zone, locating creative companies together. The relocation of the company's acquisitions is a central part of the company's strategy in bringing together its acquired companies to facilitate synergies and efficiencies across departments. The Managing Director of the Oaks Group explains this:

Moving in here was all part of the acquisition strategy, to buy up various elements to consolidate the business and to create a bigger in-house post-production facility... so when we moved into here what we actually did was move the post-production company into here as well, so now all our post-production is here... so

it's a case of, all production, only have to go downstairs to an edit suite, or a dubbing suite. (Myra, MD – Oaks Group)

As such, a key feature of the development of Oaks is the provision of a variety of resources to produce Welsh television within the mixed-genre and children's departments. Onsite post-production provides efficiencies in enabling production staff to easily access post-production facilities and expertise in the final stages of production. Similarly, the creation of the online channel also enabled by the amalgamation of the company's resources in the context of digitalisation, provides new opportunities for production in the Welsh-broadcast division.

As part of the company's consolidation and relocation strategy, senior management also made attempts to facilitate a creative culture for TV production. Oaks' offices are bright and colourful, decorated with chandeliers, patterned sofas and artwork across the walls. These offices are mostly open plan for staff, but with a 'top table' for senior management in the mixed-genre productions department. The strategy also includes efforts by management to emphasise the continued creativity of the company despite its transformation from multiple small, independent production companies into a large corporate entity. For example, Myra, the Managing Director, explains her attempts to encourage a more creative culture in the consolidated company:

I'm trying to change the culture slightly, because I think that a creative culture has to be a happy culture. It has to feel creative. I'm quite laid back on a day to day level. I wouldn't want people to feel that they're coming into an environment that feels stuffy or quiet, the more noisy the environment is the better I feel about it... it's got to be fluid... I just try and keep it light-hearted... I want it to be enjoyable, I want it to be fun... a creative environment is definitely different from a call centre or different from, a law firm... it's got to feel creative and that's what we try and encourage. (Myra, Managing Director - Oaks Group)

Similarly, the Managing Director of the post-production house reflects on the acquisition of his post-production company into the super indie company and the importance of retaining independence and a creative identity in this situation. For him, the development of the super indie structure has led to a more professional, corporate and competitive environment, due to stricter deadlines and more intense work. He explains:

It has changed a lot from when things were 'Post-Production Company', and the problem is we are working in a very uptight, deadlines, things not happening, problem solving type of work, so it's quite hard to be chilled out... I think the company's been a lot more now about producing and making money... I think the larger a company gets, the less chilled out it can be really, but we still try to keep that ethos and that's why we were quite strict about wanting you know, if you go down to post-production, the wallpaper, the chandeliers, the idea that, we're a bit more than just an office kind of company and I suppose that's the culture we try to hang on to. (Harry, MD – post-production)

This shows management's recognition of the increasingly corporate nature of Oaks given its expansion, and the strategies they use to promote a creativity rhetoric within the company, using boutique brands and symbolically, through the office's layout and design.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter shows how Oaks has been able to expand its operations, expertise and resources to develop from a small independent production company to a large super producer, specialising in mixed-genre and mixed-platform content. In tracing its development, the chapter has shown how political and industrial trends in the marketisation of television production have been fundamental to its expansion, as well as conditions specific to the Welsh TV context. The public funding of Welsh language television programming and the promotion of its cultural significance by the Welsh Government in particular, has allowed the Welsh television landscape to thrive, and Oaks' management have taken advantage of this setting in their acquisition strategy. The chapter has documented how this context has shaped the company's development, identifying key organisational features that contextualise the nature of TV production work in this setting. These key features, such as the use of a more stable staff workforce, streamlined development, and the centralisation of resources, point to a continuing pattern of attempts towards more cost effective and efficient TV production in the Welsh broadcast context.

In pinpointing these key features of the context, the chapter provides a backdrop for television production work. The data chapters that follow build on this story of organisational development to analyse the company's expansion from the point of view of those making television programmes; the television workers. The following chapter extends this investigation through exploring and assessing the experiential outcomes of the super indie institutional structure on the nature of work for television workers in various creative and technical roles at Oaks.

5. WORKING IN WELSH TELEVISION PRODUCTION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter maps the development of Oaks Productions Ltd (Oaks) into a super indie, highlighting the key features of its development. The key developments centre on the use of a staff workforce, the streamlined development process and the availability and centralisation of resources. These features result from the company's expansion and are also influenced by the company's embeddedness within the Welsh TV context that brings both budgetary constraints and an ability to integrate longer term planning. This chapter builds upon these contextual insights to begin to assess the impact of the super indie development from the point of view of the workers. While the literature on super indies has predominantly focused on the potential practical benefits from combining resources and expertise (Faulkner et al., 2009; North and Oliver 2015), this chapter begins to analyse the underlying outcomes for the nature and experience of work for different television workers.

The aims of this chapter are twofold; first to examine the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the nature of TV production, and secondly, to assess the nature of creativity in this setting. This chapter assesses both of these themes since creativity is at the crux of TV production. TV production therefore shares many general features of creative work (Lee 2012), warranting an integrated analysis of these themes. However, the thesis also recognises that not all workers involved in the television production process hold creative positions, with many fulfilling important technical roles that provide auxiliary support to the production of creative content; this group of workers are often overlooked in assessments of TV production work (Lovink and Ross 2007; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008; Banks 2010; Thompson et al. 2016). As such, the chapter analyses the impact of the super indie structure on the nature of work for both creative and technical workers, before assessing the nature of creative work in the super indie setting by focusing on creative workers exclusively.

The chapter continues as follows; it begins by examining the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the nature of TV production. This section is positioned around five emergent themes; namely multi-skilling, work intensification, routinisation, inclusion/exclusion in development and varied progression opportunities. The implications of these overarching themes for the nature of TV production for different groups of creative and technical workers are identified and assessed. The findings point to a number of tensions related to the use of a staff workforce, with trade-offs for creative and technical workers in terms of skill specialisation, work intensification and routinisation, and progression opportunities. A particularly important trade-off is that of creativity. This is evident

in workers' differing access to ideas development, while also featuring to varying degrees across the aforementioned tensions. This is most apparent for those directly involved in creative labour; the creative workers. As such, the remainder of the chapter presents a typology of creative work, highlighting creative workers' enhanced or restricted experience of creative work following the company's expansion.

5.2 Examining the nature of work in TV production

The nature of Welsh TV production at Oaks is shaped by key features of the organisational structure as well as aspects of the Welsh production context. The findings demonstrate that these features fundamentally influence the nature and experience of TV production for creative and technical workers in heterogenous ways. The findings presented in this section begin to expose these differences through analysing emergent themes relating to experiential outcomes of the work context; this includes multi-skilling, work intensification, routinisation, inclusion and exclusion in ideas development, and varied progression opportunities. The changes to the nature of work from television workers' expected job roles are summarised in Appendix 8.

5.2.1 Multi-skilling and fluid role boundaries

Television workers often reflect on multi-skilling as a key feature of their work following Oaks' development into a super indie. Pressures to multi-skill stem from the emphasis on low-cost productions within the Welsh-broadcast division, given the extremely limited budgets provided by S4C to produce Welsh-language programming. Chapter 4 details these budgetary constraints, with the average budget for producing S4C programmes ranging from £15,000 to £60,000 per hour of programming provided. As a result, production teams are often small and short staffed, and staff workers are encouraged to multi-skill on productions to minimise costs associated with hiring additional freelance workers. The trend towards multi-skilling and the fluidity of job roles has been identified within the wider independent TV industry (Lee, 2012), however this is further intensified in the context of Welsh television given the restricted budgets in this setting. This has various consequences on the nature of work for different creative and technical workers.

5.2.1.1 Creative workers

As Sally explains below, multi-skilling provides opportunities for those in senior positions to be 'hands on producers'. Executive producers usually oversee the production process, with little involvement in the daily operation of productions (Davies and Sigthorsson 2013), however all executive producers in the Welsh-broadcast division also act as 'hands on producers' on various productions across Oaks (Appendix 8). This is enabled in part by their staff status, which allows these workers additional flexibility in their role boundaries since they are not employed on a daily

basis accruing high freelance costs. For example, Sally, Executive Producer for Children's Television, explains how she was able to contribute to ideas and producing programmes as part of her work:

I'm a hands-on producer as well, so every couple of weeks I produce as well and I prefer that cos originally, I was just an exec telling producers you know, try this and that... so I thought if I put myself in the position to produce, keeps me happy and if I've got new ideas, I can try them out as well then. (Sally, Executive Producer – Children's Television)

For producers, multi-skilling provides opportunities to undertake editing, directing and filming activities in the production process in addition to the managerial, administrative and creative aspects of their work (Appendix 8). Opportunities for producers to participate in these activities arise from the company's staffing approach, which involves the primary use of staff producers, and the use of freelance directors, editors and camera operators, with the exception of several staff directors, editors and camera operators in the children's TV department. As such, the addition of editing, directing and filming to the producer role is largely a cost saving exercise, reducing costs associated with hiring additional freelance workers. For example, Louis, Producer for Children's Television, discusses how his experience of producing has changed over the ten years he has worked at Oaks, to one involving more time dedicated to the editing part of the production process. He explains:

Traditionally the director would go into the edit suite, with an editor, and in the old days they'd sit there for the whole duration, months or whatever, telling the editor how they want it. These days, the way it works here specifically is the directors are mostly freelance, whereas I'm staff and producers are generally staff, so we hire the directors by the day, so what tends to happen is that you obviously book the director for filming, and then maybe a couple of days to start off the edit and to sort of give a rough overview but the budgets don't allow for a director to sit in there, so there's more onus on us [producers] now than there used to be, but speaking personally I'm quite happy to direct that edit process as well. (Louis, Producer – Children's Television)

These new opportunities for edit-producing (the overseeing of the edit and directing editors on how to piece the programme together), also relate to the expansion of the company's post-production house. Having on site post-production facilities provides the necessary equipment for editing, with in-house post-production professionals also providing a valuable source of the relevant skills and expertise producers need to incorporate editing into their work. Daisy, Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, reflects on her ability to edit as part of her role as a producer, as well as the crucial role of post-production workers in helping her to do this:

I always do the editing myself, that's part of the process... you've gone out to film, you've written the script, you're there on location and then you're in the edit producing it... I make time to look at all the rushes because people don't and I think

that's just a shame because you might have missed an amazing shot... but I think also sometimes people feel a bit intimidated by that part of the process... whereas I'm kind of used to going to speak to [post-production] and no technical question is too daft, because they don't always know the answer, but they're always more than happy to help with that kind of thing, but having the kind of editors, technical side, post-production house, machine room here, all of that massively helps. (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

While the above analysis points to some of the benefits from multi-skilling, other workers find this development acts to their detriment. For junior-level creative workers such as assistant producers (APs) and researchers, multi-skilling leads to broadly defined job roles. This relates to the budgetary restrictions associated with Welsh TV production, in which production teams are often small and resultantly short-staffed. As such, APs and researchers carry out a broad spectrum of tasks associated with pre-production and production (Appendix 8). This contrasts with large-scale, well-funded productions in the wider TV industry and the company's network division, where job roles are more narrowly prescribed and workers are pigeonholed into specific role-types, such as casting or archive APs and researchers. While broadly defined job roles give APs and researchers a lot of task variety in their work, it also leads to concerns for developing skill specialisations. For example, Mick, AP for Mixed-Genre Productions for the past six years, explains the broad nature of job roles within Welsh broadcast television and its tendency to create 'jacks of all trades':

One experience I've come across working here is that we tend to cover a lot of different roles within production, whereas on bigger productions with bigger budgets say within London, you have a very specific role, you may be just a researcher, or casting researcher which is a different ball game again, whereas we tend to do all those jobs in one... you're a bit of a jack of all trades and a master of none. (Mick, Assistant Producer and Director – Mixed Genre Productions)

As a result, multi-skilling leads to job enlargement for these workers. Given that the company cannot afford a dedicated production manager/coordinator for each production, multi-skilling for APs largely involves undertaking tasks associated with the production coordinator role, such as completing paperwork and managing schedules (Appendix 8). Liv compares the difference in her role boundaries in Welsh television to more generously funded productions for English television:

There's a lot of production coordinator role when you're working on the S4C things cos you haven't got the luxury where you have in the network where everyone's got their job... with the S4C programmes for Channel 4 Wales and BBC Wales because the budgets are much smaller... there is quite a lot of overlap. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

As such, multi-skilling is perceived to undermine skill specialisation for APs, and to heighten the mundane and uninteresting aspects of their work. This is attributed to two main factors; the high

proportion of production coordinator-type work and the strict scheduling of staff time. Together, these factors restrict Liv's chances of gaining experience in editing, with her role predominantly involving logistical tasks:

The edit is one aspect which I haven't had much experience of, cos you haven't got the luxury, usually you get the director or the producer who sits in so therefore there's not much opportunity for you, and you get moved onto the next production and stuff, a bit like a conveyor belt... I'm just fed up of doing the same old, calling contributors, and setting things up, I want to spend more time in the edit... I'm doing the same old things, all the time... I'm a little bit brain dead. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

The predominance of production coordinator-type work for APs and researchers is also pronounced in the Children's Television Department. The use of child-contributors requires the department to adhere to regulations around licencing which usually falls under the remit of production managers/coordinators (Appendix 8). Given the high volume of work and shortage of workers within the department, APs and researchers are expected to undertake this administrative and bureaucratic work. As this work is highly time consuming, it takes time away from more creative aspects of work, such as filming and directing; several comments from APs and researchers in the children's TV department describe this situation:

Licencing children, it's a nightmare, because you know we only produce children's programmes here... that's a lot of paperwork... I totally understand that they would need paperwork and stuff in place to make sure that they're fit and healthy to take part, but a child that's never been on TV and stuff they still have to have like a medical form filled out n stuff but that can be a big, big constraint on filming. (Rose, Assistant Producer – Children's Television)

There's a lot more organising with Kids TV, there's a lot more, you have to get things like licences and things like that... with kids, you need a lot more prep work and things like that, that's probably the main difference and of course you're sort of caring for children... I much prefer being out and doing some directing and filming and meeting new people than the organising. (Cindy, Assistant Producer – Children's Television)

Pressure on staff to multi-skill also affects directors. For directors, multi-skilling blurs the aesthetic and technical aspects of their work, requiring them to operate technical equipment during filming as well as undertake the usual visual and aesthetic elements of their work (Appendix 8). Damon, a staff Director in the Children's Television Department for two years, accounts for this aspect of his work:

Here you definitely need quite a good technical knowledge as well as opposed to just creative knowledge you know, because of the way money's going at the moment, we have to do the vision mixing desk in the gallery... you have to do a lot of that work yourself, instead of having a vision mixer, you do get it with some programmes here but there's quite a lot where you have to just do it yourself, so that's, that's just technical knowledge there's nothing creative about it really,

you're just learning a technical skill I suppose. (Damon, Director – Children's Television)

Similar to APs, the emphasis on multi-skilling also leads to concerns for skill specialisation for staff directors, with the scarce use of freelancers, particularly within the children's department, perceived to undermine opportunities to learn new skills and ways of doing things. Working with the same teams on similar productions prevents directors from picking up new techniques from freelancers who move from company to company. For example:

Freelance staff, because they go to different companies, they pick up things that they might not pick up in one company and they can take that to another company, and I can pick things up from them as well...but because the staff cameramen, they're doing the same type of things for the same company every time, you don't pick up as much from them. (Damon, Director – Children's Television)

As such, the pressure on staff directors to multi-skill and their staff-status, seemingly undermines their specialist skillsets, through increasing the technical aspects of their work and minimising opportunities to learn and develop new skills and knowledge from freelance workers.

5.2.1.2 Technical workers

Technical workers also speak about how the company's expansion has led to multi-skilling. This is particularly the case for technical workers in the children's TV department responsible for the live studio shows where budgets are especially constraining. The studio is often under-staffed, meaning that technical workers have to be flexible, undertaking any technical tasks required as part of the production. Joel, Sound Recordist for Children's Television reflects on this:

Cos of the nature of the budget that we have here on a lot of the programmes being minimal, everyone does a bit of everything, everyone chipping in kind of thing... compared to maybe you know a larger budget where it's gonna be much more strictly regimented. (Joel, Sound Recordist – Children's Television)

Multi-skilling for technical workers often involves learning new technical skills and acquiring knowledge to take on additional tasks outside of their usual job specifications (Appendix 8). As such, similar to junior creative workers, multi-skilling for technical workers often means job enlargement. This is the case for Simone, Studio Operator and Director, who also undertakes editing, vision mixing, and VT (video tape) work as part of her expanded role at Oaks. She explains:

So actually, my role is a studio operator and director but now I do a variety of roles, technical based mostly, sometimes I direct and vision mix studio links... I do a bit of editing, and I also VT, which is playing in recorded clips, so it's just a rota really of those roles. (Simone, Studio Operator and Director – Children's Television)

Similarly, Hilton, Sound Recordist and Trainee Broadcast Engineer, explains his multiple roles in the Children's Television Department, noting how this results from the limited budgets in

the Welsh TV context and the small scale nature of production, necessitating that technical workers take on a range of different roles in their day to day work:

The money aspect... it seems to be worse on us [in Wales].... [and] we're quite small scale here... so you just do what needs to be done... I'm employed as a sound recordist, but I'm also in training as a broadcast engineer and do other bits, so day to day I might be one of three things, so firstly I'd be out on what we call a PSC [production single camera] shoot... secondly I could be in the studio [vision]mixing, or on the floor for a live show, and then thirdly I could be in the gallery in the studio manager position, engineering a live broadcast or pre-recorded material... and my day is very much driven by what jobs are in currently, it's not something predetermined. (Hilton, Sound Recordist and Trainee Broadcast Engineer – Children's Television)

For both creative and technical workers, pressures to multi-skill stem from the budgetary constraints of the Welsh production context and Oaks' staffing approach, enabled by the stability caused by the Welsh commissioning process. In this context, the use of small production teams that are often understaffed, and expectations of job enlargement and flexibility from workers given their staff status, heightens pressures for multi-skilling by staff in both creative and technical roles. Multi-skilling however has varying impacts on the nature of work for creative and technical workers. For highly skilled creative workers, multi-skilling means opportunities for editing, directing and filming, whereas for junior creative workers, it increases the administrative, logistic and technical aspects of their work, at times undermining skill specialisation and development. For technical workers, multi-skilling expands their technical responsibilities, providing opportunities to rotate across various technical roles during the production process, but also heightens pressures through expectations to continually adapt to the demands of the job.

5.2.2 Work intensification

Work intensification also emerges as a key theme in the findings in relation to the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the nature of TV production. Building on the previous section, these developments emanate from pressures for multi-skilling, as well as the limited budgets, strict deadlines and staff shortages within the Welsh-broadcast context. This is primarily the case for junior creative workers, as well as technical workers in staff positions that are usually freelance roles.

5.2.2.1 Creative workers

Whilst the Welsh-broadcast division is under-funded in general, production management carefully schedule staff to ensure their time is maximised. Head of Production for mixed-genre productions comments on this logic:

One of the things you have to consider if you have people on staff is that their schedules are full, but that tends to be more of your junior level researcher, or assistant producers; your producer has to be suited to that job. (Theresa, Head of Production – Mixed-Genre Productions)

As Theresa explains, this is more relevant for junior level researcher and APs than more experienced producers, who tend to be allocated to projects based on expertise. The combination of multi-skilling and the careful scheduling of staff time often increases pressures to complete work within strict timescales for APs and researchers. This intensified work for these junior creative workers, creates heavy workloads and unrealistic work demands. This aspect of work is highlighted by Kim and Lucy, both researchers in the Children’s TV Department:

It’s just unrealistic the amount of work they give you... when you go out filming they think you can do X amount and it just can't be done kind of thing, so a production that has enough time to set up, a production with enough money, I don't think that exists here. (Kim, Researcher – Children’s Television)

The researcher does a lot of stuff, I just feel like, people delegate very well like... some people if they're higher up the chain they think that they can't help me out... sometimes it's like you can see that I'm stressed, please help me... it's just the fact that some people once they get higher in the chain... the job title makes them think they can't help out with normal stuff, like contacting contributors, cos they're too good. (Lucy, Researcher – Children’s Television)

Both Kim and Lucy reference the heightened work intensity and unequal delegation by more senior workers. This is also linked to staff status. This is because salaried staff are perceived to be cheaper than daily paid freelancers, and therefore, often longer working hours are expected from salaried staff. For example:

As a staff member you don't get paid any extra for the hours, so my hours are 9 till half 5, but for example, if I've been out casting, driving around Wales, and I've been working 9 till 9 at night, as in I just lose those hours, I don't get anything, it's just part and part of the parcel. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

5.2.2.2 Technical workers

For technical workers, the organisational expansion also intensifies certain aspects of work. For example, the expansion of the company has increased the complexity of managing budgets and editing schedules for production management. Tiff, Unit Producer Manager for Children’s Television explains this:

The biggest challenge is managing schedules now the company is so big... if anything changes in any production, there's a knock-on effect for everything... I have to try and work out the jigsaw... it's a massive jigsaw, it's every week something changes, and you think you've got it sorted and then it changes again, that's the biggest challenge. (Tiff, Unit Production Manager – Children’s Television)

In particular, work intensity is a prevalent theme for staff camera operators in the Children's Television Department. This is because the department employs only three staff camera operators, two of whom are employed on a full-time basis. To avoid hiring additional freelancers, where possible, staff camera operators are allocated the majority of work in the children's department, which means that these workers have particularly intense workloads and are put under a lot of pressure from timescales, for example:

You haven't got time to put up 10 lamps or whatever, you've got to think how can I make this work in the time we have? It's very quick, and you obviously want to do your best job so you've got to keep your eye on the ball you know? You don't want to cut corners with focus and with lighting and with the exposure, so you have to think what's next really, how can I get to the next place quicker, the next shot quicker? (Alfie, Camera Operator – Children's Television)

There is a lot of pressure on cos of budgets and so on, there's no time, there's never any time, so you've always got to push, push, push, push, push, to get that one shot or the entire day sometimes and you just push constantly... you just need to be able to take a battering basically... that can be quite stressful. (Zach, Facilities Manager and Trainee Camera Operator – Children's Television)

The similar accounts of both creative and technical workers, detailed above, illustrate the commonality of experience in terms of work intensification for both junior level creative workers and technical workers at Oaks. This outcome stems from the limited budgets associated with Welsh broadcast television, leading to staff shortages and therefore heavier workloads for staff workers, both creative and technical. The result is a highly pressurised working environment for these workers as they attempt to undertake an 'unrealistic' amount of work within extremely limited timescales.

5.2.3 Routinisation of work

Building on pressures to multi-skill and work intensification, there is also a trend towards the routinisation of work processes for certain groups of workers at Oaks. Whilst work roles are flexible, the organisation of work has become more rigid for some workers, since the expansion of the company has been accompanied by predefined protocols in order to effectively manage the staff workforce and the volume of projects. This is most prominently the case for APs and researchers across both departments, as well as editors and directors, and technical workers within the children's television department.

5.2.3.1 Creative workers

For APs and researchers within the Mixed-Genre Productions Department, routinisation is associated with the allocation of projects by production management. Whilst producers are usually responsible for constructing project teams, this is done by production managers at Oaks (Appendix

8), who allocate production workers to projects based on their schedule availability. This practice is associated with creating a sense of routinisation in the production process by APs, as they are moved from one project to the next sequentially as their availability allows, to ensure they are used in the most cost-effective way. For example:

It's a bit of a conveyor belt, because you're moving from one thing to the other. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

It's a machine, it's like a treadmill, you just, you can't come off. (Tina, Trainee Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

The routinisation of work processes is prominent for junior creative workers in the Children's Television Department. The market for Welsh children's television is somewhat predictable (Chapter 4), enabling a considerable level of standardisation in the production of children's programmes in the department. This department produces a high volume of similar programmes using a staff workforce which leads to a sense of repetitiveness in the work process, particularly for APs and researchers. Several comments by junior creative workers accounted for this, for example:

In the children's department it's like a sausage factory, you know, exactly at nine o'clock, ready to go into studio, you do your links, they film it, you come out and then you're scripting for the next day, and that's what it's like, day in, day out. (Nancy – Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

The live show here which is a studio show and it's just on constantly every Friday night and every Tuesday night... it's just a production line of getting kids in and doing the show and getting them out... You're just a cog in the wheel and you do your bit and it never ends really... it's very monotonous and there's no place to progress on it really. (Rose, Assistant Producer – Children's Television)

This was similarly the case for directors and editors, who identify the standardisation of children's TV production as restricting their autonomy within the production process. These workers are required to follow certain structures and formats in their work, rather than being afforded a degree of originality and creativity in how programmes look and sound. As staff members, these workers also lack choice in terms of their project allocations and therefore, predominantly work on the same types of children's television programmes, providing few opportunities to work on alternative genres that require greater creative capacity. This is explained by several editors and directors:

The kids [programmes] tend to be like more formatted... you tend to just fit all the parts together and put the effects and music and turn it up to eleven as they say... so we often joke we're in a sausage factory, it is a production line, you have to just start on a Monday, often with a lot of footage... you have to make sense of it and compile it by maybe Tuesday/Wednesday... and then Thursday/Friday you're finishing and people will approve it and it'll go out the door then. (Brody, Video Editor – Children's Television)

On the young kids' stuff... I find it not as creative because it's more on the making sure [the kids] know what's going on... cos it's for young kids it's making sure that the cuts aren't too frequent... you can't do certain things... if you were counting flowers on something you have to go clockwise around the screen, cos that's how the kids learn in school and stuff like that, and certain ways you say the letters, cos they learn it in school... so a lot of it is down to what you want the kids to sort of learn and stuff like that... it does get a bit long and tenuous. (Toby, Director, Editor, Vision Mixer and VT Operator – Children's Television)

For directors and editors, the company's expansion therefore leads to an unwelcome level of routine and repetitiveness within their work. This is because of the degree of standardisation in the production of children's programming, facilitated by the predictable market for Welsh-language children's programming. This sense of routine is further fostered by employment as staff members, which results in these workers having little choice in the programmes they work on, meaning they are often allocated to similar projects, restricting the possibilities for expanding their creativity into other areas.

5.2.3.2 Technical workers

Work routinisation also impacts on technical workers at Oaks, which is to be expected to an extent, given the roles these workers fulfil (Appendix 8). However, the combination of multi-skilling and work intensification in the context of the limited budgets of Welsh TV production and efforts by management to organise work allocation efficiently has led to a sense of additional bureaucracy and repetitiveness for these technical workers. This is evident in comments by technical workers that reflect on the monotonous and repetitive nature of their work. For example:

I suppose like any job, doing too much of one sort of type of work, does get a little monotonous... it's not really challenging, with doing the same type of work all the time it gets to a point where you've worked out the issues, you're just trying to economise a little bit by doing the work in a slightly better way. (Hilton, Sound Recordist and Trainee Broadcast Engineer – Children's Television)

You get more regularity as staff and you can say right I'll do a four week block in the studio and I know for definite that's what's gonna happen, as opposed to being a freelancer when anything could come in at any point ... but again, with the kids department, it's very repetitive... so with [the sound team] we try and rotate so you're not constantly stuck in one area, but it really depends on what's in. (Joel, Sound Recordist – Children's Television)

These comments illustrate how features of the super indie structure routinise the nature of TV production work for certain creative and technical workers. This was particularly the case for children's TV workers, where the predictability of the commissioning of Welsh-language children's TV programmes led to a level of standardisation in the TV production process. As the chapter is starting to show, the distinct division of labour within Welsh-broadcast television following the company's expansion, advantages workers in certain positions while disadvantaging others. The

section that follows continues to build on this story, analysing the differing experiences of ideas development following Oaks' expansion.

5.2.4 Inclusion and exclusion in ideas development process

An area of particular interest for this current research is how these restrictions or opportunities influence the ability of workers to input into creative content, which remains pivotal to TV production. The findings show that both creative and technical workers acknowledge differences in relation to their participation in the ideas development process. This includes the ability to generate and develop new programme ideas. Changes to involvement in this process emanate from the company's attempts to streamline its development activities as part of its acquisition strategy; most notably, the appointment of an ideas development team by Oaks' senior management. Chapter 4 catalogues this development, with ideas channelled through two senior figures to increase the likelihood of winning commissions from Welsh broadcasters. Prior to the consolidation, ideas development was an inclusive process, involving brainstorming between teams, and discussions and meetings where preliminary sketches and plans for programme ideas were developed in a collective process involving various members of the production teams. However, the delegation of ideas development to a team of experienced professionals is a new feature of Oaks' expansion, with varying repercussions for different creative workers.

5.2.4.1 Creative workers

The development team encourages some executive producers and producers to work closely with the team to generate and develop new programme ideas. This means that these workers remain highly involved in the development side of the production process. For example, Daisy, Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, cites working on ideas as a key aspect of her work. Daisy has over twenty years of experience in the industry, producing at Oaks for the past seven years. She describes this aspect of her work:

I'm constantly working on programme ideas, all sorts of things, for S4C, BBC Wales and Channel 4, but sometimes it's a case of the bosses say we're doing an idea on this can you write something up, and you say when do you need it, and it's like within half an hour, so you kind of get used to reeling off programme ideas, both Welsh and English. (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Similarly, Tegan, Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, has worked in the industry for over twenty years. Tegan comments on her involvement in ideas development in her work:

I have to continuously come up with ideas that will entertain our learner's audience at the moment... we do some brain storming with the executive producer... thinking of different subjects. (Tegan, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Creative workers within the online team also have opportunities for ideas development. Content for the online channel is distributed via the internet; the relationship with the audience is more immediate and S4C guidelines are more relaxed in comparison to traditional TV programming. This gives the online team considerable freedom in all aspects of the production process, including working with ideas. This is particularly the case for Ste, a digital producer for the online channel. He explains the development process for this channel, the freedom surrounding it and his involvement in developing ideas:

We can create anything, like I can think of anything, any idea, to make anything, and I can say to S4C I've got this idea, I wanna try this, see if it works, and we'll go out and we'll shoot this video, and we'll upload it, and S4C will be like yeh cool if you can do that with the money you've got why not? Whereas with TV you've gotta tick the boxes, they want a documentary about this, ok you've gotta go make that then, you're answering more to the commissioner, whereas now the commissioner is more answering to us in a way, and with a direct audience that's amazing, that freedom. (Ste, Digital Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

For more junior workers, such as APs, this top-down approach to developing ideas and programme formats excludes them from the creative conversation, an expected element of their work (Appendix 8). Exclusion from this aspect of the production process undermines APs' expectations of creative work, diminishes their creative input and triggers concerns for the quality of their work. This is particularly pertinent for Liv, an AP for the Mixed-Genre Department. Liv has 4 years' experience as an AP and 3 years' experience as a researcher at Oaks. Liv reflects on the new approach to ideas development at Oaks:

Not a lot is done here to inspire creativity because the development side of things is now looked after by two people, instead of you know, development should be something where you get 20 people in the room and you start with something on the board and you progress to an idea.... and some programme ideas which go in from development, they're not thought out very well... basically it all comes down to the ideas process, it hasn't been thought out, they've stuck something in, but there isn't enough mileage in it in terms of being able to make a series of 6 programmes so therefore you're churning out crap. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Similarly, junior workers from children's television are also unable to contribute to ideas development as part of their work. Lucy, Researcher for Children's Television, is a recent graduate, researching at Oaks for a year, with previous work experience in TV production during her university degree. Whilst able to help shape segments within commissioned programmes, Lucy explains how the conceptualisation and development of the initial programme idea is beyond her job role:

I don't get input to ideas, not for shows per se, they usually get the producers in the room, and have a producer meeting about brain storming about new shows, for the show that I work on, I can give ideas for items for example... put it to the

exec producer and then she has to say yes or no... but for actual new programmes or commissions, that would just be the producers. (Lucy, Researcher – Children’s Television)

This illustrates how attempts by management to streamline the development process and win more commissions through the appointment of the ideas development team includes and excludes certain groups of workers from the ideation and conceptual aspects of work in the development process. Whilst highly-skilled, experienced creative workers and online producers are provided with opportunities to brainstorm and contribute to the development of new programme ideas, junior creative workers are excluded from this process that they were previously involved in.

5.2.4.2 Technical workers

One key difference for technical workers stems from existing expectations. Technical workers did not expect to be involved in the conceptual and ideation stages of the production process, as would be expected from workers occupying technical roles in the TV production process (Banks 2010). As such, the level of dissatisfaction from the changes to the development process were far less apparent. As two technical workers comment:

I don't come up with ideas thankfully, that's the producers, I'm the one who just has to imagine what [the idea's] going to cost. (Tiff, Unit Production Manager – Children’s Television)

My job is not technically creative at all, it's all about scheduling, budgets, keeping everyone happy basically, just managing projects, there's nothing creative to it really... It's really important to me that as an outlet in life, to be creative, but for me at the moment it's not through my work. (Holly, Junior Production Manager – Mixed-Genre Productions)

5.2.5 Varied progression opportunities

An important finding is the varied impact of these themes on the nature of career progression and other opportunities inside Oaks for different creative and technical workers. This is explained with reference to the company’s expansion in the Welsh context, which has consolidated the local market. Whilst this consolidation creates new opportunities for more senior creative workers through potential collaborations and for technical workers through opportunities to multi-skill, it restricts progression and alternative employment opportunities for more junior creative workers.

5.2.5.1 Creative workers

For executive producers, the company’s expansion has brought more opportunities for collaborations by bringing together many smaller production companies. This is particularly the case for founders of the initial companies amalgamated into Oaks. For these individuals, the consolidation into a larger structure means a lower level of personal responsibility for winning

tenders and undertaking key operational activities for the company, freeing up their time to focus on programme making itself. As Darcy, Executive Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions and co-founder of the television drama company explains:

Before [the consolidation], there were lots of little things you had to deal with in running the company, HR and that sort of thing, not just programme making.... so in a way [the consolidation] has been a big plus, I wouldn't have worked with other people unless I was here, I wouldn't have had other experiences, so there are big pluses, and especially if you want to develop something because there are lots of little units within the same building now, people with different backgrounds, different experiences, so if you need advice or just somebody to collaborate with there's always somebody here, so those are big pluses I think. (Darcy, Executive Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

More junior creative workers however find that the company's restructure has been detrimental to progression opportunities. Theresa, Head of Production for Mixed-Genre Productions, notes how progression in the company is like "waiting for dead men's shoes", with higher level positions only becoming available when senior staff leave. With no jobs becoming available, there are very few opportunities for workers to progress upwards within the company beyond AP level. Liv, an AP with 7 years' experience at Oaks, and Lisa, a researcher with 2.5 years' experience, both account for their experiences of restricted progression opportunities within the company, for example:

Because you've got the higher tier here and a lot of people in my position as assistant producers there's no way to progress, because that higher tier, who obviously cost a fortune, it's not moving anywhere, so there's no progression within the company... there's no opportunities really because those people on the higher tier aren't going anywhere soon. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I feel like it's an industry where you need to move on, and get loads of experience if you want to succeed, and I'm at the point now where, I'm sitting by my desk and thinking, I don't want to be here anymore... they've put me to one side and I think they've just forgotten about me... my producer is quite good with me... she's been very supportive, but then again, like the people that are higher than her, they don't give me opportunities. (Lisa, Researcher – Mixed-Genre Productions)

The consolidation of the local market into Oaks has also removed alternative employment options for these workers, creating further challenges for their progression. Liv explains this dilemma:

For me it's a decision of if I want to leave the company, I've basically got to kiss goodbye to a staff job, because I'd never get a staff job ever again in the industry, but then again, there aren't many perks other than knowing you've got X amount coming into the bank... but there have been job cuts from ITV, so the only other option is BBC Wales, but they never take on, they take on staff jobs in terms of like marketing and the other aspects, but in terms of production, never see a staff job for more than 6 months... so there's ITV, BBC, here, and then there are a few smaller

companies... there's not much opportunity really. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Directors and editors in the Children's Television Department view their staff-status as undermining their progression opportunities. These individuals consider the company to have little drive to train up directors and editors past the level that the company needs, as this will require the training of another individual to replace their existing position. Toby explains this:

That's one of the downsides I guess, is that, you have to sort of get on their back really to get you onto new things and to get you to progress a bit more, because I think, I guess the way they see it is that, if you're good enough for that job they're gunna have to train someone else up if you leave to go onto something else I guess, so, I guess that's why they try and keep you in that one sort of place for now. (Toby, Director, Editor, Vision Mixer and VT Operator – Children's Television)

As such, the use of a staff workforce creates tensions for progression opportunities for these junior creative workers. Whilst their staff status provides an element of regularity and security in their working lives, it also undermines their opportunities for progression. This is augmented by the consolidation of the local market by Oaks, which restricts alternative options for these workers.

5.2.5.2 Technical workers

Technical workers view the expansion of Oaks as opening up certain opportunities, through being part of a larger company, with various divisions and an expanded portfolio. For example, the diversity of genres and departments within Oaks provides opportunities for production managers to rotate across departments, gaining new experiences of managing different types of productions:

I had a few months two years ago working on a sitcom for our [mixed-productions department] which obviously wasn't a children's programme so that was a nice change so I wouldn't mind having a few more goes doing something like that in the future. (Marnie, Junior Production Manager – Children's Television)

Similarly, for technical workers, the expansion of the company, bringing in additional resources and expertise from different professionals, provides additional opportunities for these workers to train up in new roles and disciplines. As discussed relative to multiskilling (Section 5.2.1.2), this was facilitated by their staff status and the low-cost nature of productions which encourages workers to be adaptable across technical job roles. Zach, Facilities Manager and Trainee Camera Operator explains the opportunities that the expansion of Oaks has presented to him during his time with the company:

I am a facilities manager and training up to be a camera operator as well... initially I had a job as facilities manager with a separate hire company... that company then was amalgamated into the overall umbrella of Oaks... it took me quite a while to get training as a camera operator but now I do that on a regular basis and because, this place [kids TV], it's got three members of staff as camera operators, if they're

busy then they tend to get myself in.... I've kind of been in a privileged position where a lot of people have asked for me to go on specific shoots and things like that. (Zach, Facilities Manager and Trainee Camera Operator – Children's Television)

The company's expansion therefore enables these technical workers to diversify into new roles, taking advantage of their staff status and the diversity of the company's operations consequent to its expansion.

When the opportunities for progression are explored in detail, it becomes more apparent that the organisational expansion has had varying implications for different groups of creative workers at Oaks. Whilst experienced producers have identified the structure as bringing in new opportunities, more junior creative workers have seen their career progress curtailed as a result of the gulf between junior level creative workers and more senior creative workers. This stunted progression is further problematised by the lack of alternative options in the local labour market, related to the consolidation of the local market into Oaks and the small pool of Welsh television production. However, several junior creative workers have been able to elevate their position within Oaks, taking advantage of opportunities for multi-skilling and finding new ways of being creative within their work (Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3).

The varying opportunities are particularly acute when the ability to generate new ideas is also considered. While established senior creative workers are able to navigate the changes for their own professional gain, other creative workers are struggling to pursue creative opportunities due to pressures on both their time and role remit. It is also here where the disjuncture between creative and technical workers is also most apparent. The research acknowledges that it is extremely important to recognise the indirect and auxiliary role of technical workers, aiding the development of creative content. However, the varying expectations of creative and technical workers means that the latter are more content with attaining a consistent and reduced amount of creativity in their work. In contrast, the experiences of creative workers begin to point to a hierarchy of creative workers, wherein some groups emerge as the 'winners', while others as the 'losers'. The remainder of the chapter assesses the experience of creative work for these 'winners' and 'losers' at Oaks.

5.3 Creative worker typology

As explained above, the emergent themes point to a creative worker typology at Oaks, with certain creative workers benefiting from the expansion, while others experience new challenges and tensions relating to their creative work in this context. Through these themes, variations are evident across different creative groups. Some individuals who already have the most creativity are able to enhance their position, whereas others with some scope for creativity before the expansion are the

most adversely impacted, with few opportunities for creative input and progression. For others, namely the technical workers, there is little change in their creative capacity, since their work is not perceived to be highly creative initially and, therefore the findings in respect of this group are not explored further in this section. As such, the findings indicate different outcomes from the super indie expansion based on workers' roles and changes associated with the creative experience; these experiences are enhanced (winners) versus restricted (losers). The following sections build upon and extend the themes identified above when explaining the creative worker typology in action. The typology is summarised in Table 3 at the end of the chapter.

5.3.1 Enhanced creative workers

The enhanced creative workers refer to creative workers who have been able to retain and, in many cases, extend, their creativity and autonomy following the company's expansion. This includes three loosely grouped clusters of workers. Firstly, executive producers and producers, with considerable experience in television production, usually mid to late career. For example, Daisy, a Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions has over 20 years' experience in the industry, producing at Oaks for over 5 years; and Sally, Executive Producer for Children's Television, has also worked in the industry for over 20 years, the past 9 of them executive producing at Oaks. The majority of this group of enhanced creative workers have also worked for the independent producers acquired by Oaks prior to the consolidation; several of them as founding members. For example, Darcy, Executive Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, co-founded Company C along with another member of Oaks' current senior management team. Others previously worked for ITV Cymru Wales and S4C. As such, their longevity in the industry, and possession of skills and expertise, legitimise their input into creative activities. As Louis, Producer for Children's Television, maintains:

I'm used to having that licence to be creative, to really just be creative. (Louis, Producer – Children's Television)

The position of this group of enhanced creative workers has been entrenched by the organisational expansion of the company; employment on a staff basis and multi-skilling combined provide opportunities for varied opportunities for these workers, with few tensions experienced as a result of the super indie development. For example, Sally, Executive Producer for Children's Television, is now able to hands on produce as a result of the changes, providing access to highly valued creative aspects of production:

It's important for me to be creative in my work and that's why it is great as I said earlier for me when I decided to be a hands on producer, although I didn't have to be, that's where I was, I felt part of the team and part of the creative team instead of... it was much easier really to be creative when you're hands on. (Sally, Executive Producer – Children's Television)

Likewise, enhanced creative workers frequently engage in ideas development, “*reeling off programmes ideas*” (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions) and “*continuously com[ing] up with ideas*” (Tegan, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions), with twenty-plus years’ experience in Welsh television asserting their role within this process.

A second group of enhanced creative workers is the online team, in particular Ste, Digital Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, and Brendon, Researcher for Mixed-Genre Productions. These are early career creative workers, who have been able to navigate the expansion of Oaks to their advantage (Chapter 6). This is through taking advantage of the changes that accompanied the company’s’ expansion, such as multiskilling opportunities and its diversification into new digital markets. In doing so, Ste has managed to amplify the creative aspects of his work to the extent that he now leads the creative side of the online channel. Ste explains how the creative input in his work has grown as a result of this:

I’m leading [the online channel] from the creative side... I have much more creative input... I feel myself more now, as a creative... and it doesn’t feel like a job now, I make videos of stuff that I enjoy watching... I enjoy the content, the ideas... it doesn’t feel like a job, that’s what I feel... I can be more personal with the content we make, it’s more direct... we can create anything. (Ste, Digital Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Brendon has also been able to capitalise on the company’s expansion through joining the online team. He notes how working for this team enhances the creative aspects of his work:

Now I’m actually working on things I’m interested in and things that are fun, and things that I can actually kind of contribute ideas wise... on my last project, I was working on a programme about a spoon collector from North Wales and stuff like that, this is more stuff I’m interested in. (Brendon, Researcher – Mixed-Genre Productions)

A further notable enhanced group of workers are experienced production managers with a creative background. Lily, for example, Production Manager for Mixed-Productions and Children’s Television, while in an administrative and managerial role, has opportunities to act as script supervisor and music PA (production assistant) as part of her work, as a result of the multiple genres Oaks now produces. Lily was previously trained as a music production assistant and script supervisor, but took up employment in production management given the lack of work available in the local market. As such, she celebrates this aspect of her work in allowing her to keep a hand in with her music background:

It’s the music stuff that I enjoy most to be honest with you, we’ve done a couple of operas... amazing to work... so I’ll get approached to do this work occasionally cos there aren’t enough people to do it, so it’s quite nice for me, I can do it then... I

think everyone thinks it feels quite healthy to have that option. (Lily, Production Manager – Mixed-Genre and Children’s Television)

Tensions in creative labour for enhanced creative workers stem from the limited budgets associated with the Welsh-broadcast context. In particular, budgetary constraints cause tensions around programme quality for these workers, as a result of production teams being short-staffed. For example:

I'm 44 now right, and I started working in TV when I was 21, and when I started at 21 in 1993 there was loads more money ... the budgets were like loads, loads more, so even in that time, it's totally deteriorated, I mean you can see it on screen. We don't often have a sound man on a production... now not all of the programmes are dubbed, so it's a real shame the impact, you can kind of see it on screen. (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

This points to a distinction between the changes stemming from the organisational expansion versus those that are more closely aligned to the Welsh context. While the enhanced creative workers can navigate the organisational changes to their advantage, the structural factors are more difficult for all workers to overcome. This is particularly pertinent for children’s television producers, however it is not perceived to limit the creativity of their work, but rather enhance it. This is because working within a limited budget is perceived to provide greater opportunities to be creative:

There's a constant battle doing them through the Welsh language is that you're always competing against CBBC and the children's on ITV and stuff that are always going to get bigger audiences and also it comes back to that budget thing as well where you know anything you come up with, they can do it better cos they've got the budgets... but then that sort of adds to the challenge and sometimes you've gotta be more creative which is you know, probably a good thing. (Louis, Producer – Children’s Television)

The enhanced position of these creative workers shows how the institutional structure of Oaks has entrenched their position, sustaining their creativity and reaffirming their legitimacy to undertake creative activities with considerable creative freedom in the television production process. Whilst this is constrained by the low-budgets associated with Welsh-broadcast production, enhanced creative workers’ responses suggest a highly positive experience of working within the super indie context, showing how these workers emerge as the ‘winners’ in this setting.

5.3.2 Restricted creative workers

Restricted creative workers refer to creative workers with low levels of creative freedom and restricted opportunities for creative involvement across the production process. Tensions created by the organisational expansion of the company are most pronounced for this group, with multi-skilling and staff scheduling intensifying bureaucratic work and routinising production processes, whilst the hierarchy between junior and senior workers restricts progression opportunities for these

workers. The category of restricted creative workers includes two broad groups; APs and researchers; and directors and editors.

As detailed in the preceding sections, a sense emerges from assistant producers and researchers that the expansion of the super indie has intensified the bureaucratic and administrative aspects of their work, whilst limiting their opportunities to work on highly valued conceptual aspects of the production process. This is attributed in part to the streamlined development process, that excludes APs and researchers from the conceptual and ideation aspects of TV production, as well as job enlargement in the context of budgetary restrictions. For example, Mick complains:

I crave more creative responsibilities. (Mick, Assistant Producer and Director – Mixed-Genre Productions)

This is a common sentiment amongst restricted creative workers. For APs and researchers, pressures for multi-skilling have potentially damaging effects on the creative aspects of their work, seeing these aspiring producers and directors largely responsible for paperwork, regulation compliance and scheduling activities. As a result, restricted creative workers often see themselves as “stuck in a rut”, “stagnant” and “tired”. For example:

I've been working in the industry for ten years now, and if I'm honest, possibly slightly stuck in a rut... I've lost a bit of direction, I'm not sure where, where I'm going... It's a bit disheartening because you see people being promoted as APs but obviously I've got 4/5 years' experience as an AP so that person is then, in the same bracket as yourself, and it just bugs you... I feel stagnant and not sure where I'm going within the company, I just don't feel I can approach them very easily with that... at the moment I'm like completely lost.... I just feel under challenged, I'm bored. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I'm already tired of my job now... I don't want to do this for much longer, cos I've been here two and a half years. (Lisa, Researcher – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Staff directors and editors are similarly restricted by the institutional structure of Oaks. For these workers, working as staff within the children’s department prevents opportunities to learn new skills and work on diverse genres, and facilitates a level of routinisation in the production process. It also involves undertaking technical tasks such as operating the VT and vision mix equipment. Toby, from the Children’s Television department, likened this aspect of his work to a dancing monkey:

[The director] is like the voice and I'm kind of like the monkey pressing whatever he wants. (Toby, Director, Editor, Vision Mixer and VT Operator - Children's Television)

The emphasis on formatting in the production of children’s TV programming also removes creative autonomy from directors and editors. As such, the majority of staff directors and editors come to similar conclusions about the lack of creative capacity available in the production process of children’s TV, for example:

I think once you've done it for a long time you realise it's perhaps not as creative as you think because it's often repetition, especially with the kids' stuff. (Brody, Video Editor – Children's television)

It's not really a creative process, not here really, not the kind of programmes we make here in kids, they're not hugely creative... in kids telly a lot of it's repetitive. (Toby, Director and Editor – Children's television)

Overall restricted creative workers perceive Oaks to provide fewer progression possibilities; that perception stems in part from their reduced ability to freely participate in the creative content at the centre of TV production. While some restricted creative workers accept that this is the price of holding a staff job in a creative industry, for example:

I am progressing at a slow pace... but if worked as freelance, on something higher profile, I'd be sent away for long periods of time filming, and at the moment with a small baby at home... that's not something I'm looking for... so I'm quite happy to be on something a bit more low key for now. (Tina, Trainee Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

other restricted creative workers foresee their only option to go freelance in light of the limited progression available at Oaks. For directors, the perception is that working as staff within the same production teams on the same types of programmes leads to a 'routine', with the possibility of becoming "moulded into an Oaks' director". As Mick and Damon explain:

I think there's a chance of getting stuck into a routine from staying in the same company and working with the same people. For me, I foresee me having to move outside of Oaks given the circumstances that Oaks are in at the minute, the way they go for commissions, so personally I see me having to move to either a different independent production company, or perhaps a publicly funded production company, such as BBC, to I guess try and get experience doing more of what I enjoy doing, and what I'd like do in the future. (Mick, Assistant Producer and Director – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Because I've just been in Oaks I'm a bit worried that I might have been moulded into an Oaks' director, as opposed to a director. (Damon, Director – Children's television)

Responding to the restricted nature of their creative work, many of these restricted creative workers contemplate going freelance; for example, Damon and Toby comment:

I hope to be freelance [within 5 years] (Damon, Director – Children's television)

Once I've progressed as far as I can and stop learning... I want to go freelance. (Toby, Director, Editor, Vision Mixer and VT Operator – Children's television)

The experiences of restricted creative workers demonstrate the realities of the hierarchical divisions between creative workers in the super indie context. The organisational expansion for these workers has many damaging effects on their creative capacity, intensifying the mundane aspects of

their work, undermining their contribution to the development process and routinising the work process by the meticulous scheduling of junior staff time. Their position also illustrates the gulf between the junior workers and high-ranking creative workers, with few progression opportunities available for junior workers. Alternative options are also limited for restricted creative workers, with leaving the company inevitably involving giving up the stability of staff employment and undertaking freelance-based work.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the nature of TV production and creativity for television workers at Oaks. Firstly, the chapter shows the tensions related to the use of a staff workforce, with trade-offs for creative and technical workers in terms of skill specialisation, work intensification, routinisation and progression opportunities. Building on this analysis, the chapter emphasises differences in the nature of creativity for creative workers specifically. Central to the company's expansion is an enhanced or reduced ability to participate in creative content for creative workers. As such, the findings indicate different outcomes from the super indie expansion based on workers' roles and changes associated with the creative experience, classifying these experiences in terms of enhanced creative workers and restricted creative workers.

This chapter also extends existing understandings of the experiential outcomes of the super indie expansion on the nature of work, demonstrating differences between creative and technical workers, as well as how the formation of the super indie creates a gulf between lower-level junior creative workers and high-tier senior creative workers. This gulf creates tensions and challenges for workers at the bottom end of the hierarchy, whilst heightening the position of creative workers at the top of the hierarchy. Given that no research has explored the specific implications of the super indie for the nature and experience of creative work, the identification of the creative worker typology provides valuable insight into the implications of creative sector consolidation on front line creative workers. This chapter also provides the foundation for the following chapter, which seeks to explain why the experience of creative work varies for enhanced and restricted workers in this organisational setting, by exploring creative workers' use of resources in navigating the super indie workplace.

Table 4: Creative worker typology

Category	Creative roles	Experience of work
Enhanced creative workers	Executive producers Producers Digital producers	Involvement in ideas development process Opportunities for directing, editing and filming Work intensification Project allocations based on skills and expertise Opportunities for varied and interesting projects High levels of autonomy and creative freedom Holistic overview of projects (involvement from start to finish)
Restricted creative workers	Assistant producers Researchers Directors Editors	Limited input to ideas development process Opportunities for production coordinator type tasks (largely administrative work) Work intensification Project allocations based on availability Few opportunities for varied projects Low levels of autonomy and restricted creative freedom Routinised production processes

6. NAVIGATING CREATIVE WORK IN THE SUPER INDIE WORKPLACE

6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters explore and evaluate the super indie institutional structure, focusing on its key features (Chapter 4) and its implications for the nature of work for television workers (Chapter 5). This chapter continues the investigation of the realities of work in super indie contexts by exploring how creative workers navigate work in this setting.

The contextual assessment of the case company in Chapter 4 has shown the importance of the Welsh television production landscape in shaping the company's expansion and organisational practices. One notable feature is the level of certainty in securing commissions from Welsh broadcasters, which in turn has a knock-on effect on how work is organised and managed. Of significance is the prevalence of stable employment for television workers in an industry typically defined by uncertainty and insecurity. However, this stability is accompanied by heightened workloads and standardised production practices, raising a series of tensions for television workers in this setting. Chapter 5 explores these tensions, assessing the impact of the super indie structure on the nature of work itself. This analysis highlights stark differences across groups of television workers in terms of the experiential outcomes of the company's expansion on the nature of work. Particularly noteworthy are differences where television workers in creative roles are concerned. In the previous chapter, these differences have been classified with reference to a *creative worker typology*, distinguishing between enhanced and restricted creative workers to illustrate the variations across groups of creative workers in terms of their experiences of work and creativity in the super indie context. While *enhanced* creative workers tend to experience high levels of autonomy and creativity, *restricted* creative workers find work is generally routinised, with creative input and opportunities limited.

This chapter continues this analysis, critically examining the variations between creative workers to investigate how and why the experience of creative work varies across groups in this organisational setting. To do so, the chapter explores the ways in which creative workers navigate work in this setting and seeks to explain why enhanced creative workers are more successful than restricted creative workers in this venture. In presenting this analysis, the chapter argues that the experience of work in the super indie workplace is largely shaped by creative workers' ability to access and draw upon a range of relevant resources in navigating TV production in this context. The chapter therefore draws attention to the embedded power structures of the super indie context, reinforced by workers' unequal access to the necessary resources for navigating TV production work in this

setting, which leads some workers to flourish in this context (enhanced creative workers), whereas others falter (restricted creative workers).

The chapter proceeds to explore the ways in which creative workers navigate work inside the super indie, drawing upon a range of different resources. This discussion is structured around four overarching themes; namely an understanding of the Welsh television landscape, knowledge of upcoming programmes/television trends, access to decision makers and diverse skillsets. Each sub-section considers the role of each resource, as well as the similarities and differences across enhanced and restricted creative workers in terms of being able to access and utilise these resources. This analysis shows how the benefits of these resources are mainly experienced by enhanced creative workers, with barriers for restricted creative workers in terms of drawing upon these resources in this context. The chapter concludes by discussing the parallels of the findings with social capital theory (Lin 1999), and also considers the relationship between social capital, creativity and the experience of work in TV production.

Whilst the discussion in this chapter focuses on how creative workers navigate TV production by drawing upon a range of different resources, it does not dismiss the relevance of these resources for technical workers in this context. However, the findings suggest that these resources play a more prominent role in explaining the divergent experiences of work for creative workers in this context, and therefore this is the focus of this chapter.

6.2 Exploring how creative workers navigate TV production

Various resources emerge as significant for navigating TV production in the super indie workplace. The role of resources like social skills, and practices such as networking, have previously been acknowledged as crucial for survival in insecure TV contexts, particularly for freelancers, as a means to navigate uncertainty and secure future work (e.g., Antcliff et al. 2007; Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). While the situation at Oaks is one of greater stability than in these previous studies, analysis of the data suggests such practices and resources continue to play a part in how creative workers navigate work in this setting. However, rather than in securing future work, these resources play an important role in regulating access to interesting projects, creative input and diverse opportunities. The most relevant resources, as discussed by respondents, were the role of knowledge and expertise of the Welsh television landscape, information about upcoming programmes and television trends, access to decision makers, and the possession of diversified skillsets in line with company preferences. The sub-sections that follow discuss in turn the role of these resources for enhanced and restricted creative workers in the super indie.

6.2.1 Understanding the Welsh television landscape

Creative workers in various roles discuss the knowledge and expertise necessary for working in TV production. However, while all creative workers possess a degree of knowledge-based resources, it is those which relate specifically to navigating the features of the super indie that are of interest and discussed here. One example of this is nuanced knowledge of the Welsh broadcast television landscape, which is crucial for navigating the streamlined development process at Oaks.

As the research has shown, the general features of work at Oaks are indicative of the company's low-cost strategy for making Welsh television programmes, partly based on seeking production efficiencies through standardising various elements of the TV production process (Chapter 4). One element of this has been ideas development which has been streamlined through two senior figures, who have discretion over who contributes to generating and developing new programme ideas. This results in the inclusion/exclusion of different creative workers in this process (Chapter 5).

Opportunities to develop new ideas tend to be reserved for those creative workers perceived to have comprehensive, nuanced knowledge of the Welsh broadcast television landscape, and therefore expertise in which programme ideas are likely to be commissioned. This was evidenced in Dirk's comments, who was Head of Development, and therefore responsible for which workers were able to spend time working on new programme ideas:

I get people coming to me with 'I've got an idea, I've got an idea' and it's not really an idea... I mean it's just that, it's an idea it's not a thought-out programme or treatment. There's a massive difference between having a subject matter or a vague idea, to actually having a programme idea that's going to work... it has to be targeted... to generate the ideas, you have to know what the channels like. S4C and BBC Wales, they're a big target, so work up ideas that would be a good fit for them. (Dirk, Head of Development – Mixed-Genre Productions)

As such, knowledge of which programme ideas align with S4C and BBC Wales' target audiences, and expertise regarding the type of content these channels prefer, is an asset when inputting to this aspect of TV production.

6.2.1.1 Enhanced creative workers

This resource is typically referred to by enhanced creative workers in their accounts of working at Oaks. For example, Louis, Producer for Children's Television, describes the value of this knowledge in developing ideas for children's programmes for S4C. He also references an example where he successfully applies this knowledge, suggesting an idea that aligns with S4C's preferences, that was later commissioned and produced:

It definitely does sort of help to be current or to have you know experience of what they [S4C] like, because the reality of it is most programmes have been done

haven't they, and if you think the amount of programmes CBBC do and things, I mean it's difficult to come up with a completely new idea, but I think what S4C appreciate is if you make it appeal to the same audience as something on CBBC, but there's something uniquely Welsh about it... That's why I suggested [Welsh programme about extreme sports] because Wales has got this thing about extreme sports and outdoor adventure at the moment, so yeh I think that's the key to it really, is to sort of try and put a little twist in it to make it slightly unique you know. (Louis, Producer – Children's Television)

Daisy, a Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, is similarly involved in generating ideas for new programmes (Chapter 5). Her reflections on this process highlight the nuances between the Welsh broadcasters, and the importance of understanding these nuances and the channels' different target audiences in generating appropriate programme ideas:

In S4C there's 6 commissioners, you've got your light ents [entertainment] one, you've got your agriculture one, and drama one and so on, so that's more straightforward. You get used to what you think they may or may not commission... There's also the different audience from S4C's point of view and from BBC Wales' point of view. The BBC Wales point of view, they don't necessarily like things that are too Welsh, but they want Welsh themes... they want Welsh celebrities, but not ones which are too Welsh... so I try and kind of work out what I think that they'll want you know? (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

This type of expertise tends to come with tenure and experience specifically within the Welsh television industry and therefore is mainly an advantage for experienced producers, who are given opportunities to work on new programme ideas as part of their work. For example, Daisy, referenced above, has over 20 years' experience in the Welsh television industry, working for a national broadcaster and another Welsh super indie prior to producing at Oaks. Tegan also "continuously come[s] up with ideas" as part of her role (Chapter 5). Tegan has 24 years' experience in the Welsh television industry and worked for S4C prior to her current position. Tegan explains how she has developed this type of knowledge from working in the industry over a number of years, and how she utilises it in her work:

I've been doing this for five years now the learner's service... but because I've been doing it for 5 years, I'm used to it and I know what we can do and what S4C want... so what I try and do is obviously get lots of variety, so just try and do different types of programmes... so at the moment we're doing a quiz... then I came up with this idea of borrowing a Welsh family for a couple of days, [for an entertainment] programme... I've learnt that it's variety really, S4C on the whole likes the idea, having lots of different strands, keeping it interesting. (Tegan, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions).

This demonstrates how knowledge and expertise of the Welsh broadcast landscape are important resources for navigating the streamlined development process. This knowledge tends to be accumulated over many years of working in the Welsh television industry, and it is therefore mainly

referenced by experienced producers. However, the mobilisation of this resource is dependent upon opportunities provided by senior management to engage in creative processes such as development. Therefore, there is also a relational aspect to utilising this expertise, depending upon the reputation of creative workers.

6.2.1.2 Restricted creative workers

While a nuanced understanding of the Welsh broadcasters presents opportunities for enhanced creative workers in navigating the streamlined development process following Oaks' expansion, it is rarely referenced as a resource by restricted creative workers in their reflections on working in Welsh television production. The absence of discussions of this resource amongst these workers partly explains their lack of involvement in ideas development (Chapter 5). Instead, the data points to a more heightened concern with a lack of development opportunities and hierarchical divisions for restricted creative workers, as is discussed in the sub-sections below.

6.2.2 Knowledge of upcoming programmes

The ability to navigate the streamlined development process is also complemented by having knowledge of upcoming programme trends as indicated by the commissioning editors representing the national broadcasters. This is because these ideas are more likely to be commissioned since they directly relate to what commissioning editors are looking for. Therefore, having relationships with commissioning editors is a valuable tool for creative workers (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). As Daisy, Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions highlights:

To get things commissioned it really helps if you've got a working relationship with the commissioners so you know exactly what they want. (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Given that workloads are intensified and creative workers' time is tightly scheduled by production management (Chapter 5), having this information enables development activities to be more targeted, and therefore more efficient. Therefore, individuals with this information are more likely to be given opportunities to engage in ideas development. Annie, Producer for Children's Television, and Daisy, Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, both reflect on this:

What happens sometimes, is the commissioner will say, right ok, we're looking for a series on you know, dogs, or we're looking for a series on vets, or whatever. So you get a bit of a steer from what they're looking for, and then I'll go away and think of ideas and formats, and it kind of saves a bit of time that way. (Annie, Producer – Children's Television)

It's difficult trying to second guess things... What's best is when the commissioner says we are looking for this, this and this, and then I try think of an idea, because of the kind of turnaround and how much stuff we have to produce... I don't think

people have got the time, these days you don't just come up with a programme idea, I don't think that's constructive. (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

6.2.2.1 Enhanced creative workers

Once more, it is enhanced creative workers who tend to have access to this type of information, stemming from their external ties with commissioning editors from the national broadcasters. For example, several producers comment on the role of commissioners in highlighting upcoming programme trends:

She [the commissioner] will give me a sort of heads up about what's coming down the line. (Mandy – Producer – Children's Television).

She [the commissioner] keeps me in the loop with happenings. (Tegan, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

While professional relationships between senior management and the commissioning editors are to be expected (Sengupta et al. 2009; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Zoellner 2016), several enhanced creative workers also note these external ties. On inspection, these relationships tend to pre-exist the company's expansion, with a number of these enhanced creative workers holding positions in the national broadcasters, prior to the consolidation of the local industry. As Chapter 4 explained, the national broadcasters played a key role in shaping the company's development, encouraging the consolidation of the local market. During this time there was considerable mobility of workers between the national broadcasters, the independent producers subsumed into Oaks, and Oaks itself. As a result, a number of creative workers cite existing relationships with individuals within the national broadcasters from when they were previously employed there, and the advantage this brings to working at Oaks. Tegan, Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, for example, previously worked as a producer for a national broadcaster. Her contract was moved across to the lifestyle and Welsh learners' independent production company, which was later subsumed into Oaks overall structure during the consolidation. She reflects on these ties in the broader TV industry:

I was working with S4C at the time, a series with them, and that series just sort of came to an end... they said, well no problem, we can just move you to another company, so I decided to go work for [the lifestyle and Welsh learners' company] at the time, and then that became part of Oaks... I knew people in S4C quite well, worked with them, in different guises, so that's an advantage... you get to know a lot of people when you work in the industry for 24 years. (Tegan, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Similarly, Daisy, Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, previously worked for one of the national broadcasters for 13 years prior to working at Oaks. External ties with this broadcaster brought its own advantages for Daisy, providing opportunities to work on different programmes that had already gone through development. She explains:

In relation to the [documentary programme], I'm working on that on my own with the cameraman, we're doing one half hour for BBC Wales which goes out in June... but it was only because I knew people from there [BBC Wales], so they asked if I could work on that. (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

This shows the significance of these external ties in accessing information about upcoming programmes and more varied opportunities inside the super indie workplace. These external ties tend to be built on years of experience in the Welsh television industry and having previously worked for the national broadcasters. For example, both Darcy and Jasmine reflect on how their success in the industry can partly be attributed to joining at the right time, allowing them to develop both their experience and contacts:

When I started there was a huge buzz so this was, it was mid-80s, late 80s, so S4C had started so there was a massive sort of energy and vigour about media in Wales at the time, and I think if you had a good degree, spoke Welsh, that was your time really to get into TV... I think it's tougher now. (Darcy, Executive Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I've only ever worked in Wales and I suppose it's been with S4C and the fact that S4C started when I was starting my career, I suppose it's been quite easy for me, because I got in straight at the beginning and I've always been here and the fact that I speak Welsh, because of the Welsh speaking community as well, it's rare to encounter people that you've never worked with before. (Jasmine, Executive Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

One exception to this is Brendon, Researcher for Mixed-Genre Productions. Brendon finds himself in an enhanced position at Oaks, engaging in highly creative activities as part of working on the online team (Chapter 5), despite only working at Oaks for 6 months. Brendon has high level connections in one of the national broadcasters, which he believes impacts the opportunities he receives in his current role:

My dad, he's one of the commissioners for S4C. I'm not used to kind of, the kind of hierarchy in the media, I forget that people kind of know who he is... but I do feel like it's kind of helped me in an unfair way, working here, but I do feel like I've had a few opportunities, where I shouldn't really have had them, being brutally honest, because of my experience and age, but I got them because of that, whatever, like I didn't do it myself, like I didn't say, I'm blah de blah's son, but they've worked it out. (Brendon, Researcher – Mixed-Genre Productions)

This shows how, despite Brendon not intentionally drawing on this resource, his association with a commissioner in S4C enhances his own status and position within Oaks and improves the opportunities he is offered.

6.2.2.2 Restricted creative workers

Possessing information about upcoming programmes and trends is associated with external ties in the wider Welsh television industry, for example with commissioning editors in the national

broadcasters, that can provide access to crucial information in developing successful programme ideas and content. Restricted creative workers tend to lack these connections, and therefore their shortage of contacts in the wider industry acts as a barrier to deploying this resource. Lucy, Researcher and Presenter for Children's Television, and Damon, Director for Children's Television both highlight the absence of relationships with commissioning editors in their comments:

I don't really deal with the commissioner, I don't have a relationship with S4C at all really. (Lucy, Researcher and Presenter – Children's Television)

I don't really deal with different people, as in the commissioner or the executive, I don't really deal with them as such. (Damon, Director – Children's Television)

Lucy and Damon are at an early stage in their careers (one year and two years in the industry respectively) and therefore a vast network of contacts would not be expected. However, more experienced creative workers at Oaks similarly highlight a shortage of contacts in the wider industry in their responses. One example of this is Brody, Video Editor for Children's Television; Brody has worked at Oaks for ten years, and describes himself as 'isolated' from the wider industry:

I think working in one company, you tend to get a little bit isolated... I come to work here, I do my work and I go home. As far as I know, I'm not what you might call, I suppose, 'well known' if you like, within the Welsh industry... what happens, in the wider industry, sometimes it passes me by. (Brody, Video Editor – Children's Television)

Having a lack of contacts in the wider industry therefore impedes these creative workers from accessing vital information about upcoming programme trends and acts as a barrier to their involvement. Despite this, restricted creative workers have mixed views on the importance of developing contacts and networking. While some highlight the importance of attempting to develop this resource, for example:

I'm very aware that I need to make as many contacts as possible in this kind of industry. (Ester, Assistant Producer – Children's Television)

Others dismiss the importance of developing relations and contacts in the wider industry, within the context of stable Welsh television production:

I've only ever worked for here, but I know a lot of people have gone freelance and stuff and their reputation does count... but I'd say networking is definitely more important down in London, Bristol, Manchester, that kind of thing. (Zach, Facilities Manager and Trainee Camera Operator)

I would say for me personally networking was important, when I was freelance, just because people keep you in mind. Now that I'm sort of staff here it's not important for me personally... but because I'm a staff position here the need to network or socialise it has kind of gone less and less really. (Tina, Trainee Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

As such, having a lack of contacts in the wider industry presents a significant barrier to accessing insider information about upcoming programme trends for restricted creative workers. While many of these workers are early in their careers, mixed views regarding the importance of developing contacts in the wider industry raise questions about the extent to which these workers may be able to develop these external ties and access this information in future.

Up to this point, the exploration of the resources creative workers use to navigate this context points to a continuing pattern of exclusion within the super indie workplace. Whilst enhanced creative workers frequently reflect on these resources in their accounts, restricted creative workers rarely reference having knowledge of the Welsh television landscape and access to information about upcoming programming trends or external ties in the wider industry in their accounts of working in television production. The analysis presented so far is also suggestive of the importance of creative workers' structural positions, contacts and experience in being able to access and mobilise resources in this context, reinforcing the theme of hierarchy raised in the previous data chapter. The next section builds on this analysis, exploring how having access to decision makers acts as a resource in navigating the super indie workplace.

6.2.3 Access to decision makers

Having access to influential individuals is fundamental to gaining employment in TV production (Willis and Dex 2003; Antcliff et al. 2007; Blair 2009; Lee 2011). However, the emphasis here is on strategic relationships that are beneficial for creative workers in improving their opportunities and work experiences inside the workplace. Notably, access to decision makers at Oaks, such as the Managing Director and Head of Production, emerges as a useful resource in this endeavour. This is because it provides access to information and enables workers to have influence over how their work is structured and the types of programmes they are allocated.

6.2.3.1 Enhanced creative workers

Again, it is mostly enhanced creative workers who refer to their internal ties with management and the benefits they bring. Jasmine, Executive Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, sits alongside the Managing Director, Head of Development, and Creative Producers in the office. Her responses suggest she is firmly embedded in this network of senior figures, having access to important information about upcoming projects, and choice over how she structures her work:

I'm at the start, I suppose, where [the programmes] all sort of begin. I'm working with [the Head of Production], you know we all sit together there, we know from the beginning when things are happening... I'm aware more or less about all new productions, obviously not in terms of the business side of things, but I'm kept in the loop right from the very beginning... so at the start, I'll discuss with [the Head

of Production] each production, what crew are available, maybe bring in the producer... but sometimes I'll be more hands on the programme side of some productions... I used to be out on location more, but I choose not to now, but it's the best of both worlds really, but I get the most out of it when I'm really involved in the production. (Jasmine, Executive Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Another individual with access to the decision makers within the company is Lily. This is indicated in Lily's responses, who describes her close relationship with the Head of Production in particular:

[Head of Production] who sits next to me, who you'll meet, I'd say is one of my very, very best friends. I mean I only know her through work, but I'd class her as one of my best friends because I spend so much time with her. We've worked together for years. (Lily, Production Manager – Mixed-Genre Productions and Children's Television)

In Lily's later responses, the benefits of this relationship start to emerge. Lily has a high degree of creativity in her work, despite holding a production management role. This is through working on music productions as a music production assistant or script supervisor (Chapter 5), an opportunity made available due to Oak's expanded genre scope (Chapter 4). These productions are not part of her usual role at Oaks, but she is permitted by senior management to work on them. She describes this situation:

When music stuff comes up I ask if I can do it, it's script supervising more than production management... it's a completely different job... but I like to do it occasionally... so I've just done a week at a [music festival], well I asked if I could go to a couple of concerts, so I did a classical concert and a pop show, so they let me work on those... so when they come up, I ask to do those. Usually [HoP] works it out for me with the schedules, if time allows. So I haven't really stopped doing it, so that's quite nice for me. (Lily, Production Manager – Mixed-Genre and Children's Television)

Lily's comments above suggest that her relationship with the Head of Production facilitates these opportunities. Whilst they are not formally part of her job role, this shows how she has been able to navigate the opportunities on offer inside the super indie using her access to senior management within the company.

Therefore, the ability to draw personal benefits from having access to decision makers depends on individuals having high level connections inside the company (Antcliff et al. 2007), and the ability to have some influence over those high-level connections. As such, once again it is mostly experienced executive producers and producers who are able to capitalise on this resource. In most cases, these workers held senior positions in the local producers that were subsumed into Oaks during the acquisition strategy (Chapter 4) and have been merged into Oaks' staff structure following the consolidation. This gives these workers a strong structural position in the company, which brings the advantage of having relationships with company management, and therefore the ability to retain a

level of autonomy and control over the nature and structure of their work. For example, Jasmine (referenced above), previously worked as a producer for the independent drama television company and was brought into Oaks as an Executive Producer following the consolidation. Lily similarly worked for the independent local entertainment production company for ten years prior to its acquisition.

Darcy, Executive Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, also benefits from having internal ties with company management. Darcy co-founded the television drama company that is now subsumed into Oaks (Chapter 4). Darcy previously held a producer role, but was “*suddenly landed with the executive producer title*” following the company’s expansion. She describes the opportunities she is offered as part of Oaks, based on her ties with management and her experience:

We have an office in [Welsh village], that’s the drama office, because we’re filming in that area... they [management] asked me, because of my background, you know with [television drama company] if I wanted to help out there, oversee it kind of thing... on that I’m producer as well... and in a way it’s been a big plus [selling the company], you know, getting back to the programme making. (Darcy, Executive Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions).

This shows the significance of having access to individuals in leadership positions in navigating creative work in the super indie context. These connections enable creative workers to navigate the structures of the super indie to their benefit, taking advantage of the expanded resources and genre scope of the company to undertake interesting projects. They also enable workers to access information about upcoming projects and gives them autonomy over which projects and the type of work they undertake.

6.2.3.2 Restricted creative workers

While access to decision makers is useful for accessing strategic information, improving opportunities and creative autonomy, it was uncommon for restricted creative workers to reflect on this resource in their accounts of working in Welsh television production. Instead, these creative workers often emphasise the hierarchical division between themselves and decision makers within the company, which acts as a barrier to navigating work in the super indie. For example, Nancy and Mick, both APs for Mixed-Genre Productions comment:

There is a top table in the office, there is an obvious hierarchy. (Nancy, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

It does feel a little one-sided in terms of being a member of staff it feels sometimes as if the upper management level is quite separated from us as staff. (Mick, Assistant Producer and Director – Mixed-Genre Productions)

As such the hierarchy is not only symbolic, but physically manifested in the 'top table', and is exemplified by the super indie structure. This table, as mentioned by Nancy above, refers to where Jasmine and Lily sit, alongside the Managing Director and Head of Production, as discussed in their reflections on how having access to decision makers benefits their work (Section 6.2.3.2).

Many restricted creative workers reflect on this divide, which demonstrates the distance between creative workers in AP, researcher, director and editor roles, and decision makers at Oaks. The distance between junior level and higher tier individuals has been intensified partly by the way that the company has developed, with a large number of senior workers being subsumed into the company's staff structure following the expansion (Chapter 5). As a result, the large number of people in the top tier blocks opportunities for more junior workers. Therefore, a lack of access to decision makers is not only problematic in preventing creative workers from having influence over the nature of their work experiences, but it also viewed as detrimental to progression and creates tensions within the company (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.5.1). Brody, who has been editing at Oaks for 10 years, reflects on this in his comments:

There are many layers to it all isn't there, there's the people who are working on the sort of bottom in the more entry level positions, and then you may have, you know the top hierarchy... there is a kind of like gulf between the two, so I think in the company, there's always a kind of, you know, you could say a friction there in a way... You know on a personal level like you know having been here ten years, I think I've always had to sort of like really fight to kind of progress. (Brody, Video Editor – Children's Television)

Liv, an AP for Mixed-Genre Productions, has a similar sentiment in her comments:

Because you've got the higher tier here and a lot of people in my position as assistant producers there's no way to progress, because that higher tier, who obviously cost a fortune, it's not moving anywhere, so there's no progression within the company... there's no opportunities really because those people on the higher tier aren't going anywhere soon. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

This shows how the development of the super indie structure itself prevents restricted creative workers from developing this resource. It also shows how the absence of these internal ties with senior management acts as a barrier for navigating work in the super indie for restricted workers.

This section again shows that it is those creative workers with stronger structural positions who are able to use and mobilise this resource to their benefit. This tends to be enhanced creative workers (Chapter 5), who are embedded within networks with senior management, and already possess a degree of status within the company. Accordingly, the findings delineated in this section continue to show the exclusionary character of this creative setting where more experienced and higher

status individuals can further enhance their positions through capitalising on their embedded resources. Conversely, less experienced junior creative workers lack these valuable relationships and are disadvantaged in this setting.

6.2.4 Diverse skillsets

Another point which informs the analysis of the findings in this chapter is the role of diverse skillsets as an asset for navigating the features of the super indie workplace. As Chapters 4 and 5 have shown, the restrictive budgets associated with Welsh language television programmes mean that production teams at Oaks are often short-staffed. In this situation, it is senior management's preference that production staff train up in multiple disciplines to minimise the use of freelancers and save costs. Theresa, Head of Production, explains the logic behind this preference:

We try and train all our researchers, assistant producers and producers to be able to use a camera... to be able go out and shoot their own footage and do it all themselves... we encourage them to take up a bit of editing, even though they're not editors but so that if they've been out filming for a week and they've got 50 hours, well that's a lot to go through with an editor who you're paying a lot of money to sit there just sifting through footage, and I'd say out of every hour you film you use 5 minutes of it, so you know, we get them to go away and go through everything before they give it to the editor. (Theresa, Head of Production – Oaks Group)

As such, this resource is particularly pertinent where workers in production roles (producers, APs and researchers) are concerned. Whilst creative workers' predispositions towards multiskilling vary (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1.1), the data suggests that creative workers who adopt skill diversification strategies to align their skillsets with company preferences can progress quickly within the company, and access more diverse work opportunities. For example, Louis, Producer for Children's Television, joined Oaks ten years ago as a researcher, and quickly progressed to a producer within four years. He reflects on his approach to his development, diversifying into filming and directing as part of his role:

Well when I joined as a researcher, within a year, I'd been given a camera kind of thing, to like take that go and do something on this, and then I'd do that, so all of a sudden I'm shooting stuff as well and then I'd go with a director then to shoot stuff as a second camera or as a main camera later on, and then, after that, you start going out directing yourself, self-shooting producer, and then, you know as years go by you kind of get given bigger projects. (Louis, Producer – Mixed Genre Productions)

Similarly, Ste, Digital Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, quickly progressed from a researcher to producer within three and a half years at Oaks and is now responsible for the online channel (Chapter 5). He describes how his progression in the company involved training up in both camera and sound:

I started for Oaks in 2013... I started off as a researcher working for the [Lifestyle and Welsh Learners' Television Company] working on the Welsh learner programmes, so I was a researcher and then I turned into a self-shooting researcher, and then I was trained up to be a sound man for the productions, and then from there I progressed into where I am now really. (Ste, Digital Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions).

As such, this resource is significant for less experienced creative workers, enabling them to enhance the creative aspects of their work and progress quickly within the super indie, by adapting their own development to match the needs of the company. The importance of diverse skillsets as a resource for navigating the super indie is illuminated when the experiences of enhanced and restricted creative workers are compared. For example, Liv joined Oaks seven years ago as a researcher, has been an assistant producer for four years, and describes her career progression within the company as “stagnant”, and herself as “stuck in a rut” (Chapter 5). Liv has taken a different approach to development to Louis and Ste, opting not to diversify her skills into camera and sound:

They [Oaks] always want you to be able to be self-shooting, because of budget constraints, so they want you to be able to film, do the sound, and, you know, what I do every day... I haven't got an eye for it at all and I've got no interest at all in picking up a camera... I don't self-shoot, and I've got no interest in doing so, I'll leave the industry before I have to pick up a camera. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Another example is Tina, who recently moved into a trainee producer role, after working as an AP for six years at Oaks. Similarly, Tina decided not to diversify into camera and sound, and finds her career progression has been slower than her colleagues:

They asked before but I never wanted to do the self-shooting type stuff, but now I am starting to learn more about the editing side of things, because up till now I've just been involved in production side, so doing schedules, risk assessments, helping with the organising, but I didn't really have much knowledge of once the rushes go on to the edit, so now I'm a trainee producer I'm starting to spend a little bit more time down there... it's a little baby step... I am progressing, it may be at a slower pace than you know, some of my colleagues. (Tina, Trainee Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

This shows the important role of this resource in navigating work in this context. However, the development of the necessary skills to work across multiple television production disciplines is not just a matter of individual willingness, but is also largely dependent on others. This is because learning in television production is mostly on the job, through observing others and informal mentoring (Blair 2001; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2009; 2011). As such, there is a relational aspect to developing this resource, based on management's willingness to invest in junior creative workers, and more experienced creative workers inclinations towards mentoring more junior creative workers.

6.2.4.1 Enhanced creative workers

Access to such development opportunities is usually referenced by enhanced creative workers, such as the online team and mid-career producers. For example, Ste, Digital Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, discusses his experiences of training opportunities in the company, and the benefits they bring to his work:

With me and this company they've been fantastic, since day one when I walked in they've always been open to if I said, I need to go on a sound course, they'd be like cool, we'll arrange it... they sent me to London Film School to do a sound course for a few days, and now I do sound on different productions, as I mentioned earlier, I've done camera courses, editing courses, and without that I wouldn't be able to do what I do now, every day I'm filming and editing, and also from a company point of view, I guess they believe I can do it more... so it helps in that sense as well. (Ste, Digital Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Similarly, Brendon, Researcher for Mixed-Genre Productions, has been able to access skill development opportunities during his six months working at Oaks. Brendon describes the informal process of learning in this context through the help of a more senior staff member:

You learn on the job, like all the kit is around, like half of it is just fiddling with cameras in the office, and when you go out you kind of like just chip in, ask questions... like a few weeks ago, in the [music event] we were filming a band playing in the night and that was my first time operating a like proper camera, not like a hand held, DSLR [digital single-lens reflex camera], and yeh, and then because the director asked me if I was like around to help, and I was like yeh I'm around but I've never filmed before, and he was like fine, and he just like kind of plonked the camera in between the stage and the crowd, and just went yeh just follow his face and then kind of set it up so I kind of yeh, so that's the way I kind of like to learn really yeh, just I dunno, have a go init. (Brendon, Researcher – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Annie is another example where informal mentoring has helped her to diversify her skillset and progress at Oaks. Annie began working in the company three and a half years ago as an assistant producer and was recently promoted into a producer role. She highlights the role of a more senior staff member in supporting her development:

I've got a fantastic executive producer that I work with, she's brilliant... It was offered to me that should I want I can follow her more on the editing side and she could sort of mentor me through this process... but the offer was given to me and yeh I took it because yeh obviously the more experience I get the better. (Annie, Producer – Children's Television)

However, access to these opportunities varies amongst junior creative workers, and therefore some creative workers are more/less advantaged than others in being able to develop their skills. On reflection, it is those creative workers who have been able to draw on a range of different resources who have been most successful in navigating opportunities for skill development and progressing

their position at Oaks. One notable example of this is Ste. After joining the company three and a half years ago as a researcher, Ste took advantages of the changes that accompanied the company's expansion, such as the company's preference for multiskilling, and its creation of the online channel. He recites how the combination of good timing, reputation and his diversified skills enabled him to progress quickly within the company, to a position with a considerable degree of responsibility:

I was sniffing around [the online channel] from the early days when it was just on paper... it [the commission for the online channel] worked well timing wise, because career progression wise, it came at the perfect time, it wasn't like I'd just joined the company and the company didn't know who I was, I'd established myself in the company as someone that can film and edit and record sound and arrange things cos I'd been a researcher for 3 years, so it came at the perfect time luckily... it started off with S4C coming and saying that they wanted a fifteen minute online broadcast every once a month or something, so I was roped in to help with the development of that, but the way it turned out, we were like, we could do loads of different videos and share them all across the month, so we developed all of the series... now I'm leading [the online channel] from the creative side, where the budgets are much, much bigger than anything I've ever worked on... I'm also involved in the more money, financial side and the politics side of pitches, which is a good thing, the projects are more ambitious and bigger. (Ste, Digital Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Similarly, Brendon has also been able to navigate opportunities inside the super indie to his advantage. He reflects on the role of internal ties and his knowledge of current trends in helping him reach this position:

So basically, when I started, they launched the online channel and only two guys worked on it... they realised it was a lot of work... so they [the online team] kind of invited me over like do you want to help out on this?...so I'm working on that and general other online stuff or other programmes and helping out with filming and stuff... I already knew [Ste] quite well, and I already posted stuff on Twitter, mostly being quite chopsy about like programmes on S4C ad things, but yeh he just asked me to come over and help out... it's just what I'm good at really, you know, like general pop culture and millennial comedy. (Brendon, Researcher – Mixed-Genre Productions)

This shows how certain junior creative workers are also able to navigate the super indie context to their advantage, employing skills strategies that enable them to diversify into disciplines that coincide with the company's needs.

6.2.4.2 Restricted creative workers

On the contrary, restricted creative workers have been less able to secure these opportunities. As noted, skill development in TV production is usually through on the job learning, observing others and informal mentoring (Blair 2001; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2009; 2011). As such, the ability to develop skills relies in part on senior management's willingness to invest in staff through formal

training opportunities, but more so on the support of senior creative workers through mentoring (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011). This means that access to development opportunities is not customary but varies from worker to worker. The nature of work at Oaks further problematises this situation, since budgets are extremely restrictive, production teams are often short staffed, and workloads are intensified (Chapter 5). This means that junior workers must rely not only on senior workers having the willingness to mentor them, but also having the time. Darcy, Executive Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, highlights this problem in her comments:

Because there are budget cuts mentoring and developing new talent tends to get side lined because of financial constraints over the budget. (Darcy, Executive Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Whilst some (enhanced creative workers) have been able to access development opportunities (Section 6.2.3), others (restricted creative workers) have been less fortunate. Liv, Assistant Producer, points to the scarcity of training and development in her experiences, which she relates to the limited budgets of Welsh language television production:

I've been on one camera course and I haven't been on any other courses since I've been here, 7 years... I've even said on productions, look can I come down to the edit? Can I just sit in the background and just observe? But there's always something else to be done, it's a job isn't it, it all comes down to budgets and there's not enough people working on productions to be able to afford the luxury of allowing me to come and sit as an observer. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Similarly, Mick, Assistant producer, raises the issue of budget pressures, and the restrictions these pose on his development:

There are certain people within the company who would have done that [personally mentored and developed] myself and some people who, with perhaps more experience in certain fields, perhaps I could turn to ask their advice, or just to learn from them you know as they work. I guess that structure does exist in terms of being able to ask somebody questions although there's not a proper structure for it within the company, as far as I can see, from my experience, the budget dictates, so things like that sometimes get sacrificed. (Mick, Assistant Producer and Director – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Here, the pressures of working under restrictive budgets displace opportunities for developing skills. Without these skills, it is difficult for workers to access more varied projects and progress within the company. This in part, explains why many of these restricted creative workers contemplate going freelance in their responses (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2), potentially opting for insecurity and instability instead of the stable yet restricted creative working experiences under the super indie workplace.

In summary, the above analysis highlights the variability of opportunities for developing skills for different workers. While enhanced creative workers have been successful in accessing such opportunities, restricted creative workers have been less successful. This is explained, in part, by the combination of resources enhanced creative workers reference in their accounts of work in this context, which complements their ability to secure informal mentoring from senior staff members. As such the analysis affirms the exclusionary nature of this TV production setting, pointing to the overarching role of status and relationships in accessing and mobilising these resources. The remainder of this chapter considers the overarching theme of social capital and its role in assessing the realities of work in the super indie setting.

6.3 Discussion: social capital, resources and the creative worker hierarchy

In summary, the findings presented in this chapter show how creative workers draw on a range of knowledge-based and relational resources in navigating the super indie workplace. The analysis builds on the creative worker typology introduced in Chapter 5, showing how the experience of creative work in this setting relates to the ability of creative workers to access and mobilise resources in the context of the super indie. Those successful in this venture benefit from an enhanced creative work experience, with high levels of autonomy and creative freedom in their work. However, those unsuccessful in attaining and utilising these resources are disadvantaged in this setting; for these creative workers, work is generally routinised, with low levels of autonomy and creative input in the television production process. The remainder of this section briefly covers the key findings from the data presented so far, and their importance for understanding the realities of work in TV production in the context of the existing literature.

The chapter's aim has been to explain those resources most recurrent in the data. While some resources are possessed by the individual, for example knowledge-based resources, the data shows that the utilisation of such resources is relational, and dependent on individual reputation. As such, the analysis in this chapter points to the overarching importance of social capital in explaining the diverse experiences of creative work in the super indie context. As the Literature Review (Chapter 2) discussed, social capital is captured from embedded resources in networks, and is used to achieve specific outcomes that are beneficial to individuals (Lin 1999). The findings show how, through drawing on resources, enhanced creative workers have been able to regulate access to interesting projects, creative input and diverse opportunities. Furthermore, the approach taken in this chapter has sought to understand and explain the role of these resources (use/mobilisation) as well as who can access them (accessibility) and what factors help to explain this (embeddedness). This approach therefore draws parallels with Lin's (1999) network theory of social capital, through its integrated analysis of these intersecting themes. An important part of Lin's (1999) theory is how the ability to

access and use these resources is partly dependent on an individual's position in hierarchical structures. This is also apparent in the findings presented here. As the findings show, the structural positions of enhanced creative workers play an important role in their access to and mobilisation of resources. In most cases, enhanced creative workers are mid-late career, with vast networks of contacts inside and outside the company. As such, their position facilitates access to resources that are beneficial for their autonomy, creativity and reputation in the industry. Conversely, the findings also highlight the structural constraints that inhibit restricted creative workers from developing and utilising these resources. As such, the creative worker typology provides an illustration of the discriminatory character of social capital in action, manifested in workers' enhanced or restricted experiences of work.

Another aim of the research has been to explore how the super indie structure impacts on the nature of creativity specifically (Chapter 5). This chapter shows how the experience of creativity and the degree of creative activities involved in TV production is shaped by creative workers' social capital. This finding therefore counters speculation that super indie contexts stifle creativity and innovation (e.g., Faulkner et al. 2008; Bennett 2015; RTS 2014; Douglas 2016), by illustrating the complexity of accessing creative opportunities in this setting. There are opportunities to be creative on offer inside the super indie, however accessing these opportunities depends on a combination of knowledge, skills, relations and position (Lin 1999). This therefore shows the interrelationship between social capital and creativity in this consolidated TV production setting, and the way that social capital functions to include/exclude individuals in creative processes (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012).

Another key finding of this chapter is how a lack of resources and/or appropriate contacts can act as barriers to navigating work in the super indie workplace (Lin 1999). This confirms the potential negative consequences for creative workers lacking in social capital, such as limited opportunities and creative input (Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). However, while restricted creative workers face barriers to accessing and mobilising resources which may have a negative impact on their creativity and opportunities, the findings discussed in the next chapter show how work is highly meaningful for this group of workers. This is through attaching meaning to factors beyond the nature of work itself and directly counters enhanced creative workers, who attach meaning to the features of creative work they experience in this context. This is suggestive of a link between social capital and the experience of meaningful work, and is discussed in Chapter 8.

Finally, as the preceding two chapters have shown, TV production in the super indie setting is characterised by increased stability in terms of securing commissions and open-ended employment.

However, resources continue to play a significant role in how creative workers navigate TV production, regulating access to interesting projects, creative input and diverse opportunities. This therefore shows the pervasiveness of socialised working practices in TV production (Antcliff et al. 2007; Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011; 2012), even in settings where insecurity is reduced, and work is regulated through standardised contracts and employment processes.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how creative workers navigate the super indie workplace, and why enhanced creative workers have been more successful than restricted workers in this endeavour. The chapter has illustrated the importance of knowledge-based resources specific to Welsh television, internal and external ties in the industry, and skills in this effort. This exploration has also illuminated the overarching importance of social capital in explaining the diverse experiences of creative work in the super indie setting. It has also drawn attention to the unequal access to these resources and hence social capital in this context, highlighting the embedded power structures and hierarchical divisions that define the super indie institutional structure.

This chapter also begins to set the scene for the following chapter, which explores how television workers search for meaning in their work. Whilst enhanced creative workers derive a strong sense of meaning from their work context through a sense of immersion in the creative process and the completion of creative products, restricted creative workers mediate tensions created by their work context by reflecting on social and relational factors. Similarly, technical workers, with low expectations for the creative content of their work, reflect on sources of meaning outside of the immediate workplace. This theme is continued in the following chapter.

7. SEARCHING FOR MEANING IN TV PRODUCTION WORK

7.1 Introduction

The earlier data chapters examine the expansion of the case company 'Oaks Productions Ltd' (Oaks) into a super independent television company (super indie), analysing its implications for organisational and managerial practices (Chapter 4) and outcomes for the nature of TV production work for different groups of creative and technical workers (Chapter 5). Chapter 4 examines the key organisational features associated with the company's development as a super indie, and the importance of these developments in a Welsh context. Chapter 5 builds on this analysis by showing the implications of these organisational changes for different groups of creative and technical workers, focusing on similarities and differences across streamlined ideas development, multi-skilling, work-intensification, routinised production processes and progression and opportunities. Analysis of these emergent themes, and the way in which creative workers navigate them, points to a hierarchy of creative workers in the case company (Chapters 5 and 6). While some creative workers have been able to utilise resources to navigate these organisational changes to their benefit (enhanced creative workers), others have faced barriers to utilising and developing such resources, finding themselves in a diminished position within the company (restricted creative workers). Despite these varying impacts on creative workers' experiences of TV production in this context, respondents across various roles were generally positive about working in Welsh television and presented their work as meaningful in their accounts. This chapter therefore develops this emergent theme, building on the previous data chapters, to evaluate how different groups of creative and technical workers find their work meaningful in the context of Welsh broadcast television.

To investigate the experience of meaningful work in this context, the research draws on a sociological approach (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017), exploring how, and to what extent, organisational structures, and changes to these structures, impact different television workers' experiences of meaningful work. Television production is often positioned as highly meaningful work (Chapter 2), particularly because of its association with the positive features of creative labour, such as high levels of autonomy and creative input, as well as its ability to facilitate self-actualisation, self-expression and self-fulfilment for creative workers (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Lee 2012). However, few studies have empirically explored how institutional factors may influence the meaningful work undertaken by creative workers, and, for example, how changes to the general features of creative labour, such as lower levels of creativity or autonomy, may affect this. As such, a central aim of this chapter is to investigate the extent to which the work context can act as an important source of meaningful work for creative workers, and how workers respond to

enhancements or restrictions to their creative work in this context (Mitra and Buzzanell 2007). If these sources of meaning are absent, the chapter questions how workers negotiate alternative sources of meaning, influenced by the broader social and cultural context of work. The sociological approach adopted here therefore recognises that the experience of meaningful work is an ongoing, dynamic process, as individuals (re)negotiate their work and their experiences. This therefore draws attention to how workers search for meaning in their work and can recast typically negative objective work features in a different light. As such, the chapter views meaningful work as multi-dimensional, contextually situated and tensional, and combines both individual work features and broader social, cultural and political factors in its assessment of meaningful work.

The chapter continues as follows. First, the chapter considers how enhanced and restricted creative workers, and technical workers, draw on diverse sources of meaning in their experiences of meaningful work in the super indie workplace. This includes how enhanced creative workers find their work meaningful through their contribution to the creative process and final creative product. This is explained with reference to the features of general labour that these workers experience following the company's expansion due to their enhanced position within Oaks. The chapter then shows how restricted creative workers and technical workers find their work meaningful in different ways, drawing on social, relational and external factors. The second half of the chapter then analyses the role of Welsh culture in how workers across all groups of television workers find their work meaningful. The analysis presented in this chapter contributes to the meaningful work literature by showing how meaningful work is relationally defined by television workers, in terms of a combination of work processes, relations and structures.

7.2 Diverse sources of meaningful work

This section centres on how creative workers find their work meaningful through participation in the production of creative processes and products, using the typology to pinpoint a number of emergent themes that demonstrate the differences for enhanced, restricted and technical workers. For enhanced creative workers, the analysis focuses on the specific features of creative labour in this context that allow these workers to derive a sense of meaningfulness from their immersion in creative processes and their contribution to finished creative products. It also explains why restricted and technical workers rarely find their work meaningful in this way, given that their work shares fewer creative labour features, instead looking at how social and relational factors are drawn on by these workers in their meaningful work accounts. This extends existing understandings of the objective features of meaningful work (Hackman and Oldman 1975; Kahn 1990; May et al. 2004; Bailey and Madden 2016) by illustrating the importance of specific creative labour features in the search for meaningful work by creative workers. It also shows the importance of situating

meaningful work in its broader context to encapsulate the role of social, relational and non-work factors as well as individual work features in assessments of meaningful work. The sub-sections that follow assess sequentially how enhanced, restricted and technical workers find their work meaningful in the production of Welsh-broadcast television in the super indie workplace.

7.2.1 Enhanced creative workers

Enhanced creative workers, who experience a high degree of creative freedom and various opportunities for creative involvement in their work, are likely to find their work meaningful through their contribution to the creative process and overall material-end product. As typically experienced members of the production teams, or digitally-focused workers, these executive producers and producers are involved in both the conceptual and operational aspects of TV production (Smith and McKinlay 2009b), including ideation and development work, as well as production and post-production activities (Chapter 5). The holistic overview of production this affords to these workers allows them to develop a sense of immersion in the production process, and a sense of achievement associated with the completion of finished products. As such, the experience of meaningful work for these workers is facilitated by the general features of creative labour in their work context, such as high levels of autonomy, personal involvement in projects, a level of totality in production processes and the creative process as a shared endeavour (Caves 2000; Smith and McKinlay 2009b; Thompson et al. 2009; Townley and Beech 2010). The following sub-sections explore these features relative to a sense of immersion in creative processes, and a sense of achievement associated with the completion of a creative product.

7.2.1.1 Immersion in creative processes

Enhanced creative workers often reflect on being “immersed” (Daisy, Producer – Mixed Genre Productions) in specific projects as a highly meaningful aspect of their work. The feeling of being immersed is associated with projects that provide workers with input into the ideation stages of production, as well as the production and post-production stages such as editing. Enhanced creative workers are more frequently provided with space and time to become immersed in their work in this way, given that pressures for multi-skilling have enabled them to branch out into editing as part of their regular work (Chapter 5). As such, these enhanced creative workers often reflect on these elements of their work, their sense of immersion and the high levels of positivity associated with them. For example, Daisy, a producer who was often given free rein on her projects, celebrates the high levels of personal involvement she has in specific projects, that also allow her to develop a sense of immersion and ownership in her work:

I love [being in the edit], that's my favourite bit... it's usually directors that do that here not producers, but I've always done it myself and I enjoy that part of the process and I think that's what you're producing isn't it? You've gone out to film, you've written the script, you're there on location and then you're in the edit producing it, or otherwise it's not your programme... you're immersed in the process and I think you know that, I've also done edit producing for other people's work and I enjoy that as well, but you don't feel that it's your programme, you're delivering somebody else's. (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Mandy, Producer for Children's Television, similarly highly values these aspects of her work:

I love the editing side of it, I love sitting in an edit trying to kind of piece it all together, just making something look good and you know, the content's approachable and fun. (Mandy, Producer – Children's Television)

This was also the case for enhanced creative workers responsible for the online channel. These workers are afforded considerable freedom in producing content for the channel, and are responsible for developing ideas, planning, filming, editing and distributing this content themselves (Chapter 5), enabling them to be involved in each specific project from start to finish. This freedom is held in particularly high esteem by members of the online team, who reflect on their ability to contribute to ideas, for example:

We actually film everything, edit everything and release everything ourselves... and because we're uploading stuff to the internet, not making programmes, we can express what we think... we can be more personal with the content we make... we can create anything... I'm so proud of all of it, it's doing so well... it's exciting... and really it doesn't feel like a job... I enjoy the content, the idea... I'm very lucky. (Ste, Digital Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I enjoy the online channel... because it's just what I'm good at really, you know, like, general pop culture and millennial comedy... it's more kind of current... kind of flexible, like adjustable and you just go with the flow really, you go with what's in the news and what's popular, it's easier for me just because I'm kind of like the target audience... and now I'm actually working on things I'm interested in and things that are fun, and things that I can actually kind of contribute to ideas wise. (Brendon, Researcher – Mixed-Genre Productions)

A sense of immersion is also associated with projects that are particularly demanding in terms of working hours. Jasmine, Executive Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions, reflects on her most meaningful projects as those that “took over your life”, illustrating the trade-offs made by enhanced creative workers, enduring long working hours in order to be truly involved and immersed in the creative process:

We did two quite large productions... when we took about 15 people back and they lived as if they were in the year 1910, so they were completely cut off from everybody, their families, and the outside world... and another when they went back to the middle ages and the same again... that was really a lot of work to set up and to run as well... so I think that's probably the one that I've had most out of

because it took over your life, I didn't go home at all even on weekends for four weeks, so that was great... definitely I get most out of it when I'm really involved in the production. (Jasmine, Executive Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

There is also a shared element to this notion of immersion in how production teams make a collective contribution to the production process. As two producers note:

It's a collaboration rather than you're just mining your own path. (Leela, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions).

I've been really lucky throughout my career to work with a lot of like-minded and fun people, I think it's an essential element of working in the media and especially with kid's TV... I think it's definitely a team effort and as long as everyone's pulling their weight then it's fine. (Annie, Producer – Children's Television)

The collaborative and social dimensions of creative labour, summarised in the 'motley crew' are well documented (Caves 2000; Smith and McKinlay 2009b; Thompson et al. 2009; Townley and Beech 2010; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011), and are a fundamental feature of television production. While enhanced creative workers recognise that TV production is a collective and shared endeavour, it is less emphasised in workers' accounts of their meaningful work than factors relating to their personal involvement and achievements.

The accounts of immersion discussed above share similarities with the notion of 'pleasurable absorption' which refers to the experience of being fully immersed and involved within a creative process (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011), and is often associated with television production processes given the high levels of personal investment in terms of time and effort involved (Ursell 2000). In Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2011) cultural study of television workers this was common across different tiers of workers, depending on television workers' own reflections on their immersion 'in the moment'. However, at Oaks, it is mainly enhanced creative workers that reflect on their involvement in the production process in this way, given that their ability to navigate the super indie workplace effectively affords them high levels of autonomy, creative involvement and a holistic overview of production (Chapter 6).

7.2.1.2 Completion of finished product

In addition to a sense of immersion in the production process, workers find their work meaningful through a sense of pride and achievement associated with the completion of a programme or series. Similar to a sense of immersion, a sense of completion is associated with traditional features of creative labour, such as having input into a project from conception to completion and making a contribution to a material end product (Caves 2000; Townley and Beech 2010). As such, it is usually enhanced creative workers who find their work meaningful in this way, given that these workers have been able to use their knowledge and social capital to navigate the streamlined ideas

development and pressures for multi-skilling to their advantage, facilitating opportunities for these workers to be involved in every stage of the production process with a considerable degree of autonomy (Chapter 5 and 6).

Seeing projects through from start to finish and reflecting on the finished product is an important part of enhanced creatives' work where they achieve a sense of meaningfulness. There is also a sense of completion derived from the notion of things coming together, bringing the disparate parts of production into a finished product. As a hands-on producer, because of her success in navigating the company's expansion to her benefit (Chapter 5 and 6), Darcy, Executive Producer, is involved in the whole production process of individual projects. This enables her to reflect on the overall process and finished product as part of her work, signalling a particularly important aspect of her work:

I like the feeling right at the very beginning of thinking, ok I have two scripts, and they're very good, and now I need to start casting, and I think that's really exciting... and then the first day of filming is always really, a bit sort of nerve wracking but exciting as well, it's just the whole process really, I think it's great, it's just you feel you are creating something and it's really nice when you see it all coming together in front of you... it's sort of just building and forming something, it's really exciting, I think it's a creative thing that appeals. (Darcy, Executive Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

This notion of things coming together in the completion of productions is particularly important to workers on the live shows. The production process of live shows involves planning, practicing and rehearsals in the lead up to the live broadcast. In Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2011, p.134) cultural study of the television industry, they note the "strong notion of temporality, of effort enhanced and expended, with the satisfaction of completion to follow" in live production settings. This also links to the indeterminacy of the creative process and the risk and anticipation involved in the inherent unknowability of the audience's reaction (Caves 2000; Townley and Beech 2010). This is further intensified in live broadcasts, due to the immediacy of the audience's response, adding to the emotional labour required by production workers in such settings (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008). As such, the sense of achievement that follows the intense effort that went into live shows is highly valued by production workers. For example:

I produce coverage [for a live event] ... I work from seven in the morning and then the programme goes out and then I finish at ten o'clock at night, for six days, and I do an hour that goes out the same day... it's just exhausting... but we manage to get all the programmes out to the highest standard you can in the time, I'm proud of that, because not many people, if you wake up in the morning and think, you've got to put an hour out and you haven't got anything, it's quite a big thing, and there's technical problems and all sorts of problems so yeh, I'm quite proud of being able to do that. (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I prefer the live shows, every time... it's the adrenaline and just everything comes together and it fits somehow, if you rehearse, rehearse, and even if you want to record that rehearsal, just something's missing... I used to be like that when I used to present as well, I used to love live television and I struggled with pre-recorded programmes, just doing normal pieces to camera, when it wasn't live, I was desperate looking for the adrenaline. (Sally, Executive Producer –Children's Television)

There is also a material element to the experience of meaningful work for these workers associated with having contributed to the completion of an identifiable and tangible product at the end of the production process. Sometimes comparisons are drawn with the work of architects, expressing satisfaction towards the production of a real and tangible output as part of the work process. Such comments indicate the material element of meaningful work, where interactions with material objects provide opportunities for the experience of meaningful work (Bailey and Madden, 2017; Symon and Whiting, 2018). For enhanced creative workers, reflections on and connections with tangible finished programmes as part of their craft are positioned as highly rewarding and meaningful aspects of their work. For example:

What's particularly rewarding I think is the idea that you've got a product at the end of it to show for your work, so you know, you've got a series of eight programmes or something, and you know that you helped to create that... I think that's the same as like maybe an architect when they've finished a building or something... it's that sense that you've created a product you're not just sort of doing some paperwork for the sake of it, you've made something. (Louis, Producer – Children's Television)

I like that you get like a blank canvas at the beginning of it with like the title maybe and like a little short paragraph of how it might work and then you've gotta make it happen... it's the best thing, those creative bits. (Leela, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

The sense of pride associated with completing an identifiable, material product is more apparent for enhanced creative workers. The way enhanced creative workers have navigated their work gives them enough autonomy to be involved in the production process from start to finish, as well as enough creative freedom to feel a strong sense of personal ownership and involvement over material end products. This also relates to the public accountability of individual projects for enhanced creative workers, for example:

I do take pride in it, cos there's not many jobs out there where your name is attached to it, like in a credit... you want things to be as good as they can be. (Leela, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

7.2.2 Restricted creative workers

Restricted creative workers, who experience low levels of creative freedom and limited opportunities for creative involvement in their work are less likely to reflect on their work as

meaningful through their contribution to the creative process and overall material-end product. This group are largely in assistant producer, researcher, director and editor roles. Pressures for multi-skilling in the context of low-cost Welsh television production and the organisation of their project work schedules increases the repetitive and routine nature of work tasks and processes for these restricted creative workers (Chapter 5). These workers also face barriers to developing knowledge, expertise and social capital, that would otherwise benefit them in navigating the structural features of the super indie workplace (Chapter 6). As such, the individual work features experienced by restricted creative workers tend to be overlooked in their accounts of their meaningful work. Instead, these workers are more likely to reflect on social and relational factors in their accounts of their meaningful work.

The following sub-sections identify three ways that restricted creative workers respond to these creative barriers and seek to find meaningful work through their family connections, camaraderie and teamwork, and contributor relations. This shows how work is experienced as meaningful by restricted creative workers despite the absence of objectively meaningful work features in the television production process, highlighting the important role of relations and structural influences in assessments of meaningful work, and its dynamic nature.

7.2.2.1 Work-life fit

Restricted creative workers often situate their work within its broader context in their accounts of meaningful work. These workers understand the broader labour market of Welsh-broadcast television production and the limited alternative options available in terms of staff jobs in the Welsh context (Chapter 5). In this sense, they recognise that a decision to leave working as a staff member at Oaks would mean opting for freelance work and the job insecurity and precariousness that accompanies it. For example, Liv notes:

I was gunna leave the company and possibly go freelance but you've basically gotta write your life off... if I wanna stay in this industry and have a staff job, this is the only place I can do it in Wales. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions).

As such, the limited creative elements of working at Oaks often come as a trade-off for the stability of staff employment in a notoriously precarious industry. Therefore, restricted creative workers often reflect on how their work allows them to have a reasonable work-life balance. This is particularly the case for restricted creative workers with families, who find their work meaningful in the way that it allows them to spend time with their families outside of the workplace, tolerating the low levels of autonomy and creative input on projects for the stability it gives them in managing their family commitments and relationships. Several quotes from restricted creative workers show these trade-offs and the significance of their work in terms of it suiting their life beyond work:

I always feel slightly guilty that I should be kind of pushing myself in the direction [of network productions] as well, but I'm enjoying doing the Welsh language stuff to be honest with you and I've got young kids as well and I'm not away from home that much, even though if I do long hours at least I'm home in the evening still, but I think if I went and pushed myself over there, you'd end up as they do, they travel the world and do stuff all the time, so without hoping I'm sounding unambitious, I kind of like being able to go home in the evenings, you know? Maybe once [the kids] are older I'll try, I'll have to try probably. (Liam, Director – Mixed Genre and Children's Television)

These reflections often also indicate the temporal nature of meaningful work, in how what they find meaningful about their work has changed over time, as they have developed as a person and took on new responsibilities outside of work. Tina and Alfie have previously worked as freelancers in other production centres such as London and Manchester, where work is precarious but projects are higher profile and more creative and rewarding. They explain how the stability of staff employment, whilst undermining the creative elements of work, suits their situation while they have young families to care for outside of the workplace. For example:

I used to get quite proud of the fact that I would say I'm working on a certain programme and most people would have heard of it... in my twenties that was something I was quite proud of. The programmes I work for now not many people watch them to be honest... but it's suiting me now and it's great for now but in the future that is something I would like to work on other programmes, something a bit maybe more high profile... I have worked on network shows and it was important to me, but things change as well when you have a family, maybe if I worked on another programme, I'd be sent away for long periods of time filming, at the moment with a small baby at home that's you know, I don't have to go away much now... so I'm quite happy to be on something a bit more low key. (Tina, Trainee Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I wanted to be the best focus puller in the world, I wanted to win an Oscar for focus pulling that's what I really wanted... but now it's just basically getting the job done... now I've got a family so this works so much better for having a family... and I just intend to hang in here now until I retire, absolutely perfect for me, I'm in quite a nice place where I'm enjoying what I'm doing, I've got my health, got a nice family, and this is where I wanna be... I don't wanna be freelance again... cos I don't think I'd want to work 15, 17 hour days again, travelling around the place and not seeing my children, and my wife... there's not so many big challenges anymore... I don't think I'm gunna win any Oscars now... but at the moment it works for me. (Alfie, Camera Operator – Children's Television)

This shows how, for restricted creative workers, meaningful work is perceived in relation to their ability to integrate work and home rather than in the content of the work itself. These workers trade-off the lower levels of creative content for the stability of working hours and secure employment status. These workers therefore reflect on their work as meaningful in terms of these trade-offs within the broader context of their working lives, mediating tensions of their creative labour with sources of meaningfulness outside of the workplace (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017).

Social and relational factors are also important in how restricted creative workers experience meaningfulness. This is manifest in two key themes: camaraderie and teamwork with co-workers and contributor relations; these are discussed in the two sub-sections below.

7.2.2.2 Collaborative working relations

As indicated previously (Section 7.2.1.1) TV production is a collective and collaborative endeavour, involving input from a variety of individuals who work together throughout the production process towards the completion of the finished product. However, unlike in other TV production settings that predominantly rely on freelancers and open-ended contracts (McKinlay and Smith 2009b), the staff status of workers and limited use of freelancers at Oaks contributes to the development of stable and cohesive team relations. This fosters a sense of camaraderie and teamwork between members of the production teams, which is particularly pronounced for restricted creative workers, for example;

What I really enjoy with drama is the team work, you know we had a crew of I guess thirty to forty people plus, some days, all working towards the same goal, and what I came to realise on that was it doesn't matter what your role is within that team, were you not there for instance, it would make the job much tougher for everybody else, so everybody's there to help each other... the sense of team work does become very obvious and it's a really nice part of it you know, you depend on others as they depend on you, for me that's an element that I really enjoy. (Mick, Assistant Producer and Director – Mixed-Genre Productions)

It's exciting and it's the camaraderie between crew as well on location when you've got 40/50 members of crew, you know, all working as a team and pretty tough hours and then at the end of it you know, you have a few drinks, and the socialising aspect as well yeh it has been great, over the years. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

While a shared sense of camaraderie and teamwork amongst television project teams is by no means a new development (Davis and Scase 2000; Antcliff et al. 2007; Deuze 2008; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011), it is a crucial aspect of meaningful work for restricted creative workers in this setting given their position within the creative worker hierarchy. With limited input to ideas development and restricted creative involvement on projects, restricted creative workers tend to draw on social relations in their accounts of their meaningful work in mediating trade-offs with their work features. Such cases often reflect on how these team relations make a difference to their working lives, for example:

I enjoy it cos of everyone that I work with, they make a massive difference. (Kim, Researcher – Children's Television)

I'm fortunate in my little team because I really enjoy working with the people I do and that makes such a difference because I have worked on productions where

there have been real difficult big characters to work with and that is another layer of stress onto your day, I haven't got to contend with that at the moment so I'm in quite a fortunate position.. down the line I will look to do something that's not purely [programme X] cos I've been working on [programme X] now for the last three years but I'm so happy with the team I work with so that's what's keeping me here. (Tina, Trainee Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Social relations are therefore a key factor in how restricted creative workers find their work meaningful through the sense of trust and belonging associated with working within a close team of co-workers toward the same end goal.

7.2.2.3 Working with contributors

In addition to relations with co-workers, restricted creative workers also reflect in their accounts of their meaningful work on working with contributors; the people who feature on shows such as presenters and quiz contestants. This is significant in this setting due to the limited funding of Welsh-broadcast television and therefore small-sized production teams, meaning that these workers are more exposed to contributors throughout the planning and production stages of the TV production process (Chapter 5). This is predominantly the case for APs, researchers, directors and camera operatives who work directly with contributors as part of their work, which involves making arrangements for briefing and looking after contributors (APs, researchers) and directing and filming contributors on set (directors, camera ops). These opportunities to work with different contributors are highly valued by restricted creative workers and are sometimes used to discount against tensions in their work, such as the intensity of work that is repetitive and administrative. Several restricted creative workers in mixed-genre productions account for the role of contributors in their experiences of meaningful work as follows:

I often think why the hell have I slogged my guts out... but I love people, that's what I love about the job, I've got a real interest in people and that's why I keep telling myself why I do it. (Liv, Assistant Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I've been doing quite a lot with [programme X]... and the people who are on [programme X] well most of them are people who have moved into the area, we've had a dentist from Thailand, we've had a musician from Italy, we've had a lady from Singapore... so they're all different people and they're all different characters, different personalities... I have met all different people from all different walks of life and that's the really nice thing about it. (Liam, Director – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I tell you what, we just have the best contributors, they're just unbelievable, I mean they let us into their homes, they let us have their kids to cover in gunge you know, the contributors are brilliant, that is one of the great things that you do meet a right cross section of the Welsh people... I think that because it's a small country as well a lot of children get to go on television, so you visit a lot of homes, you know, and everybody is very welcoming, it's really nice! (Alfie, Camera Operator – Children's Television)

Contributor relations were especially important for restricted creative workers within the Children's Television department. This department produces two live shows a week, often involving large groups of child-contributors. As part of this, APs and researchers regularly act as chaperones during on-location shoots and studio shows, looking after the children-contributors and ensuring compliance with regulations, whilst directors and camera operators work closely with child-contributors during the preparation and filming of the live shows. As a result, a large proportion of restricted creative workers' time is spent working with children. As a key part of their work, Dianne, Head of Children's Television, notes workers in the department "*have to have a liking for the audience... if you're not interested in them then you're in the wrong place*" (Dianne, Head of Production – Children's Television). Several restricted creative workers from the Children's Television department reflect on working with children in their accounts of their meaningful work, for example:

It's fab working with kids... the contributors that come on that programme... they're usually there because they're confident and good at what they do... working with the kids that have done the series that I've done now, they've been fantastic... they were brilliant on camera and working with kids is just such fun because you get to go down to their level really have fun with them you know? And I always believe if you're having fun when you're filming it's gunna come across on the programme, and these two lads that are in this programme, aw they're fun, like a little Ant and Dec. (Cindy, Assistant Producer – Children's Television)

I think you get more job satisfaction after working with kids... they just enjoy it so much more, they appreciate it so much more. (Rose, Assistant Producer – Children's Television)

Working with kids can be really tough but it can be really exciting as well cos you never know what they're gunna do... there's days where you just come home, you've just been laughing all day cos you'll get some gems of kids you know when they come out with brilliant funny lines all day, they can really make you laugh sometimes. (Damon, Director – Children's Television)

This section shows the important role of social and relational factors in restricted creative workers' accounts of their meaningful work. These workers, in a less privileged position in the creative worker hierarchy, experience individual work features such as low levels of autonomy, restricted creative involvement and repetitive work processes (Chapter 5), that constrain the experience of meaningful work through their creative work. However, this did not inhibit meaningful work for restricted creative workers. Instead, meaningful work is relationally defined as a series of trade-offs between their individual work features and broader social and relational factors, enabling them to find their work meaningful through the integration of work and home life and collaborative working relations.

7.2.3 Technical workers

In contrast to creative workers, technical workers have low expectations for creative input and involvement in their work, filling predominantly production management and technical support roles (Chapter 5). That said, technical workers highly value being creative as a means of expression. This, however, is not accessed through their individual work features, but instead through the sense of being part of a shared creative culture, and through supplementing their work with additional activities that provide them with alternative channels through which to be creative. The following sub-sections explore how technical workers find their work meaningful through the creative culture at Oaks as well as through alternative creative channels.

7.2.3.1 Being part of a creative team and creative culture

As with restricted creative workers, social and relational factors are important in technical workers' accounts of their meaningful work. For this group of workers however, this is in the sense of being part of a creative team and working in a creative culture. Technical workers are mostly production managers of varying levels of seniority (managers, juniors, coordinators, assistants), and technical workers (studio directors and managers, engineers, sound recordists, camera operators), undertaking predominantly administrative, organisational and technical support work (Appendix 8). The limited creative elements of their individual work features do not constrain their meaningful work. Instead, these workers reflect on having the opportunity to do their work in a creative culture surrounded by creative individuals in their accounts of their meaningful work. For example, for Dawn, Junior Production Manager for Children's Television, the opportunity to work in an industry based around the creation of a creative product is highly valuable. She finds her work meaningful knowing that it ultimately contributes to the production of something creative. She explains:

In a production management type role, we're seen as being, not on the creative side of it, but I will always argue that, anyone who gets into this industry has got into it because they want to be creative, because otherwise you could go and, you know I could go and manage a hotel... so I think everybody's who's in this industry, wants some kind of creative involvement, but obviously on the production management side, it's not necessarily always obvious, but there are things that I will get quite excited about helping to make happen, because I know it will be a logistical thing to make it happen, but creatively it will look fantastic once we've got it on screen... by doing something uncreative you get something that is really creative and that's how I feel about it, that's what excites us and that's what keeps us doing the job really. (Dawn, Junior Production Manager – Children's Television)

For other production managers, the opportunity to work in a creative culture is enhanced by the social elements of work, in which working with creative individuals and as a creative team contributes to meaningful work. Holly and Pam, both junior production managers for mixed-genre productions reflect on these social factors in their accounts of their meaningful work:

My actual job is not creative... but I'm not disappointed by that, because I get to meet lots of people who are creative... my job isn't technically creative at all, it's all about scheduling, budgets... but being in an atmosphere that is creative is good, I enjoy that, I enjoy being around people who are making stories and making films and I get to meet really cool people and go to great events, and talk to people about what's going on and talk to people about their ideas, I love that, I really enjoy that. (Holly, Junior Production Manager – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I enjoy the [live programme] that we do because that's twice a year and it's always the same group of people, it's quite a big production, it's live so it's quite intense and it's long days but because you're a big group there's a good sort of social element and a teamwork... you feel like you achieve working on that as a team. (Pam, Junior Production Manager – Mixed-Genre Productions)

The sense of being part of a creative team is similarly important for technical workers and is intensified by the limited funding associated with the production of Welsh-broadcast television. The restrictive budgets mean that the creative teams need to pull together, enhancing the significance of social factors for these workers. Alfie, Camera Operator, and Joel, Sound Recordist, from the Children's Television department both reflect on being part of a team in their descriptions of their meaningful work:

The good thing is the little creative team, cos we're all running around to get things done on time, so there's no real place for egos here I think, it's like we all sort of slog together to get it done, so that's quite nice as well, it is a little team, just little production teams. (Alfie, Camera Operator – Children's Television)

Cos of the nature of the budget that we have here on a lot of the programmes being minimal, everyone does a bit of everything, everyone chipping in kind of thing, so it can be quite pally, compared to maybe you know a larger budget where it's gonna be much more strictly regimented in the department... it just appeals to the way I work really, the sort of team effort, I just really enjoy it... once you're on location it's such a bubble environment and it's quite intense... it makes it good fun on location it's always a laugh when you go out, a bit of a team event. (Joel, Sound Recordist – Children's Television)

This shows how technical workers find their work meaningful through the sense of being part of a collective creative effort and working in a creative environment. Whilst their specific work is limited in its creative attributes, the shared notion of creating a creative product is highly meaningful to these workers, and therefore social and relational factors play a key role in technical workers' reflections on their work as meaningful.

7.2.3.2 Alternative creative channels

Technical workers often reflect on non-work activities as containers of meaningful work. Whilst the organisational expansion and features associated with Welsh-broadcast television production have intensified and routinised their work processes, little has changed in terms of the creative elements of their work (Chapter 5). As such, technical workers accept that their specific roles in the

production process, while playing an instrumental role in the organisation and facilitation of television production, are not highly creative. Instead, these workers draw on creative activities outside of work in order to fulfil their desires for creative expression. This focus allows them to engage with activities they associate with being meaningful, such as performing music, arts and crafts and individual film projects. Holly, Junior Production Manager for Mixed-Genre Productions, neatly summarises how she seeks creative activities outside of work, given her lack of creative input in the work process:

It's really important to me that as an outlet in life, to be creative, but, for me at the moment it's not through my work, it's all stuff that I do outside of work... I sing in a band, and I draw, just a bit of this and that, just for Instagram... I just really enjoy it, I guess cos I don't get the creative outlet here, so it's good to do stuff like that outside of work. (Holly, Junior Production Manager – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Similarly, Alfie, Camera Operator for Children's Television, speaks of opportunities he undertakes outside of work that enable him to access these creative aspects of work. For Alfie, this includes undertaking "passion projects", taking time off work to engage with projects he feels more passionate about than the work he undertakes in his day-to-day work. For example, he explains:

I've just had three weeks off the start of this year to do a project that I wanted to do in Europe... we decided to just go out there and shoot it so that was quite good fun... it nearly killed me cos we were so involved in it, myself, the director and the producer, because we'd worked with it for 9 years... all of the energy went into the film so we were probably doing 18 hour days with shooting and discussing the next day's work... it was pretty intense, it was proper guerrilla TV... it was brilliant, absolutely brilliant...and it was just really cool to work with people who wanted to get it done as well, it was really good. (Alfie, Camera Operator – Children's Television)

It is also common for technical workers to undertake activities outside of work that they hope to one day integrate as their primary form of work. This includes side projects such as floral design, cake decorating and music composition. Several technical workers talk about these side projects:

It's important to me that I enjoy my work... but outside work I'm also self-employed, I'm a trained floral designer, and I also train as a cake decorator as well, so I do work outside of work as well... it was just a hobby and then my brother married and he said you can do the flowers... and that was nine years ago and it was a hobby that's escalated really... so I'm at that point in life where maybe I've got to make a decision, do I stay in the media, or on my own as self-employed. (Courtney, Production Assistant – Children's Television)

My work pays my mortgage... but I'm also a composer, so I've got my own studio at home, so ideally one day I'll do that all the time. (Hilton, Sound Recordist and Trainee Broadcast Engineer – Children's Television)

This illustrates how technical workers draw on non-work activities in their accounts of their meaningful work. Rather than constrain their meaningful work, the limited creative elements of their work are acknowledged, triggering the search for meaningful work based on alternative non-work domains.

7.2.4 Summary: diverging and converging sources of meaningful work

The above analysis highlights the different ways in which creative and technical workers find their work meaningful depending on their position within the creative worker typology (for creative workers) and through combining alternative sources of meaning within and outside of work (for technical workers). Building on the creative labour typology (Chapter 5), the chapter shows how enhanced creative workers find objective features of their work meaningful. Restricted creative workers on the other hand, often lack the levels of autonomy and creative involvement necessary for realising meaningful work in this way. Instead, they reflect on social and relational factors as well as non-work domains in reframing their meaningful work. For restricted creative workers, this often involves reflecting on trade-offs in their work context, such as the stability of employment that suits their family life, albeit resulting in uninteresting and unambitious projects in their daily work. For technical workers, whilst the work context itself is not viewed as a strong source of meaning, these workers draw on non-work domains that allow them to engage with activities they associate as creative endeavours, such as performing music, arts and crafts, and individual film projects. The social relations of work are also significant for these workers, as well as being part of the creative culture. Therefore, the above analysis helps to explain how and why certain groups of workers find their work meaningful in different ways, showing that where there is an absence of individual creative work features, this can stimulate the search for meaning based on other social, relational and non-work factors.

Despite the divergent sources of meaning for different workers and the negotiation of the above trade-offs, a consistent theme that emerges across all groups of creative and technical workers is the additional meaning that is attached to national culture. This is particularly acute for this case study given its strong ties to the Welsh language and Welsh culture. The following sections outline how the Welsh identity contributes to the meaning of work across various groups of television workers at Oaks.

7.3 The role of Welsh identity and Welsh culture

Creative and technical workers converge in the way that the Welsh culture contributes to their meaningful work. This is apparent in individual work features associated with working in Wales, social and relational factors associated with working with other Welsh people, and notions of cultural worthiness associated with making a contribution to Welsh culture. The remainder of the

chapter turns to assessing the role of the national culture of Wales in creative and technical workers' accounts of their meaningful work in the setting of Welsh-broadcast television.

This section identifies overarching similarities in the ways that creative and technical workers find their work meaningful through notions of Welsh culture. Whilst the meaning of work literature has long acknowledged the role of social and cultural influences (Marx 1867; Weber 1904; Brief and Nord 1990), empirical accounts tend to focus on identifying patterns across cultures in terms of the socialisation of work meanings, using work centrality as a means to understanding cultural differences (Rosso et al. 2010). However, the analysis presented here extends this focus through providing a more fine-grained analysis of the role of national culture in work meanings, assessing on a more granular level how and why national culture contributes to meaningful work in the setting of Welsh TV production. The sub-sections that follow address how working in the Welsh language, the mutual bond between Welsh people, and producing a product that contributes to Welsh culture, contributes to meaningful work for creative and technical workers in the production of Welsh television at Oaks.

7.3.1 Working in the Welsh language

Workers often reflect on individual work features associated with working in the Welsh context in their accounts of their meaningful work. This is in addition to creative work features that enhanced creative workers highlight as particularly meaningful, and an important part of work for restricted creative workers and technical workers who lack creative work features in their daily working lives. In particular, workers highlight having the opportunity to work in the Welsh language as a meaningful aspect of their work, for example:

It's nice to be able to work in my first language, and use my first language day to day, it's nice as well because it's broadcast in Welsh, a lot of my friends are Welsh, and there's more of a chance they'd actually see the programmes and think, oh I know that guy, oh he's one of my friends. (Damon, Director – Children's Television)

I feel very much at home because I'm working in the medium of Welsh, Welsh is my first language, everybody around me works in Welsh, it's very nice. (Tina, Trainee Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

Several workers highlight this as a particularly significant aspect of their work, with “*I couldn't work in English*” (Tegan, Producer – mixed-genre productions) a common attitude across workers. This sentiment is associated with the rapid expansion of Welsh-broadcast television during the 1980s and 1990s, which provided opportunities for Welsh residents to live and work in Wales, whilst also pursuing a career in the media as opposed to relocating to a different geographic media hub, such as London or Manchester. For workers at Oaks, the expansion of Welsh-broadcast television and its

accompanying opportunities are highly valued and appreciated aspects of their working lives.

Several quotes from workers with developed careers in the industry illustrate this:

I never wanted to work in London, I nearly did when I worked for the BBC, I nearly went to work in CBBC, I had a job there, but I didn't take it up cos I had another job in Wales, and I never regret that... cos I generally make things for S4C it's quite a smallish pool, I think you get more work life balance cos if I was making huge things for network I think your emails would probably be going all night... I think it's more of a normal job maybe in Wales, rather than a career maybe in London... it's nice to be able to work in Wales and do a job like this that's creative, interesting, you know... it's nice that you can have a job and a career in Wales. (Leela, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

I've had a fantastic career in what I do and can still be local and I've got two kids that go to Welsh medium schools and I couldn't do that in London you know and still have a great career in the media really... the job, it's not as glamorous maybe as what it used to be years ago, I think the money's less now than what it was you know years, maybe 20 years ago... but I think Welsh TV's fantastic... London is much closer now if you wanted to do that but obviously with me and my family, I wouldn't be able to, but I believe in what I'm doing for the Welsh language as well really. (Sally, Executive Producer – Children's Television)

This shows how opportunities to work and live in Wales are highly valued aspects of work, especially in relation to producing Welsh-language television programmes. As such, the expansion of Oaks into a super indie is highly significant for many of these workers, in solidifying the company's position in the Welsh-broadcast production industry and providing opportunities for working in television production and living in Wales.

7.3.2 Shared sense of Welshness

In addition to the individual elements, there are also social elements of the Welsh culture that contribute to workers' meaningful work, with a shared sense of Welshness deeply embedded in the values of workers at Oaks. This shared sense of Welshness amongst the workers is also shaped through their work which is designed to promote a sense of purpose and positive impact on others (Grant, 2007). This is also emphasised by management who have isolated the Welsh side of the business in order to retain its Welsh identity (Chapter 4). It is important for management that the company retains its status of an indigenous Welsh company, in which management also promotes the significance of Oaks' output by emphasising the importance of the company for the Welsh economy, as well as their work. This Welshness is also fostered by the cultural homogeneity of the workforce that strengthens this value congruence and helps to facilitate a culture of Welshness amongst workers in the children's department. As Chapter 4 details, management have a preference for hiring Welsh speakers and those passionate for Welsh language output, as well as targeting Welsh speaking universities for graduates. Many comments illustrate this shared sense of Welshness amongst workers:

We all speak Welsh... we're all very proud of working in Wales, working for S4C, working in Welsh... obviously our programmes, like especially the live one you know, if Wales are playing for instance at the Euros, obviously that's gonna be headline news for that programme for that day, in that sense we're quite Welsh. (Mandy, Producer – Children's Television)

I just think [Welsh television] is a better community, I think just cos, it's a lot smaller, I just think, I just think it's a nicer feel to it, and it's like a more, I dunno you feel closer to everyone I guess, I dunno if that's because of the language or, but because I went to a Welsh school I'm just used to everything in Welsh, but yeh, I just think, there's a lot more people in English language TV, so it's a better community [in Wales]. (Dawn, Junior Production Manager – Children's Television)

This shared sense of Welshness is similarly relevant for the Welsh audience as well as the Welsh contributors who feature on the television programmes being produced. For example, Liv, Assistant Producer for Mixed-Genre Productions says “*I feel I identify with the Welsh people*”. Likewise, in highlighting projects associated with particularly meaningful memories, creative workers often reflect on projects that involve working closely with Welsh contributors and on topics relating to the Welsh language. Tina and Daisy for example, both reflect on the same project based on celebrities learning the Welsh language in their accounts of their meaningful work:

I worked on [a programme] which was quite a big one, so basically we had a group of celebrities who went to different locations but they were all camping on site and the challenge was to learn Welsh in a week and we had different activities every day, it was also an as-live show, recorded on every evening so that was quite full on, but it was very rewarding, and it was quite exciting because the as-live element was good, and the Welsh element was good... I'd say that's something in recent years that I'm the most proud of. (Tina, Trainee Producer – Mixed Genre Productions)

We did this thing for S4C, so that was, 8 live shows, with celebrities learning Welsh, and we went to West Wales to this lovely sort of glamping kind of place and we spent a week, so that was lovely, really good experience and it came across on screen as well and we spent a week there and the sun was shining you know, people learnt Welsh, people cried. (Daisy, Producer – Mixed-Genre Productions)

The shared notion of Welshness across workers in Welsh-broadcast television is also strengthened by the historical-political context of Welsh language television. Specifically, this involves reflections on the historical-political context of Welsh language television, characterised by longstanding struggles for funding and challenges for S4C (Aldridge, 2007), which further contributes to the culture of Welshness. These struggles facilitate a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to the Welsh television community in particular. This is apparent in workers' responses who speak of “*flying the flag for Wales*” (Tom, Creative Producer – Digital Studio) and the need for Wales to “*make a stand*” (Alfie, Camera Operator – Children's TV) illustrating a strong sense of national identity underpinning the importance of their work. For example:

Wales has to stand up and push the people that it's got there, because what's the point of people coming here [from England], earning good money and then taking it back over the bridge to spend you know, let's get the people here that can earn the money here and spend the money here, and then hopefully that will increase budgets for everybody you know? That's what we'd like to happen. (Alfie, Camera Operator – Children's Television)

The challenges that come and go I suppose are people who don't agree with the Welsh language needing that kind of funding and people will always say that S4C doesn't need to exist and stuff, but I think it's easier just to ignore them and carry on with what we're doing because it's very important, I meant the [pre-school] service is very, very important for small children... there'll always be challenges but I think it's important to keep it... I've been brought up through my life with Welsh language TV... it's important to be able to have that aspect of life, and... to have that right to have a Welsh language channel, and to have good content on it and not just something thrown together. (Hilton, Sound Recordist and Trainee Broadcast Engineer – Children's Television)

This demonstrates how the shared sense of Welshness and mutual bond of the Welsh culture of Oaks contributes to meaningful work for workers. This is strengthened by the broader context of Welsh television production and facilitates a strong national culture across the Welsh-broadcast departments that unite workers in their Welshness, and contributes to their meaningful work in this setting.

7.3.3 Contribution to Welsh culture through Welsh TV production

Creative workers also position their work as meaningful through appealing to notions of the cultural worthiness of their work. In this sense, these workers justify the moral worth of their work, reflecting on its contribution to the greater good (Lepisto and Pratt 2017). Part of this sense of the moral worth of work involved the sense of struggle felt by Welsh creative workers in the context of Welsh-language television, as discussed in the previous section. This sense of struggle has been identified in marginalised television production contexts elsewhere, such as Levine's (2009, p.158) study of Canadian television production, where national identity played a "power place" as Canadian workers justified the importance of their work through appeals to the 'Canadianess' of their work. This is similarly the case at Oaks, where creative workers appeal to the Welshness of their work in framing its broader purpose and importance for the Welsh culture. Such accounts drew on the importance of Welsh-language television for the Welsh language, for example:

There's always this battle to keep the language alive and I think the channel has a huge influence on that, S4C, so without it, and without the programme making, it wouldn't connect so many people and you know, it's one of the sole purposes I think, it's a talking point for Welsh speakers and it's something to bring them together. It's a small world really so. (Simone, Studio Operator and Director – Children's Television)

I don't want the Welsh language to die out, and I think Welsh television is a big part of that because it's a way of getting Welsh out into communities that don't actually get chances to talk that much Welsh, if the Welsh channel would go I think the language wouldn't be that far behind it to be honest with you. (Damon, Director – Children's Television)

Based on similar perceptions as in the above quotations, creative workers often justify the importance and significance of their work through positioning its contribution to Welsh language television, and therefore the Welsh language and Welsh culture. Such accounts are widespread across responses, with a tendency to position the meaningfulness of work around the broader contribution it brings to the Welsh culture. This is the case across the different groups of workers in the typology regardless of their position in the creative worker typology, and plays a significant role in creative workers' accounts of their meaningful work. For example:

When I look back on my childhood and I remember the things I used to watch, I used to enjoy it so much, and I just wanted to make sure that that's available for the next generation, especially in Welsh, just make sure that I'm helping to produce great programmes really. (Tiff, Unit Production Manager – Children's Television)

Our remit here is about the Welsh language, you know? It is to keep kids on the ball with the Welsh language, and I think it does work, especially our pre-school stuff, you know? I think that's really good, and I think it does play an important role... it gives them a good little base. I know I'm really proud that my kids speak Welsh, and they like watching Welsh television. (Alfie, Camera Operator – Children's Television)

I really, really believe in what we do especially for the Welsh language... and there's so much competition out there, especially in the age group 13 to 16... so when we've got over a thousand kids competing you know, in two programmes, for me that's amazing, just to make a difference really and to make a difference with the Welsh language... we go behind the scenes of The X Factor, we do speak to Nicole Scherzinger... or teach Dermot O'Leary how to speak Welsh, and, he, the presenter said something [in Welsh] and Dermot said what's that, oh I just said the gorgeous Dermot O'Leary, and he said ah I just love the Welsh language, such a beautiful language, and for me, for him to say that, you know, it's priceless for that child who goes to a Welsh school from a non-Welsh background... you just feel you can do a difference really. (Sally, Executive Producer – Children's Television)

The role of the Welsh culture is therefore highly significant in creative workers' accounts of their meaningful work across all groups of workers at Oaks. This is evident in individual work features, in having opportunities to work and live in Wales, and in the shared Welshness of the workforce that is highly significant in producing TV programmes in this Welsh super indie.

Finally, Welsh culture plays a key role in justifying the broader purpose and significance of their work, in how creative workers reflect on their contribution of their work to the greater good through its contribution to the Welsh language and Welsh culture. The historical-political context of Welsh-

broadcast television strengthens notions of Welsh culture in this context; the marginalised position of Welsh-broadcast television and its associated longstanding struggles unites these workers, as they justify the inherent worth of their work in strengthening the position of the Welsh language and Welsh-language television.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how creative and technical workers find their work meaningful in the context of Welsh-broadcast television in the Welsh super indie, Oaks. Building on the typology presented in Chapter 5 and 6, the analysis shows the competing ways in which television workers find their work meaningful, drawing on divergent sources of meaning. It shows how the experience of work in television production is strongly associated with the divergent sources of meaning drawn on in meaningful work accounts. Those creative workers whose work resembles the traditional features of creative work, (e.g. highly creative, autonomous, holistic involvement) often reflect on individual work features and the experience of work itself in their meaningful work accounts. These workers have been successful in navigating the super indie workplace to their advantage through their high levels of social capital.

On the contrary, those creative workers with less creative input and autonomy reference alternative sources of meaning, negotiating the meaning of their work in terms of trade-offs for creativity, such as work-life fit and collaborative working relations (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017). This is similar to technical workers, who reflect on relational and non-work factors in their experiences of meaningful work. As such, the chapter shows how social and relational factors are more important in this context when individual creative work features are missing, showing how in the absence of creative work features, creative workers search for meaning from other domains. It also shows the prevalent role of national culture in this setting, where television workers unite in the strong sense of meaning attached to producing Welsh cultural products, shared understandings of Welshness, and appeals to the cultural worthiness of work.

Together Chapters 5, 6 and 7 illuminate the realities of work for television workers in the super indie context. The presentation of these findings has shown how the varied experience of work is associated with organisational changes, ability to navigate these changes using resources, and the negotiation of diverse sources of meaning. These findings show the interconnectedness of these themes, and together, provide a holistic account of the realities of working in Welsh television production. The way these themes interrelate through the typology is summarised in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Summary of data themes by creative worker typology

Typology	Experience of work	Resources/barriers to resources	Sources of meaning
Enhanced creative workers	Involvement in ideas development process	Nuanced understanding of the Welsh television landscape	Immersion in creative process
	Opportunities for directing, editing and filming	Knowledge of upcoming programme trends	Completion of finished product
	Projects allocated based on skills and expertise	Access to decision makers	Welsh identity and culture
	Opportunities for collaborations across units	Diverse skillsets	
	High levels of autonomy and creative freedom		
	Holistic overview of projects (involvement from start to finish)		
Restricted creative workers	Limited input to ideas development process	Lack of contacts in wider industry	Work-life fit
	Production-coordinator type tasks (largely administrative work)	Hierarchical divisions and lack of access to decision makers	Collaborative working relations
	Work intensification	Lack of development opportunities	Working with contributions
	Project allocations based on availability		Welsh identity and culture
	Routinised production practices		
	Limited progression		
	Low levels of autonomy		

8. DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to assess workers' experience of television production work in the context of a Welsh super indie, in particular evaluating how organisational and contextual factors influence the experience of creative and meaningful work. To do so, the research is underpinned by three research questions; to assess the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the nature of work, to examine how creative workers navigate the super indie workplace, and to explore how workers respond to these changes in their meaningful work. Given the sparsity of research on work in super indie settings, the research offers a holistic overview of TV production in this setting. In doing so, the research provides an in-depth account of the nature of TV production for the different groups of workers involved and evaluates how TV production and its creative content has evolved due to the super indie expansion and the organisation's embeddedness within the Welsh television context. Emergent findings indicate the important and yet underexplored connections between the nature of work, the nature of creativity, resources and the nature of meaningful work. As such, the thesis draws on these interconnected themes to assess workers' experience of the super indie form in context. This provides an important contribution by bridging the creative work, social capital and meaningful work literatures, showing the pivotal connections between these processes for workers in TV production.

Chapter 4 begins by setting the scene for the remainder of the analysis by examining the key features of Oaks' expansion alongside an illumination of changes to Welsh TV production more broadly. Building on this context, Chapters 5 and 6 present the findings from the case study company, demonstrating the interconnectivity between nature of work, creativity, resources and meaningful work. The first of these themes covers the impact of the super indie institutional structure on the nature of TV production work, showing how workers in different creative and technical roles are impacted by the company's expansion (Chapters 5). Secondly, the research assesses changes in the nature of creativity, accounting for the 'winners' and 'losers' in this setting in terms of the impact of the organisation's development on creative workers' ability to input into creative content as part of their work (Chapter 5, Section 5.3). Thirdly, the research builds on this typology to examine how creative workers navigate the super indie workplace drawing on a range of resources which explains why some creative workers are more successful than others in this context (Chapter 6). Finally, the research draws upon the findings from Chapters 5 and 6 to evaluate how workers respond to these changes in terms of their meaningful work (Chapter 7). This includes an assessment of how creative and technical workers find their work meaningful, and in the absence of creative work features, find meaning through external, social and relational factors.

This chapter brings together the findings from these interrelated themes and discusses their connections and contributions to existing research on TV production, creative labour, social capital and meaningful work. To do so, the empirical, conceptual and theoretical implications of the study are set out. Firstly, the chapter addresses how the super indie context alters the experience of work for television workers, locating the research findings within existing debates in TV production and creative labour research. It then considers the relevance of the research for the research on social capital, and meaningful work. This also includes an assessment of the significance of national culture in this context. Building on this synthesis, the following section demonstrates how these findings contribute to a sociological study of meaningful work.

8.2 The super indie structure and the reality of work

One central focus of the thesis has been to assess how the super indie institutional structure impacts workers' experience of television work. Although there are variations across different groups of creative and technical workers in the company studied, the findings reveal that the way work is experienced as meaningful is associated with an individuals' role within the television production process, and the way that role (in particular the creative elements) has been affected by the development of the super indie institutional structure. To assess this emergent finding in more depth the discussion in the following sub-sections is set out under the following three interconnected key themes. First, addressing the impact of the institutional expansion on tensions and trade-offs in TV production. Second, demonstrating the creative workers' varying ability to input into creative content. Third, assessing how these changes shape how workers experience meaningful work in this setting. These themes are addressed in turn below, before they are drawn together to demonstrate how they contribute to a sociological study of meaningful work.

8.2.1 Tensions and trade-offs

The first data chapter (Chapter 5) examines the nature of TV production work in the case company, drawing attention to differences across and within groups of creative and technical workers. Despite important variances in the experiences of these workers in this thesis, existing studies tend not to differentiate between the different workers studied, grouping together workers in diverse roles under the label of 'creative workers' (Thompson et al. 2009; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009; Thompson et al. 2016). This approach conceals important differences in the nature and experience of work for the broad spectrum of workers involved in creative production (Christopherson 2009; Banks 2010). In addition, where TV production research makes a distinction between these workers, there is a predominant focus on creative workers (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Lee 2011; Lee 2012), with technical workers frequently overlooked or underexplored. To address these omissions, the thesis includes technical workers in its analysis, recognising their important contribution to

facilitating TV production and supporting the creative process. This approach also facilitates comparisons, enabling the research to explore how the context impacts different workers in different ways, and what this means for workers in different roles.

Chapter 5 also assesses and explains how the development of work in the case company emanates from both the contextual features of the super indie expansion as well as the company's embeddedness within the Welsh context. This shows the illuminating role of the Welsh context for TV production in this setting, in which factors of the Welsh TV production context are integral to the nature and experience of work. While the production studies literature has identified the important role of national context in TV production processes (Levine 2009; Zoellner 2016), this has received limited attention from TV production research in organisation studies. As such, this is a significant finding and contribution to the understanding of the contextual features that shape TV production in organisational contexts.

In addition, Chapter 5 identifies and evaluates how the consolidation of the sector has impacted on the institutional structure of the case company, and consequently the impact of this structure on the nature and experience of work for television workers. The majority of TV production studies focus on freelancing in the industry (Dex et al. 2000; Paterson 2012; Lee 2012; 2013; Wing-Fai et al. 2015). The thesis therefore adds to a small collection of studies that evaluate the experience of TV production for full time employees (Sengupta et al. 2009), providing an up to date, empirical analysis of the impact of industry changes on work experiences in specific case contexts.

A central theme in the TV production literature points to the instability and precarious nature of work in the sector (Randle and Culkin 2009) and how this provides both burdens and benefits for its workers (Dex et al. 2000; Ursell 2000; Paterson 2012). A central critique of the precariousness of the industry is that it creates challenges for sustaining employment (Dex et al. 2000; Blair et al. 2001; Blair et al. 2003; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2009), undermines trust and social relations (Paterson 2001), and leads to self-exploitation (Menger 1999; Ursell 2000; McRobbie 2002b; Lee 2012). Within this debate, limited research has explored the merits or conceptual drawbacks of a more structured and stable approach to TV production. This thesis directly responds and adds to this gap in the literature by showing how the expansion of Oaks into a super indie impacts workers' experiences, including its influence on their creative and meaningful work. It is from this analysis that the importance of alternative tensions and trade-offs operating in a super indie setting are highlighted.

The investigation of the nature of TV production work in Chapter 5 indicates the overarching experience of stability by television workers. This is unusual in TV production contexts, given that the industry is usually associated with 'structural uncertainty' (Randle and Culkin 2009) due to the

casualisation of labour in the sector. A noteworthy point of the present study is therefore how management in the case study company have been able to provide stability for workers, through capitalising on the nature of TV production in the Welsh context. This confirms the use of standardised forms of control in TV production settings (Sengupta et al. 2009) and shows how stability can be achieved in settings where contracts from commissioners are more long term.

Early studies focused on the precariousness of the sector have speculated on the potential benefits of a more structured and stable approach to TV production in terms of facilitating creativity and innovation (Barnett and Starkey 1994; Paterson 2001). Chapter 5 however reveals important and yet underexplored associated trade-offs and tensions that accompany a more stable approach to TV production, with staff positions in creative industry occupations seemingly associated with negative attributes by some workers. For example, workers identified the stability of work to be accompanied by restricted skill specialisation, work intensification and routinisation. This therefore provides important insights into the TV production literature, showing how negative attributes associated with insecurity can similarly be true for more stable production contexts. In addition, Chapter 5 builds on the findings from studies of freelance workers that highlight the compromises made by television workers in terms of the trade-offs between insecure working conditions and opportunities for highly autonomous, creative and self-fulfilling work (Ursell 2000; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Lee 2012), to show how in super indie settings these trade-offs are reversed. Instead of trading stability for creativity, at Oaks workers accept stability, but at the expense of other aspects of their work. As such, the first main contribution of the study extends the existing research on TV production through highlighting the way that the super indie impacts the trade-offs associated with creative work in this context. Usually, the trade-offs associated with TV production are positioned around the acceptance of irregular, precarious work because of the ability to participate in creative content. By working in creative roles workers trade-off the negatives for the positives of creativity, which is premised as a panacea for the structural constraints of work (Lee, 2012). The thesis builds on this previous research by showing how stability is not a panacea for the competing tensions associated with creative labour, since the rationale for more stable and efficient production is also underpinned by different tensions relating to the creativity and quality of productions and the production process. Therefore, tensions and trade-offs are multi-fold, operating when there is both insecurity and stability.

As noted, the thesis includes an analysis of both creative and technical workers. In doing so, Chapter 5 extends the scope of previous studies by identifying similarities and differences across television workers in terms of their experiences of TV production work. This builds upon claims that technical workers have fundamentally different aspirations and motivations to creative workers (Banks 2010;

Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). The thesis begins to expose these differences; trade-offs were less pronounced for technical workers, and emergent themes relating to the super indie structure, such as multi-skilling and opportunities, tended to benefit this group of workers. Instead, the biggest source of tensions for these workers related to the Welsh context, with budgetary constraints intensifying their work. This confirms recent calls for technical workers to be differentiated and examined specifically, since the nature of work for these workers differed from creative workers, particularly in terms of the trade-offs of the situation (Banks 2010; Thompson et al. 2016).

Finally, Chapter 5 reaffirms the importance of contextualised assessments of work in creative sector settings that sufficiently capture the role of contextual factors in how work is managed, organised and experienced. Echoing the position of labour process theorists, this confirms the importance of connecting changes in the nature of creative work to broader changes in the social, economic, production and political environments within which TV production takes place (Christopherson 2009; Smith and McKinlay 2009a; 2009b; Thompson et al., 2009; Thompson et al. 2016). Identifying the features of creative work without consideration of the specificity of different sectors and the constraints associated with conducting creative work in commercialised and marketized settings leads only to superficial accounts of the nature of such work (Thompson et al. 2016). As such, the move towards assessing changes in the nature of TV production in relation to the development of the super indie structure in Wales reconnects changes in creative work to its broader context, providing a more nuanced explanation of the nature of work in such settings.

8.3 Creative worker hierarchy

An important contribution of this thesis is the emergence of a creative worker hierarchy. This builds on and extends the previous theme, whereby emergent findings point to certain creative workers benefiting from the context and gaining equal or enhanced participation in creative work. Some attempts to explore a labour market hierarchy have been explored for precarious workers in the creative industries more generally (Ross, 2004). However, since there is a primary focus on freelance workers, there are few studies on organisations within TV production. As such, little is known about hierarchies in creative work when an organisational setting is explored. Adding to this underexplored area, this thesis highlights the ways that these enhanced creative workers are better able to negotiate the ideas development and participate more fully in the creation of creative content. Moreover, an important facet of this finding, is the position of these enhanced workers in senior positions within the super indie. The workers have been able to entrench and enhance an already strategic position. This further echoes the hidden power relations often at play within the creative industries more widely, and TV production specifically (Davis and Scase 2000; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010; Thompson et al. 2009).

Additionally, the identification of the creative labour hierarchy extends the existing literature by showing a more nuanced analysis of the experience of creative work for creative workers in different positions. In particular, this thesis also sheds light on the lower-level workers, and pinpoints the difficulties faced by them in trying to achieve creativity in the context of the super indie structure. While the enhanced workers are benefiting from the improved stability and have negotiated and entrenched their more favourable position in the hierarchy, the restricted workers are plighted with the opposite outcomes. The creativity that is premised to be at the centre of their work is threatened and instead their roles become more routine with less scope for ideas development. Building on the above finding, the thesis highlights the importance of looking at the impacts of these changes for workers and showing the power imbalances that they can create.

These findings reflect research done elsewhere in the creative industries, such as the games development industry where similar organisational changes have occurred (Hodson and Briand, 2013). The routinisation of creative content through project management practices led to certain workers being afforded ideation and conceptual stages while others fulfilled the more functional and everyday activities. In a similar manner to the findings in this thesis, the more privileged workers who exercised greater creativity in their work were also more likely to be producers or more experienced workers. The problems associated with project managing creative work has also been highlighted (Movitz and Sanberg, 2009). Again, senior management were seen to undermine creativity by allocating creative tasks to senior creative workers, often at the expense of other creative workers. This thesis reflects these hierarchies at play in the management of creative work showing that even when insecurity is reduced, there are a number of additional barriers that impede upon creative workers' fulfilment of creative work. However, this thesis extends these findings further and begins to question how the workers' respond to these difficulties when seeking to retain a sense of meaningful work even when creativity is diminishing.

Furthermore, these changes point to a further tension for TV production more broadly. The initial fragmentation of the industry was accompanied by the assumption that creativity, talent and innovation is better fostered within genre-focused independents, and therefore a preference for independent producers as the favoured means of programming in the industry (Born 2002; Bennett 2015). This followed from the casualisation of the industry that transformed the nature of work and employment in the sector, essentially through a process of 'de-bureaucratisation' leading to a move away from permanent, salaried staff with clear career ladders, to a sector comprised of independent producers and freelancers (Starkey et al. 2000; Smith and McKinlay 2009b). In contrast to these changes, this thesis points toward re-bureaucratisation in the industry whereby the creative process

is being more stringently managed and controlled through project management and greater consolidation of roles and responsibilities.

This thesis highlights signs of this trend through the organisation and management of the super indie. Given the marketized context of TV production and competition based on cost control, management have sought to consolidate ideas development to make it more efficient, showing signs of an increased likelihood to attain successful commissions. As such, in the super indie context, control has been reassigned to management in the way that work is organised, by stripping away the need for talent and creativity on the part of many of the workers in the television production process (and along with the large supply of workers in the market). The situation has been intensified in Welsh context because of small number of Welsh language TV staff jobs, further reducing the labour power in terms of the creativity.

As alluded above, these changes to both the nature of work and workers' ability to partake in creative content more specifically are seen to have significant impact on the workers, the organisation and TV production more broadly. Yet, previous research had insufficiently explored how workers are responding to these multifaceted trade-offs. This thesis responds to this gulf by showing the impact of these changes on the ways that workers search for meaning in their work and lives.

8.3.1 Social capital and resources

Chapter 6 explores the ways in which creative workers navigate work in the super indie setting and seeks to explain why enhanced creative workers are more successful than restricted creative workers in this venture. The chapter shows that the experience of work in the super indie workplace is largely shaped by creative workers' ability to access and draw upon a range of relevant resources in navigating TV production in this context, pointing to the overarching theme of social capital in how work is navigated and experienced. The chapter identifies the importance of knowledge and expertise specific to Welsh television, as well as access to decision makers and diverse skillsets as important resources for navigating the structural features of work in the super indie workplace. Through exploring the role of these resources, and who has the ability to access and mobilise them in navigating their work, the chapter illuminates the embedded power structures of the super indie context, reinforced by workers' unequal access to the necessary resources for navigating TV production work in this setting, which leads some workers to flourish in this context (enhanced creative workers), whereas others falter (restricted creative workers).

This builds on previous studies of TV production and social capital, that have shown how the role of networks and social capital in the coordination of the industry reinforce hierarchies, albeit

manifested in different ways to the traditional hierarchical organisational structure (Antcliff et al. 2017; Morris et al. 2016; Farrell and Morris 2017). The exclusionary nature of social capital in such studies serves to prioritise those in higher reaching hierarchical positions, and neglect those in lower-level positions. This is similarly the case in the present research, with social capital more prevalent for experienced and well-connected creative workers, who are able to navigate the structural changes of the super indie workplace to their benefit, accessing higher levels of creativity, autonomy and opportunities in their working lives.

However, an important finding of the research is the ability of some junior creative workers to enhance their position in the company, drawing on a combination of different resources to access more variety of opportunities and progress quickly within the super indie structure. The resources perspective of social capital (Lin 1999) is illuminating here, showing how creative workers who investment in developing social relations, in conjunction with other resources, such as knowledge and expertise, are better equipped at navigating the structural constraints of their work in the pursuit of beneficial outcomes. This demonstrates the important role of creative worker agency in shaping social capital, and is suggestive of why certain individuals attempt to access and maintain resources more so than others (Lin 1999). For it is those more enthusiastic and 'enterprising' (Storey et al. 2005) individuals who are more engaged with developing these resources, who are more flexible to the needs of the company (Lee 2011) and consequently more successful. Conversely, other creative workers dismiss the importance of developing resources, and instead settle for their restricted experiences of creativity in light of stable employment. Therefore, whilst the research also highlights the dark side of social capital in reinforcing power structures and inequalities (Antcliff et al. 2007; Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011), it also points to the potential for workers to improve their own resources, develop their social capital, and navigate the super indie workplace to their advantage. However, whilst the research suggests that some workers have been successful in this endeavour, it is beyond the scope of the study to explore why certain individuals have been able to develop relations and resources more so than others. For example, this study has not considered the potential role of education or background on workers ability to develop these resources (Lee 2011). Such a focus would provide greater insights into the potential for enhanced experience of creative work in different TV production settings.

Chapter 6 also provides insight to the nature of skill development in the super indie workplace. In discussing who has access to diverse skillsets, the research highlights the relational nature of skill development, often dependent on the willingness of senior creative workers to nurture and develop young talent. This finding shares parallels with existing studies of skill development in the TV industry that highlight the difficulties associated with learning based on relationships, which limits

certainty in terms of development and consequently career progression (Grugulis and Staoynova 2011). These existing studies however focus on freelance labour markets, and how the predominant use of freelancers inhibits skill mentoring because of geographical separation caused by the short-term nature of freelance contacts (Grugulis and Staoynova 2011). While the outcome is the same, the issue here is partly facilitated by the nature of work in the super indie context, in which the limited budgets, tightly schedule production schedules and intensified workloads results in the prioritising of production, as opposed to nurturing skills and development.

8.3.2 Sources of meaningful work

A noteworthy contribution of the thesis is the location of work meanings within and outside of the work setting. Chapter 7 specifically addresses this focus, showing how television workers respond to the changes in their work and creativity. In particular, the findings point to the varying sources of meaningful work when the potential to input into creative work is enhanced or diminished. While all findings' chapters are important in showing the interconnection between the nature of work, creative content, social capita; and meaningful work, it is Chapter 7 that holds the most explanatory potential. In addition to focusing on what changes are occurring and how they impact the nature of creative content, Chapter 7 helps to explain how these changes are impacting workers and why it is important for the meaning of their work.

Previous studies have begun to adopt tensional approaches to understanding and exploring meaningful work in different settings (Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017). Here, Mitra and Buzzanell's (2017) focus on the discursive role of communication in negotiating meaningful work through the impact of work and career positioning. While this study provides a noteworthy starting point, this thesis contributes additional important insights. Firstly, this thesis supports and extends the premise that meaningful work is experienced as a set of tensions and trade-offs for some workers, particularly for those without creative work features. Second, this research goes beyond addressing purely the discursive communication practices and illuminates the material aspects of meaningful work (Symon and Whitling, 2018). For example, this research points to the relevance of the finished creative product, which provides meaning for both the creative and technical workers. Moreover, an interesting theme that emerges relates to the role of technology in bringing the online channel, which is perceived as highly meaningful for those workers involved in the process.

The underlying premise of meaningful work in the creative setting is a strong expectation that the processes and practices underscoring the work should be meaningful because of their creative content (Bailey and Madden, 2017). This runs contrary to work being viewed as drudgery, highly repetitive and unchallenging (Bailey and Madden, 2017). As such, it has been argued that workers in the creative industries find meaning in the work they undertake, and are therefore filing to forfeit

security and financial remuneration for the ability to partake in self-expressive and self-fulfilling creative work (Ursell 2000; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010; Lee 2012). Given these considerations, the emergence of a hierarchy of creative workers and the diminishing of creative input for some 'restricted' workers runs contrary to the potential for a highly meaningful and creative experiences. This thesis directly explores this quandary, showing how different workers react to this environment. As Chapter 6 sets out in detail, the enhanced workers benefit on both levels, attaining more security and additional (or at least retained) ability to not only participate, but also influence, creative content. In contrast, restricted workers gain some security but at the expense of additional functional demands, heightened workloads and loss of creativity. The research shows how these consequences directly relate to sources of meaning in the creative workplace. While the enhanced workers retain an emphasis on creative work itself being a source of meaningful work, the restricted workers instead look at external factors beyond creativity as a source of meaning. This includes factors internal to the organisation, such as internally within the team and externally, in relation to their private and personal lives.

The disjuncture between workers seeking exciting work unfazed by long hours versus those looking for both professional and family values as important facets has been recognised in existing research (Bailey and Madden, 2017). Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger workers without a family are happier to opt for exciting work at the expense of a work-life balance. In contrast, other workers, particularly those with families seek a work-life balance. To some extent, these themes are echoing in this thesis since the restricted workers with family and personal commitments reference their willingness to sacrifice the ability to partake in creative activities, with improved stability and the presence of meanings attained from the personal and family connections. However, these sources vary over time and certain workers who lost creativity but did not have the family as a source of meaning discussed the potential of relocating into freelance work, where creativity was deemed to be more prevalent (Lee 2011). These findings also highlight the temporal and cyclical nature of meaningful work (Bailey and Madden 2017). Workers appreciate the barriers to and sources of meaningfulness in their present work, as well as their work histories and potential careers. In this sense meaningful work is contextualised, and dependent on history and future experiences as well as family commitments.

Outside of the family, other workers also sought meaning through participation in activities outside of the workplace and social connections within the workplace. This helps to explain how workers are mitigating the loss of creativity and looking for meaning through an array of external sources. The location of work meanings outside of the workplace for creative workers is a new finding, and shows the importance of contextualised assessments of meaningful work for providing a more rounded view of the experience of meaningful work (Bailey et al. 2018).

8.4 The significance of the national context

An important contribution of this thesis is the overarching importance of Wales and the role of national culture as a source of meaning regardless of the experience of creative work following the organisational expansion (Chapter 7). There is a growing body of literature in cultural and production studies that consider the role of culture in creative industries showing the enduring role of place in creative production (Banks, 2010; Levine, 2009). However, little focus has been placed on its importance for workers when mediating potentially negative changes to their work and ability to partake in creative content. This thesis shows the underexplored importance of national culture as a facilitator of meaningful work, helping to mediate challenges for workers and provide a shared sense of solidarity and through creating meaning via participation in the Welsh language and through contributing to Welsh culture. This also reaffirms the important role of perceiving a contribution to the greater good in how workers find their work meaningful (Lepisto and Pratt 2017).

8.5 Towards tensional meaningful work

This thesis develops a sociological perspective of meaningful work by bringing together an analysis of the objective features of the work context and subjective understandings of meaningful work (Michaelson et al., 2014). This is used to illuminate the different ways that work features acted as sources of meaningful work in this context. Whilst objective approaches consider the role of the work context and working conditions as precursors to meaningful work (e.g. Grant 2007; Grant et al., 2007), subjective approaches prioritise individual judgements in understanding what is considered to be meaningful (e.g. Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009; Lips-Wiersma et al., 2016). It is assumed here that objective and subjective dimensions of meaningful work mutually influence one another, connecting individual subjective experiences of meaningful work to objective features of the work context (Michaelson et al., 2014; Bailey et al., 2018; Boeck et al., 2018). In doing so, this approach shows the interactivity between the structures of the super indie context and the agency of television workers in revealing how features of the television work context contributed to the experience of meaningful work in different ways for different workers. As such, the thesis shows that the complex interplay of objective features of work and subjectively experienced aspects of meaningful work result in diverse experiences of meaningful work for different television workers in this context. Contextual features are highly relevant as facilitators of meaningful work in whether or not they are perceived to support workers' sources of meaningful work, however these contextual features are perceived and experienced differently depending on television workers' specific role in the production process and the work features that they experience.

By adopting this integrated approach, the thesis contributes to the existing literature on meaningful work in several ways; firstly, Bailey et al. (2018, p.17) claim that "the empirical literature remains

focused entirely on meaningful work as a subjective experience". Therefore, bringing together a subjective assessment of the features of work unites these two often distinct areas of research, illustrating that meaningful work factors may not necessarily be experienced as meaningful in reality. Secondly, objective accounts of job characteristics associated with meaningful work tend to be based on general accounts, decontextualized, and give little consideration to specific occupations. As such, the research extends these general objective accounts via an in-depth, contextual assessment of work features that contribute to a sense of meaningfulness in various creative sector occupations. This demonstrates the complex and nuanced nature of meaningful work within television production.

8.6 Conclusion

The discussion is centred around the core themes emerging from the research, namely the trade-offs and tensions in the super indie workplace, the hierarchy of creative workers, the important role of resources, and sources of meaningful work. These components help to explain the realities of work in super indies for television workers through presenting a holistic overview of the experience of TV production work in the case company.

This research is novel because it brings together the nature of work, creative labour and meaningful work literature with a specific assessment of TV production to better explain how workers in various TV production roles experience and respond to their institutional context. This provides a more nuanced account of the experience of work in creative industry contexts by showing how different workers experience the broad spectrum of work involved, and the contextual features that influence their job roles. It also shows the criticality of social capital as a tool for navigating the structural constraints of the work setting. The research brings these findings together to show how meaningful work is both situationally dependent but not wholly structurally determined. The research shows how, through drawing on a combination of processes, relations and structures, workers have the capacity to negotiate, transform and shape the meaning of their work, but the extent to which this comes from work specifically is constrained and enabled by features of their work context as well as their social capital.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

The research develops an integrated approach to studying the realities of work in television production, looking specifically at television worker experiences in a Welsh super indie. This concluding chapter summarises the thesis, showing the significance of the findings in terms of the research aims and the extant literature. The sections that follow reaffirm the key findings of the research and its contributions, before the thesis concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the research, and potential areas for further study.

9.2 Inside the super indie workplace

First and foremost, the thesis provides a detailed contextual assessment of work inside a super independent television production company through adopting an in-depth organisational case study. This is the first study of its kind, given that no prior studies have explored the super indie at both organisational and individual level, with insights from both managers and employees working in the same organisation. The case study comprised of 63 interviews, 15 with managers and 48 with employees over a course of 7 months.

The research builds upon the understanding of super indies gleaned from freelancer perspectives (e.g., Lee 2011; Morris et al. 2016), confirming the emphasis on cost-cutting strategies and trend towards standardised production practices in such settings (Faulkner et al. 2009; Sengupta et al. 2009; North and Oliver 2015). The research extends this understanding by providing unique insights into organisational practices associated with super indie organisations (Chapter 4), such as the use of a staff workforce, showing the potential for stability in TV production work, moving on from the insecurity and uncertainty associated with freelancers and independent production companies in the sector (Dex et al. 2000; Paterson 2012; Lee 2012; 2013; Wing-Fai et al. 2015).

However, the research also shows that stable employment is not a panacea for the structural constraints associated with fragmented and insecure creative labour markets (Lee 2012). As Chapters 5 and 6 have shown, television workers continue to face intensified workloads (Paterson 2001; Lee 2009), unequal progression opportunities (Tempest et al. 2004; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012), disparities in skill development (Storey et al. 2005; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2009; 2011; Lee 2009) and face pressures to build and maintain networks of contacts in order to navigate work in the industry (Paterson 2001; Antcliff et al. 2007; Farrell and Morris 2017). As such, the research shows that stable employment in TV production does not resolve the issues associated with flexible working practices, but instead changes how these issues are manifested for television workers. The

research also confirms the prevalence of socialised working practices in the super indie (Lee 2011), despite the fact that insecurity and uncertainty are reduced.

Overall, the detailed contextual assessment of the development and features of the super indie structure (Chapter 4), and its implications for the nature, organisation and management of work (Chapter 5) is an important empirical contribution of the research, showing how cost-cutting management strategies translate experientially into the working lives of television workers. The empirical analysis of the super indie also fills an important gap within the existing literature, and provides an essential foundation for exploring the realities of work in television production.

9.3 Rethinking creative trade-offs

Moreover, the research shows how creative workers continue to make trade-offs for creativity inside the super indie workplace (Chapter 5). The current literature highlights the frictions between creativity and insecurity for creative workers in independent television production, where insecure working conditions are often endured for the prospect of highly creative, self-fulfilling work (Ursell 2000; Lee 2012). The PhD research contributes to this literature by showing the persistence of these tensions in the super indie setting. The research extends the understanding of these tensions by showing how, where stability is increased, the trade-off is reserved. It is often the case that creative workers accept reduced input into creative activities in light of the stable working hours and open-ended employment contracts they receive in the super indie (Chapter 5). The research therefore counters existing claims that posit an association between stability of employment and enhanced creativity in television production (Barnett and Starkey 1994; Paterson 2001). Instead, the research reveals the complexities involved in navigating tensions between creativity and stability in the super indie workplace, and the important role of social capital in this process (Chapter 6).

9.4 Hierarchies of creative work

An important finding in the research is the identification of the creative worker typology. The typology classifies the experience of work, following the development of the super indie institutional structure, by summarising emergent themes in terms of the nature of work (Chapter 5). It shows how some (enhanced) creative workers experience enhanced creativity in their work through more opportunities for ideas development, collaborations and varied work activities. Conversely, it also shows how other (restricted) creative workers experience a reduced creative capacity following the company's expansion, with limited input into ideas development, routinised work processes and limited opportunities. Combined with the assessment of social capital (Chapter 6), the typology illuminates the entrenched power structures and hierarchical divisions that underpin creative work settings (Movitz and Sanberg 2009; Smith and McKinlay 2009b), which are exemplified in the super

indie setting. While the expansion has altered the structure and organisational features of the company, hierarchies remain, and are shaped in part by varying capacities to access social capital and embedded resources.

9.5 Using resources to capture social capital and creativity

The relationship between the creative experience and social capital demonstrated in the research is an important contribution to the existing literature. Existing research has shown the multiple functions of social capital in television production, in regulating temporary working arrangements (Morris et al. 2016), controlling access to skill development (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011; 2012), coordinating teams (Bechky 2006), and facilitating career progression (Tempest et al. 2004). The research therefore adds to this expanding literature by showing how social capital also plays an important role as a means of accessing and regulating creativity, autonomy and opportunities inside an organisational setting (Chapter 6).

The research also builds upon resources perspectives of social capital (Lin 1999), by empirically demonstrating the value of an integrated assessment of the embeddedness, accessibility and mobilisation of resources for understanding differences in the experience of creative work. While previous studies have acknowledged the position of individuals within networks in explaining variances in work experiences (Antcliff et al. 2005), this approach also incorporates an assessment of embedded resources. Thereby, the research contributes to the existing literature by connecting the experience of TV production to social relations, embedded resources and position (Lin 1999). Bridging these concepts provides useful insights into the importance of resources in navigating work and creativity in the super indie setting.

9.6 Negotiating the meaning of creative work

As part of the investigation of the realities of working in television production, the research aims to explore how television workers respond to work in the super indie setting. To address this aim, the research has analysed how television workers find their work meaningful, revealing multiple and competing sources of meaning across different groups of television workers (Chapter 7). The research has also shown how the experience of meaningful work is an ongoing, dynamic process, as individuals (re)negotiate their work and their experiences within changing organisational, social, cultural and temporal contexts (Mitra and Buzzanell 2017). For example, the research has shown how television workers who face reduced creative input in their work following the development of the super indie structure find their work meaningful by negotiating its meaning relative to its fit with their life beyond work.

Existing studies tend to position television production as highly meaningful work, based on its association with features of creative labour such as high levels of autonomy, creative input, and its potential for facilitating self-actualisation, self-expression and self-fulfilment for creative workers (Ursell 2000; Florida 2002; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). However, no studies have empirically explored the precise sources of meaning in TV production settings, or the potential implications for meaningful work where creativity is reduced. While the research confirms the widespread experience of meaningful work in TV production (Ursell 2000; Florida 2002; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011), it also extends the literature by documenting the complexity of this process. Television workers draw on multiple sources of meaning in finding their work meaningful, based on a combination of work, social, relational, personal and cultural factors. As such, the research provides an important bridge between the creative labour and meaningful work literatures.

The research also contributes to the meaningful work literature by demonstrating the value of an integrated analysis of meaningful work that comprises both subjective and objective dimensions in action. While many theorists posit the merits of such an approach (Michaelson et al. 2014; Bailey et al. 2018b; Boeck et al. 2018), less empirical studies have attempted to assess meaningful work by encapsulating both the role of the work context and worker agency in shaping what is found meaningful. As such, the PhD adds to a growing number of studies (Bailey and Madden 2017; Mitra and Buzzanell 2017; Symon and Whiting 2018) that examine the complex interplay of objective features of work and subjectively experienced aspects of meaningful work in the context of specific occupations and industries. This is also the first empirical study of the meaningful work of television workers, and therefore the thesis responds to this gap in the existing research.

9.7 Theorising creative work

The empirical findings of the research can also contribute to theoretical debates on the nature of creative labour in modern society. Neo-liberal critics present creative labour as a site of self-exploitation and self-commodification, where creative workers' high levels of personal investment in work lead to strategies of self-governance with pervasive modes of power and control rife in creative labour settings (Ursell 2000; Gill 2002; McRobbie 2002; Ross 2004). Empirically grounded sociological research has begun to break down these fatalist accounts of creative labour, going beyond the doctrine of creativity at the heart of post-Foucauldian accounts to show the enduring role of structures, agency and ethics in creative sectors like TV production (Banks 2006; Lee 2012; Hesmondhalgh and Zoellner 2013). The present research contributes to this growing body of empirically grounded sociological work, showing the complexities between creativity, social capital and work meanings in how creative workers experience TV production. The research demonstrates the reflexivity and agency of creative workers (Lee 2012; Thompson et al. 2016) who are strongly

aware of the structural constraints and inequalities of the super indie workplace and its implications on their working lives. These workers acknowledge the importance of developing resources, and make active choices on whether to invest in these resources to build their careers inside the super indie, settle for an easy life of nine to five but less creativity, or opt to go freelance to pursue more exciting opportunities.

9.8 Made in Wales: the significance of the Welsh context

An overarching theme throughout the research is the significance of the Welsh language and Welsh language television to the research findings. The research has shown how the company's embeddedness in the Welsh television context has shaped its development and its organisational practices (Chapter 4). After all, it is the commissioning process of the Welsh national broadcasters that facilitates the use of a staff workforce, which has far ranging implications for the nature and experience of television production work in the case company. There is also a distinctive industry within Wales which impacts the development of social capital, with contacts in the wider English industry viewed as irrelevant to working in this setting. Further, the importance of being Welsh and Welsh aspects of work was a consistent source of meaning for workers across the board, regardless of whether their work experiences had been enhanced or restricted by the super indie expansion. As well as empirically significant, the importance of the Welsh language in this context provides insights into national culture as a facilitator of meaningful work, helping workers to mediate challenges in their working lives, and providing a shared sense of solidarity to Wales. The potential drawbacks of the specificity of this context are discussed below.

9.9 Limitations and further research

This thesis offers an integrated assessment of the realities of work in a Welsh super indie. The above discussion highlights the contributions of this approach, however there are also some limitations and areas for potential future research worth noting.

Firstly, the research is reliant on a single organisational case study of a super independent TV production company within Wales. Whilst producing valuable insights into the specifics of the Welsh case and the crucial role of Welsh culture in workers' accounts of meaningful work, the use of a single, specific case presents issues of generalisability (Saunders et al. 2016). However, despite the specifics of this case, there are other nations with their own regional broadcasters and distinctive television industries, for example Scotland and Northern Ireland. As such, future research could look to draw comparisons across these settings, to assess whether the stability of Welsh television is a unique case, or whether this finding is emerging in other contexts. As detailed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.8.2) another interesting area of comparison would have been between the different production

departments at Oaks. Whilst the focus of this research has been on the nature of TV production for Welsh broadcasters specifically, the company also houses a network division, targeting the network channels. These different target markets result in fundamentally different approaches to managing and organising TV production work across these two departments. However, given the exploratory nature of the research this was not discovered until after access had already been negotiated. Nevertheless, a comparison of the nature and experience of work across these different areas of TV production within the same company context would be an interesting angle for further research.

The identification of the creative labour typology in the case study company is an integral emergent finding of the research, developed from the research's particular concern with the impact of the super indie structure on the nature of creativity. Whilst the analysis of technical workers' experience proves an interesting addition to the research, further research could explore this analysis further, to consider the resources important for technical workers in navigating the super indie context. Whilst the research considers what happens when creative work is enhanced or diminished, it would similarly be interesting to include a more intricate analysis that includes technical workers, and how they might fit into a wider production hierarchy.

Whilst a key contribution of the research is its integrated approach, bringing together the three areas of the nature of work, social capital and meaningful work, it is recognised that by looking more holistically across these themes the research could not examine each theme in the same level of depth as if one area was the primary focus of the research. However, whilst this holistic approach has been beneficial to the overall research, future research could expand on the novel findings presented in each data chapter in greater depth.

At the same time, while this research has provided a more holistic overview, there are also several themes that it has not been possible to explore further given the scope of the study, which could present interesting areas for future consideration. An area underexplored in the thesis is the role of gender representation in the creative labour hierarchy. Whilst this is beyond the scope of the present study, it would be interesting to explore how the stability within the sector impacts on gender differences within the industry. Furthermore, whilst the role of national culture is crucial in the case, this is an extremely large area of research. As such, further research could focus exclusively on the role of national culture in TV production, and how this functions in various ways in coordinating work.

Furthermore, the trend towards consolidation has also been identified in other creative sectors, most notably the games development industry in both Canada and Australia (Hodgson and Briand 2013; Thompson et al. 2016). As such, another potential area of future research could explore the

similarities and differences across these different consolidated creative sectors, examining the impact upon front line creative workers, and how the specific product markets associated with these different industries influence the nature and experience of work.

On a final note, whilst the Welsh language broadcaster has begun to respond to the digitalisation of the TV production industry and changes in audience viewing habits, its digital footprint is still in its infancy. As one of the cornerstones of culture in Wales, it would be interesting to explore the impacts of digitalisation on S4C and the representation of the Welsh culture through these alternative platforms, as well as how these changes filter through to the realities of work in Welsh television production.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Glossary of television production terminology⁵

Contributor: a person who features on programmes, such as quiz contestants

Development: the stage of production where ideas are brainstormed and worked up

Formats: formatted content often sold internationally

High-end television: productions costing more than £1 million an hour

In-house producers: the internal production arms of UK PSB broadcasters (BBC, ITV and Channel 5)

Independent production company: a television production company in which a broadcaster has no more than a 25% shareholding and which itself owns no more than 25% of a broadcaster

Local production companies: production companies headquartered in the UK, outside the M25

Nations and regions: the UK outside of the M25

Pitch/pitching: a prepared overview of ideas for programmes presented to commissioners

Portable single camera (PSC): a single-camera set up or single-camera mode of production

Post-production: work such as editing, dubbing or visual effects that takes place after the production has been shot

Pre-production: the initial programming making phase prior to filming

Production overheads: costs associated with keeping the company operational including office costs, insurance, finance costs, office administration and staff costs

Production and post-production: production is the process of film, audio or video recording, followed by post-production where the programme is prepared for distribution, including editing, image grading and track mixing

Production quotas: The Communications Act (sections 286 and 288) and the BBC Agreement that require that a suitable proportion of programmes are made outside the M25, that these constitute a suitable range of programmes, and that a suitable proportion of expenditure is spent on producing these programmes in a suitable range of production centres

Public service broadcasters (PSBs): The BBC, Channel 3 services, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

⁵ Compiled from the following websites: Ofcom (2015; 2019), ScreenSkills (2019), Screencraft (2016) and academic sources: Davies and Sigthorsson (2013)

Recce: or *reconnoitre*, a visit to a potential filming location to determine its suitability for filming, as well as identifying opportunities and problems to anticipate logistics for dealing with them

Regional productions: first run PSB qualifying network programmes made in the UK outside of the M25, including in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Rushes: the footage that has been shot that day

Super indie: a conglomeration of different producers who specialise in a particular type of output and operate in a number of markets around the world and typically have UK revenues over £50m per year

Vision mixing: manipulating different images for multi-camera style formats through cutting and mixing various camera shots on the mixer desk

VT: or video tape, editing or playing in recorded clips to a programme

Appendix 2: Invitation to take part in research study email

Dear [Insert Name]

My name is Emma Jones, I am a PhD student at Cardiff University, currently conducting my doctoral research looking at the experience of working in television production in Wales. Given the integral role of [company name] in the production of Welsh language content and the company's diverse experience of television production, your support in this research would be extremely valuable. I am therefore writing to you because I would like to discuss the possibility of meeting with you to find out more about [company name] and its divisions, and its potential involvement in this research.

One focus of the research is the role of collaborations in creative projects in Wales, and therefore I am particularly interested in conducting this research with you at [company name] because of the different divisions that the company includes. Benefits for participating in the research include feedback through reports and presentations in regards to the research findings, as well as my contribution to daily work activities, if desired by the company. As all Cardiff Business School research is subject to a strict ethical code of conduct, the names and any identifying information of all individuals and organisations involved in the research will be kept entirely anonymous.

I would be extremely grateful for the opportunity to meet with you to explain this research project in more detail and to discuss the possibility of your involvement. If possible, please could we arrange a date and time at your convenience?

If you would like any additional information regarding the research in the meantime please let me know.

Best wishes,
Emma

Emma Jones
PhD Student
Cardiff Business School | Ysgol Fusnes Caerdydd
Cardiff University | Prifysgol Caerdydd
Aberconway Building | Adeilad Aberconway
Cardiff | Caerdydd
CF10 3EU
M: +44(0)7933 652743
E: JonesEL13@Cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Example senior management interview guide

Theme 1: Biography

- Could you tell me a bit about your position in the organisation and your responsibilities?
- How many people do you manage? What type of positions?
- Do you have any involvement in production?
- How long have you been in this position?
- How did you get involved with this position?
- Have you been in any other positions in the company? How and why did you move?

Theme 2: Organisational development

- How has the organisation developed since you've worked here?
- What was the initial strategy with the acquisition/merger? Has this always been the aim? Were you involved in this? How did the process pan out?
- What elements of production have been integrated since the acquisition/merger?
- Have there been any advantages/disadvantages of this?
- Were there any staff changes?
- How did this effect the company?
(In terms of team work; working environment; staff morale; working relationships?)

Theme 3: The organisation

- What is the management structure?
- How is the organisation structured in terms of grade?
- How is work organised? By teams? Projects? Who manages these teams?
- Is work flexible?
- How does heading your department compare to other departments? How does work differ across departments?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the company?
- How do you manage these challenges?
- Do you deal with commissioners/broadcasters? How would you describe the company's relationship with them?

Theme 4: Organisational culture

- How would you describe the company culture?
- What are the company's values? Do you have a mission/vision?
- How important is identity of the Welsh business? How do you manage/maintain this?
- How would you describe the relationships between the different divisions? What synergies exist?
- How would you describe the relationship between the company and ITV?
- How would you describe your management style? How do you manage your staff?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the company's culture? How do you think this could be achieved?

Theme 5: Human resources (if applicable)

Recruitment and selection

- Do you have a role in hiring? Hiring for what roles?
- What sort of person do you look for in that role?
- What type of skills/experience/education?
- Would you say the work is more suited to some people than others?
- How would you describe the perfect candidate?
- How important is it that employees speak Welsh?

Skills and training

- How tightly defined are individual job roles? Is there much overlap?
- What skills are important for this work?
- What training does the company provide?
- Why do you provide this training in particular?
- Can workers ask for additional training?
- Do you provide feedback to employees?
- Is there a performance management system in place?
- Do you offer apprenticeships/work experience? If so, is it likely that you'll offer these individuals jobs afterwards?
- Do any of the senior staff mentor new workers? How does this work?

Career development

- What is the average tenure of employees?
- Are there any other rewards other than pay?
- What career development opportunities are there?
- What is the criteria for progression? (E.g. skills, tenure, reputation). Do many employees go down this route?
- Are there opportunities to move around within the organisation? (e.g. across divisions/locations)

Theme 6: Welsh context

- What have been the challenges of being based in Wales?
- What have been the advantages of being based in Wales?
- Do you know if the company has ever benefited from any WAG or other financial incentives?
- Is there much support provided by the wider industry for the company and for employees?
- Do you have any relationships with the universities in Cardiff/Wales? If so, elaborate.
- How do you think Wales could better develop the creative industries here? What's needed? What's missing?

Close

- What is the company's strategy for the future?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix 4: Example employee interview guide

Theme 1: Biography

- What is your position in the company?
- What are your main responsibilities?
- How long have you been in this position?
- Have you been in any other positions in the company?
- Is media production something you have always been interested in?
- How did you get involved in this type of work?

Theme 2: Nature of work

- What type of contract are you on? What sort of hours do you work?
- Is your job clearly defined? Is there much overlap? Do you multi-task? Is your job flexible? Do you have a variety of roles?
- What genre do you mostly work on? How does this influence the work?
- How would you describe your work-life balance?
- How would you describe your job security?

Theme 3: Skills, autonomy and control

- What type of skills are important for your work? Where did you develop these skills?
- Is there training available? What type?
- Have you ever been mentored by staff?
- What would you recommend a school leaver interested in media production doing in terms of education/training?
- How much autonomy do you have over your work?
- What are the biggest constraints on how you go about doing your work?

Theme 4: Team work and networking

- Do you tend to work with the same group of people?
- What qualities make a successful project team? How would you describe the perfect co-worker?
- Are there ever issues involving creative compatibility? Clashes about how productions should be made?
- Have you ever experienced any conflicts within teams/projects?
- Is there any competitiveness across the company in terms of the different divisions/project teams?
- Is socialising part of the culture here? Is there any pressure to go the pub (or similar) after work? 'Wrap parties' – celebrate after finishing a series?

Theme 5: Organisational culture

- How would you describe the culture/working environment?
- Have the consolidations/restructures had any impact on your work?
- How would you describe the management style?
- How would you describe communication?
- Is there anything that you think could be done to improve the culture or working environment here?

Theme 6: Job quality and production quality

- What do you like/not like about your job?

- What are the most rewarding aspects of your work?
- Which production have you enjoyed working on the most?
- How would you describe your job quality?
- If you could change anything about the work, what would you change?
- How does working in this industry compare to your expectations?
- What would you consider to be a 'good' or 'bad' product in your line of work? What would you consider a 'successful' production?
- What do you try to achieve with your productions?
- Can you describe a project/programme that you have been especially proud of?
- How do you prioritise the different stakeholders of productions?

Theme 7: Creativity and work meanings

- What does creativity mean to you?
- What aspects of your work would you describe as creative?
- Is being creative important to you?
- Has the creativity in your work changed over time/roles/companies? Why do you think this is?
- Are there any restrictions on your creativity?
- Are you happy with the amount of creative freedom you have?
- Do you feel personally invested in your work?
- What motivates you? Why do you work in this type of work?
- What does your work mean to you?
- Do you think the type of work you do aligns with your own personal values?
- Do you find your work meaningful?

Theme 8: Welsh Context

- What have been the challenges of being based in Wales?
- What have been the advantages of being based in Wales?
- Have you worked elsewhere? How does this compare?

Close:

- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Do you think you'll still be working here? What's your ultimate career aim?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix 5: Ethical approval letter



Cardiff Business School

Ysgol Busnes Caerdydd

Jones, Emma
Cardiff University Business School

08 September 2016

Dear Emma,

Ethics Approval Reference: 1617007

Project Title: Examining the nature of skill in knowledge work: an ethnography of the creative industries

I would like to confirm that your project has been granted ethics approval as it has met the review conditions.

Should there be a material change in the methods or circumstances of your project, you would in the first instance need to get in touch with us for re-consideration and further advice on the validity of the approval.

I wish you both the best of luck on the completion of your research project.

Yours sincerely,

Heike Doering
Deputy Chair of the Ethics Committee
Email: CARBSResearchEthics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix 6: Participant information sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET An Exploration of Media Production in Wales

Purpose of Research:

This is a PhD study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Cardiff Business School. Its aim is to explore the realities of working in the media industries in Wales. In particular, the study is concerned with the views of media workers towards career development, collaborations and networks, and the nature of media production in Wales. The study is also interested in examining the regional features of the industry to assess the significance of working within the Welsh context.

You have been asked to take part because you have experience of working in the media industries in Wales.

Participant Involvement:

Participating in this study will include a voluntary interview of no longer than 60 minutes in duration. Questions will be open-ended and relate to your experience of working within media production, as well as your views on the Welsh media industries. With your permission, interviews will be recorded.

Collected Data:

Once interviews have been completed they will be transcribed and analysed by the researcher. All participants will be kept entirely anonymous and pseudonyms will be used throughout the research. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time, or withdraw from the questioning of particular topics. Interview transcripts will only be seen by the researcher and research supervisors.

Research Outcomes:

The research findings will be used within the doctoral thesis and potentially for academic journals, conferences and publications. The findings will also be made available to participants and the organisation under study with the aim of providing valuable feedback and support to the industry's ongoing development and success.

Contact Details:

Emma Jones, PhD Student Researcher

JonesEL13@Cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Sarah Jenkins, Primary Supervisor

JenkinsSL@Cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Tim Edwards, Supervisor

EdwardsTJ@Cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Dimitrinka Stoyanova-Russell, Supervisor

StoyanovaRussellD@Cardiff.ac.uk

For more information:

Please contact the primary researcher, Emma Jones via JonesEL13@Cardiff.ac.uk or 07933652743.

Appendix 7: Informed consent declaration for research participants

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of this research is to explore the realities of working in the media industries in Wales. In particular, the study is concerned with the views of media workers towards career development, collaborations and networks, and the nature of media production in Wales. The study is also interested in examining the regional features of the industry to assess the significance of working within the Welsh context.

This study is being conducted by Emma Jones, PhD Student at Cardiff Business School and Cardiff University under the supervision of Dr Sarah Jenkins who can be contacted via JenkinsSL@Cardiff.ac.uk.

Participation in the research project will involve a 60 minute face-to-face, semi-structured interview with the primary researcher, exploring your experiences and views of working within the media sector in Wales.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and participants can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. Participants are free to ask questions at any time. If, for any reason, participants have second thoughts about their participation in this project, they are free to withdraw or discuss their concerns with either the researcher (JonesEL13@Cardiff.ac.uk) or the supervisor listed above.

The findings of the study will form part of the doctoral thesis and may be used for journals, conferences and publications.

All information provided by participants will be held confidentially and securely, such that only the researcher can trace this information back to individual participants. The information will be retained for up to 3 years and will then be anonymised, deleted, or destroyed. If participants withdraw their consent they can ask for the information they have provided to be anonymised/deleted/destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Participants can request information and feedback about the purpose and results of the study by applying directly to the researcher.

Participants give their permission for the interview to be audio recorded. This recording will not be shared with anyone other than the researcher and the research supervisors.

1st July 2016

Researcher: Emma Louise Jones, PhD Student

Cardiff Business School

Cardiff University

Appendix 8: Profile of job roles: traditional versus changed roles at Oaks

Job roles ⁶	Traditional responsibilities ⁷	Revised responsibilities ⁸
<i>Creative roles:</i>		
Executive Producer	<p>Oversees all parts of the production process including editorial and financial aspects; normally takes responsibility for hiring directors, producers and writers</p> <p>Usually included in the production's key decisions, and does not contribute to the daily running of the production</p>	<p>Not usually responsible for hiring the directors and producers (who are allocated to the show by PM)</p> <p>Also gets involved with the productions day-to-day operations as a 'hands on producer'</p>
Producer	<p>Instigates the start of the project and sees it through to completion. Generates the initial programme idea.</p> <p>Pitches to and liaises with commissioners, editors and financiers</p> <p>Provides both organisational and creative supervision of the project, and often includes raising finance</p> <p>Chooses APs, researchers and crew for projects, working closely with creative personnel and technical workers throughout production</p>	<p>Also allocated to projects created by development team</p> <p>Some involvement with pitches and liaison with commissioners, editors and financiers, though generally left to senior management</p> <p>Does not generally raise finance</p> <p>Manages and works closely with project team but does not choose members (allocated by PM)</p> <p>Also undertakes editing, directing and filming activities</p>
Digital Producer	Looks after digital content, often helping to develop a digital strategy to attract	Also films, directs, edits and distributes content

⁶ Includes only those job roles relevant to the discussion in Chapter 5 (as opposed to an extensive list of all roles involved in TV production). Grouped by 'creative' and 'technical' roles

⁷ Details traditional responsibilities usually associated with each job role (specific responsibilities vary by genre). Compiled with reference to Davies and Sigthorsson (2013, p.227-246), the Prospects and ScreenSkills websites (Prospects, 2019; ScreenSkills 2018a; 2018b; ScreenSkills 2019a;) and primary data

⁸ Details the responsibilities following the company's expansion, compiled from primary data

	<p>bigger audiences. Involves developing stand-alone content, re-cutting sequences into short-form videos, creating animations, scripting content, live tweeting, producing polls, comments and questions for the main show</p>	
Assistant Producer	<p>Usually has a little less responsibility than producers, assisting with many of the producer's tasks but without the final say on key decisions</p> <p>Often specialises in casting, archive or self-shooting</p>	<p>Assists with producer's tasks in organising production, but with little creative input and no say on key decisions</p> <p>Undertakes broad range of roles, including casting, achieving, assisting with filming, prepping presenters and checking facts</p> <p>Also undertakes PM-type work, completing paperwork, managing schedules, licensing child-contributors, organising equipment, coordinating accommodation and travel</p> <p>Does not specialise</p>
Researcher	<p>Works for the producer and usually spends a large amount of time on the phone searching for contributors, locations and props. Sometimes helps to organise travel and access to locations</p> <p>Often specialises in casting, archive or self-shooting</p>	<p>No change but does not specialise, undertakes broad range of roles depending on demand</p>
Director	<p>Works alongside the producer; supervises and helps to execute the creative realisation of projects.</p> <p>Usually works closely with production designers, actors, screenwriters and other departmental heads, and across all stages of production (pre-production,</p>	<p>Also undertakes editing, operates VT equipment and the vision mixing desk in the studio</p>

	production and post-production)	
	Visualises script in its visual form and instructs crew	
Editor	<p>A both creative and technical role, involving editing together the raw footage into a finished programme</p> <p>Works closely with director in pre-production to plan the script, and post-production to refine the director's and final cut</p>	Usually follows formats, fitting together cuts based on predetermined protocols
<i>Technical roles:</i>		
Unit Production Manager	<p>Works closely with departmental heads to allocate money, ensuring production adheres to health and safety standards as well as delivers programmes on budget and on time.</p> <p>Oversees all paperwork and crew contracts.</p>	No change
Production Manager	<p>Prepares contracts, oversees location searches, liaises with local authorities in relation to permission and permits, signing location releases and recruitment.</p> <p>Also utilises accounting software, entering accrual, forecast and actual expenditure. Ensures paperwork up to date, paying bills, supervising call sheets, managing the music and archive clearance and petty cash, as well as health and safety responsibilities such as signing off risk assessments.</p>	Also constructs project teams based on staff availability.
Production Coordinator	Helps to coordinate the production office, manages paperwork and organises equipment, staff and supplies.	No change

	<p>Coordinates accommodation and travel, as well as work permits and visas for crew and cast.</p> <p>Usually issues scripts, cast and crew lists and shooting schedules. Also responsible for the preparation, update and distribution of crew lists during production, as well as daily progress reports and script changes</p>	
Production Accountant	<p>Calculates finances and costs of production, oversees spending and helps production managers and producers compile budgets and cost reports</p>	No change
Camera Operator	<p>Works for director, capturing images, framing shots and performing camera moves.</p> <p>Ensures camera and equipment are rigged. Usually involves use of various camera types.</p>	Also works for producer
Sound Recordist	<p>In charge of all sound recording throughout filming.</p> <p>Works with the producer and director to plan methods of capturing sound according to director's style.</p> <p>Usually visit locations prior to filming to scope out potential sound problems, and ensure audio is appropriately recorded during production</p>	Also undertakes vision mixing, and studio manager-type work, engineering live broadcasts or pre-recorded material
Studio Manager	<p>Helps to run the TV studio facility. Usually responsible for overseeing health and safety, and managing staff. Assists with admin and logistics in managing the studio</p>	No change

Studio Operator	Operates studio technology and sometimes directs actions of performers	Does not direct actions of performers, but also directs, vision mixes, edits and operates the VT equipment.
Broadcast Engineer	Works with and helps to maintain broadcast systems, setting up and monitoring equipment and carrying out studio work, sets work and post-production operations.	No change
