

**TV or not TV? Contemporary experiences of digital television
as a medium and technology for parents and children living
in mediated homes**

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Abstract

This thesis is an empirical study of digital television viewing and the use of media technology in the home in the context of contemporary parenting in the UK. It is concerned with the current diversity and complexity of the ways of accessing and viewing television content in the home, and how they are understood, experienced and practiced by parents in the context of family everyday life: the domestic space, daily routines, family communication and relationships, and most importantly, the practice of parenting. The thesis significantly expands the discussion of television consumption in the home by including wider aspects of digital television, such as the discussion of its diverse technologies - devices, services, applications and formats - and complex ways, in which these are negotiated, chosen and used by parents as a specific audience group on a daily basis. The study introduces the life course approach to the research into everyday media consumption, and examines parenting as a unique stage in the life course that alters multiple aspects of individuals' everyday lives, including television viewing and other media practices. The findings of this study thus offer an original contribution to both the field of television studies, and the field of parenting studies. On the one hand, this study reveals that the role that television and media technology play in audience's everyday life is specific to the stage in audience's life course, with audiences appropriating television and media technology to suit their particular circumstances and experiences. And on the other hand, this study positions television and media technology as central to how parents experience, negotiate and deal with the everyday tasks of parenting, and to how they construct and manage their sense of parental identity.

List of contents

Abstract	2
List of contents	3
List of illustrations	7
Acknowledgements	8
Prologue	10
Introduction	12
Television, family and everyday life.....	12
Television as digital media.....	17
Aims, approach and research questions.....	25
Methodology	40
Researching television audiences.....	40
Data collection and sample.....	44
Organisation, presentation and analysis of data.....	56
Chapter 1. Parents negotiating digital television: the space of media technologies in the home and domestic digital estates	59
Introduction.....	59
Literature review.....	60
Negotiating digital television in the home: domestic digital estate.....	64
Parenting, the domestic digital estate and the space of media technology in the home.....	68
Multi-functionality of media technology in the home and domestic digital estate.....	77
Conclusion.....	82

Chapter 2. Parenting, temporal organisation of everyday life and digital television	84
Introduction.....	84
Literature review.....	85
Digital television viewing in the temporal constraints of parenting.....	88
Parenting and the temporality of television viewing experience.....	97
Conclusion.....	108
Chapter 3. Media devices, applications, formats, and parents’ decision making process behind the choice.....	110
Introduction.....	110
Literature review.....	112
The hierarchy of media devices in the home.....	114
The choice of media devices and gendered experiences of parents.....	118
Television services, the rationale of parents’ decision making process and the limits of choice.....	126
‘To own or not to own?..’ – DVD VS Online streaming.....	134
Conclusion.....	141
Chapter 4. Re-configuring the concept of family ‘togetherness’: Parenting, television viewing in the home and media multitasking.....	144
Introduction.....	144
Literature review.....	145
Television viewing and family time together.....	149
Media multitasking, family relationships and gender.....	153
The varying and contradictory concept of family ‘togetherness’ in relation to television and media technology.....	161
Conclusion.....	166

Chapter 5. Children, television, media technology, and parental views on the value of children’s media use.....	168
Introduction.....	168
Literature review.....	170
Children and ‘screens’	173
Introducing media and media technology into children’s lives.....	178
Parental views on the <i>value</i> of children’s media use.....	183
Conclusion.....	194
Chapter 6. Television, media technology, parental identities and the pressures of having to manage children’s media use.....	197
Introduction.....	197
Literature review.....	198
‘Good’ parenting, parental identity and children’s television viewing and the use of media technology.....	204
Children’s media use, intensive parenting ideology, and the issues of class and gender.....	211
Children’s media use and the performance of parenting.....	219
Conclusion.....	225
Conclusion.....	228
Empirical findings and theoretical implications.....	230
Future research.....	240
Bibliography.....	243
Telegraphy.....	280
Filmography.....	281
Appendices.....	282
Appendix 1 – Terminology.....	282

Appendix 2 – Participant recruitment.....	283
Appendix 3 – Survey questions.....	290
Appendix 4 – Survey question 7: Are you currently...?.....	292
Appendix 5 - Interviewed families.....	293
Appendix 6 – Interview questions.....	295
Appendix 7 – Overview of the components of participants’ domestic digital estates.....	298
Appendix 8 – Parental attitudes on digital television viewing.....	301
Appendix 9 – First stage of coding.....	302
Appendix 10 – Second stage of coding, additional/edited codes.....	304

List of illustrations

Picture 1. Weekend playtime.....	10
Picture 2. Victoria and Andrew’s living room.....	74
Picture 3. Mary and Stuart’s living room.....	74

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Prologue



Picture 1. Weekend playtime (original image used with parents' permission)

The idea for this thesis came to me when my friends and family members started to have children. Visiting their homes on numerous occasions, I witnessed multiple situations, where children engaged with media technology, and was constantly amazed by their uses of it, particularly by them being at ease with *all* media devices in the home, 'jumping' from one to another, with some being used jointly, while others being used individually. I observed my niece watching a cartoon on television, then going on the iPad and playing a game with the same characters, then when realising that cartoon has finished on the TV Channel, YouTubing it to watch again. And to top my fascination and confusion up, she described all of it to me as 'watching telly'. At that moment I realised that I no longer knew what 'television' or 'watching television' actually was, although it was something that I did every single day.

Such media use, however, was not just *there*, part of the everyday experience, going unnoticed and unquestioned. My friends and family, first time parents, often anxiously asked me, *media student*, about my views on whether they should allow their children to use media devices or whether they should take them all away and be *proper good parents*, who do not rely on external help and actually *communicate* with their children, constantly being bombarded by the information about the *risks* of media use for children, their development and wellbeing coming from the screens and parenting books. I was always puzzled and fascinated by their dilemmas; not being a parent myself, media use has never urged me to question my sense of responsibility and never made me feel *good or bad, successful or failing* - it was just simply what I did on a daily basis. And I have never realised that television or other media technologies occupied such a big place in parents' minds, everyday routines and considerations. What started as an interest in how television is used in the home and what both 'old' and 'young' audiences mean by the word 'television', soon became also an interest in how television makes specific audiences, such as parents, feel and what it makes them do – around the house, with their time, with their parenting styles.

When I started my research, I was surprised at how little academic work there is on the topic of parenting and media. Of course, there is a lot written about children and media use, or parental strategies of managing children's media use, but parents' *own* everyday media use is rarely acknowledged, with parents' perspectives and personal everyday experiences being absent from these debates. Similarly, in parenting studies, media is not usually seen as anything more than a convenient tool, or again a problem to be solved. So this study is my attempt to bring parenting and media together, in order to examine television as a *lived experience*, and expose multiple cultural meanings and social consequences of the medium, as experienced by parents in their everyday lives.

Introduction

This study aims to examine digital television viewing and the use of media technology in the home in the context of contemporary parenting in the UK. It is concerned with the current diversity and complexity of the ways of accessing and viewing television content in the home, and how they are understood, experienced and practiced by parents in the context of family everyday life: the domestic space, daily routines, family communication and relationships, and most importantly, the practice of parenting. However, before I discuss the exact aims of this research, the approach that this study is following, and the research questions that this thesis will be answering throughout its six chapters, I first want to establish the academic fields, as well as wider theoretical arguments and traditions that this study is speaking to. No research is produced in a vacuum, and this study has been influenced, inspired, informed and shaped, to some extent, by previous conceptual developments, and a rich variety of academic works in different subject areas, including television studies, media studies and parenting studies. In this introduction I will present an overview of the key debates that this thesis is speaking to, however, a more nuanced literature review can also be found in each of the consecutive chapters.

Television, family and everyday life

There is a long tradition of studying television in the context of the family and family's everyday domestic life¹. From its early beginning, television has been associated primarily with the domestic viewing. As Roger Silverstone has argued:

'Television is a domestic medium. It is watched at home. Ignored at home. Discussed at home. But it is part of our domestic culture in other ways too, providing in its programming and its schedules models and structures of domestic life, or at least of certain versions of domestic life' (1994:24).

¹ For an overview of the history of television studies and different research traditions, please see Shaun Moores (1996) *Satellite Television and Everyday Life: Articulating Technology*. Luton: University of Luton Press.

The reason why the inquiry into the domestic was particularly interesting for the early researchers of television is because of the intricate relationship between television and the domestic arena. As David Morley explained, 'there is a complex symbiosis at play here, as TV and other media have adapted themselves to the circumstances of domestic consumption while the domestic arena itself has been simultaneously redefined to accommodate their requirements' (2003:443).

Academic interest in this symbiosis between television and the domestic has led to the family audience and their everyday practices being the major object of research for many decades (Bausinger, 1984; Gauntlett and Hill, 1999; Lembo, 2000; Lull, 1988a, 1988b, 1990; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Moores, 1996, 2000; Morley, 1986, 1988; Rogge, 1991; Scannell, 1996; Silverstone, 1991, 1994; Spigel, 1990; 1992)².

James Lull explained this research interest in *family's* television viewing by arguing that:

'Television viewing is *constructed* by family members; it doesn't just happen. Viewers not only make their own interpretations of shows, they also construct the situations in which viewing takes place and the ways in which acts of viewing, and program content, are put to use at the time of viewing and in subsequent communications activity' (1988a:17, my emphasis).

Similarly, Jan-Uwe Rogge has argued that 'the media form a part of the family system, a part many can no longer imagine living without... For this reason, everyday media activities within the family context cannot be reduced to a simple medium-receiver relationship' (1991:169). Indeed, over the years, researchers have uncovered diverse and complex features of the relationship between television and the family. For instance, in his work, James Lull (1980, 1988a, 1988b) investigated what happens around the television set and the ways it fits into the social relations of the household to which it belongs, bringing family members together in some instances, and causing conflict in others. David Morley (1986) looked at the different relations, which men and women had to the television set in the family context, the use of which was symptomatic of the gendered roles adopted in the

² Please refer to Matt Briggs (2010) *Television, Audiences and Everyday Life* for a useful overview of these works.

family. Ann Gray's work (1987, 1992) focused on the VCR, and explored women's distinctive everyday experiences of and attitudes towards this television technology. Different researchers (Gauntlett and Hill, 1999; Gray 1992; Morley 1986; Silverstone 1994) have pointed out that gender struggle is one of the main characteristics of television use in the family context, with male members of the family most often being in charge of the decisions about media use.

Research into the domestic family television viewing has always also been research into the everyday life. Everyday life is a concept with a long history that can be defined as the routine aspects of the social world with which all individuals engage, including elements of ordinary life, such as domestic activities, but also those outside the home, such as routine forms of work, travel and leisure (Felski, 1999:16; Green et al., 2011:1). As Rita Felski has put it:

'After all, everyday life simply *is*, indisputably: the essential, taken-for-granted continuum of mundane activities that frames our forays into more esoteric or exotic worlds. It is the ultimate, non-negotiable reality, the unavoidable basis for all other forms of human endeavour. The everyday, writes Guy Debord, 'is the measure of all things' (1999:15)³.

Roger Silverstone explained academic interest in the everyday television viewing by highlighting 'television's veritable dailiness', and arguing that television as a medium and as a technology has found its way profoundly and intimately 'into the fabric of our daily lives' (1994:2). As Shaun Moores further explained, television should be understood as 'an institution in everyday life – part of the social fabric that goes to make up our routine daily experiences' (2000:12). For that reason, in his work, David Morley (1986, 1988, 1992) has focused on the *activity* of television viewing, and particularly stressed the need to study television in the *social context* of audience's everyday lives. As he has argued:

³ For more on the concept of the *everyday*, see Michel De Certeau (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Henry Lefebvre (1991) *Critique of Everyday Life*. Vol. 1: Introduction. London: Verso; and Susie Scott (2009) *Making Sense of Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

'It is necessary to consider the *context of viewing* as much as the *object of viewing*... Just as we need to understand the phenomenology of "going to the pictures", so we need equally to understand the phenomenology of domestic television viewing – that is, the significance of various modes of physical and social organisation of the domestic environment as the context in which TV viewing is conducted' (Morley, 1988:47, original emphasis).

Similarly, Roger Silverstone's (1994) work in particular has focused on the relationship between television and specific elements of the everyday life, such as the domestic space and temporal organisation of everyday life, emphasising television's ability to shape individuals' 'sense of days' (also see Scannell, 1996). Research conducted by David Gauntlett and Annette Hill (1999), as well as by Hugh Mackay and Darren Ivey (2004), also demonstrated that audiences use television and other media to manage time and space in their everyday lives; further emphasising the importance of analysing media as being set against the backdrop of everyday life, being *lived* and *experienced* daily, as well as being used to cope with everyday problems and challenges (Rogge, 1991).

The research focus on family everyday life has always meant a particular exploration of the *home*⁴ as a specific site of television viewing, as it has been argued that the home is one of the central sites of everyday life, where most of the media consumption takes place (Bakardjieva and Smith, 2001:69; also see Bakardjieva, 2006; Heller, 1984; Silverstone, 1994). As Roger Silverstone has argued, 'television and other media⁵ are part of the home – part of its idealisation, part of its reality' (1994:29; also see Green et al., 2011). By focusing on the home,

⁴ For more on the study of the *home*, see Mary Douglas (1991) 'The idea of home: a kind of space'. *Social Research*, Vol. 58(1), pp. 287-307; and Siri Norve (1990) 'The home – materialised identity and household technology', in K. H. Sorensen and A. J. Berg (eds.) *Technology and Everyday Life*, Oslo: Norwegian Research Council for Science and Humanities, pp. 4-21.

⁵ Television is of course not the only media studied in the context of the home and everyday life. Previous research has also examined radio and everyday life (Mendelsohn, 1964; Moores, 1988; Scannell, 1996); telephone and mobile media in everyday life (Fischer, 1992; Hjorth et al., 2012; Moyal, 1989); Internet and computer technology in everyday life (Colley and Maltby, 2008; Bakardjieva and Smith, 2001; Hughes and Hans, 2001; Lally, 2002; Meyen et al., 2010; Robinson and Kestnbaum, 1999; Watt and White, 1999).

researchers of television have recognised the importance of studying both television *viewing* and its *use*, devoting attention to television technology, as well as television texts. As David Morley has argued, ‘from this perspective, we perhaps also need to treat TV not so much as a visual medium, but as a visible *object*’ (2003:444, my emphasis; also see Geller, 1990; Morley, 1995). And as critics have observed on multiple occasions (Bakardjieva, 2006; Bell et al., 2005; Morley, 2000; Silverstone, 1991), studying television as technology in the home opens research up to the discovery of diverse functions and meanings of television for the audience, which often exceed the industry conceptions and initial predictions of use. As Maria Bakardjieva has argued:

‘With respect to communication technology, then, home is interesting in that it allows for varied perspectives on the meaning and practical usefulness of a device, and its pertaining content and functionality, to be discovered and enacted. It is the point where the powers of technologies meet with the meaningful activities and self-affirming projects of ordinary users’ (2006:69).

What all the works discussed above have in common is their call for the inclusion of the social environment, or what Roger Silverstone calls ‘the experience of television’ (1994:2), into the study of the medium, as well as a specific focus on audiences, their own personal experiences and practices of and attitudes towards television viewing in everyday life; the theoretical tradition, which I am continuing with my own research. However, although this current study is following the tradition of research on television in the context of family everyday domestic life; television is no longer the same television that researchers, whose work I have discussed above, were writing about in the late 1980s, throughout the 1990s, and in the early 2000s. Consequently, this thesis also speaks to academic works that have been conducted in the last ten years (which have arguably been the most dramatic for the development of television as a medium), and which focus its inquiry on the analysis of television as *digital media*. In the sub-section that follows, I will offer a brief overview of the key debates in digital television studies, after which I will discuss the approach to the study of digital television that I am taking in

this thesis, and which has been influenced by both these traditions in television studies research.

Television as digital media

Before I start the discussion of the changes that digitalisation has brought to the medium of television, I first want to emphasise that the debate about the changes happening to television is not new, and is not specific to television of the late 2000s. As Gerard Goggin has argued, 'new technology has been a constant in the history and development of television' (2012:92; also see Brunsdon, 2008), with every new technology, such as the remote control, the VHS, the DVD, cable or satellite, destabilising the object of television (Hills, 2007:41; also see Bennett and Brown, 2008; Booker, 2002; Briggs, 2010; Parks, 2004; Sinclair, 2004; Thomas, 2011; Uricchio, 2009)⁶. As William Uricchio has pointed out, 'caught between the "taken-for-granted-ness" associated with a long-domesticated audiovisual delivery system and the recurrent innovation and sometimes radical redefinition that seems emblematic of its technical and expressive capacities, television's identity is a highly unstable affair' (2004:166). Many researchers have therefore argued that digitalisation has not dramatically revolutionised television, by tracing the changes throughout medium's history. As such, Derek Kompare has noted that since 1976 the VHS has been offering viewers a possibility of recording and re-viewing of television content (2005:206); and therefore, as Matt Hills has argued, gave rise to the debates around 'time-shifting', suggesting that 'a collective social and technological practice previously known as 'television' would fragment into a plurality of privatised and consumer-led viewing activities' (2007:42-43; also see Cubitt, 1991; Levy, 1989). As John Sinclair pointed out, the viewer empowerment of the video recorder has later been followed by the cable and the satellite

⁶ For the detailed discussion of the development of television technology, please see Erik Barnouw (1990) *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. For a review of the history of the medium, see Helen Wheatley (2007) *Re-viewing Television History: Critical Issues in Television History*. London: I.B. Tauris.

technology, which have created a multichannel television environment; all leading to viewers having an increasing choice of content, being liberated, to some extent, from the restrictions of the fixed programming schedules and the limited number of broadcast channels (2004:42-43). As Julian Thomas has further argued, what all these previous technological developments have achieved, is, in essence, 'exactly the underlying aim of digital broadcasting today: an extraordinary increase in the amount and diversity of information accessible for ordinary viewers through a television set' (2011:52). Similar arguments have also been made about digital television's claim to interactivity and participation, as Su Holmes has demonstrated how these concepts can also be traced to television content produced in the 1960s (2009:5). Thus 'as television – a medium with a long history of entanglements with other media, from the telephone to film to the radio – continues its latest pas de deux with the networked computer' (Uricchio, 2011:32), it is important to keep in mind the forms of television that anticipated and, to some degree, pre-empted digital television (Thomas, 2011:52).

However, just as important as it is not to overplay the changes that digitalisation has brought to the medium of television and its viewing experience, it is also important not to downplay these changes, reducing them to 'we have seen it all before' discourse (Morley, 2012:80). Digital television⁷ broadly refers to television's convergence⁸ with the Internet and other digital media forms - 'those generated with computers as the primary instrumentation responsible for the structure and appearance of certain objects' (Murphy, 2011:11; also see Bennett,

⁷ See appendix 1 for a discussion of how the terms 'digital' and 'digital television' are used in this study.

⁸ For more on the concept of convergence in relation to media and television, see Tim Dwyer (2010) *Media Convergence*. UK: Open University Press; Henry Jenkins (2001a) 'Convergence, I Diverge'. *Technology Review*, Vol. 104(5), p. 93; Henry Jenkins (2004) 'The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence'. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7(1), pp. 33–43; Henry Jenkins (2006) *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press.

2011:8; Brunsdon, 2008:131; Goggin, 2012:82; Parks, 2004:134)⁹. As Gabriella Coleman has pointed out, 'the term digital... encompasses a wide range of nonanalog technologies, including cell phones, the Internet, and software applications that power and run on the Internet, among others' (2010:488). Digitalisation has allowed information to be standardised for multiple applications and transmissions (Green, 2004:49), leading to what counts as television diversifying, across media technologies and viewing experiences (Hartley, 2009:20), 'changing what it is that television can do, for whom it can do it, and under what conditions' (Turner and Tay, 2009:3; also see Strangelove, 2015:5). Some critics have referred to digital television as 'Television 2.0' or 'TVIII', 'positioning the medium as another software version, upgraded in the latest programming language and thus more efficient and easy to run' (Parks, 2004:133; also see Hills, 2007:51-52). As Elizabeth Evans has pointed out:

'The most recent cycle, involving technologies such as the internet and mobile phone, has seen an explosion of changes within both the television industry and the daily lives of viewers... The technologies, content and spaces of television are more numerous than they were at the end of the twentieth century' (2011:1).

Jennifer Holt and Kevin Sanson provide a good example of that, discussing how 'today, second-screen content, social networking, apps, cloud-based services, and over-the-top (OTT) technologies have all evolved to provide content for a multiscreen ecosystem [of television] that is constantly reinventing itself' (2014:8). With digital television, content can be 'watched or listened to via many platforms, on a range of devices, at the *time* and *place* of a viewer's choosing' (Goggin, 2012:65, my emphasis; also see Dawson, 2007:239-242; Marshall, 2009:43); and what 'we refer to as the modes of viewing associated with digital television are boundary practices, in which established modes overlap with emerging ones' (Bury and Li, 2015:594). Many critics suggest that television as digital media is a

⁹ For the history of digital television, see Martin Bell (2007) *Inventing Digital Television: The Inside Story of a Technology Revolution*. London: The London Press.

significant shift in television's cultural form (Bennett, 2011:5). As Lynn Spigel observed, 'in the postnetwork, postpublic service media systems, television as we knew it is something else again' (2004:1; also see Morley, 2000:26; Strangelove, 2015:4-5). And as James Bennett has argued:

'Concerns about treating television as new media or old media are therefore slightly misplaced—television, like so much of our contemporary mediascape, is now a digital media, and we must work to theorize it as such. It's time for television studies to go digital' (2008:164).

Thus contemporary television and media scholarship has been trying to chart the movements and shifts of new television forms, as well as to come up with new conceptual frameworks, in order to understand 'what it [television] might do and how it will do it' (Turner, 2011:41; also see Smith, 2008:129).

As such, it has been noted on numerous occasions by different theorists that television should no longer be primarily analysed as a *mass media* and as a collective mode of address (Hartley, 2009:26; Lotz, 2007:247; Strangelove, 2015:4; Turner, 2011:41), as it has begun to lose this fundamental component of its earlier character, and should now be discussed 'as a highly personal medium of individualized, privatized consumption' (Turner and Tay, 2009:2; also see Rizzo, 2007:112; Turner, 2011:41), where the previously mass audience of television is fragmented into a series of personalised choices (Bennett, 2011:2). As John Sinclair has argued:

'The 'golden age' of television as we have known it, that is, as a nationally based, broadcast 'mass' medium, is coming to a close... To the extent that the new services cultivate ever more varied and specialised tastes and interests, they become a force for social differentiation rather than unification' (2004:42-43; also see Bennett, 2011:4; Carlson, 2006:111; Goggin, 2012:67; Uricchio, 2009:35; Whitaker, 1999:135).

Both Lev Manovich (2001:41) and Helen Kennedy (2008:313) have argued that digital media and therefore digital television stand in contrast to the old logic of 'mass standardisation' and rather correspond to the post-industrial logic of 'individual customisation', 'production on demand' and 'just in time' delivery.

Similarly, although it has already been established that the increasing choice and interactivity of television content and control over it have been *gradually* becoming more and more available to audiences with every new technological development in television, it has been argued that digitalisation has given way to even more choice and more control over content, scheduling, flow, platform and format of delivery (Alexander, 2016; Parks, 2004; Shapiro, 1999; Smith, 2008; Turner, 2011), as well as leading to a more interactive television viewing experience that potentially encourages new levels of audience participation (Bennett, 2006; Evans, 2008; Green, 2004; Holmes, 2004, 2008, 2009; Jenkins, 2001b, 2003, 2004; Jensen and Toscan, 1999; Kim and Sawhney, 2002; Kioussis, 2002; Marshall, 2004; Ryan, 2001).

In order to deal with television's potentially new mode of address and viewing experience, over the years, digital television scholars have come up with a few new conceptual frameworks to make sense of the digital television environment - user engagement, television business models, policies, technologies, and infrastructures. For instance, 'multiplatforming' or '360 degree commissioning' are the terms that are often used in the discussion of digital television, in order to refer to television programmes and services that are developed across multiple platforms and distribution outlets (Caldwell, 2003; Holt and Sanson, 2014; Johnson, 2015; Roscoe, 2004; Strange, 2011). As Catherine Johnson has explained, the concept of multiplatforming 'positions the internet as an extension of linear television – a means of multiplying the television programme through content produced for specific platforms (a website, an app, a mobile game etc.)' (2015). Some theorists go as far as arguing that television has become 'platform-indifferent' (for instance, see Boddy, 2007). As James Bennett has argued:

'Television as digital media must be understood as a non-site-specific, hybrid cultural and technological form that spreads across multiple platforms as diverse as mobile phones, games consoles, iPods, and online video services such as YouTube, Hulu, Joost, and the BBC's iPlayer, as well as computer-based mediaplayers such as Microsoft's Windows Media Player and Apple TV' (2011:2-3).

Other scholars have been using the concepts of ‘transmedia’/‘transmedia storytelling’/‘transmedia engagement’ to analyse the contemporary television viewing experience. As a conceptual framework, transmedia aims to explain how ‘engagement’ with narrative content is structured across different media and technological platforms in numerous ways (Evans, 2011, 2016). According to Elizabeth Evans, transmediality is the default mode for the media industries, especially television; and transmedia storytelling can be defined as

‘...the deliberate creation of narratives that are coherent but spread over multiple media forms, is a part of this broader strategic approach, but sits alongside other strategies of distribution, marketing or branding that position the work of the television industry – and audiences’ experiences with that work - as inherently sitting in multiple technological spaces’ (2016; also see Carroll, 2003; Evans, 2008, 2011; Jenkins, 2003, 2006).

Other scholars have also used concepts, such as ‘spreadable media’ (Jenkins et al., 2013) or ‘connected media’/‘connected viewing’ (Holt and Sanson, 2014), in an attempt to describe and analyse the social and cultural trend across the media industries to integrate digital technology and socially networked communication with traditional screen media practices, such as watching television, with a particular focus on the importance of ‘engagement’ to the screen industries. As Jennifer Holt and Kevin Sanson have argued, ‘as the media industries adapt to technological change and consumers continuously resist and reshape institutional imperatives, the term connected viewing points to an impending revolution in how screen media is created, circulated, and consumed...’ (2014:1). In a different vein of argument, Michael Curtin conceptualises the transition from the one-to-many distribution strategies of the broadcast network era to this current moment ‘characterized by interactive exchanges, multiple sites of productivity, and diverse modes of interpretation and use’, by describing this juncture as the ‘matrix media’, arguing that ‘television had become a matrix medium, an increasingly flexible and dynamic mode of communication’ (2009:13; also see Holt and Sanson, 2014:4).

Other scholars are adopting the concept of personalisation¹⁰ to the discussion of television and argue in favour of personalised or personal television. As Lisa Parks has pointed out:

‘Personal television is a set of industrial and technological practices that work to isolate the individual cultural tastes of the viewer/consumer in order to refine direct marketing in television—that is, the process of delivering specific audiences to advertisers... It is a model of television that promises to tailor packages of content to individual choice, and thus it is ultimately a move toward what might best be described as “the programming of the self”’ (2004:135).

Similarly, Anne Friedberg’s analysis focuses on increasingly personalised experiences of television, which are enabled by the multiplicity of options, the changing mode of address and new forms of audience engagement and control (2006:243; also see Carlson, 2006; Forgacs, 2001).

What all of the works, theoretical frameworks and conceptualisations discussed above have in common is the fact that they are discussing and analysing the same development: that ‘television is now bigger than the TV’ (Evans, 2011:1), as well as pointing at the complexity and difficulty of the task of defining the medium. As Sheila Murphy’s has rightly pointed out, “‘television’ is a word whose meaning has been expanded and applied to so many different things that using the term precisely can be difficult—the word has become an abstraction’ (2011:5). The literature review has demonstrated that television is examined in a variety of ways, with a focus shifting from its content, to its distribution practices, to industries, viewers and viewing practices. To quote Sheila Murphy once again:

¹⁰ The term ‘personalisation’ came to acquire many different definitions, for instance, ‘narrowcasting, adaptivity and variability’ of digital media (Kennedy, 2008:308); interactivity used to adapt media content to user preferences (Thurman, 2011:395-396); and the growing amount of individual technologies that are increasingly customisable and user-driven (Hjorth, 2012:190-191; also see Goggin, 2012).

‘In common parlance, “television” can refer to a television receiver or set, or a particular program, or the entire field and history of media made for and broadcast or relayed and delivered via television technologies, or particular television networks, production companies, or distribution companies’ (2011:5).

For decades, television has been understood and therefore defined based on its mass broadcasting nature, as a medium that reaches out over distance to the mass audience, offering a continuous flow of content (Carroll, 2003; Ellis, 1992; Gripsrud, 1998; Williams, 1974). However, this understanding of the medium has been gradually shaken by the technological changes that have been happening to the medium, which adds further complexity to academic understanding of it. Similarly, throughout the history of the medium, the discussion of what defines television has caused disagreements in academic debates, with theorists often being located in one of the two opposing ‘camps’ – those who study television as a text, and those who study the context of television’s use, which results in different academic works on television producing ‘television’ as a different kind of object (Evans, 2011:6; Frith, 2000:34; Hartman, 2006:81). However, this, too, has been problematised by television texts moving across a range of media platforms (Hills, 2007:45), and the contexts of television viewing becoming more and more ‘messy’, converged and individualised (Bennett, 2011:7). As Charlotte Brunson has argued, ‘there is much more of “it” to study, and it is much less clear what the “it” is when it stops being roughly the same thing in most living rooms in each country’ (2008:132; also see Spigel, 2004:21; Strangelove, 2015:7). This idea expressed by Charlotte Brunson is the point of departure for this thesis, the overall aim of which is to make sense of the complexity of contemporary digital television, its viewing experience and meanings in a specific context of family everyday life and contemporary parenting. In what follows, I will discuss what this thesis is examining; the approach that I have chosen for this study, and how it speaks to the two research traditions in television studies reviewed above; introduce the research questions that this thesis aims to answer; and offer a brief introduction into the chapters.

Aims, approach and research questions

This research has four main aims, which are achieved by taking specific approaches to the study of digital television. Firstly, this thesis aims to examine digital television and its everyday viewing experiences from the perspective of the audience by using an audience-centred approach to the study of the medium. In order to make sense of audience's complex experiences of digital television, this study is taking a non-medium specific position on television, examining both television and media technology in the home. Secondly, the aim is to combine two research traditions introduced earlier: the study of television as a domestic family medium and the study of television as digital media. Thirdly, the aim is to examine family digital television viewing and the use of media technology from the perspective of parents, whose voices are often absent from the debate, by using an interdisciplinary approach of bringing together television studies, media studies and parenting studies. Finally, the aim is to introduce the life course approach to the study of television consumption and proving its utility for television and media studies. The following discussion will address these aims and approaches in more detail.

Audience-centred study of digital television

In this thesis, I am first and foremost concerned with how digital television, as a technology, as a cultural institution, and as a part of everyday life, is experienced, understood and discussed by its audiences, who are both the viewers of content and the users of technology of television. By focusing on the audience and their understanding and experiences of digital television, I am contributing to the audience-centric investigation of digital television, which is a much smaller cluster of academic work, than those works that focus on the industry or television texts, despite its significant contribution to the knowledge of the medium in its current state. According to William Boddy, 'despite a decade of both apocalyptic and utopian predictions about life in the "post-television era", the effects of technological and industrial realignments upon actual viewing practices... are still

quite uncertain' (2004:136). Similarly, as Elizabeth Evans has discussed in relation to the research that has been conducted over the next seven years after William Boddy's initial argument, although a growing amount of research has focused on the so-called 'post-television era', 'much of this research has tended to focus on textual and industrial changes within the United States; little has focused on the impact of changes on the daily lives of audiences or industries outside of the United States' (2011:2). Thus this thesis is particularly concerned with how digital television is understood and experienced by audiences in the British television context. The literature review of the work on digital television explored above has indeed started to demonstrate that the industry- and text-focused perspectives tend to prevail and dominate the field. As such, critics examine the circulation and distribution of digital media, and the migration of viewers to mobile and multiple screens (Bennett and Strange, 2011; Gerbarg, 2009; Gripsrud, 2010; Kackman et al., 2010; Spigel and Olsson, 2004; Turner and Tay, 2009); the proliferation of second-screen applications (Lee and Andrejevic, 2014); television industry's business strategies aimed at reconnecting advertisers with viewers (Boddy, 2011; Cunningham and Silver, 2013); broadcasters reimagining the traditional creative and industrial practices (Gillan, 2011); and the extension of television entertainment content across screens and platforms (Marshall, 2009). And while these works provide a productive framework, in which to examine digital television, shedding light on the television industry structure and business models, adopted technology and platforms, and the resulting content (Holt and Sanson, 2014:9); they do not offer any actual data on the audience's consumption practices or contemporary digital television viewing experience. On the contrary, the audience is often assumed, with researchers making claims about audience's consumption practices, television experiences and expectations that are not based on empirical work: 'audiences [are] being unwilling to wait for programmes to be screened' (Goggin, 2012:28); 'fundamental shifts in the interface between viewer and television, and thus in the viewing experience' (Uricchio, 2004:165); 'such a mode of consumption, doing away with "appointment viewing," fundamentally changes the relation between the audience and its selection of content' (Turner, 2011:41); 'the promise of greater control invites the media consumer to contribute their time,

attention and labour to emerging media products that subsequently expose the consumer to new modes of social regulation and normalizing regimes' (Smith, 2008:130); and so on. As these examples illustrate, and as Sonia Livingstone has argued, 'the 'implied audience' – the audience as presumed, imagined or mythologized – plays a key, if often unacknowledged, role in the discourses surrounding new media' (1999:63; also see Livingstone, 1998). And despite the claims about the 'transformations in the practice we call watching TV' (Spigel, 2004:2; also see Bird, 2011), there are still gaps in academic knowledge of how exactly these transformations are experienced by audiences, pointing to the importance of conducting empirical studies of digital television.

While the literature review of the work on digital television has shown that it is in fact possible to observe the changes that are happening to television from the standpoint of the industry and television content, it is nevertheless 'also necessary to ascertain the extent to which viewers are embracing these changes' (Evans, 2011:2). According to Sonia Livingstone:

'Empirical research on audiences is ever more important for new media research. As audiences become less predictable, more fragmented or more variable in their engagement with media, understanding the audience is even more important for theories of social shaping, design, markets and diffusion than, perhaps, was true for older media' (1999:63).

Similarly, as Elizabeth Evans has pointed out:

'...if multiple types of content are available through the same source (the television set) and traditional televisual content is available elsewhere, then the technological factors of 'television' as a medium, and the role they play in audiences' understandings of 'television' must be recognised' (Evans, 2011:6).

And this is particularly what my study aims to examine – how parents, as an audience group, make sense of the diversity of ways of accessing and watching digital television, and why and how certain choices with regards to television viewing are being made, as these choice cannot necessarily be explained by the technical characteristics of television technology or its presumed functionality.

Indeed, the work that Elizabeth Evans has been doing on audience engagement shows that very often there are significant differences in how the industry and audiences understand digital television experience, in the particular case of her research, how practitioners discuss engagement and how audiences relate to the notions of transmediality (Evans, 2016; also see Evans and McDonald, 2014). Thus Elizabeth Evans's work on transmedia television, and in particular her book *Transmedia Television: Audiences, New Media, and Daily Life* (2011), is the clearest precedence for the research in this thesis, as it aims to explore *audience's* experiences and understandings of digital television in its current form. In her work, Elizabeth Evans empirically considered 'the industrial changes that have occurred within British television culture since the emergence of the internet and mobile phone as audio-visual platforms and the ways in which those changes are being understood by audiences' (2011:2; also see Evans, 2008). Similarly, in my research I am also interested in the technologies of television, and in how they shape the ways, in which audiences consume television, and the meanings and purposes of the medium.

In order to make sense of digital television at this particular stage in its development, and also to reflect parents' experiences of everyday television viewing, in this thesis I will be approaching television from a non-medium-specific position. Throughout the chapters I will be demonstrating that in the contemporary digital television environment, it is increasingly difficult to separate or define where television starts and where it stops, or to filter out the unique properties that are essential to the medium, as it increasingly means different things for different people (Murphy, 2011:9). Hence in my own research on television I will include the discussion of all media technology, from which television content can be and is accessed by my participants (media devices, applications, television services), and not just the ones that are directly associated with television, such as the DVD or the DVR (for the discussion of the terminology that this study is using in relation to digital television and its technology, see appendix 1). Similarly, I will not be imposing boundaries around television content on the study, being attentive to how participants themselves talk about television content and what it entails for them. Quite often this means that the discussion will not only include television

programmes, but also films and shorter videos, as all of these have been referred to as 'watching television' by participating parents, pointing to the hybrid status of television in the contemporary cultural imagination (also see Smith, 2008). As James Bennett has argued, contemporary television is so complex and dispersed that it is no longer useful to police the boundaries of television and television studies and trying to formulate exactly what it is that television scholars should be studying (2008:163). As Elizabeth Evans has pointed out, 'television must be fully recognised as a 'medium', not just as a technology or as a form and style of content, and what is meant by the 'medium' of television within an increasingly cross-platform landscape requires further consideration and exploration' (2011:8).

The study of digital television in the context of everyday domestic family life

As Virginia Nightingale and Karen Ross have argued, 'the nature of audiences is always... being redefined in accordance with new situations of engagement' (2003:2). And as Graeme Turner has pointed out, now that digital television consumers face an assemblage of media choices that 'generates different kinds of engagement, involving different modalities of subjectivity', 'both the importance of the family and the implied domesticity of the discursive regime within which the medium addresses its audience have declined' (2011:42; also see Turner and Tay, 2009). Whereas previously the traditional model of television was seen as being addressed to the family (which also implied the home as a particular site of consumption), the 'ideal addressee' of digital television is no longer the family (Turner, 2011:42), but the fan (Green, 2008) or technically competent youth (Groening, 2008, 2010; Marshall, 2009; Newman, 2011). In contemporary academic debate, the family audience and the family television are often presented as obsolete concepts (Livingstone, 1999:62). Critics note that digital television 'has physically migrated out of the domestic living room', becoming personalised and portable (Hartley, 2009:20); 'shifting instead towards smaller, more mobile and interactive screens' (Uricchio, 2011:34); leading to television's family audience in the living room also becoming increasingly dispersed – 'into the kitchen, into the den, study or computer room, into the home theatre, into the bedroom and, finally,

out of the home altogether: into the street and onto their mobiles' (Turner and Tay, 2009:2; also see Sinclair, 2004:44); and thus threatening to upset assumptions that have been made previously about the medium and its role in the organisation of everyday life (Bennett, 2011:4). These arguments reveal a clear dissonance between the two traditions of studying television, which I have reviewed in this introduction, with many critics putting forward an argument that digital television simply cannot be studied in the traditional context of the family domestic everyday life.

In contrast to these claims, in this research I am arguing that it is still, if not ever so, important to address everyday digital television viewing in the context of the home and the family audience. As Virginia Nightingale and Karen Ross finished their argument, 'the nature of audiences is always therefore being redefined in accordance with new situations of engagement... *Yet we sometimes forget that the new situations may possess parallels with past modes of media engagement*' (2003:2, my emphasis). I am therefore arguing that it is possible and useful to draw parallels and bridges between the current studies of television as digital media, and previous studies of television in the context of the everyday domestic family viewing. Roger Silverstone's argument, which he has made about the new media environment of the 1990s can be applied for the discussion of digital television today: 'It is reasonable to suggest that it is in the domestic, the household, the family – it is in the home – where this new media environment will be worked with and appropriated' (1991:140; also see Mackay and Ivey, 2004). As James Bennett (2013), one of the main scholars of digital television, himself has argued, what makes television a particularly significant object of research and what makes television studies an important academic field is particularly television's relationship with everyday life, which the previous tradition of television studies learned to capture and research so successfully, the research tradition that I find worth both preserving and developing further. By looking only at specific 'unique' situations and contexts, in which television viewing happens, the research is likely to abstract television viewing from the social environment, in which it takes place, and it is particularly this *social everyday environment* that this thesis is concerned with. The focus on the home as the context for television viewing and use still has

the potential to open multiple opportunities to discover and examine the varied perspectives on the meaning and practical usefulness of television and television technology, as home is an important point where media and media technologies 'meet with the meaningful activities and self-affirming projects of ordinary users' (Bakardjieva, 2006:69). This thesis thus uses the focus on everyday digital television consumption in the home to examine what Maren Hartmann (2006:88) refers to as 'being-in-the-world': human everyday experience of being an individual, a consumer, a citizen, and in the case of this particular study - a parent (also see Bell et al., 2005).

Digital television, media technology and parenting

In this thesis I am approaching the study of the family audience from a slightly different angle. Researchers into television and the family have pointed out on numerous occasions that 'family' is an incredibly diverse and complicated notion, with there being no single or preferred type or definition (Godfrey and Holmes, 2016; Lull, 1988a; Silverstone, 1994). As James Lull further pointed out:

'There are "families" of many varieties, even within national cultures. Generally, families are composed of persons who are related by blood or marriage, but not always. Sharing the same roof, food, dining table, money, material goods, or emotions could define any group as family' (Lull, 1988a:10).

In my own study of the family audience I follow the argument put forward by Roger Silverstone, who has emphasised that the family is a system of relationships that can change over time (1994:32). Following this idea, I am arguing that a study of the family should be a study of the different processes of change that it is gradually undergoing. Hence, instead of examining the 'family audience', which is quite an abstract concept, in this thesis I am examining the '*parenting audience*', considering parenting of children to be a more specific stage in the family's system of relationships, which can provide a narrower and more precise context for the study of digital television in the home.

Parenting is the object of study in multiple fields, all of which approach it from different perspectives, particularly when it comes to the exploration of parenting in relation to media. Parenting studies define 'parenting' as the concept that has emerged in both the UK and the US over the last twenty years, 'to characterize the activity that parents do in raising children' (Faircloth and Lee, 2010:1). Parenting scholars stress that 'parenting' should not be seen as simply a new word for child rearing, or a *neutral* term used to refer to a *single* activity. Rather, as Esther Dermott and Marco Pomati have argued, the term 'parenting' is 'really a multifaceted notion comprising parenting behaviours/styles; the quality of the parent– child relationship; parenting activities; and more general caring activities' (2015:4; also see Lee et al., 2010). However, the investigation of the role that the media in general, and television in particular, play in the complex process of parenting is rarely addressed by parenting scholars, which does not allow for a full understanding of all of the components of parenthood and the nature of this experience (Araujo Martins et al., 2014:122). Similarly, although media studies scholars have long recognised that media and media technology are essential parts of the contemporary experiences of childhood and parenthood (Livingstone, 2016; Nelson, 2010); in television studies and media studies parenting is not a common object of research, and studies of parents tend to be limited to a narrow range of academic inquiries. For instance, there is a recent trend of focusing on mothers and their social media use, particularly 'personal mommy blogging', and its association with aspects of maternal well-being (Hall and Irvine, 2009; McDaniel et al., 2012; Morrison 2010, 2011, 2014). Fathers are largely absent from these works though, and the focus on mothers and mothering roles breaks down the practice of parenting, rather than considering it as a whole, leaving many questions about what role media and media technology play in the practice of parenting unanswered (also see Plantin and Daneback, 2009). Despite the industry's recent recognition of parents as the key audience, particularly for On Demand television

services (Grainge, 2016)¹¹, this trend has not yet been reflected in the academic debates. In television and media studies' research on parents and media use, parents as an audience group continue to be examined primarily in relation to their mediation of children's media use, with children's, rather than parents', media use being the primary object of investigation (for instance, see LSE's current project *Preparing for a Digital Future*, LSE, 2015a, 2015b; also see Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2016; Carlson et al., 1994; Lim, 2016; Livingstone, 2007; Nikken and Schols, 2015; Paus-Hasebrink et al., 2013; Schaan and Melzer, 2015; Walsh et al., 1998). Thus parenting as a practice, and parents' *own* media use and how it fits in with the practices and everyday realities of parenting are overlooked or not examined in a particular detail¹². While acknowledging that children's media use is an important cultural and social issue, in this study I have given priority to the everyday media experiences of parents, which gives my study a different focus and produces a new set of data needed for the understanding of the meaning of digital television for parents, and the uses of television for the purposes of answering the needs and demands of contemporary parenting. The thesis therefore analyses parenting as a complex process, in which decisions about various aspects of everyday life (including media consumption) of both parents and children have to constantly be made; the decisions that parents make against the contemporary

¹¹ In his recent conference paper, Paul Grainge (2016) has observed a change in On Demand television services promotion in the UK, with brands such as the BBC iPlayer moving away from focusing their marketing campaigns on the availability of television in various circumstances, times of the day and places, towards focusing on everyday uses of parents, recognising them as the target audience.

This can be illustrated by the most recent BBC iPlayer advert *If You Love Something Let It Show*, available on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9G6bQSCGBk>).

¹² There are a few exceptions to this, for instance, Philip Simpson's edited collected titled *Parents Talking Television: Television in the Home* (1987) London: Comedia. This collection's focus is on parents, and not just on children's media use and its mediation in the home. However, the articles within this collection are written primarily as observational auto-biographies, with little or no academic analysis of the role of television viewing and the use of media technology in the practice of parenting and parental identity.

context of cultural expectations and discourses surrounding ‘good’ and ‘bad’ parenting.

Life course approach to the study of television consumption

In this study I am therefore approaching parenting as both a practice and a *specific stage in the individual’s life course*, which has a powerful influence on media consumption. Life course approach to media consumption is not common in television and media studies¹³. It has previously been adopted by some researchers for the study of family relationships and marriage (Becker and Moen, 1999; Moen, 2001; Moen and Firebaugh, 1994) and, more recently, in fandom studies (Harrington and Bielby, 2010; Harrington et al., 2011), rarely, however, has this approach been used for the study of cultural practices or television consumption. For instance, in television studies, age or aging are the concepts that have been used much more broadly and widely than the life course (Chayko, 1993; Harwood, 1997, 1999; Mares et al., 2008; Mares and Sun, 2010; Mares and Woodard, 2006), quite often in the discussion of generational differences in media use. In both television and media studies, when it comes to the research that explores audience’s media practices, at least some attention is often paid to the age of the studied audience, whether it is children and young people (Harwood, 1997; Mares et. al, 2008; Mundorf and Brownell, 1990), or the elderly (Harrington and Brothers, 2012; Mares and Woodard, 2006; Riggs, 1998; Tulloch, 1989), and age is used to broadly signify what is going on in research participants’ lives. However, according to Simone Scherger, although cultural practices are closely bound up with age, it is important to bear in mind ‘the complexity of the – at first glance simple – dimension “age”’ (2009:27; also see Hunt, 2005:2; Mares and Woodard, 2006:598). As Stephen Hunt has pointed out, ‘the life course now seems less predictable and determined’, and ‘the once assumed ‘stages’ of life such as ‘childhood’ and ‘adulthood’, and what they entail... are no longer ‘fixed”’ (2005:3). Although by the

¹³ Life course or life cycle approach to human existence is dominant in sociological and anthropological thinking. For an overview, see Stephen Hunt (2005) *The Life Course: A Sociological Introduction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

age of 30 many individuals have their first child, and by the age of 65 many individuals retire, being 30 is not synonymous with being a parent, and being 65 is not synonymous with being retired. Thus Simone Scherger pointed out that 'chronological age, taken as an indicator of ageing, and the socially constructed life course must be distinguished' (2009:26). Christine Fry has argued that the life course approach can broadly be defined as 'understanding lives through time' (2003: 271). Similarly, Lee Harrington and Denise Bielby have pointed out that all multiple and diverse approaches and perspectives on the life course share 'a focus on issues of time and timing, intersections of social context and personal biography' (2010:430; also see George, 2003:672; Mortimer and Shanahan, 2003). Hence, life course is an approach that is interested 'in patterns and pathways at all ages and stages, as well as the strategies individuals, couples, and families adopt in the face of expected and unexpected change' (Moen, 2001:97; also see Hunt, 2005; Kohli, 1986).

Although the life course in itself is not the key object of my inquiry (I am not investigating the ongoing changes in the lives of my participants), I nevertheless argue that the concept of 'life course' can be extremely useful for the contextualisation of the audience group under examination in the study of media consumption, as it offers a significant improvement on the concept of chronological age, providing more detail of what is going on in individual's life, and shedding more light on what is leading to specific media consumption practices. Previous research, although limited, have already started to show how cultural practices can potentially be linked to certain transitions and phases of the life course (Harrington and Bielby, 2010; Mares and Sun, 2010; Mares and Woodard, 2006; Scherger, 2009), and in this thesis I want to continue this work, and offer empirical data to support this hypothesis by examining the relationship between parenting, as a specific stage in the life course, and television viewing and the use of media technology in the home in the context of everyday life. According to Cristina Araujo Martins et al.:

‘The birth of a child is usually considered one of the most important events and milestones in the lives of parents and family, which... marks the beginning of a new transition phase in the life cycle, moving from a marital to a parental role’ (2014:122).

Scholars call the transition to parenthood ‘a long-term restructuring process’ (McDaniel et al., 2012:1509; also see Perren et al., 2005), which requires ‘the implementation of more or less difficult adaptive strategies’, and leads to new patterns of living, incorporation of a new identity, redistribution of parents’ investment in other roles, and redefinition of family relationships (Araujo Martins et al., 2014:122; also see Glabe et al., 2005). As I am arguing in this thesis, individuals’ relationship with television and media technology is also undergoing a process of transformation when individuals transition to parenting, acquiring new uses, purposes and meanings. The study is therefore looking to examine a specific audience – parents – and the intricate relationship between digital television viewing, the use of media technology in the home, and the practice of contemporary parenting. Throughout the thesis I will be exploring both how television and media technology is affecting the practice of parenting, and how parenting as a unique stage in a life course is affecting television viewing practices and the use of media technology in the home. As Shaun Moores has argued, from its early days television studies have often sought to explain ‘how we got to be who we are’ (1996:2). This thesis definitely works towards providing an explanation to this complex and vitally important question, by empirically examining the lived experiences of contemporary parents, and the ways, in which these experiences are influenced or shaped by television and media technology.

Research questions and thesis structure

As David Morley has observed:

‘We are surrounded by discourses telling us what new technologies are going to do to us, for better or for worse. However, we must be wary of such a media-centric focus on the supposed effects of technologies because, as the uses and gratifications theorists observed many years ago, we need also to think about what people do with media technologies’ (2012:79; also see Morley, 2003:443) and *when* they do it.

In this study I am arguing that while a lot of emphasis is put on studying how media is shaping the everyday life of individuals, there is not a sufficient amount of research on how audience’s specific circumstances and life stages, such as parenting, are influencing media practices. In my research I am thus interested in how television and media technology become integrated into the everyday life of parents; how television and media technology are used by parents for the purposes of dealing with changes that parenthood brings to individuals’ lives, and pressures of parenting; and how this use relates to parents’ wider attitudes towards media, home, family relationships, childrearing and parenting. There are four main research questions that this study aims to answer:

- 1) How do television and media technologies fit into domestic spaces, temporal routines and the everyday practice of parenting?
- 2) How do parents make decisions regarding various ways of accessing television content: devices, applications, formats?
- 3) What is the connection between television viewing, the use of media technology in the home and everyday communication and relationships between parents, parents and children?
- 4) What is the relationship between children’s television viewing, media use in the home and parenting?

The thesis opens with a discussion of what ‘digital television in the home’ actually is, by looking at the space and functionality of television technology, and how it is negotiated by parents on a day-to-day basis. The chapter will propose the concept of the domestic digital estate, as originally theorised by Elizabeth Evans (2015a, 2015b), for the examination of the process of sense-making – parents making sense of the variety of media technology in the home and the diversity of ways of accessing and watching television content – as well as how these different options are organised and negotiated to offer a coherent and logical home entertainment system. The discussion then moves to the examination of how digital television relates to the temporal organisation of parents’ everyday lives in chapter 2. This chapter will address the specific characteristics of parenting as a unique stage of the life course, and explore their connections with the ways, in which digital television is used and viewed in the context of busy everyday lives and constant time pressures. Chapter 3 addresses the complexity and diversity of television technology in the home, by exploring how parents make the decisions regarding different ways of accessing and viewing television content, including media device, application, television service and format of content, in order to answer specific family needs.

Chapter 4 is looking at how television and television technology fit into everyday family interactions, communication, relationships and often gendered parenting roles. It examines what parents mean by ‘family togetherness’ and how this relates to the use of media technology in the home by both mothers and fathers. The final two chapters of the thesis will be looking at parental attitudes towards children’s television viewing and the use of media technology in the home. In particular, chapter 5 examines parental views on the value of children’s media use, and how it is encouraged and enabled by parents. Contrastingly, chapter 6 positions parental mediation as central to the responsibilities of parenting and parental identity, revealing the operations of the contemporary ideology of intensive parenting, which constructs children as being ‘at risk’, putting parents in a position of being constant managers of risk to children, which includes television and media technology to a great extent.

However, before the thesis moves to the empirical chapters, it will first offer a discussion of the research methodology adopted by the study, in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of how the data has been gathered, as well as both the affordances and the limitations of the chosen research method for the findings of this study.

Methodology

This thesis examines digital television viewing and the use of media technology in the home in the context of contemporary parenting. Put in simple and general terms, this study is concerned with parents' everyday experiences of living in the contemporary multimedia homes, and the role of digital television in how parents deal with everyday pressures of parenting. The introduction has already demonstrated how this study has been shaped, to some extent, by previous theoretical and conceptual developments in the study of television. This methodology chapter will in turn show how the study has been influenced by previous methodological developments in the field of television studies, and discuss the methods employed for the generation and analysis of the research material, as well as their strengths and limitations.

Researching television audiences

Research into television audiences has been approached by using both quantitative and qualitative research methods by academia, industry and governmental organisations. As Shaun Moores has argued, for the media industry, primary concern has always been to quantify consumption (for obvious economic reasons), with ratings figures being calculated 'on the basis of data gathered from electronic 'set meters' and diary entries in a chosen panel of households' (1996:5). Similarly, Ien Ang in her book *Desperately Seeking the Audience* (1991) observes the industry's quest to turn television viewing into a known, objectified category (also see Morley, 1992). In the UK today quantitative data on the use of television and other media comes from the communication regulator Ofcom (for most recent reports on television use, see Kantar Media, 2016; Ofcom, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c), as well as from the marketing body for commercial television Thinkbox, which issues frequent reports and latest figures on television consumption (for instance, see Thinkbox, 2016). There is also a tradition of academic quantitative audience tracking studies. For instance, *One Day in the Life of Television* 'mass observation'

project, which involved 22'000 people from around the UK, examined what the nation had to say about television in 1988 (Day-Lewis, 1989); and the BFI *Audience Tracking Study*, which consisted of 15 questionnaire diaries that 427 respondents have filled in over a five-year period (1991-1996), examined audience's relation to television and how it changes over time (Gauntlett and Hill, 1999). However, as Hugh Mackay and Darren Ivey have argued with regards to statistical quantitative research:

'Questionnaires, diaries, set meters, people meters and passive people readers provide a wealth of quantitative data, but fail to distinguish between levels of engagement with the medium; nor do they tell us anything about the forms of viewing (or not viewing) or the significance of such activity – there is an assumption that having the television switched on is the same as 'watching television', or that 'watching' is the same as 'paying attention'. Most of the data is used to generate averages and to identify regularities and generalisable patterns to identify and classify 'typical' reading, listening and viewing behaviour' (2004:7; also see Moores, 1996:5).

Similarly, as David Morley has argued, television viewing in particular, is a 'complex and variable mode of behaviour, characteristically interwoven with other, simultaneous activities', and this is exactly where the usefulness of the quantitative studies often reaches its limits (1992:177). There is also an added challenge of the volume of data being gathered by quantitative studies, for instance, the BFI *Audience Tracking Study* has provided researchers with 3'500'000 words in total, which had to be organised and analysed (Gauntlett and Hill, 1999:16). In contrast with the aims of quantitative research, my interest in this study was less with demographics and large populations, and more with the diversity of a particular group of television viewers (parents) and their individual personal stories, something that is really difficult for quantitative research to grasp. Similarly, although quantitative audience research is an important tradition within the studies of television and media use, it is difficult for quantitative studies to examine how television is used in context, and its significance for individual's everyday lives and everyday practices, such as parenting (Hoover et al., 2003:20; Mackay and Ivey, 2004:9). Because of these difficulties, this research builds upon a long tradition of qualitative research, which focuses on the lived experience and aims to 'provide

insight into cultural activities that might otherwise be missed in structured surveys or experiments' (Tracy, 2013:5). However, this is not to say that quantitative research methods cannot contribute to a qualitative research project, and this study was using both the survey and interviews to generate data and facilitate its validation, as will be further discussed in the *data collection and sample* subsection.

Since the late 1980s, academic researchers who studied television viewing and the use of media technology in the home tended towards qualitative, and most often, ethnographic research designs. The examples of such early studies have been reviewed in the introduction: David Morley's research (1992) on television and audiences; Ann Gray's work (1987, 1992) on the gendered uses of the VCR technology; and James Lull's work (1990) on family television viewing. As David Morley has pointed out, ethnographic research strategy 'rests on an ability to understand how social actors themselves define and understand their own communication practices – their decisions, their choices and the consequences of both for their daily lives and their subsequent actions' (1992:183). Similarly, as Roger Silverstone has pointed out, research into media use in the home

'...requires a commitment to specific empirical enquiry. The requirement to generate an understanding of the contextual embedding of media use and to understand media use as embedded within the daily practices of everyday life suggested to us a predominantly ethnographic research strategy, designed to provide a detailed account of the domestic consumption and of the nature and significance of media and information consumption within the home' (1991:137).

It is important to emphasise though that what television scholars refer to as 'ethnography', often differs from how ethnography is understood and practiced in sociology and anthropology, the disciplines where it originates from.

Scott Vanderstoep and Deirdre Johnston define ethnography as understanding of a culture from the perspective of the members of that culture, arguing that it 'involves the observation and recording of conversations, rituals, performances, ceremonies, artifacts, jokes, and stories' (2009:201-202). Similarly, Sarah Tracy has argued that 'long-term immersion into a culture is a hallmark of

ethnography... As they write and describe people and cultures, ethnographers tend to live intimately beside and among other cultural members' (2013:29). And as Marie Gillespie has argued:

'Despite the widespread interest in ethnography among TV researchers and the proliferation of theoretical writings proposing it as a panacea for audience research, very few existing studies... genuinely deserve to be described as ethnographies. Rather, the term ethnography has come to be associated with one method in social research, the in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interview... The 'native' view envisioned by classical ethnographers is hardly to be grasped through a series of one-off 'in-depth' interviews or brief periods of observation' (1995:54-55).

Thus Sarah Tracy has argued that it is more accurate to refer to the research methods used by television scholars as 'ethnographic methods' or 'ethnographic approaches', rather than referring to them as 'ethnography': 'The phrase "ethnographic methods" provides a helpful way to describe one's methodological approach and to sidestep potential criticism from scholars who want to reserve the term ethnography for long-term, side-by-side, immersed, and holistic studies of a culture' (2013:29). Other researchers have also referred to 'ethnographic methods' as 'qualitatively oriented field work' - 'a type of research which relies on direct or indirect, systematic or unsystematic participant observation as well as on structured or unstructured narrative interviewing' (Rogge, 1991:174).

Based on these methodological nuances, the method my own study has employed can also be defined as 'ethnographic approach' or 'qualitatively oriented field work'. I did not conduct ethnography in its pure sense (systematic long term observation), because of the difficulties of gaining prolonged sustained access to the private settings of home media consumption, as well as well recorded effects of the researcher's presents on participants' behaviour (Brunsdon, 1991:31; Lull, 1990:181; Mackay and Ivey, 2004:163; Moores, 1996:30-32). Instead my study included an online questionnaire, qualitative semi-structured interviews in participants' homes with open-ended, non-directive questioning, and elements of participant observation during the interview process. Such research design has been tried and tested by previous researchers into television and everyday life (for

example, Mackay and Ivey, 2004; and Rogge, 1991). And according to Ien Ang, 'this type of qualitative empirical research, usually carried out in the form of in-depth interviews with a small number of people (and at times supplemented with some form of participant observation), is now recognized by many as one of the most adequate ways to learn about the differentiated subtleties of people's engagements with television and other media' (1989:96).

Data collection and sample

Aims

Before I start the discussion of data collection and sampling, I first want to briefly introduce the overall aims of this study. The main aim of the data collection process has been to gather responses rich in personal insight that reflect on the media environments in contemporary homes, with a specific focus on television and its technology, and on how they were understood and experienced by parents, with a specific emphasis on the everyday experiences and practices of parenting. The survey aimed to paint a broader picture of what media technologies parents used every day in relation to television viewing, and what were the wider attitudes towards television viewing and the use of media technology in the family context and in the context of contemporary parenting. The following interviews aimed to address the issues raised in the survey in more depth, focusing on a larger range of questions and getting views from both parents where possible. The study also involved elements of participant observation (with the written consent from parents), the aims of which have been to reflect on *how* certain issues were discussed and by whom, as well as to reflect on the surroundings, and the place of media technology in the family home. In what follows, I will address the process of data collection in more detail, looking at its various stages, and explain how I went about meeting these aims of the research.

Ethical considerations

Data collection had three stages: pilot study of the online survey, online survey and interviews. Prior to the first stage of the study being conducted, I have applied for and was successfully awarded the ethical approval from the General Research Ethics Committee at the University of East Anglia, as well as the Enhanced Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service to do research with children and adults. Throughout the whole duration of the research I have been following the ethical rules and standards of conduct. Participants have been treated with respect, and were not harmed or distressed in any way. I have always been honest and transparent about the aims of the research with my participants, and always emphasised and respected their right to pull out from the study at any time without having to provide an explanation. All research participants took part in the survey and interviews voluntarily and free from any coercion. Prior to conducting the interviews, all participants were provided with clear information (in a language which they could understand) about all aspects of the research project, which might have had influence on their willingness to participate (also see Wiles, 2013); and I have obtained informed consent from all participants in writing. Children were never approached on their own, they were only interviewed in the presence of parents. Parents were made aware about the content of the interview and the topics that would be covered in advance to make sure that they found them appropriate and suitable for children; parents were made aware that they and/or their children can decline to participate in the research at any point in the process without having to provide an explanation. All data has been fully anonymised, with all names being replaced by pseudonyms. I have always made sure that there was accuracy in reporting the findings, that the results were understandable and accessible, and that all of the diverse accounts given by my participants were included into the discussion, never purposefully or intentionally keeping any of the responses out.

Pilot study

The online survey was created on *Survey Monkey* platform. Before launching the online survey, in August 2014 I first conducted a pilot study, in which 10 participants took part. The term 'pilot study' refers to the specific preparation and pre-testing of a particular research instrument, such as a questionnaire (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). I have approached the parents that I knew personally (university colleagues, friends and family), and asked them to fill in the draft of the survey and reflect on their experience of answering the questions: how long filling the survey took them, and whether all of the questions were logical and easy to understand. The pilot study has been a crucial part of my study design, as it allowed me to test the adequacy of the survey questions; assess whether the time taken to complete the questionnaire was reasonable; assess (to a degree) the feasibility of the survey; collect some preliminary data, and assess its relevance to the main research questions (whether each question gives an adequate and useful range of responses). Using participants' feedback, I have identified ambiguities and difficult questions, refined the questions and launched the final version of the survey in September 2014.

Participant recruitment

Although previous research on television use in the home sometimes used pragmatic sampling – contacting 'friends of friends' and using researcher's personal network of people for the reasons of convenience (Mackay and Ivey, 2004:161) – in this study my aim was to maintain a greater distance from my participants than would be possible if the researcher already knew the research subjects, as well as to avoid sampling bias. The survey was thus advertised through online media, such as Facebook groups (*Babes With Babies*, *Mam UK*, *Tiny Talk*, *Baby Centre*, *Dads House* and others) and forums for parents (*Netmums*, *Mumszone*, *Made For Mums*, *Dad Info* and others) (see appendix 2 for the full list of online spaces targeted, as well as the advertising text used). Many of the online spaces targeted were specific

to the geographical area of the researcher – East of England, but I have also targeted forums and groups that were not limited to a narrow area, but rather open for all¹⁴. The survey was available online for 3 months: September, October and November 2014.

It is important to reflect on participant recruitment process, as it had significant implications on this research and on the data presented in it. Firstly, the study only recruited participants from the UK, due to the physical location of the researcher, time and financial constraints, which makes it a British (and predominantly English) study. Therefore, the research I am presenting in this thesis is not about television, media technology, parenting and the intersections between these *generally*, but it is about all of that in a specific UK television context, with a specific focus on television services that are available in the UK and relevant to British television audiences. This sample worked well with the key objectives of the research, which goal was not to look at other national contexts and conduct a comparative analysis, but rather examine in depth digital television viewing, the use of media technology in the home and parenting *in the UK*. Secondly, the decision to use an online survey and advertise it online through forums and groups for parents also had implications on who ended up participating in the study. It can be suggested that the nature of the recruitment process helped to self-select people who were more *au fait* (or at least comfortable) with a range of media technology, already aware of at least some of the technological options available to them. It is also possible to suggest that these were the people who engaged with parenting forums and groups on a regular basis, and therefore were more aware of the debates around ‘good’ and ‘bad’ parenting, which in turn influenced the answers that they have provided. It has to be mentioned that in the recruitment stage of the research, I made an attempt to recruit participants offline by using printed out flyers (see appendix 2 for the flyer), however, I did not get any response following

¹⁴ However, as my participants have mentioned to me themselves, they were often motivated to take part in the study by the fact that I was a researcher from their local university – University of East Anglia – to which they felt a symbolic connection, even if they have never attended it themselves; the motivation that participants from other parts of the UK did not share. This can potentially explain the fact that the majority of participants come from the East Anglia region.

this recruitment strategy (one potential reason can be that of convenience and different time demands – it was much easier for parents to immediately follow the link to an online survey, rather than to contact the researcher by email listed on the flyer). Once again, although online recruitment and the consequent sample did work well for the purposes of the research, as I wanted my participants to discuss the use of media technology in the home and their attitudes towards parenting and contemporary parenting discourses, it is nevertheless important to keep these nuances in mind when reading the thesis, and not to attempt to generalise the data presented in it.

Survey

The online questionnaire aimed to examine the diversity of media technology and ways of accessing television content in the home, and how television was used by participants in the context of everyday family life. It consisted of 23 questions, and included different types of questions, such as multiple-choice, closed-ended, partially open-ended and fully open-ended (see appendix 3 for the list of questions used in the survey). The survey was anonymous, except for the last question asking participants to provide their name and contact details if they were interested in further research participation. Before participants could start to fill in the survey, on the first page they were provided with brief information about myself as a researcher, the overview of the project, and some details about the questionnaire they were about to fill in. The first question required all participants to indicate their consent and agree with the following statement: *'I have read the information above. I know that my participation in this questionnaire is voluntary and that my responses will be anonymous. By ticking this box, I agree to take part in this study'*. The participants were free to leave the survey at any time simply by closing the page. In a few instances when the questionnaires were not complete, they were deleted and not included into the final sample. Similarly, the condition for the participation in the survey was that participants had children, as this was a study of parents, children and their television use. Due to the fact that my survey had been picked up by UEA marketing

team and advertised on UEA Facebook and Twitter pages, some of the responses I got were from individuals who were not parents, mainly from students. When that was the case, these responses were deleted and not considered for the study. Apart from these two criteria (questionnaire had to be completed, and participants had to have at least one child), there were no other limitations for participation in the survey, and all of the responses that met that criteria were included in the sample.

All of the participants who took part in the study were first recruited for the survey (meaning that filling in the survey was compulsory, and everyone who was interviewed had filled in the survey first). The survey was used as a way to map the research field (for instance, examine the range of media devices in the homes, or applications used on such devices to access video content), get access to a larger number of respondents, recruit participants for the interviews, and prepare the interview questions. In other words, the data collected through the survey acted as a backdrop for an in-depth analysis pursued through the interviews.

Survey sample

The final survey sample included 152 participants. While gathering the survey data, I have followed the general rule of audience research, and gathered data until I met the criterion of redundancy, or in other words, empirical saturation (Adler and Adler, 2012:8-9; Becker, 2012:15; Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009:188) – a point, at which getting more survey responses would not have dramatically changed the findings of the research. Although the initial idea was that both parents and in some cases even children (given that they were old enough) would fill in the questionnaire, in reality this was very difficult to achieve, and in the majority of cases only one member per family would fill in the questionnaire (there were only 5 cases of more than 1 member of the family filling in the questionnaire). Similarly, although I hoped that both mothers and fathers would fill in the questionnaire, and I was targeting online spaces for fathers as well as mothers, women were much more likely to respond to the advertising and fill in the questionnaire – 91.45% of respondents were female (139 participants) and only 8.55% were male (13 participants). However, in their answers the participants

would always discuss television use in their family more broadly, reflecting on the viewing practices of all family members, which meant that the data I got was very useful and relevant to the project. The majority of respondents to the survey were from the geographical location of the researcher - East of England (74.17% or 112 participants), other areas included South of England including London (13.25% or 20 participants), Midlands (6.62% or 10 participants), North of England (2.65% or 4 participants), Scotland (1.9% or 3 participants) and Wales (0.6% or 1 participant). The majority of participants were between 24 and 44 years of age: 46.05% were 25-34 years old, and 38.16% were 35-44 years old. In the questionnaire I did not ask participants for their exact age, and used broader age categories instead, in order to minimise the chances that participants would prefer not to provide an indication of their age.

90.07% of participants were married or in a domestic relationship, which means that the study mainly represents nuclear family type, with less than 10% of participating families being single-parent households. In the recruiting stage of the research I tried to make sure that all family types would be represented, and targeted forum threads and Facebook groups for single parents and same sex parents, however, the response was low or non-existent. 61.18% of the respondents to the survey were in full-time or part-time employment, and 22.37% described themselves as being homemakers (see appendix 4 for more details). All participants had at least one child (40.6% of participating families had 1 child, 49.3% had 2 children, 10.1% had 3 or more children). Although parents of children of all ages were invited to participate, the majority of families that took part in the study had young children under the age of 5 (76% of participating families had at least 1 child under the age of 5, while for 61% of participating families all children in the household were under the age of 5). This sample, however, worked particularly well for this research, as the early stages of parenting require the most adaptation and negotiation of various aspects of everyday life by parents, including media use, and it is particularly these experiences of negotiation of everyday parenting that this study was interested in. Similarly, increasingly, children's first introduction to television and media technology occurs during the early months and years of infancy and early childhood, however, there is currently an uneven coverage of

children's media use by age, with the majority of research on children's use of media technology being conducted on teenagers (70%), with only a small fraction of studies looking at children under the age of 5 (6%) (Olafsson et al. 2013: 20; also see Roberts and Howard, 2005:91). Therefore, my sample allowed me to address, to some extent, this gap in the study of families and their media use.

The survey did not include questions regarding the income of the family or the profession of the participants, which means that it was not possible to determine what social class participants belonged to. The following interviews did not directly ask participants about their social class belonging either (although all of the participants mentioned what they did for a living, so it was possible to assume their social class belonging), and it was only when participants themselves brought the issue of class up, that it was considered. This decision was made purposefully and had both advantages and limitations. The main limitation is that I could not draw direct connections between the issues I have uncovered in the study and class, which is a break in the tradition of researching media in the home that in most cases tended to draw connections between viewing practices and participants' social class belonging. However, this limitation was also an advantage of the analysis pursued in the study. Researchers in family and parenting studies have argued that contemporary parenting scholars are too preoccupied with labelling all parenting practices and choices as either 'middle-class parenting' or 'working-class parenting', with class often becoming an overwhelming and exclusive prism through which data is seen and analysed (Dermott and Pomati, 2015:14). This is done despite there being no conclusive evidence that working-class families do not engage in 'good' parenting practices or make different parenting choices due to their social class or education (Dermott and Pomati, 2015; Gillies, 2008), with there being a range of other factors that influence parental choices and practices, which become overshadowed by the inquiry into parenting and class, and therefore remain understudied. Thus in my analysis I did not want to impose class labels on the responses of my participants. I was not interested in working-class parents *or* middle-class parents, just as I was not interested in mothers *or* fathers – the aim throughout this thesis has been to study *parenting*, and be open to how parents themselves articulate their experiences and explain

them. And the issue of class was mentioned by my participants, some of whom self-identified as belonging to working-class or middle-class, and connected this belonging to their own experiences of being a parent. Similarly, on a few occasions participants did raise an idea that their experiences might be influenced by gender, discussing the differences in fathering and mothering roles that they have themselves felt and experienced. And when that was the case, the analysis reflected this, however, I intentionally did not make class or gender the key objects of investigation and the main prisms, through which data was viewed and understood.

Interviews sample

The following interviews aimed to address the issues raised in the survey, and examine them in depth with both parents being present where possible. Participants were recruited for the interviews via the survey. The last question in the survey was *'Would you be interested in being interviewed on this subject? If so, please provide your name and email address'*, and 32 participants have provided their contact details (the initial response rate of 21%). I have then contacted all of the participants who have provided their contact details via email; some have gotten back to me straight away, others either changed their mind about further research participation or did not respond (I made up to 3 attempts to contact each non-responsive email address). 12 interviews were arranged and conducted in October and November 2014 (see appendix 5 for the details of the families who took part in the interviews). This sample size is in line with the scale of research considered to be sufficient by previous studies on media use in the home: for instance, Hugh Mackay and Darren Ivey's (2004) study involved 10 households; Chris Shepherd et al.'s (2006) research was informed by the study of 12 families; and Shaun Moores (1996) and David Morley's (1986) samples both consisted of 18 households. As Patricia Adler and Peter Adler have argued, such medium size subject pool 'offers the advantage of penetrating beyond a very small number of people without imposing the hardship of endless data gathering, especially when researchers are faced with time constraints' (2012:8-9).

While the aim was to recruit parents from diverse social, economic, cultural and racial backgrounds, particularly for the in-depth interview part of the project, it was not always possible, as there was no control over who chooses to express the interest in further research participation (see appendix 5 for the details of the interviewed families). Two family types were represented in the interviews: nuclear family (83.3%) and single-parent family (16.6%). The participants were of either middle class (66.6%) or working class backgrounds (33.3%) (this was determined based on the information about participants' profession that they have provided, or participants' own self-identification with a certain social class that they brought up during the interviews). While the majority of participants were British (75%), a few came from other ethnical and/or cultural backgrounds (25%). Due to the geographical location of the researcher, it was also difficult to target vast areas, especially in the interviewing part of the research. The majority of the participating families resided in Norfolk (66.6% or 8 families), but interviews were also conducted in Suffolk (8.3% or 1 family), Nottinghamshire (8.3% or 1 family), Kent (8.3% or 1 family) and East Sussex (8.3% or 1 family). While this sample does not allow to produce representative and generalisable results, it was sufficient to elicit deep and personal accounts from respondents, giving them voice, and exploring the individual reasons for media practices, and how they are imbedded in everyday lives of family members and the practice of parenting, which answered the aims of the research.

Interviews

Conducted interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended, non-directive questioning, lasted on average for 1 hour and were digitally recorded. This interview design was chosen, because, as Jan-Uwe Rogge has argued, while reflecting on his own study of media use in the family context, 'open questions encourage the informants to supply specific information on their everyday lives' (1991:174), providing narrative responses rather than brief answers, which was the overall aim of the data collection process. Participants were encouraged to speak from experience and to provide examples from their everyday lives. The survey

responses family members have provided prior to the interviews were used to prepare the interview questions, and served as a way to map the media environment in each home (I would go to the interviews already having some idea as to what media technologies parents had and used, their general attitudes towards television viewing, how many children there were in the household and their ages etc.). Although, in order to make the data comparable, all interviews followed a similar structure and included a similar set of questions (see appendix 6 for the list of interview questions used), I would often follow up the specific responses given in the survey to contextualise them and find out more information on them. The interviews were conducted in participants' homes at their convenience, and all members of the family were invited to participate, including children (although in the majority of cases they were either too young to participate, or not interested in research participation).

The fact that all of the interviews were conducted in the homes of those interviewed was central to this study, as it has been for previous studies of television use in the home (Gray, 1992; Hoover et al., 2003; Morley, 1992). When making this research decision (interviews to be conducted at participants' homes), I was following David Morley's (1992) interest in visiting domestic settings to see the spaces that television and media technology occupy, as well as learn about what people do and say about television. The interviews usually took place in the living room, the central 'hub' for family media consumption. Some observational work was therefore possible during the interviews (participants were aware of my intentions to take observational notes where relevant, and signed the consent form prior to the interview to state that they agreed to that). I took notes on the household's interior layout and decorative mode, drew quick sketches and in some instances took photos of participants' living rooms (always with permission and prior consent). Similarly, the decision to conduct interviews with the entire family, rather than with its individual members, was also due to the fact that the presence of all household members during the interview allowed me to get some insight into family's interpersonal dynamics, observe and record some of the interactions between family members (Moores, 1996:34; Rogge, 1991:174). I also witnessed and took notes of some of children's 'screen' practices, as in the majority of cases

parents gave their children media devices to keep them occupied during the interview.

As Ann Gray has pointed out, the research method that I have chosen – interviews with parents and limited participant observation – can be criticised for relying heavily ‘on respondents’ accounts and explanations of their own actions, feelings and attitudes’ (1992:33), which necessarily include a degree of ‘performance’ for the benefit of the researcher, rather than being based on actual impartial observation of participants’ everyday life (which in itself is a questionable notion). However, following Ann Gray’s (1992) justification of her own research, I want to argue that even if what parents said to me does not directly reflect their experience, it is nevertheless their own way of articulating that experience, and it matters. When parents discussed television viewing and the use of media technology in their homes, they were definitely aware of the importance of ‘proper parenting’, a task for which they felt responsible and accountable, and this awareness did shape the accounts of family media use that they provided me with, and the ways, in which these accounts were presented. However, while this can be seen as a potential limitation of the data (parents not necessarily providing a true account of media use), this is also one of the biggest strengths of my data: it is from these ways, in which parents’ accounts of television use were inflected with their assumptions about ‘proper’ parental behaviour in relation to media, that the understanding of how parents themselves experience everyday parenting in relation to television and media technology, could be derived.

Using the data from survey and interviews

Although the survey allowed me to set questions to be put to a larger and more diverse group of participants, my interest was never in the statistical factual data. For instance, I was not interested in measuring how many hours or minutes children spent watching television or engaging with other screens (and I realised that it would be next to impossible to get access to this data, as both parents and children are often not aware of how many hours they spend consuming different media; or due to the stigma surrounding ‘screens’, parents will potentially want to

downplay the amount of time their family spends on them). Rather, what I was looking for were personal accounts and insights, and qualitative rather than quantitative data from parents about the affordances of media technology or difficulties that they were facing when it came to parenting with or around media technology. This is why I designed the survey in a way that would allow participants some space to describe and discuss their experiences, and this is why often such survey responses are used together with the interview data in the thesis, as they are equally qualitative in nature.

Using a mixed method approach (combining surveys with interviews) and triangulation definitely enhanced the validity and reliability of the research, as interviews allowed me to check the survey data for validity, and vice versa. For instance, many parents in the survey responded that they did not allow their young children to watch television, however, the interviews demonstrated that there was a wide spectrum of what parents consider to be 'watching television', which had to be taken into account when analysing such responses (see chapter 2 for this discussion). Such internal validity of the findings – 'the use of multiple streams of information converging *within* a particular study to construct an account of a complex investigatory theme' (Lull, 1990:19, original emphasis) – helps my study to address the common criticism of qualitative empirical research – 'insufficient generalisability'. As James Lull has pointed out, the internal validity is much more important than generalisability in qualitative research, because 'the primary objective of qualitative empirical research... is not to assure that analytical accounts produced about certain families, peer groups, or subcultures can readily be generalized to other groups or settings (indeed, they often cannot be), but to explain well the phenomena, subjects, and contexts at hand' (1990:19).

Organisation, presentation and analysis of data

After all the interview data has been gathered, I transcribed it myself and started the analysis process. In order to organise the data from the survey and the interviews, and make sense of it, I was using coding software *Nvivo*, 'assigning tags or labels to data, based on concepts. Essentially... condensing the bulk of data into

analyzable units' (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996:26). The coding process had multiple stages. Firstly, the data was carefully read, main themes and issues were identified, and each assigned a code. These codes were noted, and later statements were organised under its appropriate code (see appendix 9 for the list of themes and codes). Secondly, using the codes developed in the first stage, I reread the data, and searched for statements that could fit into any of the categories. At this stage further codes were developed to make sure that nothing was missed, and all different perspectives and responses were included into the findings (see appendix 10 for the list of additional codes). The full and final set of codes was then used to code all of the data gathered again. Thirdly, after the first two stages of coding have been completed, I became more analytical and looked for patterns and explanations in the codes. Finally, I read through the raw data for cases that illustrated the analysis or explained the concepts. I was looking for data that was contradictory, as well as confirmatory, in order to build a comprehensive picture and avoid confirmation bias. Coded data was then organised in a way that similar statements were clustered and grouped into common themes. I interpreted the findings, established how they helped to explain the phenomenon under study and linked the findings to the body of related knowledge to construct theory.

My aim has always been to approach data collection and analysis in a flexible and relatively unstructured way, in order to make sure that it was the data that raised themes, and to avoid pre-fixed arrangements that would impose categories on what my participants said or did. However, at the same time, I do not make any claims on objectivity, as 'the task for all researchers is to recognize and come to terms with their/our partial and situated 'subjectivity' rather than aspire to an impossibly distanced 'objectivity'' (Crang and Cook 2007: 13). As Ann Gray has observed, qualitative audience research is always a subject to a 'double interpretation': first, the interpretation which participants bring to their own experience (as discussed above), and second, the interpretation that the researchers make of participants' responses (1992:33; also see Ang, 1989:106; Busse and Gray, 2011). My interpretation connected the empirical data to the key issues, concepts and theories in the relevant academic literature, and thus was influenced by theoretical and conceptual discourses, which constituted the

framework of my analysis, as well as my own interests and intuitions (Gray, 1992:34; Mackay and Ivey, 2004:12). In order to keep to the overall focus of the thesis (television viewing and the use of media technology in the context of parenting), some of the themes that emerged in the research, but which were not relevant to this focus, were not included in the discussion in this thesis (see appendix 9 and 10 for the full spectrum of themes and codes).

It is therefore my hope that the methodological considerations discussed in this chapter of the thesis will provide the reader with the needed context for the exploration of the empirical chapters that follow.

Chapter 1. Parents negotiating digital television: the space of media technologies in the home and domestic digital estates

Introduction

As it has been discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the question of why and how audiences accept or refuse the changes to television viewing introduced by the industry and the digitalisation of television, remains vitally important in both academic and industry debates. This chapter begins to address this question by acknowledging the diversity, complexity and multi-functionality of home television environments, and by looking at personal individual narratives of the negotiation of television technology in the home. It aims to contribute to the debate on digital television and contemporary everyday life by bringing more complexity and nuance to the notion of 'television viewing experience', by acknowledging and examining the *efforts* parents put into making sense of, organising and managing various media technologies and ways of accessing television content in the home. Thus this chapter explores the multi-screen and multi-media nature of contemporary homes by looking at what spaces media technologies occupy in the home, their functionality, organisation and negotiation by parents. It takes the domestication approach to the study of media use in the home as a starting point, with an aim to re-conceptualise this framework, in order to enable it to better suit the needs of contemporary television scholarship, and to fully grasp the complexity of contemporary home digital television environments, which now consist of both physical and cloud elements.

Following Elizabeth Evans's (2015a, 2015b) work on the domestic digital estate, this chapter proposes this concept as a framework for the discussion of the digital television environment in the home and its individual negotiation by audiences. The chapter examines the diversity of television technology in contemporary homes, both physical and cloud, and explores how it is made sense of and negotiated by parents on a day-to-day basis by the means of formation and management of domestic digital estates. This chapter highlights the importance of investigating how *parents*, as a specific audience group, make sense of the

technologically complex home environments, in order to answer family needs and specific circumstances of parents' everyday lives; exploring the diverse and complex ways, in which parenting intersects with the domestic digital estate. The chapter thus draws special attention to the importance of considering individual personal ways, in which media technologies are used and made sense of, as the increasing multi-functionality of media technologies means that their use cannot be predicted or guaranteed, being dependent on individual's specific personal preferences, needs, experiences and circumstances.

Literature review

Before I start the discussion of how parents, who participated in my study, have negotiated media technology and various ways of accessing and watching digital television content in the home, it is first important to discuss how the issue of audience's negotiation of the domestic media technology in an increasingly mediated home has been discussed in academic literature to date. As it has been noted on multiple occasions, media technologies in the home have been diversifying and growing in numbers over the past decades, becoming an essential part of the home environment, in which families now live. Over twenty years ago Roger Silverstone has argued that 'without doubt, television is no longer simply a broadcast medium and households are no longer condemned to a single set' (1991:136). Almost ten years later Joseph Kayany and Paul Yelsma have pointed out that if traditionally families and households have been defined as social systems, today 'modern households possess an additional technological dimension' (2000:216) brought about by multiple television sets, video players, video recorders, computers, gaming systems, and most recently tablets and mobile phones, meaning that any study of family everyday life or the home has to acknowledge this technological element of everyday experience, and study the home and the family in relation to it. As David Morley has argued, 'in this vision of the household, the technologies are no longer merely supplementary to, but constitutive of, what the home itself now is' (2003:450).

Consequently there is a wide range of academic works that examine the constantly growing and changing amount of media technologies in the home: Moira Bovill and Sonia Livingstone talk about contemporary homes having multiple media technologies and being 'media-rich spaces' for family members (2001:3), something that Gerard Goggin also refers to as 'increasingly digitally saturated households' (2012:87); Joseph Kayany and Paul Yelsma describe contemporary homes as 'technologically complex environments', where family members have to make sense of the growing and changing number of media technologies, and learn how to live with them (2000:219); while David Morley particularly highlights the shift from families having 'one box in the living room' to having multiple screens on offer to family members, referring to contemporary families as "multiscreen' households', and pointing to the fact that this alters the relationships audiences have with media (2003:448). While of course not all households are 'media-rich', according to Sonia Livingstone's (2007) research findings based on a large sample of families, 9 years ago 45% of households were already 'media-rich', with 29% being 'media-poor' and 26% being 'traditional'. Similarly, as more recent Ofcom long term qualitative study of people's media practices and attitudes (2013) begins to demonstrate, due to the constant development of technologies, their increasing affordability over time, and the increasing social pressures to be 'online', more households are becoming 'media-rich', acquiring new media technologies to access information and media content. It can be argued that 'multi-screen' household is now the norm, especially due to the fact that the content that formerly could only be accessed via the television set, is now available on many more media devices, such as PCs, laptops, tablets and mobile phones.

However, previous research inquiry has not stopped at merely observing the multimedia nature of the home. These observations have often been followed by a further inquiry into how media technologies fit into or transform the domestic space, and how they are being appropriated by family members (for instance, see Mackay and Ivey, 2004). It has been widely acknowledged that when new technologies enter the home, they often do not have an obvious location, and therefore have to be appropriated by families and integrated into the domestic environment: 'the process of consumption and of embedding the object into the

household is one of sense making, of transforming the alien object to ascribe it meaning in the symbolic reality of the household' (Berker et al., 2006:7; also see Hartmann, 2013; Morley, 2003). For instance, Sonia Livingstone discussed how the computer, when it first entered the home, during the process of its appropriation by families, could be found in living rooms, dining rooms, studies, bedrooms and even hallways (2007:7). Similarly, in their discussion of On Demand television, Rich Ling et al. have argued that any new television technology has to be 'placed physically in the home and fitted into an understanding of the users and their lifestyle' (1999:87). The idea that it is not enough to simply examine what the creators of media technology have intended, and what uses and features they predicted the media technology to have, is at the heart of the domestication approach to home media consumption, which many previous researchers into television in the context of the everyday life have followed. Thus in my own inquiry into how parents make sense of the multiple ways of accessing and viewing digital television content in the home, I am following the tradition of the domestication research.

As Roger Silverstone, one of the founders of this theoretical framework, has argued, domestication 'looks at how technologies are negotiated within the household or within the more general structures and patterns of our everyday life' (2005:167), stressing that although all new technologies arrive already more or less clearly marked in terms of their functions (through their marketed images, design, technical capacities and public policy), 'their incorporation into each household along these predefined lines or claims cannot be guaranteed nor is it always significant or uncontested' (1991:148; also see Burgess, 2012; Cummings and Kraut, 2002; Haddon, 2006; Hjorth, 2012; Hughes and Hans, 2001; Silverstone, 2006). A substantial evidence of previous research indicates that people do not merely react to technology, but actively shape its use and influence by generating interpretations and applications of technological systems that often diverge from the ones, which were originally inscribed in them (Bakardjieva and Smith, 2001:68; Fischer, 1992; Hughes and Hans, 2001:788). The ways, in which media technologies will be used and appropriated will, among other factors, also depend on user's own personal experiences, attitudes and preferences: 'machines and services do not

come into the household naked. They are packaged, certainly, but they are also 'packaged' by the erstwhile purchaser and user, with dreams and fantasies, hopes and anxieties: the imaginaries of modern consumer society' (Silverstone, 2006:234; also see Haddon, 2006; Ling et al. 1999; Rogge and Jensen, 1988; Silverstone, 1991; Silvio, 2007; Sorensen, 2006). However, although I find the domestication approach to home television consumption incredibly useful, I want to argue that this theoretical framework needs to be re-worked and re-conceptualised, in order to grasp the complexity of contemporary home digital television environment.

The tradition of research on television, which focused on how television and its technologies have been domesticated by audiences, have largely revolved around the study of television as a physical object, with an idea that television, like all other objects, 'shapes its immediate space through its material form' (McCarthy, 2001:96; also see Morley, 2000). As Anna McCarthy has argued, that

'...involved bothering to think about the very basic and barely noticeable physical form of television-inquiring into the assumptions behind the placement of TV sets in hotel bathrooms; wondering why people often decorate TV sets with plastic flowers, or posters, and why they cover them with cloths as if televisions are precious icons' (2001:97).

However, as a result of television's digitalisation and convergence with digital media and the Internet, television is becoming less material and 'site-specific' (McCarthy, 2001:99), and more flexible, fluid and 'formless' (Murphy, 2011:9; also see Hartmann, 2013). Vital components of digital television today are online services, which are not material and physical, but 'cloud', and the domestication framework does not offer a way of making sense and analysing these immaterial technologies of television. And as many theorists have argued, these online services are becoming vital to audience's experiences of television. For instance, as Catherine Johnson has argued in her discussion of online television: 'the rhetoric of online TV speaks to a moment in which the internet is emerging as an integral part of providing television services, whether through a television set, PC, laptop, tablet or mobile phone' (2015). She then continued by pointing to the fact that in 2015 broadcast television viewing saw a decline of 12 minutes from the previous year,

which could be accounted for by viewing on Catch Up, Video On Demand (VOD) and subscription services, such as Netflix: 'Certainly, non-traditional viewing has risen over the past year; viewing of non-subscription catch-up services (such as BBC iPlayer) has increased by 26% and 16% of UK households now subscribe to Netflix' (Johnson, 2015). Similarly, as recent Ofcom's *Communications Market Report* demonstrates, at the end of 2014, 56% of UK households already had a TV connected to the internet, either via a set-top box or smart TV, and 83% of UK premises were able to receive superfast broadband (Ofcom, 2015a). This statistical data proves the importance of online television services for the digital television viewing experience, however, tells us nothing about how audiences actually make sense of the increasingly complicated home digital television environment. Thus there is clearly an urgent need for research that looks at how audiences make sense of and negotiate digital television technology in the home, both physical and cloud, the need that this chapter is looking to address. However, as it has been already noted, the domestication framework does not offer the tools for addressing this issue, which means that a new theoretical and conceptual framework is required. As I will discuss in the remaining part of this chapter, the concept of the domestic digital estate can offer the needed framework for the discussion of the digital television environment in the home and its negotiation by audiences. In what follows, I will examine the diversity of television technology in contemporary homes, both physical and cloud, and investigate how it is made sense of and negotiated by parents on a day-to-day basis, exploring the diverse and complex ways, in which parenting intersects with the formation and management of domestic digital estates.

Negotiating digital television in the home: domestic digital estate

In order to discuss how the concept of the domestic digital estate can be used for the discussion of audience's negotiation of digital television technology in the home, I first want to briefly discuss the origins of the concept. Elizabeth Evans, who has introduced the concept of the digital estate to the academic discussion of digital television, has argued that although the concept of digital estate is not

common in academic discussions, it has been used by the industry for quite some time: 'the concept of 'digital estates' has emerged across the sector, both in the rhetoric of key executives and distribution-related strategic decisions' (2015b; also see Evans, 2015a). Similar to the argument made by Catherine Johnson (2015) discussed above, Elizabeth Evans has pointed out that while television industry's initial strategy was to get content everywhere fast, there has recently been a shift towards integration of broadcast television and online services for a more coherent and organised user experience (Evans, 2015a). In particular, Elizabeth Evans used an example of Channel 4 and 4OD's recent re-branding: 'Channel 4 are attempting to create a fundamental shift in the way they see themselves. Rather than a television broadcaster they are becoming managers of content that is spread across multiple distribution outlets but still form a coherent unit' (Evans, 2015b; also see Johnson, 2015). In his speech on 'Assessing the health of broadcast TV', Channel 4 chief executive David Abraham said:

'This new version of the 4 logo will incorporate our entire channel and digital estate into one universe for the first time. All 4 represents a complete reframing of our digital estate, to provide a more joined-up online content and brand experience' (Channel 4, 2014).

Thus the term 'digital estate' refers to the integration of multiple television outlets into a coherent unit, 'a single entity made up of multiple components', which significantly changes the logic of television content provision, with the digital being positioned as equal to linear broadcasting, and with television industry providing more transmedia content to audiences in a coherent and user-friendly way (Evans, 2015b; also see Johnson, 2015).

However, as Elizabeth Evans has pointed out, this change is not only happening on the level of the television industry, but parallel changes are also occurring at a domestic level – 'in the behaviour and attitudes of audiences towards transmedia modes of engagement and the expansion of television onto digital technologies' (Evans, 2015b). She has thus introduced the concept of 'domestic digital estate' for the discussion of how digital estates are forming in the home, in order to explore the ways, in which digital technologies are managed to create

transmedia experience not only by the industry, but also by audiences in their everyday lives (Evans, 2015a, 2015b). While in her own work Elizabeth Evans uses the concept of 'domestic digital estate' mainly to make sense of how audiences experience transmedia television content, with an emphasis on the ways, in which audiences negotiate television viewing experience in the home, in my discussion I want to appropriate the concept to refer largely to the ways, in which audiences make sense and negotiate the complexity of digital television technology in the home, both physical and cloud. By doing this, my aim is to use the concept of the domestic digital estate to address the limitations of the domestication framework discussed earlier in the chapter, and to examine how television and its technologies are appropriated and domesticated by parents in the context of contemporary everyday domestic family life and parenting.

Thus, following Elizabeth Evans's (2015a, 2015b) work on domestic digital estates, in this chapter I am arguing that just as important as it is for the industry to be able to offer an easy to navigate, follow and use singular entertainment service for the audience, it is equally important for audience members to be able to make sense of diverse and complex media technologies available to them in their own homes, to organise them and use them in a logical and coherent manner to access video content. The concept of domestic digital estate can be used to address the multiplication of where television can be found in the domestic setting, referring to the series of connected but distinct devices and services that can potentially be used for accessing television content in the home. It has to be noted that the domestic digital estate is not a unified concept though. Although individuals might use similar or even identical media technologies, and although all new media technologies arrive into the home already more or less clearly marked in terms of their functions and capabilities (Silverstone, 1991), there are nonetheless variations in how and what for media technologies are used, and consequently variations of what the domestic digital estate can look like, and how it can be formed and organised. In the words of Jo T. Smith, today individuals are invited to get caught up in 'technological techniques and experimentations' (2008:137) when creating and organising their digital estates. There is no singular formula to it, and the way the domestic digital estate will eventually look like will largely depend on which media

technologies individuals use, the purposes and logic of this use, as well as particular personal circumstances, such as employment, age and number of children, place of residence and so on. The same argument that Henry Jenkins was making about media convergence can now be adopted for the discussion of domestic digital estate: 'for the foreseeable future, convergence [and domestic digital estate] will be a kind of kludge – a jerry- rigged relationship between different media technologies – rather than a fully integrated system' (2004:34). Thus the only way to examine the audience level of digital television experience, and to access the ways, in which audiences accept or refuse the changes to television viewing introduced by the industry, is to look at personal individual narratives of television use and the formation of domestic digital estates within individual homes.

Furthermore, as Henry Jenkins was noticing about media convergence, the domestic digital estates are also likely to develop unevenly within a given culture, 'with those who are most affluent and most technologically literate becoming the early adapters and other segments of the population struggling to catch up' (2004:35). My study has shown that those families with larger economic capital and more disposable income had richer and better-organised domestic digital estates, as they were 'staying on top of things' (as described by one of my participants Nick, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months), constantly upgrading their media technologies to 'smarter' ones. This goes in line with the argument made by Pablo Javier Boczkowski and Ignacio Siles, who pointed out that 'consumption is also shaped by the social system or context in which the adoption process takes place' (2014:562), particularly at a time when technological developments are so rapid. However, what all different versions of domestic digital estates share in common is that they have to be created, organised and managed by individuals, which takes considerable time and effort on behalf of individuals, and there has to be a logic to them, which might also differ depending on the household, the specific circumstances of everyday life and a stage in the life course, as the following discussion will illustrate.

Parenting, the domestic digital estate and the space of media technology in the home

In order to provide context for the discussion of parents negotiating the domestic digital estates in their home, I first want to briefly introduce the main components of the domestic digital estates that parents, who participated in the study, had. Families that took part in the study had a rich array of media technologies in their homes: 92.76% of respondents to the survey had a TV set; 82.89% had a laptop (often more than one per household), 59.21% had a game console of some kind, 38.16% had a PC, and 32.89% had a Blu-ray player (see figure 1 in appendix 7 for more details and an extended list of media devices in the home). More families participating in my study had a tablet (in most cases it was an iPad), than a DVD player - 79.61% and 78.29% respectively. As the survey has shown, the majority of these devices were used collectively, with all members of the family having access to them. The only device that was likely to be used individually was the mobile phone, with 76.97% of respondents saying they consider this device their own, rather than shared with other family members (see figure 2 in appendix 7). On these devices, family audiences were most likely to access Catch Up and On Demand video content by the means of iPlayer (73.68%), YouTube (70.39%), 4OD (43.42%), and iTunes (39.47%), with the figure for broadcast television being 39.47%¹⁵ (see figure 3 in appendix 7 for the full list).

My research of parents (particularly parents with young children), as a specific audience group, has revealed that having children and the experience of parenting play a great role in shaping the domestic digital estate. In the interviews parents were making a clear distinction between television viewing and the use of media technology 'before' and 'after' having children (also see Eynon, 2015). The change in what television technologies were acquired and used for watching television was caused by the change in lifestyle, daily routines and most importantly, different attitudes to television and media devices that were brought about by having children and feeling a new sense of responsibility.

¹⁵ This particular finding (less than 50% of parents reporting watching broadcast television) will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter.

As such, parents mentioned that having children encouraged them to acquire media devices that could allow recorded or On Demand viewing, such as digital video recorders and smart TVs with built in applications (such as iPlayer, YouTube, Netflix, Amazon Prime), as well as to get a subscription to On Demand video services, such as Netflix or Amazon Prime, in order to be able to 'protect' children from the risks of live broadcasting, such as advertising and unrestricted content. Online television services, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, were reported to be particularly supportive of parental mediation, much more so than traditional broadcast television:

'For me, I think, it is more controlled and regulated, because I can really control and regulate the kind of things that they are watching, and set up parental controls in a way that I probably couldn't with a regular telly... I have set parental controls, so something with like sexually explicit content or with like a lot of bad language, that gets blocked out' (Rachel, 45-54 years old, Norfolk, three children aged 16, 12 and 7).

William also talked about Netflix making the process of setting up parental controls easy and straight forward: 'Netflix is really good because you can set... you can have a kids setting, so you know, whatever they look at is going to be suitable for them' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2). Parents also discussed teaching children how to use the Smart TV and DVR devices, in order to 'stay safe' – not being exposed to advertising or inappropriate content:

'They can fast forward the commercials themselves, they can choose things on YouTube, if we've already selected... done the search, but it's again through the television, because it is a smart TV, so there's a way of doing this' (Samantha, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5);

'All recorded, they do it themselves. So the kids will spin to the beginning of the programme and then they will spin through the adverts' (James, 35-44 years old, East Sussex three children aged 3, 6 and 10).

Recorded, Catch Up and On Demand television was often chosen by parents as a 'safer' option than live broadcast television, particularly as children grow older. Thus one of the purposes of the domestic digital estate in the context of parenting

can be seen as a way of managing childhood, or at least one important part of it – children’s media use, by the means of carefully selecting television services and encouraging their use, or setting parental controls¹⁶ (also see Shepherd et al., 2006).

Parents also mentioned that having children pushed them towards acquiring portable devices, such as tablets, in order to have an option of entertaining children ‘on the go’ in any situation, both inside and outside of the family home. They also talked about using existent portable devices more and for different previously not experienced purposes, such as watching television content. For instance, Mary talked about using her phone to play short videos for her daughter (of her favourite television shows, such as *Peppa Pig*) to entertain her for a short while or distract her quickly, if she gets upset (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). William discussed how his boys were ‘completely taken to technology and they’ll watch TV on your phone or my phone, if they are allowed to. You know, they’ll run off with our phones and start watching stuff, or the iPads, or the laptop’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2); and how his children’s media practices were influencing his own, as well as his partner’s, with portable media devices being used more, and playing a bigger role in the domestic digital estate. As William’s wife Megan pointed out:

‘I watch like YouTube videos and stuff on my phone now. And actually if there is something I really want... last night there was something on Facebook that I really wanted to watch and I started watching on my phone, and then I bounced it to the TV, because I wanted to watch it bigger, I suppose’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

In this case parents’ growing use of portable media devices for video content viewing is leading to home media technologies becoming more connected to each other (Megan started watching content on one screen and then ‘bounced’ it to another), leading in turn to a more connected, coherent and user-friendly domestic

¹⁶ For more on children’s media use and parental negotiation of it, see chapters 5 and 6.

digital estate, where media technologies are connected to offer a coherent television viewing experience.

However, parenting decisions have not only influenced what media technologies were acquired, and how they were used, but also how, where and why they were placed in the family home. For instance, in order to avoid children accessing inappropriate content, parents often had a specific rule for children's media use, where television and other media could only be accessed from the public spaces of the home, such as the living room, and not from the privacy of children's bedrooms. This was done so that parents could be in the same room with their children, watching content together or simply keeping an eye on what children were doing (also see Walsh et al., 1998). James talked about trying to watch television content with his children whenever he could, as then it is not only about supervising their media use, but also about sharing media time with them: 'If I'm home, on weekends like this, I'll sit down with them and watch it with them. It's our together time' (35-44 years old, East Sussex three children aged 3, 6 and 10). Donna mentioned listening to her son watching or playing something on the iPod, as a way of keeping track of his media activities, even when she could not watch the screen with him being busy doing other things:

'There is so much stuff on there that I wouldn't want him to see, that I do have to... Luckily, he has the sound up anyway, so I can kind of hear, so I can listen to what he watches as well. It is really important' (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months).

Such mediation practices and rules around media use were leading to most media technologies in the home being placed in public centralised spaces of the home, which in most cases was the living room, thus determining the spatial characteristics of family's domestic digital estates (also see Aarsand and Aronsson, 2009).

In fact, for all 12 families that took part in the interviews, the living room was the most important and the most used space in the house, which was also the main location of media technologies, both static and portable ones. This finding goes against the popular claims that multi-media and multi-screen nature of

contemporary homes is unavoidably leading to the decentralisation of 'the traditional television-set-in-the-living-room' (Uricchio, 2011), with media technologies becoming spread around the house, inviting family members to access media content from different separate spaces around the family home. As William has explained:

'I think we have 3 iPads, to put it like that, so... So we have an iPad mini, a really old first generation iPad and a new one, that's my work one. So they have enough screens that, you know, if one is allowed to go on one... then the other one can as well. And then they will sit at the dining table and play a game or whatever... The kids love watching TV programmes on the iPad, although it has a little screen... They usually either sit here [living room] or in the dining room, don't they?' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

As this quote demonstrates, despite the multitude of portable media devices available, their use mainly takes place in the living room/dining room downstairs, which is often regarded by parents as *the place* to use media, a symbolic centralised space for entertainment and information, where children's media use can also be monitored for safety (also see Mackay and Ivey, 2004). After the living room, the second most popular place for media use was parents' bedroom, which was also often the location of some media technologies. Here children would often watch television content or use media technology, while parents were still sleeping in the morning, or getting ready for work or for bedtime:

'The TV in our bedroom we only ever use sometimes at night, although I use it quite a bit when he wakes up very early in the morning, just to stick the TV on and then he can watch his cartoons, and we can still have a bit of a doze' (Emily, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months);

'We do quite regularly actually watch some programmes on the iPhone, a lot on our iPhones. And often it's in the morning, when she wakes up a bit too early, and we just wanna snooze or, you know, just not get up yet. So we use YouTube quite a lot...' (Mary, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

Or as Samantha pointed out: 'Sometimes they will watch something on the laptop in the bedroom... Yeah, I would say laptop for DVDs, especially at night time...

When we watch things on the laptop, it's always in the bedroom' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5). Once again, despite the portability of the laptop, it nevertheless had a specific 'location' in the family home ('always in the bedroom'), instead of being constantly moved around the house, and this location was determined by the specific experiences of parenting and the need to have media technology 'at hand'.

In the households with young children under the age of 5, parents also often had to hide all media technologies, including the television set, out of reach of children for the reasons of safety, using child locks on media storage cupboards and drawers, as well as TV wall mounts. Donna (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months) explained how her husband *had to* mount the television set to the wall, because their 2-year-old son was poking the television set and driving toy cars along it, which was not safe for the child, and could also mean potential damage for an expensive piece of media technology. Similarly, Samantha explained the reason why they only had 1 television set mounted to the wall and no other television sets in the house by saying:

'We used to have a TV in there [bedroom] but it broke. It fell on one of them, so... It's a bit scary. Because the thing with flat screen TVs is, unless they are bolted to the wall, they are quite dangerous, because they are quite heavy, so it sort of just slipped on forward...' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

The reason why it was so important for parents that the television set was not within the easy reach of children, is because the area in the living room around the television set was almost always used as a sort of playground, with children spending a considerable amount of time there. In her work, Jackie Marsh referred to such an arrangement as 'television-related play space', and pointed out that it was a trend among parents (2005:40). Children's toys and books would often be located in front of the television set, and such arrangement was reported to both allow the family to spend time together, and for parents to have some relatively undistracted television time, when parents could watch television to relax and wind

down, while children were occupied by playing with toys, see pictures 2 and 3 below:



Picture 2. Victoria and Andrew's living room (25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 and 5 months). Original image used with parents' permission.



Picture 3. Mary and Stuart's living room (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). Original image used with parents' permission.

These examples demonstrate that the ways, in which television is experienced, have significant impacts on family's use of overall space, with domestic digital estates in general, and television technology in particular, contributing in multiple ways to the construction of spaces of everyday life (also see Marsh, 2005; McCarthy, 2001; Olofsson, 2014; Tufte, 2000).

However, children-related considerations were not the only factors influencing the location of media technology in the home. When it comes to placing the television set and other media technologies in the home, parents were also governed by the unspoken conventions of what looked good and 'stylistically pure' (Olofsson, 2014:377), reflecting current cultural ideas of what the ideal family home should look like. As such, the furnishings and fixtures for media technologies were carefully thought through, planned and chosen, with parents using different types of TV stands, entertainment units and wall mounts to display some devices, while hiding the rest for aesthetic reasons. Television stands and entertainment units were often a source of pride and admiration for parents, as they were the focal points of the living room, its physical as well as symbolic center. In the living rooms they served as 'space-binding' furnishings (McCarthy, 2001:93; also see Olofsson, 2014), surrounded by sofas, armchairs and living room storage. Mary and Stuart even named their entertainment unit, remembering warmly and in detail why and how they got it: 'We wanted to have the TV opposite the sofa... and so we planned this 'Maggie unit'... that's what we call it!' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). However, there was an unspoken hierarchy of media technologies in terms of visual aesthetics: for instance, while the television set was often proudly displayed, Wi-Fi routers and broadband receivers were mainly hidden from view either behind the television set or inside the television stand or entertainment unit. Devices, such as game consoles, DVD players, Blu-ray players and digital recorders, were usually located underneath the television set, where they would be visible, but at the same time would not attract too much attention.

It is important to note though that parents did not always have a choice as to where to place media technology, as the living space would often have specific limitations. Due to a specific traditional layout of the homes, where living rooms have a fireplace and/or a chimneybreast in the living room, the television sets in

these homes were usually located on either side of the chimneybreast. Similarly, the size and shape of the room also acted as determining factors when it came to the decision of placing the television set. As Mary pointed out, 'it was because this is the biggest part of the room, as you can see that's kind of dining area up there, and it's narrower' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). Or as William explained:

'I think just because of the way the chairs fit. This is the longest wall, so the sofa has to go here... So if we put the TV over there, it would be weird. I think it's just the shape of the room, and there's a door there, so... It's probably the only place it can go' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

The location of doors and windows in relation to the television set was also carefully thought through, in order to optimise the viewing experience, for example, as Annabelle mentioned, 'it's to stop it being too reflected by the window...' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months). Another factor that influenced television set's location in the homes of my participants was the cabling and fixtures, which also pre-determined and dictated the space for media technologies in the home. As James explained, 'Yeah, everything is behind that corner, like the aerial and plugs and stuff' (35-44 years old, East Sussex, three children aged 3, 6 and 10). Similarly, as Campbell family discussed:

Annabelle: It was the aerial! I think the aerial was over there.

Nick: Which we are not using! Oh, you mean the Virgin box? Yeah, the Virgin box is over there!

Annabelle: That would be why then! It's logistical rather than anything else.

(25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children under 5).

Despite the argument put forward by many domestication framework theorists that 'an increasing array of technologies has now become naturalised to the point of literal (or psychological) invisibility in the domestic sphere' (Morley, 2003:449), the families that took part in the interviews demonstrated their

conscious awareness of media technologies in their home, and spent a considerable amount of time during the interviews discussing their place in their homes. Moreover, the examples discussed above point to the fact that organising, developing and building domestic digital estates is an on-going project for parents. For many parents the process of 'locating' and 'furnishing' media technology does not have a natural ending point, as personal circumstances change, for instance, when children are born or when they grow older, as well as when new media technologies are being purchased and no longer fit into the existent space or entertainment unit, requiring a re-consideration of the domestic space.

Multi-functionality of media technology in the home and domestic digital estate

The findings on the location of television and its technology in the family home discussed above do not offer a radically new picture of the places that media technologies occupy in the home, and similar accounts have been previously provided by other scholars in the field of television and everyday life (for instance, see Briggs, 2010; Lull, 1988a; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Morley, 1986, 1992; Olofsson, 2014; Silverstone, 1991, 1994). However, my investigation of parents as a specific audience group and parenting as a specific stage in the life course, has shown that parenting intersects with the domestic digital estate in a number of ways, and the influence of specific stages in the life course on the domestic digital estate should be acknowledged. Moreover, I want to argue that while media technologies might continue to occupy the same spaces in the family home, what is changing is the very nature of home media technologies, which are becoming increasingly *multi-functional*, allowing individuals to use them for a variety of purposes, in a variety of ways, and thus problematising our understanding of what these devices are for and what meanings they hold for audiences. This also means that while individuals might have the same media technologies in their homes, and they can be found in similar places around the house, their media consumption can be radically different, being dependent on how media technologies are actually being used.

For instance, while most parents chose to carefully negotiate and manage their domestic digital estates, in order to ensure children's safety and wellbeing, in

one family parents employed much more drastic measures and instead of establishing a digital estate, chose to establish an anti-media home, where there was no media technology that children could regularly access at all. In this case, the living room was largely a media free zone, there was no television set and no other traditional television technology present. Other media technologies, such as laptops and phones, which were needed by parents largely for work purposes, were hidden from view and only used on special occasions. As Deborah and Robert discussed:

Deborah: It tends to be... like if we are having, like if it's a rainy afternoon and there is nothing else to do... And it's normally on a Sunday if at all.

Robert: Yeah, we might get them to sit and watch *Strictly* for an hour or something, but it's not something that they have an allowance of. Sometimes we will just all sit on a sofa and watch something.

(25-34 years old, Kent, three children aged 6, 3 and 1).

From the account that Deborah and Robert have provided, it was evident that on the rare occasions when television content was watched, parents consciously or unconsciously replicated television viewing experience by gathering in the living room and positioning the laptop or the tablet screen in the middle, so that all members of the family could see it. For that hour or so, the work device, such as the laptop, would turn into a television screen in the family room. Analogously, as another participant Samuel explained: 'My desktop is where I access most of my TV... it has a large (TV like) screen, plugged into a great sound system' (25-34 years old, London, one child aged 4 months). In this example, again the PC - the device that is most often used for work and is therefore associated with work-related activities - is at the same time used for watching television, two seemingly distinct activities being centered in one device. There is also a clear attempt to bring the experience closer to that of traditional television, with Samuel emphasising that the desktop screen is large and 'TV like', as well as being 'plugged into a great sound system', just like the television set potentially would be.

Similarly, the fact that families have a television set in the home does not necessarily mean that it is used for television viewing purposes. This idea was very

evident from the survey responses, as one of the survey questions required participants to list the media devices they had in their homes (see figure 1 in appendix 7). While some participants would just choose the options from the list, others felt the need to explain what the device was actually used for in their family, as quite often it was not a straightforward answer. For instance, Carol chose the television set from the list, however, she specified that 'We play Wii on our TV mainly at the moment, because it's new... good family fun' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 4), indicating that while her family did have a television set, it was not currently used for the traditional television viewing purpose, but rather used as a screen to play Wii. Another participant Stuart used the television screen as a second screen for his computer. As his wife Mary explained:

'Up in the spare bedroom/study, we have the iMac and a TV screen, because Stuart does editing. He edits film footage, because he produces and directs as well... So he uses the TV screen as a tool. We don't watch TV on it, we don't watch TV up there' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

The usage and functionality of a TV screen is again different in this account, with the television set being used instead of a computer screen for work, and not for the purpose of watching television content. In both accounts there is no mention of television as a medium, and all emphasis is on the multi-functional nature of media technology - a 'screen' that can be used for a variety of purposes, depending on the need. The fact that there is a potential mismatch between the media technology and what it is actually used for was felt by many other participants, who felt the need to explain what each device was used for by different members of the family. As Faith explained: 'We use it [television set] everyday sometimes to watch a film as a family. My partner uses it for gaming and to watch his sports, and my little boy loves to watch *Peppa Pig* and other cartoons online' (18-24 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

These examples show that it is not possible to make generalisations about what happens in the domestic digital estate or what media technologies are used for, based on their obvious characteristics and features. Moreover, such multi-functionality of media technologies is often blurring the already shaky and

uncertain boundaries around television as a medium, such as what is considered to be a television technology, and which home video services and content count as television viewing. As such, YouTube was often mentioned in the context of television viewing. While many individuals still use smaller portable devices, such as mobile phones, tablets and laptops, to access YouTube content (Ofcom, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c), my survey and interviews have shown that more and more parents use smart TVs with built in YouTube application to watch videos, which brings it ever closer to being thought of as a television viewing experience. While in the majority of families, YouTube videos were used as supplementary to traditional television broadcasting content (as was evident from the range of television services that participants have chosen from the list offered, see figure 3 in appendix 7), in one household it was used as an alternative to all traditional television broadcasting content altogether, with both Nina and her husband Alex only choosing YouTube and iTunes from the list of television services they regularly used. As Nina explained, '[we use] Device (24inch imac) / Service (Youtube) we enjoy watching and discovering new things with the family and friends' (35-44 years old, London, one child aged 1). Similarly, when asked '*which devices and services do you use most often to access television content and why?*', other participants would give answers such as 'The TV and YouTube on mobile phone' (Mary, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1); '"Live TV", DVD player, YouTube, Catch Up TV' (Ted, 35-44 years old, London, two children aged 9 and 17); 'Laptop or iPad as I can watch YouTube' (Sonia, 35-44 years old, East Sussex, three children aged 3, 6, 10), further indicating that for many parents YouTube has become an essential part of the television viewing experience. What counts as television technology and what counts as television content were two questions that parents had to negotiate for themselves, and this negotiation was a huge part of the organisation and formation of the domestic digital estates.

The variety of media devices and ways of accessing television content in the home did not simply *exist*, rather it was constantly negotiated by parents, who had a specific logic or reasoning for having and using these media technologies in a specific way. As Elizabeth Evans has argued, 'what is different is the multiplicity of technologies that are now on offer, that require a greater balancing out of their

various capabilities to fit each specific moment of viewing. The examples here are only part of the picture, but raise the value of considering notions of management' of the domestic digital estates (Evans, 2015b). 'Domestic digital estate' is indeed a very useful concept to be applied to characterise this process of negotiation of diverse and complex media technologies, because it refers to a coherent and logical structure of media technology and media use in the home, where all different elements come together, adding something to the overall experience of home media use (also see Evans, 2015a). A coherent domestic digital estate thus becomes the ultimate goal for negotiating, appropriating and organising media technologies in the home; the point when media technologies form an 'integrated system', and become an 'infrastructure' of family's living - fitting into daily routines, timetables and relationships; making sense for family members; anticipating and fulfilling their needs (also see Livingstone, 2010; Morley, 2003). In other words, a domestic digital estate is a system, where media technologies do not contradict each other and do not stand in a way of each other's functionality and use, but rather work together to enable the most convenient, easiest and most enjoyable way for individuals to use media in their home.

While the domestic digital estate might be a theoretical concept, participants in my study nevertheless showed their acute awareness of it: when answering questions about home media use, respondents often offered an overview of their domestic digital estate, pin pointing how media technologies were connected together in their use, and the particular logic behind that use. For instance, Amanda's response ('Roku box for Netflix, PlayStation for amazon prime - mainly for films', 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children, children's ages not specified), and Stella's response ('TV - broadcast TV; PS3 to watch iPlayer or Blu-ray', 35-44 years old, three children aged 21, 19 and 3) both explain which particular media devices were used for which particular television services, providing details of the roles of these media devices in their domestic digital estates. Similarly, Megan's response ('iPlayer/iTunes/Netflix through apple TV', 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2), and Lacey's response ('TV set: recorded programmes (on PVR), broadcast TV, iPlayer and YouTube', 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 4 and 2) both describe the multi-functionality of the

Apple TV or the Smart TV devices, which allowed them to keep various television services in one centralised space, thus significantly simplifying their domestic digital estates. These and other responses of that kind signal that domestic digital estates are becoming an important part of everyday life, something that individuals are acknowledging, and finding worth sharing and explaining, with specific personal circumstances and life stages, such as parenting, influencing their formation in a number of ways.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has explored the range of media technologies in the homes of my participants, the spaces they occupy and their multi-functionality. It paid close attention to how separate media technologies, both physical and cloud, such as media devices, applications and television services, come together and are negotiated by parents using the concept of the domestic digital estate. The discussion in this chapter has expanded the use of this concept to include the experiences of parents in negotiating domestic digital estates in their everyday lives. It has also shown that parenting, as an experience and a specific stage in the life course, influences the formation and organisation of the domestic digital estates. The chapter thus draws special attention to the importance of considering individual personal ways, in which media technologies are used and made sense of, as the increasing multi-functionality of media technologies means that their use cannot be predicted or guaranteed, being dependent on individual's personal circumstances, preferences and needs.

This chapter is an original contribution to the field of television and everyday life, as it recognises that contemporary digital television experience includes the use and negotiation not only of various physical media devices, but also of 'cloud' applications and services, which also have to be made sense of, organised and connected together by parents, in order to enable convenient, easy, enjoyable and safe way for parents and their children to view television content and use media technology in the home. By acknowledging and examining the efforts individuals put into sorting out various media technologies and ways of

accessing television content in the home, this chapter brings more nuance and complexity to the notion of 'television viewing experience', examining it from the position of parents as a specific audience group, and revealing multiple layers of this everyday experience, ranging from where to position and how to furnish media technologies in the family home, to what to use them for, and how to make sure that all separate media technologies provide a coherent and logical way to access home video entertainment.

By exploring parents' domestic digital states and their components, this chapter aimed to set the scene for the further discussion of parents' everyday experiences of digital television and its technologies that will be pursued in the following chapters. In particular, while this chapter has examined the impact of digital television and its technologies on family's use of space, chapter 2 will be looking at the ways, in which digital television intersects with parents' organisation of everyday life in terms of time and temporal routines.

Chapter 2. Parenting, temporal organisation of everyday life and digital television

Introduction

As Torunn Selberg has pointed out, ‘television can be used in structuring daily life in the three dimensions: space, time and social relations¹⁷’ (1993:5). The previous chapter has examined the relationship between digital television and parents’ organisation of the domestic space. The aim of this chapter is to explore how digital television influences the ways, in which parents organise their everyday life temporarily, given the everyday pressures and constraints of parenting. This chapter examines personal circumstances and individual reasons behind parents’ digital television viewing practices, further emphasising that the concept of the life course is highly useful for a detailed and contextualised study of audience’s home television viewing. As such, it examines how parents often purposefully use television as a work-family strategy, and the connections between specific viewing practices and parental attitudes towards time, work, leisure, media use and child upbringing. By doing so, this chapter contributes to a better understanding of the meanings of digital television for audiences and their everyday living, as well as to the fields of parenting studies and family studies, which often do not study television and media technology in the context of individuals adjusting to and dealing with the experiences of being a parent in the contemporary world.

However, this chapter will also argue that the discussion of the temporality of television viewing should not stop at examining how television helps viewers organise or structure their everyday life, but also look at the very *experience* of watching television, which also has a temporal dimension. In this chapter I will therefore also explore how parents negotiate and construct their experiences of watching digital television, raising a question of what digital television flow looks like for parents, as a specific audience group, and how parents themselves

¹⁷ The issue of how digital television intersects with family relationships will be explored in chapter 4.

understand the notion of 'watching television'. By addressing these questions, this chapter aims to contribute to a better understanding of digital television as a medium, in a specific context of contemporary parenting.

Literature review

Before I start the discussion of the relationship between digital television and parents' organisation of everyday life and television viewing experience, I first want to examine how television has previously been studied in the context of the temporal organisation of everyday life. Roger Silverstone has argued that

'..an enquiry into the 'audience' should be an enquiry, not into a set of pre-constituted individuals, but into a set of daily practices and discourses within which the complex act of watching television is placed alongside others and through which that complex act is itself constituted' (1991:135).

Many theorists have argued that media and media technology play an enormously significant role in how everyday life and daily practices are organised and experienced (Briggs, 2010; Fiske, 1987; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Morley, 2000; Selberg, 1993). For instance, Hugh Mackay and Darren Ivey have argued that 'the media are used to make time, to pass the time and, importantly, to construct a sense of time' when it comes to audience's everyday lives (2004:117). It has also often been argued that media, such as television, play a great role in naturalising, stabilising and structuring the day (Briggs, 2010:106; Gauntlett and Hill, 1999:38; Mackay and Ivey, 2004:107; Morley, 2000:90). As David Gauntlett and Annette Hill have argued, 'television is, at the very least a catalyst for forms of organization of time and space – or, to be more emphatic, often a primary determining factor in how households organize their internal geography and everyday timetables' (1999:38). Various examples have been offered to support this claim, for instance, it has been noted that the timetable of television programmes targets audiences and purposefully coincides with the daily timetables of the majority of the population: morning shows coincide with breakfast time, and most evening entertainment starts when people are back home from work (Gauntlett and Hill,

1999; Mackay and Ivey, 2004). However, according to David Morley, 'there is a complex symbiosis at play here', with both television and other media 'adapting themselves to the circumstances of domestic consumption', and the domestic arena itself being 'simultaneously redefined to accommodate their requirements' (2003:443). The example of this can be families scheduling their dinner around evening news, adopting their daily routines to media schedules (Mackay and Ivey, 2004:117).

However, this traditional way of analysing television viewing and its relation to the temporality of everyday life has been constantly challenged by the developments in media technology, such as the emergence of VCR, which allowed viewers to record programmes; satellite and cable television, which offered more varied content and therefore viewing times; +1 channels, which offered a one hour delay of all television content; digital recorders, which allowed viewers to pause, forward and record programmes; and online television services, which offered On Demand and Catch Up services for certain programmes¹⁸. Over the years, television scholars have therefore discussed the increasing choice of devices, from which to access television content; audience's changing use of time and space; greater freedom and control over viewing choice; and the constantly growing possibilities of self-scheduling and time-shifting¹⁹, which are putting the importance and the very existence of television schedule, liveness and television flow under question (Carlson, 2006:97-98; Forgacs, 2001:135; Goggin, 2012:28; Grainge, 2011:6; Kennedy, 2008:313; Kompare, 2006:336; Livingstone, 1999:64; Mackay and Ivey, 2004:108; Nightingale and Ross, 2003:2; Pariser, 2011:11; Parks, 2004:137; Rizzo,

¹⁸ For a historical overview of the development of television's add on technologies, see Rhiannon Bury and Johnson Li (2015) 'Is it live or is it timeshifted, streamed or downloaded? Watching television in the era of multiple screens'. *New media and Society*, Vol. 17(4), pp. 592–610.

¹⁹ Rhiannon Bury and Johnson Li in particular differentiate between three modes of digital television viewing: *digital timeshifted viewing* (also referred to as timeshifted viewing or timeshifting, the term used in the context of viewing recorded television programming), *online viewing* (associated with computer technologies, including downloading, file-sharing and streaming) and *mobile viewing* (also enabled by streaming and downloading, but involves a mobile device, such a smart phone, iPod Touch or tablet) (2015:594-595).

2007:116; Rosen, 2006; Sinclair, 2004:43; Uricchio, 2004:172). In these debates the audience is often presented as demanding and active, expecting choice, diversity, flexibility, mobility and interactivity from television content. It has been noted that audiences can now 'temporally opt out of media schedules to structure their own routines, rather than have them determined by broadcasters' (Mackay and Ivey, 2004:113). Similarly, Virginia Nightingale and Karen Ross have argued that 'the proliferation of technologies for reproduction and distribution of media forms allowed people to enjoy them in situations of their own choosing rather than at the whim of the broadcaster' (2003:1). Or, as Hugh Mackay and Darren Ivey put it:

'Television has become 'on tap' regardless of the time of day. Bite-size news and the repetition of programmes mean that the media no longer punctuate the day but, rather, become the background against which the day is set. The media day unfolds in real time, in a less synchronic way than before' (2004:115).

In these works, the relationship between television and family's temporal organisation of everyday life is becoming increasingly uncertain, with some scholars arguing that digital television does not influence family's temporal routines at all now.

Such arguments are, however, continuously problematised by other contrasting research, which claims that new media technologies have not dramatically changed the experience of watching television or the relationship audiences have with the medium. For instance, Toby Miller argues that 'people keep watching television, on a set, at home, with other people, based on the schedule constricted by networks' (2014; also see Ellis, 2013). The figures released by Thinkbox show that in 2013

'...viewing on devices other than TVs of video on demand services like ITV Player, Sky Go and the BBC iPlayer accounted for just 1.5% of overall TV consumption... As for time-shifting programmes, while 59% of homes now own a digital TV recorder, even in these homes more than 80% of television is watched live' (Cellan-Jones, 2014).

It should be noted that Thinkbox is of course the marketing body for commercial television, with a certain bias towards traditional ways of watching television. However, media regulator Ofcom shared similar findings: Ofcom's 2015 *Communications Market Report* indicates that while audiences do experiment with new ways of accessing television content, the main way people watch programmes continues to be at the time of broadcast - 88% (Ofcom, 2015a).

There is thus a very unbalanced and unclear picture of contemporary digital television viewing and its relationship with the temporal organisation of everyday life. This contradiction is often due to 'the audience' being assumed or presented as a homogenous group, with little attention being paid to the specificities of everyday life and personal circumstances of individual audience members. In this chapter my aim is therefore to empirically examine this contradictory issue, and argue for the utility of the life course approach – detailed attention to the specific stage in audience's life and the characteristics of this stage – in the discussion of the everyday temporal experiences of television viewing and the use of television technology. In what follows, I will be examining how parents' specific experiences of everyday life, shaped by time pressures and constraints as a result of parenthood, are leading to specific ways of viewing digital television, and specific ways of negotiating the relationship between television and the temporal structure of everyday life.

Digital television viewing in the temporal constraints of parenting

I want to start the discussion by emphasising that media practices, such as television viewing, as well as audience's attitudes towards and experiences of media, are always dependent on the specificities of everyday life and personal circumstances of individual audience members. As it has already been noted in the introduction to this thesis, where I have discussed in detail the life course approach to the study of digital television consumption; parenting (particularly in its early years) is a unique stage in the life course - a moment of transition to a parental role, which calls for a 'set of (behavioral, cognitive and emotional) responses that usually do not belong to the parents' cognitive repertoire' (Araujo Martins et al.,

2014:122; also see McDaniel et al., 2012:1509). Thus parenting requires the implementation of some kind of adaptive strategies and changes in the patterns of everyday life. And this process includes television viewing and the use of media technology in the home to a great extent, even though media's role within this process is rarely examined in academic literature on parenting and parental strategies of coping with everyday pressures.

Moreover, my study has shown that 'life course' is not just a theoretical concept, but an actual human experience, something that helped some of my participants to make sense and talk about their life, or rather a specific stage in their life – being a parent of young children – and televisions' place within it. During the interview, one of the participants in my study was gently teasing her husband for his recent purchase of an expensive big screen smart TV, wondering if it was indeed a 'smart' and justified purchase, given that they rarely watch TV anymore. However, during the conversation with her husband, Annabelle also finally admitted that:

'We will [watch television] again, that's the thing, this is just a very short phase of our lives! [talking to the baby in her arms] When you eventually go to bed reliably, early, and stay asleep, then mummy and daddy will again be sat in front of the telly comatosed for hours! Yes, we will!' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

Here Annabelle herself defines parenting as a phase of life, and highlights how it alters television viewing practices. Other parents also talked about their television viewing practices 'before' and 'after' having children, emphasising how becoming a parent is a powerful change affecting multiple and diverse aspects of individual's life. Mary and Stuart were discussing their own special television viewing practices, only to realise that they actually have not done that since they had their daughter:

Mary: There is a programme called Sunday... Well, actually we haven't seen it in ages... Actually we've got a bit of a traditional New Years day, which extends from having a hangover in the morning...

Stuart: We haven't done that for years!

Mary: Yeah... Since having her, it's a bit different, but we used to have like a movie marathon on a New Years day, we would kind of bring the sofa bed out and really make a day of it.

(35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

Phyllis Moen and Francille M. Firebaugh have argued that individuals in middle age are likely to be 'time poor and goods rich' (1994:32). Previous chapter has already demonstrated that the majority of participants in the study were indeed 'goods rich', with a wide array of media technologies in the home. On the other hand, the existence of children, particularly young children under the age of 5, and the pressures of balancing employment with childcare were putting significant time constraints on the participants in the study, making them 'time poor', constraining time for many activities, including television viewing, and requiring parents to develop new viewing practices, as a way to cope with the changes in their lives.

As such, the survey has demonstrated that for parents as a specific audience group, the traditional mode of viewing, that of watching live broadcast television, is in decline. Only 39.47% of participants said they regularly watch broadcast television, the figure that was lower than for many online television services, such as iPlayer (73.68%), YouTube (70.38%) and 4OD (43.42%) (see figure 3 in appendix 7). This data was also complemented by that of the other survey question, where participants had to rate how much they agree or disagree with the given statements about digital television viewing (see appendix 8). 47.68% of respondents strongly agreed and 34.44% agreed (82.12% of respondents overall) with the statement '*I like to watch television programmes at my own time, rather than according to the TV schedule*'. Similarly, 37.75% of respondents strongly agreed and 33.11% agreed (70.86% of respondents overall) with the statement '*I often use the pause/resume option when I am watching television*'; and 42.11% of respondents strongly agreed and further 26.32% agreed (68.43% of respondents overall) with the statement '*I often record television programmes to watch them at a later time/date*'. The survey produced similar data for Catch Up television services as well, with 37.50% of respondents agreeing and 32.89% strongly agreeing (70.39% of respondents overall) with a statement '*I often use television Catch Up*

services to catch up with the programmes that I have missed'. The figure for television downloads either through the smart TV or through the computer device was smaller, with only 30% of participants ever using television programmes download option (see appendix 8). Only two respondents to the survey mentioned illegal downloads. For example, Gabby pointed out that she was 'watching TV programmes (sometimes illegally) downloaded from the internet using a fileserver and the file browser built into the TV' (35-44 years old, Somerset, one child aged 2). The fact that illegal downloading was only mentioned twice can either mean that it is not that common in the UK, where there are many other options to access television content and films, and where torrent sites are highly controlled and limited, or that participants preferred not to disclose such activities in the survey.

Thus time-shifting television content can be seen as a major characteristic of parents' digital televising viewing. Previous research has already looked at audience's television time-shifting practices by the means of purchasing television programmes on physical carriers, or accessing television content using Catch Up, On Demand and download options (Bury and Li, 2015; Carlson, 2006; Hills, 2007; Ihlebæk et al., 2014; Newman, 2011; Ofcom, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Rizzo, 2007). However, previous research has rarely put time-shifting practices in the context of audience's everyday lives or specific experiences and life circumstances, such as parenting. The importance of my discussion of parents' television viewing practices therefore lies in the fact that it establishes connections between media practices and audience's everyday experiences determined by the specific stage in the life course, providing needed contextualisation for viewing practices. In the instances when parents discussed using Catch Up television services (when answering the question *Which devices and services do you use most often to access television content?*), the words that have been used most often when describing the experience were 'miss', 'convenience', 'constraints'. As Charlotte explained, 'I use Catch Up services if I miss an episode of a favourite programme, or if someone tells me I'd like something that's been on' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, three children aged 8, 6 and 2). Similarly, Dorothy mentioned that she preferred the 'iPlayer, as can watch programmes at more convenient times' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, four children aged 11, 8, 5 and 2). Such accounts signal that television viewing in the

context of parenting goes hand in hand with the issue of busy lifestyle and constant time constraints, which makes it very hard for parents (especially with young children) to follow broadcasting schedules, which results in favourite programmes often being 'missed'. Similarly, parents have mentioned that recording content was often the only possibility for them to watch television programmes, as they simply could not watch them at the time when they were broadcasted live. Recording television was also used by parents to avoid 'time clashes', for example, when two or more of the favourite programmes were broadcasted simultaneously, something that Emily called 'good days' of television programming. As Emily pointed out:

'Especially because at the moment we find that there's a few good things on there, and they all clash, so we record things and catch up when there's not so good days -when TV is not that interesting, or if Mike is needing a lot of attention, we'll record something and watch it later when he is in bed asleep' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months).

Thus the programmes that 'had to be missed' were recorded and saved for later, with parents then having to find a suitable time to watch them. Similarly, 'time clashes' could also occur when the time of the programme clashed with particular family activities. As Abigail explained:

'Live would be the news and the weather and *The One Show*, because it's on when we are having dinner... Yeah, that's about it, everything else, so everything recorded would be documentaries, like *Panorama* or the *Apprentice*, things like that... that we watch when she is in bed, because often they aren't between 8 and 9 or they are on at 9, but on the night when we are busy doing stuff, so... I automatically series link all the shows I like well in advance, and then if I happen to be able to watch it on the night – great, if not – I know it's recorded and we'll just watch it another time' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2).

Abigail's account illustrates that parents have a very narrow 'window of opportunity' when it comes to watching television, which is largely influenced by children's routines. In the majority of cases, television programmes that are of interest are not broadcasted in this 'window', which makes time-shifting an important strategy of dealing with the temporal demands of parenting. Both

examples also show that time-shifted viewing was often planned and done in advance of broadcasting time, in order to make sure that the programmes were recorded *in case* they could not be watched live. This points to the difficulties that parents are experiencing planning their leisure in advance and devoting certain hours to television viewing, as parenting has been reported as an experience full of surprises, constant alteration of plans and related stress. Time-shifting can thus be considered as a way for parents to manage the uncertainty of everyday life – when things go wrong and favourite television programmes cannot be watched at the planned time, they are saved for later, proving parents with a sense of reassurance and comfort, and a feeling that they are in control.

Hence my research of parents (mostly parents of young children under the age of 5) has revealed that for this audience group at this specific stage in the life course television viewing is rarely accidental but in most cases carefully thought through, purposeful and planned. It also came with (and was shaped by) specific attitudes towards television, influenced by lifestyle and specific conditions of parenting. For instance, television advertising was not simply described as ‘annoying’ and ‘irritating’, but also as ‘time consuming’, which makes recording programmes and watching them ad-free not simply a desirable ‘time-shifting convenience’, but rather a desperately needed time-saving measure, meaning parents can watch more of the actual content in the limited leisure time that they have. For instance, as Nicole shared, ‘Recorded tv and blu ray player. Hate adverts! Waste of time!’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 3 months); or as Donna shared, ‘...most of it is recorded just purely to skip through adverts as well, so it saves you time that way’ (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months); or as Abigail pointed out, ‘My digital video recorder for watching recorded TV with no ads, saves time as I can only watch once daughter in bed’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2). This finding shows that even if parents’ television viewing practices do not significantly differ from how other audiences might watch television, parents nevertheless have very distinctive views on television and very specific reasons for their viewing practices, which are influenced by their specific circumstances and everyday experiences. Examining the everyday context, in which television viewing decisions are made by parents, allows a deeper insight into the

relationship between the audiences and the medium, and the place that television occupies in the organisation of everyday life and the management of parenting. For parents, many television viewing practices were consciously and strategically developed specifically to deal with the pressures of parenting, as a way of 'managing parenting stress and to transitioning well to parenthood' (McDaniel et al., 2012:1509; also see Cooper et al., 2009).

As such, morning television viewing routines (particularly in those families, where both parents were in full time employment) often presented a case of specific 'work-family' strategies' (Becker and Moen, 1999), aimed to help parents organise their limited time before work more efficiently, in order to deal with the pressures of busy lifestyles. Parents mentioned using television in the morning to occupy children while they were getting ready for work. As Megan and William discussed:

Megan: We try not to let them watch in the morning, but they usually watch about half an hour.

William: Yeah, just while we are getting ready.

Megan: Yeah, when we are getting ready, because it is a bit of a rush in the morning.

(35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

Such morning television viewing routines were not only built into the everyday living of parents, who felt annoyed and disoriented if these routines or habits broke down, as Colin shared ('I tend to kind of get up and make breakfast and watch the news for about 20-25 minutes, so it's like my way of waking up really, and it's now quite a habit, isn't it? And if I wake up late, then it's annoying, because I've broken my habit, it's just my way of waking up, with the news, to find out what's going on' - 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2), but also into the everyday living of children, who were also highly reliant on habitual repetition of television viewing routines. Stuart discussed the effects that morning television routines had on the behaviour of his young daughter, who got so used to them, that 'first thing in the morning she will come in and then she goes looking... when she wakes up, she goes

looking for a mobile phone and then comes over holding it' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). Many family studies scholars note the constant issue of balancing work and family, particularly among 'the dual-earner couple' (Becker and Moen, 1999; Spain and Bianchi, 1996), but extremely few of them look at micro strategies in the home, with the use of media and media devices rarely making it to the list of strategies that working parents employ. However, my study has shown that media use is a huge part of daily existence for many people, and parents do use it to manage 'work-family interface' (Becker and Moen, 1999:996). The examples from the interviews with parents discussed above demonstrate that in some families, television content and media devices were in fact used strategically, in order to manage day-to-day aspects of work and family lives, and to deal with the demands of work and raising young children.

It is also important to mention that both parents did not always have to have the same morning television viewing routine, and could rather decide to split the responsibilities of childcare, as demonstrated by Annabelle and Nick's discussion:

Annabelle: You will have to answer that! Nick does the morning shift! Because I'm still up in the night with her, so I don't see what they do in the morning, yeah.

Nick: Yeah, we are now getting into a morning routine, where...

Annabelle: That's what I thought, I didn't know anything about it though.

Nick: When we get down, I kind of get the breakfast stuff ready, Max is not ready to eat straight away, so he'll sit and he will ask for something, it will be *Peppa Pig* or *Tumble Leaf*, so we'll have a couple of episodes and we'll say "right, now it's time to eat breakfast!" and we will have breakfast. So that's quite consistent now, almost every morning... .. And it will always be recorded, it would never be... Oh, I don't know, it was live stuff actually occasionally, like CBeebies at that time. But mainly recorded yeah...

(25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

Such routine formation can be seen as a highly strategic, inventive and resourceful process, with parents trying to adapt to the change of lifestyle after the birth of a

new baby. As such, Annabelle and Nick divided their days into 'shifts', with Annabelle 'being on duty' at night with a newborn, and Nick 'being in charge' of the early morning time when their older son woke up. Similarly, Abigail and Colin tried to make the most of their very limited leisure time, with Colin watching his favourite programmes when Abigail was cooking dinner, and Abigail watching television when Colin was doing the washing up: 'Between 8 and 9 he tends to be washing up, and I've already done like cooking and things like that, so I might watch something between 8 and 9 like *CSI*, which Colin doesn't really watch...' (Abigail, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2). These examples show that parents' television viewing practices and routines need to be understood in context, as they are much more complex and nuanced than might appear at the first glance.

My research has also recorded instances where parents felt the need to change their television viewing or other media related routines, in order to set a good example for their children, as well as to develop new 'family friendly' routines that allowed for 'family time together'²⁰. This points to the argument made earlier about the power of the different stages of the life course, such as parenting, to alter individuals' views and ways of living. For instance, Megan and William discussed their decision not to use any media devices in the evenings, while the children were awake:

William: They would watch it all the time if you let them, you know, kids love screens, don't they? Like the iPad or... So we try not to use screens either, like Megan and I. We are trying to avoid our phones, while the kids are awake. Because they say that kids grow up now watching their parents just on the phone all the time...

Megan: ...just on the phone all the time. And we realised that they started to do it, so yeah, we try to have like a night... like we don't have any screens at the table... we don't really use them when they are... until they are going to bed.

(35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

²⁰ The concept of 'family time together' will be examined in more detail in chapter 4.

To quote Penny Edgell Becker and Phyllis Moen, these examples ‘emphasize the processes through which family members actively construct and modify their roles, resources, and relationships’ (1999:995), in order to somehow manage the experiences and responsibilities of this new family life. According to Phyllis Moen and Francille M. Firebaugh, this shift in roles, relationships and responsibilities in reaction to changes in family needs can be seen as a ‘family career’ (1994:30), which similarly to the work career, is also a journey. Once again, television viewing can be seen as an integral part of such strategies, with both parents employing it as part of their daily routine, even when doing so separately, which further connects television viewing practices with the concept of the life course, where these media practices become dependent on and governed by the changes in individuals’ lives, with life course influencing the attitudes individuals have towards media technologies and their use.

Parenting and the temporality of television viewing experience

However, when discussing the temporality of digital television viewing, it is not only worth looking at how television helps parents organise their everyday life, but also at the very *experience of watching television*, which also has a temporal dimension, and which is also shaped by the experiences of parenting. According to John Paul Kelly, rigid temporal regimes (liveness, flow, scheduling, appointment viewing) are what characterises the medium of television, as they have always structured both the form and economy of broadcast television (2011:124). According to Raymond Williams, the individual television programmes or broadcasting segments are not as significant as the overall experience of live broadcasting viewing that keeps audiences ‘tuned in’:

‘It is evident that what is now called ‘an evening’s viewing’ is in some ways planned, by providers and then by viewers, *as a whole*; that it is in any event planned in discernible sequences which in this sense override particular programme units’ (1974:93, my emphasis; also see Uricchio, 2004, 2009).

Other scholars have also discussed the importance of flow, referring to it as the 'process of optimal experience', derived through absorption with a specific task, the concept that is not limited to television viewing, but which could also be used in relation to other aspects of leisure and work (Jin, 2012:169; also see Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre, 1989; Hoffman and Novak, 2009; Sherry, 2004). Consequently, television viewing has been characterised by continuity - where continuity techniques, such as trailers, announcers, and logos 'make up the glue that holds the schedule and channel together... essential in creating flow' (Van den Bulck and Enli, 2014: 450). As Paul Grainge has pointed out, 'urging audiences to 'stay tuned' for as long as possible, a sense of the ephemeral is built into television's structures of scheduling, forms of address and attempt never to be the same twice' (2011:6). However, as the discussion of parents' television viewing practices so far has demonstrated, parents often go for alternative ways to access television content, not relying on live scheduling, but rather using recording, Catch Up and On Demand options, which in turn has the potential to alter parents' relationship with the medium of television, television liveness and television flow. And as the following discussion aims to demonstrate, just as parents' practices of television viewing have unique and very distinctive features, so do the ways, in which parents negotiate the idea of television flow and liveness. This in turn is calling for a consideration of how the traditional logics of television broadcast flow and live television are being adapted in the context of contemporary parenting and everyday life (also see Kelly, 2011).

The fact that in most cases, when answering the survey questions, parents referred to particular programmes, rather than to television viewing more generally, is worth emphasising. Time constraints require parents to be organised and identify specific programmes of interest, as there is not much time available for viewing of content that is of no particular interest or personal value. As Andrew explained: 'Being very busy with two children and busy with planning and studying, I don't have a great deal of time for television. I have three programmes I watch weekly' (25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 years and 3 months). In the survey parents referred to recorded and Catch Up television as 'easy': easy to navigate and use, easy to control and fit into their lives, easy to find

specific programmes of interest and watch them without delays. For example, Francesca explained that she preferred the 'iPlayer - easy to find programmes or TiVo box player' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 11 and 9). Analogously, Margaret explained why she preferred Catch Up television services, particularly the iPlayer: 'easy to use and hold information/programmes I require' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, three children aged 8, 5 and 2). Such responses indicate that for these participants - parents experiencing constant time constraints - it was important to have clear control over their television consumption. Moreover, the responses were not about television entertainment in general and abstract terms, but rather about particular, clearly defined and segmented content that participants had control over. The language used by parents in those responses is also noteworthy, as television is discussed by using the language traditionally associated with computer use, rather than television viewing: '*hold* information/programme I require' or 'easy to *find* programmes' (also see Rizzo, 2007).

In his discussion of BBC iPlayer, James Bennett has previously argued that it 'removes television programmes; unbundles them... from the flow of the linear schedule; and places them as content at the "beck and call" of the user'; and in so doing 'it remediates television's ontology from flow to database' (2008:159-160; also see Bennett and Brown, 2008; Grainge, 2011; Manovich, 2001; Schroter, 2009). The data from my research has shown that this argument and this concept of a 'database' can be extended to all television services, such as recorded content, Catch Up and On Demand. Parents' responses above illustrate that television is often experienced as a database of content, rather than the medium of fleeting and ephemeral content that *flows*. Similarly, television content is not experienced as programmed sequences of texts, but rather as discrete and user-controlled units (Kelly, 2011:124), something that Derek Kompare refers to as 'files' (2002, 2006). As he explained, 'the file is the opposite of flow. As flow creates large synchronous audiences over long stretches of time, the file is made available directly to individuals in small packages on an ad hoc basis' (Kompare, 2002:4). There is thus a shift in parents' attitudes towards television and its purpose, and a move away from seeing television as 'providing' and 'giving' content to 'storing' it, not simply

for immediate viewing, but also for later access, using the same logic as a computer hard drive. Such examples call for a re-consideration of television as a medium, analysing it as moving towards the computer-like function and experience for viewers, particularly for parents as a specific audience group; as well as for a re-consideration of the television flow as being broken into units or segments, no longer being a 'complete' and 'continuous' viewing experience (also see Kompare, 2002; Rizzo, 2007).

However, just as the concept of flow is still in active use in the television scheduling departments²¹, it also remains an integral part of the television viewing experience for audiences, particularly for parents as a specific audience group, even if in different way than before. Although scholars who discuss the file-based digital television with a database logic often argue that it is no longer characterised by patterns of temporal regularity and temporal logic, because consumers can be watching content at any time of the day (Kelly, 2011:125), time constraints of parenting put serious limitations on this optimistic view. Although parents' television viewing often cannot be characterised by continuity and broadcasting flow in traditional terms, their viewing is still strategically organised in a specific sequence, in order to deal with the time pressures of parenting. Although parents often time-shifted television programmes, by recording them or accessing them using various television services, thus lifting them from the broadcasters' schedules, they nonetheless still selected and ordered programmes, thus creating their own viewing schedules and their own unique types of flow²². For instance, binge-watching was the most common experience of television viewing sequencing among the participating parents (also see Henning, 2013; Ramsay, 2013). Although

²¹ For more on how the concept of flow is used and discussed in the contemporary television industry, and for the discussion of vertical and horizontal scheduling techniques, see Karoline Ihlebæk et al. (2014) 'Keeping Them and Moving Them: TV Scheduling in the Phase of Channel and Platform Proliferation'. *Television and New Media*, Vol. 15(5), pp. 470–486.

²² Sresa Rizzo (2007) discussed this process using the concept of the 'playlist', see 'Programming Your Own Channel: An Archaeology of the Playlist', in A. T. Kenyon (ed.) *TV Futures: Digital Television Policy in Australia*, Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, pp. 108-131.

binge-watching or binge-viewing is usually defined as ‘watching episodes of a TV series back to back’ within a very tight time frame (Henning, 2013), I want to argue that in the case of parents as an audience group, binge-watching should be extended to include a wider time frame (it can be weeks or even months), in which individuals exclusively watch the episodes from the same television programme. As Megan and William discussed:

Megan: We just watched *Game of Thrones*, and we pretty much watched... how many seasons?.. back to back, didn't we?

William: Yeah, I don't remember how many there were... But that was all that we watched for a couple of weeks pretty much.

(35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

In this case, *Game of Thrones* was the only television programme that parents watched, as much as their free time allowed. Viewing in this type of sequence and flow can once again be seen as a strategic approach to television viewing adopted by parents, where one programme is chosen out of many, based on parents' specific interests and preferences, and devoted all of the television time, in order to make sure that it is actually watched until the end, rather than started and then later abandoned due to the shortage and unpredictability of free time.

Similarly, Samantha discussed how the traditional television broadcasting schedule of ‘things like *X-Factor* or *Dancing with the Stars*... [being] on the same time every Saturday night’ did not work for her, because there was no guarantee that she would have time for television on that day at that time every single week. What she had to do instead is come up with a different more flexible and personal type of television viewing scheduling that worked for her as a busy parent of young children, whose free time was not guaranteed and easily predictable:

‘I might record a series and not watch it for months, because I just haven't had the chance or I'll watch it all in one go. So I'll wait until it's been recorded, and have a big like Television-o-thon or something. When I have a chance’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

This example further illustrated that parents, for whom interruption and fragmentation of everyday activities is a daily experience, prefer not to view their favourite programmes until the 'time is right', when they can fully focus on them, knowing that they will not be disturbed and interrupted. And when this time comes, as much television content is viewed as possible, with binge-viewing or 'television-o-thon' replacing traditional broadcasting flow.

Parents also noted that YouTube was operating on the principle of television flow, by putting different episodes of programmes in a certain sequence or flow, which parents reported to be particularly useful and convenient for them. As Stuart explained, '...we watch television programmes on YouTube. Mainly with Lily though, it's mainly things like *Peppa Pig*. It seems that there's hundreds of clips uploaded, where they've stitched together, sort of like in an hour's worth' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). In this case, YouTube, as a source of television content, was chosen by Stuart particularly because it was organised in a flow, as this meant he did not have to go back to it and search for more video clips of *Peppa Pig*, instead they were already conveniently organised for him in a continuous flow. This example challenges the previously expressed academic views on YouTube as a database and an archive, which lacks flow in the traditional sense, 'offering instead a set of equivalently accessible alternatives at any given moment' (Uricchio, 2009:32; also see Grainge, 2011:8; Schroter, 2009:340). The examples of how parents negotiate and manage digital television flow, using television as a computer-like database of content on the one hand, and experimenting with sequencing and flow of content on the other hand, highlights the importance of examining what individuals actually do with television flow, rather than trying to explain these experiences using narrowly defined conceptual frameworks of flows and files. As William Uricchio has pointed out, 'the larger point is about the subtle but important shift in the concept of flow away from programming strategies toward viewer-determined experience' (2004:172), the experience that can be characterised as a flow, as a file or as a combination of the two (also see Kelly, 2011; Rizzo, 2007; Uricchio, 2009).

Flow in relation to digital television viewing is not, however, the only concept that needs to be addressed in the discussion of the temporality of parents'

television viewing experience. My study has shown that just as parents negotiate television flow, they are also re-working the concept of television liveness, making clear distinctions between *background live television viewing* and *watching television*. The discussion of television viewing in the context of parenting so far has focused on what can be described as planned, selective and purposeful viewing – parents tuning in for specific programmes, usually time-shifted via recording, Catch Up or On Demand, at a specific time in the day. This might create a misleading picture of parents not watching live broadcast television at all, which was not the case. However, as I will explore in the remaining part of this chapter, parenting (as a specific experience and a distinctive stage in the life course) requires parents to reconsider their attitudes towards background television viewing and live television viewing, and leads to a new understanding of the concept of ‘watching television’.

In the survey parents (mainly mothers, as they were the ones to take maternity leave and stay at home with the children in the vast majority of cases) mentioned often having live television on in the background, when they were alone with children during the day, while their partners were at work (also see Gauntlett and Hill, 1999; Morley, 1986). As Emily shared, ‘A lot of the time, especially with having a young baby, it’s mainly on at the background at the moment’ (Emily, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months). Or, as Donna pointed out, ‘To be honest, at the moment, I am on maternity leave, so it pretty much stays on all day every day when I am in the house’ (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months). These examples point to a close connection between the experience of staying at home with a baby or a young child, and background television viewing. In Milly Buonanno’s words:

‘In the ambience of the home, interwoven with relationships and duties, it can happen at some times of day and stages of life more than others that a switched-on television set provides a counterpoint or background to our main occupations or, if we are lonely, gives us the company of human voices and pictures that require no more than a glance from time to time, just to confirm that they are there’ (2008: 39; also see Ellis, 1992).

Indeed, the responses that participants have provided indicate that live background television was not watched intently, but rather acted as a background sound for the

busy everyday life of a parent: 'TV background when doing online shopping/social networking' (Katie, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 4 and 2); 'Now TV, because I can watch it from the kitchen while doing my ironing' (Silvia, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 6 and 2). In the following interviews, when asked to recall the content that was on television when it was in the background, participants could not provide much details, recalling the channel that was on, rather than specific programmes. As Donna discussed:

'It can be anything, like this morning I put it on Channel 5 to watch 10 minutes of something, and then it stayed on that channel for 2 hours, even though no one was watching it... It's not anything in particular that I put on, like when we are having dinner, I will probably put a music channel on and watch... and listen to it in the dining room. If I do need to leap upstairs, then I will probably just put some kids programming on, I hate it anyway' (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months).

Thus parents' responses indicate that when television was left on in the background, it often did not matter what programmes were on, with parents not paying attention to the content, and just enjoying the 'noise' and companionship that television provided for them.

This finding (television being used as a background for family everyday life) in itself is not new and has been observed by other television scholars in the past (for instance, see Gauntlett and Hill, 1999; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Morley, 1986). However, what I want to add to the discussion of background live television viewing, is that contemporary parents do not consider background live television as 'watching television', making a clear distinction between the two (also see Weissmann, 2015a, 2015b). For instance, in the interview Abigail stated that her daughter 'just started watching telly in the last month or so actually, it has been the first time, she is 21 months now' and that her viewing is highly limited. However, television was on in the background for the entire duration of the interview, and when asked about it, Abigail said that:

‘In the evenings we tend to be watching it, but on the weekend like today it will be just noise on the background, and sometimes I will put on a music channel. I like to have a bit of a constant kind of bubble, bubbling kind of noise, I don’t like silence at all or anything like that, so yeah’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2).

This discussion therefore demonstrates that Abigail does not consider live television left on the background as ‘watching television’ neither for adults, nor for children. Instead of referring to background television as ‘watching television’, Abigail uses different words and terms in her description, such as ‘noise’ and ‘bubble’, pointing to the fact that background live television is used not for content and images, but rather for the sound. Abigail also clearly contrasts weekend background television with the weekday evening viewing, when they actually ‘tend to *watch it*’. Similarly, as another participant Jason shared:

‘Yeah, a lot of the time it [TV] is on the background, especially with things like *Sky Sport News*, it’s not... you are not really paying too much attention to it, but just when I am marking and stuff, just have it on the background and sort of pick up things every now and again, but you are not so properly watching it, so yeah, I do use it quite a lot as a sort of background thing. But yeah, if we know there’s a good thing that we want to watch, we record them. So mostly like live stuff, but if there’s something we’d like watching, then we’d record that and watch it’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months).

Here Jason clearly differentiates between just having television on in the background and ‘watching television’. If there is ‘a good thing’ that Emily and Jason would like to watch, they make a conscious effort and watch it purposefully and intently. Moreover, they would not just ‘catch it on a telly’ live, but rather they would record it and watch it at a later time with no distractions and interruptions. As Elke Weissmann has observed, ‘When I go around to other people’s houses, I often find the television is on – but they are not necessarily sitting down to watch. When they sit down to watch, it’s often something from Netflix/IPlayer/itvplayer/4oD’ (2015a). This finding contradicts the previous conceptualisations of the pleasures of television viewing experience for the audience purely in terms of liveness and flow. For instance, as P. David Marshall has

argued with regards to ‘the pleasures of television as they have developed over the last 60 years’: ‘...the viewer accepted the pleasures of the flow (and the flow of segments). This pleasure could be summarised in the phrase ‘watching television’, as opposed to watching a particular programme’ (2009:44). Whereas it has been previously argued that liveness and flow are the essential elements of the pleasure that audiences derive from television (Williams, 1974), the accounts that parents have given me clearly indicate a shift in what is considered to be a pleasurable experience of television viewing, at least for parents as a specific audience group. Recording television content or accessing it via Catch Up and On Demand services is valued and appreciated more by parents than live television with broadcasters’ flow.

However, parents’ own television viewing was not the only one that has been described as selective and purposeful. Children’s television viewing has also been reported as consisting of single separate units of programmes. For instance, as Samantha explained, they chose mainly recorded television content for their daughters, ‘because we try to make it so that they are not watching just television, they are watching... they are asking to watch a particular programme’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5). Here Samantha makes a very clear distinction between ‘just watching television’ and ‘watching a particular programme’, with the former being considered a meaningless pastime, and the latter being considered a purposeful thoughtful activity:

‘I think it’s... it’s because... There is no thinking behind it. If you are saying you are watching television, well, why are you watching just television? Are you bored, you know? If it’s there because you want to enjoy a particular programme, then to me it makes more sense’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

Such approach to children’s television viewing can be seen as parents’ attempt to find a way of letting their children watch television, while at the same time avoiding the stigma of ‘bad parenting’ attached to it due to the common associations of

television with passive and meaningless past time²³. However, parental attitudes towards television, and what counts as 'watching television', could also undermine parental mediation in certain cases. For instance, the definition of television viewing as only purposeful viewing of selected content, as discussed by Abigail earlier in this chapter, has an interesting effect on parental attitudes towards children's viewing, with background television not being considered viewing at all, thus often being left unnoticed, unattended and uncontrolled, being dissolved in everyday family life. Although Abigail did put a lot of effort into carefully choosing and selecting television programmes that her daughter was allowed to 'watch', she completely ignored live background television that her daughter was exposed to on a day-to-day basis. As Suzy Tomopoulos et al. have argued with regards to their findings, particularly young children were very likely to watch 'more background media that featured age-inappropriate content or had not been turned on for them' (2014:546). As Samantha has put it:

'...you might say: "My children only watch "U" films"... And that might be true, but they will have *The Jeremy Kyle Show* on in the background... But just because they didn't put it on *for them*, then think their kids aren't watching... Or all those music programs with all the people shaking their... you know...' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

Thus this example demonstrates that parental negotiation of television viewing is not always straight forward and simple, and can pose unexpected issues for parents.

This section of the chapter has demonstrated the importance of not only addressing the issue of how television viewing is fitted into the temporal routines of parents' everyday lives, but the issue of how parents negotiate their own and their children's television viewing experience, which also has a temporal dimension. During the process of this negotiation, concepts that are core to television as a medium, such as liveness and flow, are also being re-worked and re-negotiated by parents, exposing the ways, in which television is experienced and understood as a

²³ The issue of 'good' and 'bad' parenting in relation to television viewing and the use of media technology will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

medium. Accounts given by parents reveal that parenting, as a specific experience and a specific stage in the life course, is altering not only the viewing practices of audience members, but also the very attitudes viewers have towards television, television flow, and live background television viewing, further emphasising the importance of the *everyday context* for the study of audience's television viewing practices, and television's meanings for individuals and their daily lives.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined digital television in the context of the temporality of parents' everyday life, and in the context of the temporality of parents' television viewing experience. It showed that parenting, as a specific experience and a distinctive stage in the life course, influences the ways, in which television viewing is understood, negotiated and practiced by individuals. The aim of this chapter was therefore not to argue that traditional modes of viewing are in decline or to draw a boundary between live and time-shifted television experience. Rather, the aim was to examine how a specific audience group – parents, particularly parents of young children - establishes meaningful, purposeful and strategic television viewing routines, and develops unique types of television flow, in order to cope with the pressures of everyday life, and to make the most of the limited free time. The chapter has also highlighted the idea that the very notion of 'watching television' is acquiring new meanings in the context of contemporary family life, with parents drawing a line between 'background live television' and purposeful television viewing. While it is important to be wary of the fact that different television viewing options available do not necessarily lead to audience's changed viewing practices and ways of organising everyday life, and therefore be careful with making generalised statements about the changes new media technologies cause; I want to argue that it is nevertheless worth examining personal individual narratives of television consumption to find, acknowledge and document the varying ways audiences access and view television content, and the implications of such practices for the organisation of everyday living and the experiences of contemporary parenting.

The first chapter has examined parents' domestic digital estates and the overall media environment of contemporary homes. This second chapter has looked at how digital television and media technology is fitted into temporal everyday experiences and structures. Both chapters have therefore emphasised the complexity of the digital television presence in contemporary homes and everyday life, highlighting the multitude of options as to how to access television content, make sense of and practice television viewing. However, the issue of how exactly accessing and viewing decisions are made and the reasons behind them has not yet been addressed. In the following chapter I will therefore particularly look at the digital television choice available to parents, and at how this choice is negotiated and acted on, with a specific focus on how the experiences of parenting are affecting this process.

Chapter 3. Media devices, applications, formats, and parents' decision making process behind the choice

Introduction

Stephen McCreery and Dean Krugman have argued that

'options for watching TV shows and movies have increased greatly since the arrival of video streaming technology and the willingness by television networks to offer much of their TV originated content through these online platforms. The change in platforms gives rise to newer forms of video consumption that potentially alter viewing' (2015:620; also see Evans, 2008, 2015b).

Indeed, the previous chapters have already introduced the diversity and complexity of media technology in the homes of the participants, and the multitude of options of accessing and watching television content that exists there. It has been argued that parents think through and make an attempt of managing the array of media technologies in their homes by organising their domestic digital estates. It has also been demonstrated how parents negotiate the temporality of television viewing, in order to fit television into their everyday lives and cope with the pressures of parenting. However, the previous chapters have largely focused on what happens when parents use a certain media technology to access television content for various reasons and purposes, or how this use is negotiated and made sense of. What has not yet been addressed is the issue of how a certain way of accessing and watching television content gets chosen by parents in the first place, and what are the reasons that motivate parents to make this choice. For instance, why are certain programmes watched on the television set, and others on the portable media devices? Or, how do parents decide what format of content to go for, physical or cloud, temporary rent or purchase? As Elizabeth Evans has argued, 'the multiplicity of technologies that are now on offer... requires a greater balancing out of their various capabilities to fit each specific moment of viewing' (2015b); and only by examining these questions, television viewing experience and its relationship with everyday life can be understood in all its complexity.

This chapter thus aims to add further complexity to the discussion of television viewing in the home in the context of parenting by looking at the processes that take place *before* television viewing actually happens. In this chapter I am arguing that before even starting to watch television content, parents engage in a decision making process, as to what is the most enjoyable, convenient and sensible way to access and watch television content – by weighting pros and cons of certain ways of accessing television content, and by asking themselves a number of questions about television viewing in the context of everyday family life, in order to make the *right* decision for both themselves and their children. The empirical question of how and why audiences in general, and parents in particular, make a choice of how to access and watch television content, remains largely unaddressed, and it is not often examined in academic discussion of home media consumption. While previous research has started to examine how specific national contexts and cultural traditions influence the ways, in which audiences make sense of the television options available to them, and make specific choices as to how to access television content (Evans and McDonald, 2014), the experience of parenting in relation to how individuals make these choices has not yet been investigated, which allows this chapter to make an original contribution to the field of home media consumption in the context of family everyday life.

This chapter thus aims to fill in this gap in academic understanding of home media consumption, by looking at how parents, as a specific audience group, make everyday television viewing choices from the options available to them, accepting some features of digital television, while rejecting or overlooking the others. This chapter aims to examine the intersections between parenting as a specific experience and a stage in the life course, and audience choice with regards to how television is accessed and watched in the home. In particular, this chapter covers the issue of the hierarchy of media devices in the home, and how it affects parents' choice of the device, from which to access television content; the correlations between the choice of media devices and gendered experiences of fathering and mothering; the rationale of parents' decision making process with regard to various television services; and how parents make choices between online cloud formats and physical releases.

Literature review

Since this chapter deals with the issue of the diverse ways of accessing and viewing television content in the home, and audience's decision making process with regards to this choice, it is first important to look at previous works on home media consumption and audience choice. Due to the rapid advances in media technology, home media consumption has been an incredibly popular object of research in the recent years, with two concepts being particularly highlighted as its main characteristics – variability and choice (Goggin, 2012; Kennedy, 2008). Variability refers to the technological changes in contemporary media, which have led to media objects not being something 'fixed once and for all, but something that can exist in different, potentially infinite versions' (Manovich, 2001:36). In other words, it refers to media becoming more diverse in its forms, more individual and personal for each member of the audience, as well as increasingly customisable and user-driven (Hjorth, 2012; Thurman, 2011). Thus contemporary home media consumption, including television viewing, is often seen in the context of individualism and a move towards 'personal media' or, in other words, 'products built around people' (Bull, 2005; Forgacs, 2001; Kiss, 2010). Such works emphasise the importance of studying individual ways, in which audiences access and view television content, as these ways are no longer fixed once and for all. In line with these arguments, researchers have pointed out that another important feature of contemporary media consumption is audience's increasing choice of ways of accessing and viewing television content, which comes in a variety of forms and shapes; the choice that has multiple consequences for home television consumption and audience's relationship with the medium. As such, there are discussions around audiences' greater and easier access to content; decreased dependence on specific distribution media; and the increasing choice of devices and applications, from which to access video content (see Alexander, 2016; Bennett, 2008, 2011; Carlson, 2006; Forgacs, 2001; Kompare, 2006; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Parks, 2004; Rizzo, 2007; Turner, 2011; Uricchio, 2004).

However, very often this choice is presented as an entity in its own right, something that all members of the audience simply have available to them. This in

turn leads to a narrow and not critical enough view of the notion of choice available to audiences with regards to ways of accessing and viewing television content – choice as somehow autonomous and independent, disconnected from the audience, their everyday activities and the context of everyday life. However, as I am arguing in this chapter, the choice of ways of accessing and viewing television content does not simply exist, but has to be experienced, processed and acted on by individuals, who in most cases do not accidentally or randomly purchase a DVD or go on their laptop or tablet to watch television content, for instance, but rather weight these decisions and think them through (also see Smith, 2008; Turner, 2011). In order to understand home television consumption and audience's choices with regards to it (what features of digital television audiences accept or reject, and why), it is not enough to look at all the options of accessing television content *potentially* available to audiences, and make arguments about audience's consumption practices based on that; individuals' everyday practices and experiences related to the reasons behind audience's choices need to be examined as well (also see Evans and McDonald, 2014). As Ronald Rice has pointed out, 'one paradox of this increased accessibility, and decreased dependence on specific distribution media, is that now individuals must make more choices, must have more prior knowledge, and must put forth more effort to integrate and make sense of the communication' (1999:29). It therefore becomes important to examine this 'work' that audience members 'must do' with regards to television choices, as it requires significant investment of time and effort on behalf of individuals. As Elizabeth Evans further pointed out:

'Broadcasters are increasingly making sure content can be viewed on television sets, desktop computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones. But this has ramifications for the management of content at home. Now that television content is spread over multiple devices audiences now have to select and negotiate the best mechanisms for accessing the content they want in the space they're in and at the time they want to watch it' (2015b).

Moreover, the ways, in which this choice is experienced, processed and acted on, will not be the same for all audience members, and the specificity and distinctiveness of this experience needs to be acknowledged and examined, in

order to understand the intersections between audience's everyday experiences and their television access and viewing choices. Hence the context of audience's everyday life is highly important here, as personal circumstances and specific stages in the life course, such as parenting, will influence, at least to some extent, the ways of accessing and viewing television content that individuals choose, and the motivations behind this choice, as the following discussion will demonstrate.

The hierarchy of media devices in the home

I want to start the discussion by examining parents' decision making process as to what media device to use to access and view television content in different circumstances. When it comes to the decision as to what media device to choose to access television content in the home, participants' responses often indicated that there was an unspoken hierarchy of media devices in each household. Such hierarchy differed from family to family, and was reflective of parents' attitudes towards television as a medium, media technology, and family leisure. Such hierarchy of media devices also resulted in different devices having different meanings for parents, with some devices being valued more than the others.

Despite the popular claim that digital television is no longer 'a discrete object or a privileged device', with there being no difference between different 'portals to television', such as television sets, computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones (Strangelove, 2015:13); both the survey and the following interviews have shown that the television set continues to hold its position at the top of the domestic digital estate, being considered the symbolic 'head' of home media devices when it comes to television viewing (also see Evans, 2015b). When discussing their preference of the television set over other media devices, participants referred to it being the 'most convenient' (Isabella, 25-34 years old, Scotland, one child aged 5); 'easiest to access' (Hannah, 25-34 years old, Cheshire, one child aged 7); and 'comfortable' (Carol, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 4), indicating that while other media devices could cause challenges in their use, the television set was quite straightforward in its use and therefore the easiest, quickest and most convenient option for parents, who often experienced time

pressures. Similarly, Donna also described the television set as 'most instant' (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months), as it only took one click of a button to get access to television content, while on other devices the user would have to go to the application and then do the search. These responses show that parents' decision as to what media device to choose when accessing television content is often governed by the considerations around time commitment and time investment, with ease of access being particularly valued by parents (also see Evans, 2015b).

The first chapter has introduced examples of parents thinking of a television set as a screen, and therefore using it for various purposes, often unrelated to television viewing. The study has also shown that even when the television set is only used for the traditional purposes of television viewing, it is still often described as a 'screen' and judged by its size in comparison to the size of screens of other media devices (also see Morley, 2012). As such, parents explained that they preferred the television set to other media devices, because 'it is the biggest item in the house and easy to see from all angles of the living room' (Emily, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months), having the 'biggest screen' in comparison to other devices (Annie, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 6 and 2), which makes it more suitable for 'watching things together' (Michelle, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2). Participants have also mentioned that they always tried 'to use the largest screen when possible' (Eleanor, 55-64 years old, Sussex, two children aged 31 and 27, one grandchild aged 2), enjoying watching programmes more if they were 'on a larger screen' (Nancy, 45-54 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 12 and 10). These responses draw a direct connection between the size of the screen and the viewing experience, meaning that television content is preferred to be accessed on those media devices that have the largest screen, which is in most cases the traditional television set. A connection can also be drawn between the choice of media device and specific family considerations – parents preferred to access television content on the television set, because it had a bigger screen and all members of the family could participate in television viewing. This finding shows that claims that are currently being made in some academic literature about television losing its connection with the family audience (Turner, 2011:42) are not

true in all respects, as shared television screen is still of a paramount importance to parents, and it is being considered when parents make a decision as to what media device to use to access television content in the home. Parents also noted that while the television set was always connected to power, other media devices constantly relied on charging, with the size of batteries being quite small, which once again made the television set a more convenient and less demanding option of accessing television content. As Freya has pointed out, 'TV, it's more convenient and doesn't drain battery' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2). Parents, who live a busy life as it is, thus preferred those options of accessing television content that required less work and maintenance – not having to worry about charging the device, on which television is watched, was reported as an important advantage of the television set over portable devices.

Within this hierarchy of home media devices, devices other than the television set then often become alternatives and substitutions for the main television set, with the decision to use them for accessing television content often being made out of necessity, when the television set or live broadcast television services are not available (also see Bury and Li, 2015). As Erin explained: 'if there is a problem with the TV service provider, then we use the laptop or iPad to view I-player' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child, age not given). The findings of my study also showed that another media device was often being used not instead of the main television set, but instead of a second television set, as families were more likely to have one television set, a laptop and/or a tablet, than multiple television sets at home (also see Evans, 2015a, 2015b; Lee, 2013; Shelley and Stanford, 2013). As it has been discussed in chapter 1, parents of young children often considered portable media devices safer than the larger, heavier and bulkier television sets, which in turn influenced the decision to use portable media devices in rooms other than the living room, rather than having multiple television sets at home. The scenario that was common in many households was that of having and watching one main television set in the living room downstairs, and using alternative devices, such as laptops and tablets for watching television content upstairs: 'Occasionally I will watch on my tablet in bed when doing shifts, as no television upstairs' (Viviane, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 8 and 1); 'iPad, nice to relax upstairs'

(Carry, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 4); 'laptop sit in bed' (Harvey, 45-54 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 17 and 14); 'Sky go, on phone or tablet to watch international sports events that are on late at night in bed' (Bethany, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). Thus instead of having an additional television set in the bedroom, many participants chose to use alternative media devices, replicating the experience of having the second television set. Similarly, participants also mentioned using other media devices when watching television content in other places around the house, such as the kitchen or the dining room: 'iPlayer on my laptop. I usually watch TV on my own while I'm doing cooking / housework in the kitchen/dining room, so I can set up my laptop there' (Gabby, 35-44 years old, Somerset, one child aged 2); 'laptop or tablet, they are easily portable and you can use them anywhere in the house' (Alex, 35-44 years old, London, one child aged 1).

However, not all parents shared the same hierarchy of media devices, where the television set was valued more and therefore preferred to other devices. Laptops and tablets, particularly the iPad, were also mentioned by some parents as being the 'first choice' for viewing television content, preferred for their flexibility and mobility, both in terms of the technology and content that can be accessed on them. In these cases, participants emphasised that other media devices, such as laptops and tablets, were much better suited for finding, accessing and watching alternative content, such as 'old programmes' (Diane, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 1), 'international programmes' (Hayley, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5), or 'TV shows that are not currently available on television' (Jasmine, 25-34 years old, London, one child aged 4 months). Parents noted that they often wanted to share the television programmes they watched when they were little with their children, and the difficulty of finding and accessing this content using the television set, as such content was usually not available on broadcast television. For instance, Deborah and Robert discussed searching for the shows and films they used to watch, such as *Tickle on the tum*, *Mary Poppins*, *Swallows and Amazons* online on the laptop, in order to introduce their children to them (25-34 years old, Kent, three children aged 6, 3 and 1). Similarly, Sonia shared using tablet and mobile phone to search for Russian cartoons that she watched as a child and

showing them to her sons (35-44 years old, East Sussex, three children aged 3, 6 and 10). In such instances, other media devices than the television set were prioritised and preferred by parents. Thus the choice of media device to access television content was also influenced by the type of content that viewers preferred to watch, with certain programmes being more easily accessed on laptops and tablets, rather than on the traditional television set (also see Evans, 2011; Evans and McDonald, 2014).

The hierarchy of media devices – when media devices were ‘graded’ by parents based on the convenience of their use, the viewing experience, and how well they answered family needs – was therefore an important factor in the decision making process as to what device to choose to view television content. Parents, who live a busy life as it is, preferred those options of accessing television content that required less work and maintenance, and offered the easiest and most instant access to the content that they were after, with there being differences as to which media devices were considered most convenient by parents. Parents always aimed for their ‘first choice’, using alternatives when that first choice was not available. However, as the following section will demonstrate, the choice of media devices for television viewing in the home was also often gendered, with specific characteristics of mothering and fathering roles and experiences of parenthood influencing the decision making process.

The choice of media devices and gendered experiences of parents

The interview data showed that when it came to the use of alternative (portable and personal) media devices for viewing television content, there were some significant differences in terms of gender. Gender could affect the choice of media devices in two ways: this choice could be a necessity, made out of lack of other options; or it could also be preferred and desired. Moreover, the study has shown that gender, in relation to the choices made with regards to different ways of accessing and viewing television content, goes hand in hand with the experience of parenting, meaning that there are differences in how mothers and fathers made

television viewing choices, due to the specificities of mothering and fathering roles and experiences of parenthood.

Thus the study has shown that mothers were much more likely than fathers to use personal media devices, such as mobile phones, laptops and tablets, to access television content, as well as using them for other media practices. The fact that fathers were not using portable media devices as much as mothers did, became clear from the conversations that my participants had during the interviews, where fathers would stress this fact. As the following discussion between Victoria and Andrew illustrates:

Victoria: Well, the kids don't get to use the iPad really. Poppy watches telly. And we've got dvd players in the car, which she uses, watches quite often. We use the iPad, we don't often use it for telly things...

Andrew: You use it!

Victoria: Sometimes I use it for iPlayer or iTV Catch Up...

Andrew: You use it quite a bit!

Victoria: Well, I don't use it "quite a bit", but, you know, sometimes. I use it for like the series that are on at the moment, which I can't record, because we've already got two other series recording at the same time. So yeah, mainly I use the iPad for email, Facebook, Internet...

(25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 years and 3 months).

During another interview, Annabelle and Nick Campbell had a similar discussion:

Interviewer: Do you ever use an iPad or your phone to watch TV?

Nick: I don't, but you watch quite a lot!

Annabelle: Yes, I use the iPad for Netflix, I've never used it for live telly, but I use it for Netflix.

(25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

The interviews showed that in the context of the home and everyday life, women were using portable media devices, such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones, for television viewing and other media purposes more than men. This can be explained by a close connection between the use of portable media devices and the experiences of motherhood, particularly in its early stages. Female participants reported starting using portable media devices more, when they delivered the baby and were breastfeeding at night, as pointed out by Tia: 'I watched quite a bit on my phone when I was up at night feeding my child as a baby' (35-44 years old, Scotland, one child aged 3). Similarly, as Annabelle shared:

'It's something you can easily do when you sat down or when you've got kids around or... I mean I initially got the iPad when I had him and I was breastfeeding, and so I needed... I only had one hand free. So that's when we bought the iPad, wasn't it?' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

In Annabelle's case, the decision to buy an iPad and use it to access television content was influenced by Annabelle's need for a smaller and a more flexible media device than the television set, the PC or the laptop, which could provide convenient and mother-friendly way to access entertainment during breastfeeding. As Stephen McCreery and Dean Krugman have pointed out:

'While the iPad offers viewing-related features that are not foreign to those accustomed to streaming on a computer, it does allow for a level of portability and convenience that, when combined with available program choices, makes TV watching portable in ways that the personal computer cannot be' (2015:635).

For both Tia and Annabelle, the phone and the iPad have answered the need for a convenient, light, readily available and easily handled media device, which could keep them company and help deal with the experiences of having a little baby.

These two accounts provide a different example of a media device being chosen for television viewing purpose due to the ease of use. Whereas, as it has been discussed earlier in this chapter, the television set was generally considered to be easy and convenient by parents; when it comes to the experiences of early

motherhood, portable media devices become easier to use, and therefore particularly chosen by mothers over all other devices. The iPad was the device that has been mentioned most often by mothers in this context. It was particularly favoured by mothers for the instant nature of its use, being the device that mothers can start using instantly, without time delays. As Victoria explained, 'I like that I can just flip the lid open and it's there, I don't have to wait for it to load up or anything' (25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 years and 3 months). Or as Annabelle pointed out:

'Maybe it's more of a time thing, it's quick. Whereas, you know, the thought of turning on your flipping computer and waiting for it to do all of its things, just feels me with dread, whereas I can just pick up the iPad and do things quickly. You know, it's accessible, it's instant' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

Mothers have reported their days having a rigid structure, dictated by children, where every minute counts. The iPad was said to fit into these structures better than other media devices, such as PCs and laptops. The iPad also addressed women's inclination towards socialisation and maintaining close ties with friends and family in the limited free time that they had (also see Colley and Maltby, 2008; Livingstone, 1994). Mothers have noted that the iPad did not only allow them to access television content, but also offered easy access to email, messaging, voice chat and social networking sites, all within the same device, with the easy option of switching from one application to another. Such accounts indicate that in comparison to many other complex media technologies, which require a considerable amount of time and effort to master, the iPad offers a rather straightforward interface, and simple tools for watching television content and doing other media activities, all of which can be done on the same media device, thus answering the everyday needs of mothers.

Women's higher time spent watching television on the iPad potentially means that women had greater familiarity with this device, which can then explain why women ended up spending more time on other tasks besides watching television on the iPad, in comparison to men, who did not report using this device

as much or at all (McCreery and Krugman, 2015:636). And this habit of mothers using portable media devices tended to continue past the stage of early motherhood, with portable media devices becoming an integral part of mothers' overall experience of television viewing. As such, mothers often made a distinction between watching something on a television set with their partner and/or children, and watching something on their own on a personal portable media device. The latter was discussed as '*me time*', a private and personal viewing experience, which did not have to be shared with anyone, a moment to be alone with oneself. Mothers were the ones, who expressed the need for '*me time*' (time for self) more strongly than fathers, with watching television content being a common '*me time*' activity (also see Bjornberg and Kollind, 2005). As Hayley shared, 'I like to watch [TV] on the laptop, as I like to use it to relax just me after a long day being a mum' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5). Similarly, as Ellie explained, 'I prefer the tablet, as a way to relax and have time to yourself' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 9 months). What is noteworthy is that many women prefer the '*me time*' viewing to happen on personal portable devices, such as a laptop, a tablet or a mobile phone, rather than on a big television screen. Previous research has indicated that watching content on a smaller screen can be a more absorbing and pleasurable experience for viewers (Lombard et al., 1997; McNiven et al., 2012; Reeves et al., 1999). For instance, as Stephen McCreery and Dean Krugman have pointed out:

'While a television screen is physically larger than a tablet screen, the distance one watches is generally much closer with the smaller screen, creating a viewing area that often takes up a larger field of vision. This closeness and larger relative screen size may create... a more intense viewing experience that will be remembered better' (2015:623; also see Reeves and Nass, 1996).

Indeed, the accounts given by female participants indicate that there is something private, very personal and highly enjoyable about watching television content on a smaller screen, when the experience is not shared with anyone, being an alone quality time that allows deep relaxation, something that was reported highly important to mothers (also see Ang, 1985; Gray, 1992; Hobson, 1980, 1982). This

type of viewing on a personal portable device was chosen by mothers, rather than settled for, and allowed mothers to deal with the often overwhelming experience of motherhood, where a lot of emotion and energy was given to children, leaving mothers feel like they did not do anything for themselves, and making them long for for some time to themselves.

However, women's use of portable media devices with a smaller screen for the purposes of watching television content was not always freely chosen by them – women also reported instances when this choice was made out of necessity. As such, women reported using other media devices to access television content, when the main television set was occupied by someone else; the finding that is consistent with previous research on the gendered nature of television consumption (for instance, see Gauntlett and Hill, 1999; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Morley, 1988). For instance, as Aimee pointed out, 'I'll watch something on another device, if it's like the last chance to get something On Demand and someone else has claimed the tv!' (Aimee, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 4); or as Nancy shared, 'I prefer to watch the tv, but will watch on my laptop if there is something I particularly want to see that nobody else does' (45-54 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 12 and 10). Alternative devices were thus chosen, when women's viewing preferences did not fit in with the family, as a way to manage family relationships and avoid conflicts and tensions (also see Morley, 2000). As Elizabeth Evans pointed out:

'Now devices are being used to manage multiple interests. Who's in charge of the remote control has been replaced by who's in charge of the TV set – multiple screen devices allow more flexible management of who gets to watch what when and how' (2015b).

Although these examples illustrate that television viewing in the home remains gendered, with women often occupying a somewhat disadvantaged position in relation to media technology in the home - not having the first claim on the television set, for instance (also see Haddon, 1992; Lauretis, 1987; Morley, 1988; Terry and Calvert, 1997; Wheelock, 1992), - my study has shown that in some other respects gender traditions around media use in general, and television use in

particular, are breaking down. For instance, it has been previously argued that most media technology is highly gendered and is associated with the masculine culture (Chesley, 2006; Cockburn, 1999; Faulkner and Arnold, 1985; Frissen, 1992; Singh, 2001; Wajcman, 1991; Wakeford, 1997; Wiley, 1995). Hence recent developments in digital television, such as online television culture, have also been linked to 'youth, technological sophistication, and masculinity' (Newman, 2011:466). Lisa Parks has pointed out that alternative ways of accessing television content (as in not via the traditional means of the broadcast television on a television set) imply 'an autonomous masculine browser, unlike the passive feminized viewer of analog TV' (2004:138). In previous research on television, women have often been presented as having quite a narrow and limited range of television viewing practices at their disposal, in comparison to men, who tended to experiment with ways of accessing and viewing television content. For instance, Hugh Mackay and Darren Ivey 'found clear signs of ambivalence and resistance by women to digital television, EPGs and the Internet in most of our households' (2004:127). Surpiya Singh has argued that women often experience low self-confidence, anxiety and continued discomfort with new technological tools, because the value system underlying new technologies is fundamentally masculine, and therefore discouraging for women (2001:407; also see Chesley, 2006). However, as the discussion in this chapter has already started to demonstrate, women, mothers, who participated in my study, did show a lot of competence using alternative means of accessing television content, not restricting themselves to the use of the conventional television set. Mothers used alternative devices, such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones, with ease and for various purposes, not considering them to be 'masculine gadgets' (Mackay and Ivey, 2004:135).

Noelle Chesley has pointed out that it is very possible that domination of technology by one family member might discourage learning about this technology and its use among others in the household (2006:593). This means that by using portable media devices more on their own, women have potentially appropriated them as 'theirs', acquiring confidence, competence and skill of use. This can help to explain the fact that some of the female participants reported using portable media devices with more confidence and skill, than the more traditional technology, such

as the television set (particularly the smart TV), which keeps its status as the 'male' technology in the home, being mostly dominated by fathers. As Annabelle noted:

'I am probably less savvy, aren't I, with technology. I mean I know how to use the TV, but saying that, it is a smart TV, and it has got all sorts of things that I am yet to... Like it has got Netflix and Amazon Prime and YouTube, I did have to say "how do you do this on YouTube?" So yeah, I am probably less confident, than you are [talking about her husband Nick]. I can point and click, and that's probably about it, which makes me feel a bit antique. But yeah I am alright with the iPad' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

Here Annabelle spent a considerable amount of time pointing out the things in the television set technology that she did not know how to use, and therefore had to go to her husband Nick for help; while at the same time adding at the end that while she might not be as 'technically savvy' as her husband Nick when it comes to the smart television set with all its functions, she is 'alright with the iPad'. When I asked what it actually was that made the iPad easier to navigate and use for her, Annabelle responded by saying:

'I think they are more accessible. They are accessible. You know, they are easy to pick up and get started straight away, you don't need to do much or know much about how they work, you know, once you got the kind of swiping and touch screen, you know, you can use it' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

Here the iPad is described as a user friendly and intuitive media technology, which women can use with confidence, and therefore prefer and choose from the array of media technology in the home. This example therefore contrasts previous research findings and shows that women are embracing new media technology in the home, rather than struggling with it, not using it much and being slow to take it up (Mackay and Ivey, 2004:129). New media technology, such as the iPad, offers great developments in user-friendliness, which seems lacking in more traditional devices, such as the television set, leading to women often choosing alternative media devices (with which they feel most comfortable) to access television content. The choice of option as to how to access and view television content can thus be

influenced by the labels that individuals attach to media technology, with certain media technologies being considered 'male' and others 'female', and consequently being used more or less by men and women in the family (also see Gray, 1992).

Gender and the difference in fathering and mothering experiences is therefore an important factor in the decision making process, as to what media device to choose for accessing and watching television content in the context of family everyday life and parenting. While men, who participated in the study, preferred and often dominated the television set, women, mothers, often had to access television content that they wanted to watch on other alternative devices, such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones. Such personal portable devices, however, could also be actively chosen by mothers, due to them answering the specific needs of motherhood, particularly in its early stages. As such, portable media devices, such as mobile phones and tablets, answered mothers' need for a convenient, light, readily available and easily handled media device, which could keep them company and help deal with the specific experiences of having a little baby, such as breastfeeding or the need for some time for oneself. The following discussion will continue examining parents' rationale of the decision making process as to what media technology to use to access television content, as well as considering the limitations of the choice available to parents.

Television services, the rationale of parents' decision making process and the limits of choice

The previous sections have shown that the choice of media device, from which to access television content is not accidental, but can be governed by individual's preferences, attitudes, specific personal circumstances and experiences, and gender, in particular with relation to fathering and mothering experiences. However, while the issue of how media devices are chosen, made sense of and used in the home often enters the discussion of home media consumption, at least to some extent; the discussion of applications and different television services used on these devices is not so common. This leads to a gap in academic understanding of how and why audiences make the decisions in relation

to them, particularly with regards to specific experiences and stages in the life course, such as parenting. As the remaining part of this chapter will argue, the contemporary experience of television viewing more often than not includes audience's decisions about what application, television service and format to choose, the process that has a specific rationale, and is reflective of individuals' personal circumstances and experiences, such as parenting; audience's attitudes towards media; knowledge of media technology; as well as views on other aspects of contemporary living. It therefore becomes important to acknowledge and document the decision making process involving television services, applications and formats, in order to fully examine and understand the contemporary experience of television as a medium, and audience's home television viewing practices. This section in particular will be looking at how parents make decisions with regards to television services and applications, such as Amazon Prime and Netflix, while at the same time considering the limitations of the digital television choices available to parents in the home.

My study has demonstrated that parents' decision about what television application or service to choose in a particular situation is not random, but rather individual and carefully thought through, and there are a lot of different aspects of television viewing that parents have to take into consideration before they make this choice. As such, parents, who I have interviewed, often mentioned doing 'research' - finding out different ways available to them to access a chosen film or a television programme, in order to be able to make an *informed decision*. This means that parents often did not have a specific way to access the content, which was used every time the family wanted to watch something, but rather the decision was made on a case by case basis, taking into consideration various factors, such as cost, availability and convenience, all of which have been reported to be highly important by parents. As Helen shared, 'Sometimes iTunes, sometimes of... lots of places are doing it now [digital rental], there's just lots of places. It just varies, I might just Google it and just go in, so I just do that' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 7 and 6). Similarly, when parents subscribed to On Demand video services, such as Netflix or Love Film/Amazon Prime, the decision to pay for the service was not simply discussed and made once and for all. In contrast, it was

constantly re-visited, with parents questioning the necessity of it, whether it offers a good variety of content for both parents and children, and whether the frequency of its use justifies paying for it. For example, as Tom and Samantha discussed:

Tom: We did use Play station 3 for LoveFilm for a while. We cancelled it...

Samantha: ...they didn't have a very good selection...

Tom: ...we finished watching everything we wanted to.

(25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

Parents also discussed subscribing for trials of various On Demand video services, in order to see what was on offer, how often they would actually use it, and then decide whether it was indeed a cost effective way of accessing television and film content that they and their children liked.

It is important to note that by subscribing or unsubscribing to television services, parents did not only change the selection of content available to them, but also to their children, as children's television viewing was in many ways dependent on this parental choice, particularly when children were young. What content different On Demand video services offered for children was an important consideration for parents, who preferred their children to access specific television content via On Demand services, rather than via broadcast television, for the reasons of children's safety (as it has been discussed in chapter 1). Parents often demonstrated great familiarity with children's content, which was available to them On Demand, knowing all of the programmes their children watched to the extent of being able to discuss specific characters and storylines. As Mary discussed her daughter's favourite programme:

'Have you ever seen *In the night garden*? It's got characters Upsy Lily, Iggle Piggle, Makka Pakka, the Tombliboos, and it's a CBeeBies programme... And they are designed to be very easy for babies to say, you know, it's kind of baby talk, isn't it? Upsy Lily, Iggle Piggle... And the characters themselves don't talk, they sort of, they are just kind of like toddlers themselves' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

From this detailed description, it becomes obvious that Mary actually watches children's television programmes, rather than simply turning them on for her daughter without paying attention to what content is playing.

However, the very fact that Mary watched content with her daughter had direct implications on what content was on for Lily to see, as Mary talked about 'getting bored' of certain programmes and thus 'not watching it too much, just bits and bobs of it' or starting to avoid them altogether:

'Peppa Pig is her favourite, and Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom is from the makers of Peppa Pig, and that's pretty good. But I kind of got bored of them... Because the thing about viewing TV with your child is that if you are watching the same thing over and over again, they are quite happy with that, but as an adult, you get bored. I mean, you know, that repetition can get a bit tedious' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

She thus talked about going through 'phases of programmes', which were not influenced by Lily losing interest in them, but rather by Mary getting bored with them: 'before she is old enough to tell me what she wants to watch, it is our decision, right? So we have phases of programmes that we like to watch' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). When asked about her daughter's favourite programmes, Mary used 'she likes to watch', 'we like to watch' and 'I like to watch', or 'our favourite' and 'my favourite' interchangeably, further emphasising the centrality of parental choice and preference in young children's television viewing. Similar account was given by other parents as well, for example, Rachel talked about selecting content for her daughters to watch that was interesting, appropriate, but above all 'something that is not mind numbing for me!' (45-54 years old, Norfolk, three children aged 16, 12 and 7). Even when children were selecting the content themselves, their choice was still often monitored and dictated by parents, who used On Demand television applications, such as Netflix, to create children's accounts with content that has been 'pre-approved' by parents. As Megan discussed in relation to her sons' viewing:

'On Netflix, they will just use the remote and surf around and will look at something. We've got an account, which is set up as kids profile, so everything he can look for, we know it's like age appropriate content... we know what it is' (Megan, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

These examples explain how the experiences of parenting and parents' specific children-related considerations influence parental decision as to what television services and application to use.

However, although there are now a lot of options available to parents when it comes to home media consumption, this choice is not unlimited, homogenous and available to all, as it is often presented in both industry and academic debates (also see Kompare, 2016). As Ronald Rice has argued, 'interactivity and choice are not universal benefits; many people do not have the energy, desire, need or training to engage in such processes' (1999:29). My study has shown that the limits of this choice are as diverse and often unexpected, as audiences' very experiences of media consumption. Thus they should be acknowledged and examined, in order to better understand the choices in relation to family television viewing that parents, as a specific audience group, make on a day-to-day basis. My research with parents has shown that choice often depends on specific knowledge and technical skills on behalf of parents, as well as time and effort required to explore the capabilities of media devices, applications and services, which can significantly limit the choice of options and the resulting decision making process for the whole family. As Nick and Annabelle discussed:

Nick: We took a portable DVD player on holiday for Max, so when we went on a plane, he had *Peppa Pig* to watch on a plane... I think for kind of long journeys and something like that, I think it's quite useful.

Interviewer: So not the iPad?

Annabelle: If we had a way of putting stuff on that, we probably would, but it's more because it has to be internet enabled to play anything, doesn't it? Like, if there was any way of downloading things on that, I would definitely use it! If I could download stuff onto that, I don't know how...

Nick: You can, you can buy stuff off iTunes, like movies and things.

Annabelle: Oh you can, can you?!

(25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

Here the decision to take a portable DVD player with a selection of DVDs for children to watch on the journey and on the holiday was governed not by careful consideration and weighting of different options, but rather by Annabelle's lack of knowledge of the offline video playing capabilities of the iPad. Since she did not know that the device could play video content when it was offline, if this content has been previously purchased or rented from iTunes, this option was not considered in the decision making process. And although her husband was aware of this technical capability of the iPad, he never felt the need to 'teach' Annabelle that, as the iPad was her personal device, which was mainly used at home; and the family also always had the technological alternative of the portable DVD player for the times, when they needed to watch something offline outside the home. This and other similar accounts from parents show that individuals often lack motivation and do not rush to experiment with new technologies, which results in media devices often not being used to their full potential by either parents, or children. Media technology's technical characteristics and capabilities are likely to be discovered over time, as the need for them presents itself and becomes urgent, or when someone else draws individual's attention to it, as it was the case with Annabelle and Nick. After the conversation above, Annabelle expressed her excitement over trying to download things off iTunes for her children to watch on the iPad, when travelling, next time they go away. This example shows that choices available to parents are not as unlimited as they might seem at the first glance, and only by looking at individual narratives, the limits of the choice become apparent (also see Haddon, 2006).

Another factor that can seriously limit family's decision making process is the broadband speed, which parents have often mentioned when they were discussing their home media consumption practices and the choices that were

available to them²⁴. Very often parents' decision making process as to what media device, application, service and format of content to use was determined simply by what *worked*, as poor broadband speeds meant On Demand and Catch Up services were not an available viable option, with parents having to go for offline options of broadcast TV, in order to avoid 'download time and interference' (Donna, 25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months), as broadcast TV on a TV set 'doesn't buffer and lose signal like other devices' (Emily, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months). As Amy further explained: 'Sky. The only choice we have. Slow broadband means alternatives like streamed services are not an option' (35-44 years old, Kent, one child aged 2). Research conducted by Bianca Reisdorf and Anne-Marie Oostveen (2014) for the project *Access Denied* shows that for many of those living outside towns and cities in rural areas, both very remote and less so, the experience of slow, patchy and unreliable internet connections was an everyday reality, often being detrimental for personal and professional lives. They found that 'even in areas less than 20 miles away from big cities, the internet connection slows to far below the minimum of 2Mb/s identified by the government as "adequate"' (Reisdorf and Oostveen, 2014). This results in many everyday activities and practices being virtually impossible, including online banking, web searches for information, sending email, and accessing audio and video content, such as On Demand television services, for instance. Mothers, who experienced constant time pressures and had a very limited amount of free time available every day, as it has already been discussed earlier in this chapter, reported slow broadband speed particularly frustrating and time-wasting.

However, even when the broadband speed improved, the memories of buffering and the inconvenience of having to wait for the content to load often prevented participants from exploring the newly available options. As Victoria explained:

²⁴ It has to be note that this limit of choice is not specific to the parenting audience, and affects a lot of television viewers across the UK.

'I suppose, I always feel that if you are watching something on the Internet, it takes a while to download, and then you sometimes get it buffering and things, which is just aggravating. And I think that actually nowadays it's not as bad as it used to be, it's just that I always think of it like that, so I don't really try [laughing]' (25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 years and 3 months).

When I asked Victoria about their broadband speed, she explained that they had changed their internet provider and broadband package a while ago, so there was no problem with the speed anymore, however, she still remembered On Demand video services being unreliable, and so she did not use them, going for recorded content or DVDs instead. This example shows that it is not just the broadband speed that can be limiting the options of accessing content, but also the attitudes, 'ways of thinking' that shape the decision making process and home media consumption practices of the family.

When discussing the variety of ways available to parents to access and watch television content in the home, it thus becomes important not only to examine this choice and the rationale behind the decision making process, but also to examine the limits of the choice. Factors, such as lack of technical knowledge or poor broadband speed, can stand on the way of parents exploring and embracing the range of options available to access digital television content for their family, and lead to very conventional ways of watching television. Exploration of what limits the decision making process also draws further attention to the fact that 'audience choice' is not a homogenous entity, and the options that are available to some members of audience, will not necessarily be available to all.

This section of the chapter has thus examined parents' decision making process with regards to television services and applications. It demonstrated that parents' decision about what television application or service to choose in a particular situation is not random, but rather individual and carefully thought through, and made on a case by case basis. Parents' decision as to what television application and service to go for could be influenced and motivated by various factors, such as cost, availability and convenience, as well as specific children-related considerations, such as what content they offer for children. However, this section also drew attention to the fact that the choice available to parents was not

unlimited, depending on both internal and external factors, such as technical knowledge of family members or poor broadband speeds.

'To own or not to own?..' – DVD VS Online streaming

So far the chapter has focused on parents' decision making process in relation to media devices, applications and services. I now want to focus on the decision making processes with regards to the specific formats of content, in particular DVD versus online streaming (rental or purchase). To my knowledge, there is currently no empirical research conducted on the question of family audience's attitudes towards home media formats, and the decision making process as to which format to choose, and in what particular situations or circumstances. In academic literature on DVD or online streaming of film and television programmes, the discussion most often focuses on these formats 'constituting an art of control' and freedom of choice for the audience (Smith, 2008:134-135); 'extending existing practices of "time-shifting" derived from the VCR' (Bennett and Brown, 2008:6; also see Hills, 2007; Walters, 2008); and offering increasing interactivity for the audience (Brookey and Westerfelhaus, 2002:40). However, none of the participants, who took part in my study, mentioned these characteristics of digital formats as a determining factor in their decision making process, which points to a significant gap in academic understanding of audience's actual everyday experiences with digital home media formats. As this last section of the chapter will reveal, it is not the 'time-shifting' qualities, or control over the content, or interactivity that draws family audiences to DVD and online streaming viewing (arguably because these qualities are now taken for granted and assumed), but rather the reasons, which are much more personal and emotionally stimulated, while at the same time being governed by the logic of use and specific circumstances of family's everyday lives and the practice of parenting.

Predicted frequency of watching a specific film or television programme was often mentioned by parents as an important factor in the decision making process with regards to choosing the format of content. This was largely due to the fact that children were very likely to want to watch the same television content more than

once, with repeat viewing being reported by parents as one of the main characteristics of children's television consumption. Parents have therefore shared that before they choose the format of a programme or a film they want to watch, they carefully think it through and ask themselves whether they think the family will watch it just once or are likely to want to watch it again later, which in turn influences whether they go for online streaming or purchasing a DVD. As William explained:

'If it's a film we want to watch, we'll just rent it, because, you know, we don't usually watch films twice, but for kids sometimes we buy them, because films like *Despicable Me*, they will just watch it over and over. *The Lego Movie*, we've seen it about a hundred times. So we bought that. Just kind of judge whether they might want to watch it more than once' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

In this particular situation parents have to not only assess and predict their own viewing behaviour, but also that of their children, taking all these various patterns of consumption into consideration, when making a decision about how to access a particular programme or a film. This also indicates that the logic behind the decision making process can change depending on the stage in the life course and particular family circumstances, for example, having young children, who are more likely to engage in repeat viewings.

As it has been discussed in the previous chapter, parents, who had very limited leisure time and not enough of it for watching a lot of television, often identified specific programmes of interest and watched those exclusively, rather than 'wasting' time on content that was not of any particular value. In this context – parents wanting to watch something specific, rather than television in general – participants talked about the advantages of the DVD format, as it could potentially provide them with more guaranteed access, because films and television programmes were much more likely to be available on DVD, than via online streaming. As Annabelle explained: 'there's this series that I really want to watch, and it's not on Netflix, and it's not coming to Netflix anytime soon, so I might have to buy a DVD to watch it' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months). Her husband Nick continued:

‘Yeah, I’ve not considered buying a DVD for a long time, for myself or for us. I guess it’s, you know, if we don’t find it on Netflix and we don’t find it on Amazon Prime, we then consider buying it on DVD’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

What is interesting here is the discourse of the ‘last resort’ attached to the DVD format: Annabelle and Nick only consider buying a film or a programme on DVD, if it is not available via online streaming, as they are already paying for Netflix and Amazon Prime, and do not want to pay extra for DVDs. Similarly, as Donna explained:

‘There are only certain films that we would watch more than once, and obviously we don’t know that until we’ve watched it, things like *Christmas Vacation*, we’ve got that on DVD, because we watch it every year for Christmas. But yeah, I prefer On Demand really, because it’s cheaper. And then if I desperately want to watch that film again, and it’s not on On Demand, then we will just go and buy it, because that will obviously be one that we’ll keep and watch over and over again’ (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months).

This example demonstrates that the decision making process of whether to buy a programme or a film on DVD or watch it on TV or via online streaming can be a long-term process, with families often waiting to see, if they actually want to watch something again or not, not trusting their own predictions of future video consumption. It is important to note the language used by participants in these examples, as when describing DVD purchase, participants often used phrases such as ‘particularly want to watch’ or ‘desperately want to watch’, once again indicating that decisions about accessing video content in the home in the family context are not likely to be spontaneous, impulsive or accidental, but rather planned, researched, thought through and justified, particularly when it comes to DVD acquisition (also see Haddon, 2006).

In the quote cited above, Donna mentioned that her preference of the online streaming was influenced by the price, as well as other considerations. Other participants have also mentioned that the price of the specific format, whether it is online streaming or DVD, often becomes a determining factor in the decision making process for parents, who often have to be very careful with finances (also

see Evans and McDonald, 2014). My study has also shown that it was even more important for single parent households, or for households with only one parent being in employment, where financial pressures were particularly high (also see Russo Lemor, 2006). In these situations, parents often had to be inventive and resourceful, and find solutions that worked best for them and their children, and made most sense for their family life and family finances. For example, as single parent Helen explained:

‘We get DVDs out from the library, probably about once a week. We sometimes buy DVDs at the supermarket, but I only let them buy them if they are like 3 pounds or 5 pounds, I won’t go overboard. That’s all the selection we’ve got, it’s all down there, so it’s not really... I am more likely to rent them from the library than I was to buy them’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 7 and 6).

In this particular case Helen, who could not afford regularly buying DVDs for her children and was not signed up for any television channel packages or On Demand services, using only Freeview channels, chose the option of renting DVDs from the local library, making the whole process of going there with her children, choosing and renting films and programmes, a special event, something they could look forward to and enjoy as a family, making the most of the difficult situation (time and finance wise) she was in.

Although the examples of parents’ choices discussed above position the DVD format as somehow secondary to the online streaming, it was not the case for all parents, who took part in my study. For some of the participants, having a physical copy of their favourite films and television programmes, or in James Walters’ words, ‘an artefact that can be held, purchased, collected, displayed, replayed and revisited’ (2008:69), was highly important on both individual and family levels. As Mary discussed:

‘Yeah, and I think we are a bit, sort of old fashioned in a way in that respect, but I do like to have a DVD to watch generally, or recorded on the box, you know. But Stuart, he is a bit more of a collector. So most of the DVDs are his’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

While for Mary herself the format is of less importance, she highlighted that her husband likes to 'collect' films and television programmes, experiencing the so called 'thrill of acquisition' with each purchase, although also admitting that such video consumption might be considered 'old fashioned' by some (also see Bennett and Brown, 2008; Klinger 2006; Smith, 2008). Other parents shared that they collected DVDs not only for themselves, for their own personal pleasure, but also for their children, wanting to pass their collection on to them. As Abigail shared, 'I've got a large Disney collection, because I love Disney films, so... which I wanted to keep for her, so... These are our main DVDs' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2). Similarly, what I have noticed first when I entered Tom and Samantha's living room was two large bookcases filled with DVDs, not books. This DVD display surrounded the television set and was the focal point of the living room. Tom and Samantha's passionate talk about their 'collection' only reinforced this initial impression of the importance of DVDs for them. As Samantha explained:

'I would say, definitely, yeah, I think that on the whole, we have always preferred to have the physical [copy]... Because we like going to our shelf and looking through things and deciding what we would like, or talking to the girls about the different options... The only issue is storage space really. We've now run out of storage space again and we keep adding shelves. That's the main issue... I think it also says a lot about us as people. You can walk into this room and you can immediately get the sense that we love films. And that's like a big part of our personality. We watch it lots. And we have that knowledge of all those films and television. So it says a lot about us as people' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

For Samantha and Tom DVD as a format is about collecting and preserving the films and television programmes that they love and treasure for themselves, as well as for their daughters. It is about sharing their knowledge of film and television with their children. It is also about expressing their identity and personality, putting their hobby and passion on display to be aesthetically admired and enjoyed, as well as passing on the information about their interests to those visiting their home. The DVD then becomes much more than just a disc in a box, it becomes the means of self-expression, and a source of communication with family members and other people (also see Boddy, 2008; Hills, 2007). However, even those participants, who

were passionate about the DVD format, like Tom and Samantha, nevertheless complained about DVD purchases leading to constant ‘battles for storage’ (Tom, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5). In this respect the online streaming format offers a clear advantage, as it does not have any claims on the domestic family space.

DVDs and television box sets being given as gifts or received as gifts was also a reoccurring theme, with parents drawing a parallel between giving books as gifts and giving DVDs as gifts, both being examples of ‘personal’ as well as ‘quality’ presents. As Jason shared, ‘A bit of both I would say, so most Christmases I would say I buy a DVD as a present and I also get... given them as presents as well. I think it makes a good present’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months). For some parents, who did not generally have time for television viewing and discovery of new content, receiving box sets as gifts from friends and family members was also a way to discover new television programmes, and get motivated to watch more television. As Deborah and Robert discussed:

Deborah: It’s not that we want to possess the DVDs particularly, it’s just that people get them for us.

Robert: Yeah, they are usually presents... It’s normally sort of... we’ve got a lot of *CSI*, we’ve got a lot of the *Sherlock* series and stuff, and *New Tricks*...

Deborah: ...my parents and my sister both like similar sort of things, so they would often say: “Oh, we found this new series that we really like! Here’s the box set!” And then we are like, “wow, now we want the next box set!”

(25-34 years old, Kent, three children aged 6, 3 and 1).

These accounts point to the rising legitimacy of television, which is seen as culturally equal to other media, such as books and films, which have a long history of being considered good quality gifts (also see Newman, 2011). Other participants have also mentioned that they favoured the DVD format for its ‘sharing’ and ‘mobile’ qualities. As Samantha explained, ‘Also, I think somebody could be over, and I say “Oh, have you seen such and such? Oh, you must borrow this DVD!”, and you can’t do that with digital copies’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5). In this

context DVD offers a symbolic connection to other people, both in terms of the content, which connects people through shared interests and tastes, and in terms of the physical object, which can be gifted, loaned and borrowed, and passed on. As Emily has shared:

‘Because it is mobile as well, so if you want to take it to your friend’s house or family, then you can take it to their house and you can watch it with them. Whereas if it’s just on the box, you are limited to watching it in one particular place...’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months).

The ‘mobility’ of the DVD is stressed here, with participants appreciating the fact that they can easily take the DVD and watch it anywhere, also noting that they do not see how this is possible with the ‘cloud’ format, such as online purchasing or renting.

These two accounts show that the observation made by Aaron Barlow in 2005 about audiences being ‘more comfortable with things than with access’ (2005:27) still stands. The audiences can in fact access the ‘cloud’ copy of purchased films and TV programmes by accessing their iTunes, Netflix or Amazon Prime account from anywhere, however, it requires certain technical skills and knowledge, which are not readily available to everyone, indicating that the ‘cloud’ format still has a long way to go before it becomes as ‘easy’, ‘intuitive’ and ‘trouble free’, as the physical carriers, such as DVD, have become in the mind of its users, particularly family audiences. Similarly, there is still the stigma around the ‘cloud’ format that it is not safe and trustworthy, and can disappear at any time. As Samantha discussed:

‘I still have this worry that when I download something digitally and lose it, then that’s it. And I’ve had that experience with software before, where I bought something and then we had our computer crash, and I wasn’t able to find the code for it, so I lost that. So physically having it means that I know that I have it’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

This issue connects with the one of the broadband speed and reliability discussed earlier in this chapter. Although computer technologies have advanced, and there are multiple backup systems offered to users, meaning that their files are safe, even

if something happens to one of the devices, on which they are stored; users still do not trust the 'cloud' formats as much as they trust the physical carriers, overlooking the fact that DVDs can also be lost or easily damaged.

The diversity of accounts provided by my participants shows that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' or 'commonly acceptable' way of accessing television content, when it comes to the choice of formats. Instead, parents' decision making process reflects the personal circumstances and attitudes of a specific family, which means that an inquiry into how parents make decisions with regards to the formats of television content is also an inquiry into everyday experiences of parenting and family life. As such, the section has shown that this decision making process had direct connections to the stage in the life course and parenting, as parents reported children's viewing habits to be an important determining factor. For instance, young children, who were more likely to engage in repeat viewings, often encouraged parents to purchase video content, rather than digitally rent it. The choice of content format can also be seen as strategy used by parents to deal with the financial pressures; as a way to manage the domestic space; as a way to connect to other people and share one's interests; or as means of self-expression.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has continued the discussion of the diversity and complexity of media technology in the home, as experienced by parents on a day-to-day basis, started in the first and second chapters, and offered an exploration of the processes that happen *before* television content is actually accessed and watched. It has highlighted the importance of various aspects of accessing digital television content, such as the choice of media devices, applications, services and formats, for the overall experience of watching television for audiences, at the same time emphasising that audience's specific circumstances and experiences, such as parenting, play an important role in how these choices are understood, accepted or ignored, acted on and practiced by audiences on a day-to-day basis. The chapter has therefore argued that before even starting to watch television content, parents engage in a decision making process, as to what is the most

enjoyable, convenient and sensible way to access and watch television content, that answers specific family needs and experiences of parenting. The chapter thus offered a needed insight into the issue of audience choice, providing a better understanding of how television consumption choices are made by parents as a specific audience group, in the domestic setting and in the conditions of family everyday life.

As such, this chapter showed that parents' decision as to what media device to choose, when accessing television content, is often governed by the considerations around time commitment and time investment; the amount of work and planning that is required; ease and instance of use, as well as ease and convenience of access to specific content that parents want to see; and how well the device is suited for *family* viewing. The chapter has also examined the correlations between the choice of media devices and gender, with a specific focus on mothering and fathering experiences. For instance, the chapter showed that there is a close connection between the use of portable media devices for the purposes of television viewing and other media activities, and specific experiences of motherhood, such as breastfeeding or mothers' need for time for themselves. The chapter has also addressed the issues of the rationale of parents' decision making process with regard to various television services and applications; and how parents make choices between online cloud formats and physical releases. The chapter has thus demonstrated that parents' decisions about what television application, service and format to choose in a particular situation is not random or universal, but rather individual and carefully thought through, and there are a lot of different aspects of television viewing in the family context that parents have to take into consideration before they make this choice. At the same time, this choice was not over-optimistically considered to be ultimate by parents, and this chapter has revealed multiple limitations in the choice of options and decision making process, linked to both internal and external factors in parents' home media consumption, such as lack of skills and knowledge, or inadequate broadband speeds.

To my knowledge, there has not been any research that particularly addressed the process of audience's decision making with regards to digital

television viewing, which makes this chapter a novel contribution to the field of home media consumption, and academic understanding of how and why audiences accept or reject specific features and offerings of digital television and its technology. At the same time, this chapter has also contributed to parenting studies research into the everyday experiences of parents and the strategies that parents employ to deal with everyday pressures of parenthood, by demonstrating how certain choices of the ways of accessing television content were highly strategic and aimed at easing parents' financial pressures, keeping children safe, and finding a balance between individual and family needs.

When discussing parents' decision making process as to what media device to choose, this chapter has very briefly touched upon the issue of individual versus collective viewing. The following chapter will address this issue in greater detail, and question how digital television viewing and parents' specific media practices, such as media multi-tasking, are affecting family relationships, and potentially challenging the notion of 'family togetherness', which is often regarded as key to happy family life and relationships.

Chapter 4. Re-configuring the concept of family ‘togetherness’: Parenting, television viewing in the home and media multitasking

Introduction

As the previous chapters have shown, television and media technology play a huge role in how domestic life is organised, practiced and experienced by parents. However, while focusing on how parents use television and media technology to achieve certain goals or to deal with specific experiences of parenting, so far the discussion has not addressed the issue of how they can potentially influence family relationships and family communication. This chapter thus addresses this issue, and examines television viewing and the use of media technology in the context of family relationships and family communication. It particularly investigates the concept of family ‘togetherness’, which my participants highlighted and emphasised as the most important part of creating a happy and satisfying family unit. The chapter examines how parents themselves experience and understand togetherness, and how this concept and this experience are affected by everyday practices of television viewing and the use of media technology in the home.

In doing so, the chapter works with the debates around contemporary family unit and relationships within that unit in both family studies and television studies. I am combining these two subject areas, as they significantly complement each other on this matter. Television studies have a long tradition of examining how television and media technology intersect with family everyday life and family relationships, as well as paying attention to contemporary media practices, such as media multitasking, something that family studies do not explore that much and in that detail in their studies of the family unit. At the same time, the analysis offered in this chapter is enriched by the use of relevant conceptual frameworks from family studies, such as family’s negotiation between autonomy and togetherness, which aim to grasp the full complexity of the relationships and experiences within the family unit. The chapter will demonstrate that media technology is central to family time together (with television viewing being the key media activity regarded in this way), while at the same time exposing the ways, in which this is being

increasingly challenged by media multitasking, which does not only affect the everyday practices and ways of living, but also the very attitudes individuals have about family life, parenting, relationships and communication. By focusing particularly on individual personal experiences of parents; on how parents themselves understand and experience family togetherness in their everyday lives, full of pressures and constraints of parenting; and on how this understanding and experience are affected by television and media technology; this chapter offers an original empirical contribution to these debates. It examines the place that television and media technology occupy in family everyday life and relationships from the standpoint of parental experiences, and the complex ways, in which media practices are contested and negotiated within the family unit and the practices of contemporary parenting.

Literature review

Family has a long history of being studied and understood as a vital component of the social system that helps to promote and maintain balance, stability and order in the larger society (Allan, 1985; Lull, 1988a; Todd, 1985). Fears of the disintegration of the family have been an ongoing concern, and family stability has been a popular object of discussion in both public and academic debates. Due to the social, cultural and political importance of the stable and strong family unit, the issues of family relationships (the ways, in which parents and children behave towards, interact and deal with each other), and family communication (the everyday exchange of information and sharing of emotions that enables parents and children to fulfil family functions, avoiding conflicts and maintaining good relations) have stimulated a wide range of research, theorising and criticism from a variety of theoretical perspectives and within many academic

disciplines (Lull, 1988a:9)²⁵. Family togetherness, which is most often conceptualised as the state of being close to one's family, which is achieved by spending time together with one's partner and/or children, has been considered an important aspect of the strong, stable, happy and satisfying family unit (Bjornberg and Kollind, 2005; Malinen et al., 2010; Miller, 1995; Vanobbergen et al., 2006). Scholars have acknowledged that there is no single or preferred type of 'family', however, it has been argued that regardless of the family type, togetherness – the balance between individuality and collectivity in the family - is vital for the stability of the family unit (Bjornberg and Kollind, 2005:29).²⁶ Although in family studies the role of television and media technology is not often considered central to how families experience and practice togetherness; for decades, media and television scholars have been studying various media in relation to family's everyday life, relationships and the processes of interpersonal communication (Gunter and Svennevig, 1987; Lull, 1980, 1988a; Silverstone, 1994; Morley, 1986, 1988, 1992). In particular, studying television in the context of family life, relationships and communication has been a major approach to the study of the medium from its early beginning. It therefore becomes important to understand how the medium of television has previously been analysed and understood in relation to the family unit.

As various theorists have indicated, from its early beginning, television has been seen and promoted as first and foremost a *family* medium: 'the home

²⁵ For more on family relationships and communication, see Daniel Canary and Marianne Dainton (2002) *Maintaining Relationships Through Communication: Relational, Contextual and Cultural Variation*. London: Routledge; Nathan Epstein et al. (1993) 'The McMaster Model View of Healthy Family Functioning', in Froma Walsh (ed.) *Normal Family Processes*. The Guilford Press: London, pp. 138-160; Laura Guerreroa and Walid Afifib (1995) 'Some things are better left unsaid: Topic avoidance in family relationships'. *Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 43(3), pp. 276-296; Ascan Koerner and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick (2002) 'Toward a Theory of Family Communication'. *Communication Theory*, Vol. 12(1), pp. 70–91; Anita L. Vangelisti (2012) *The Routledge Handbook of Family Communication*. London: Routledge

²⁶ In my own discussion of togetherness in this chapter, I am taking this theoretical definition as the starting point, while at the same time being sensitive to how my participants themselves understood and discussed family togetherness, aiming not to impose theoretical conceptualisation on their experiences.

magazines helped to construct television as a household object, one which belonged in the family space' (Spigel, 1990:76; also see Spigel, 1992:2). However, it was not simply emphasised that television belonged in the family home, but also that it had a specific *value* for the family unit, having the power to bring family members closer together. As Deborah Chambers explained:

'During its period of inception from the late 1930s to the 1950s, television was promoted as a domestic technology that fostered family harmony. In the post-war period, popular media images of 1950s nuclear families gathered around TV sets to watch programmes together were powerful symbols of domestic stability after the turbulences of World War II' (2012:70, also see Groening, 2011).

It thus had been assumed that 'watching television' is first and foremost a family activity, television audiences had been commonly conceived of as families, and it also implied the home being the main site of television consumption (Davies, 2010:149; Lull, 1990:148; Mackay and Ivey, 2004:5; Morley, 1988:27; Rogge, 1991:169; Turner, 2011:42). This was not simply the discourse promoted by the industry, but the discourse that soon entered the social and cultural thinking and imagination, firmly positioning television at the centre of family everyday life.

It has to be noted that other media have also been researched in terms of their potential to bring the family - parents and children - closer together. Deborah Chambers' (2012) study of Nintendo Wii gaming in the context of family life demonstrates how such platforms succeeded in signifying video gaming as sociable, respectable and 'family centred', with a potential to offer collective, rather than individualised family leisure. Similarly, in their recent study Kelly Boudreaux and Mia Consalvo (2014) were looking at the ways, in which social network gaming offers new spaces for collective leisure for families, that transcends geographical boundaries, increases family interaction and expands social ties, adding new dimensions to existing family relationships. Thus media in general have been researched as being a big part of family everyday life, particularly of shared leisure time spent together, and therefore often seen as an integral part of family relationships and communication (Chesley, 2006; Lull, 1980; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Moores, 2000; Morley, 1988).

However, not all research on media in the context of family life regards media as benefiting family relationships and communication between parents and children. There have also been some anxieties in both academic and public debate surrounding media and media technologies, and their negative effects on relationships and communication patterns between parents and children (for example, see Turkle, 2011). In such contrasting research, media and media technology (particularly portable personal devices, such as music players and mobile phones) have been analysed as privatising and individualising, having the potential to create private autonomous spaces or protective bubbles for their users, with the possibility of limiting or switching off altogether the unwanted interaction with others (Bovill and Livingstone, 2001:2; Livingstone, 2010; Morley, 2003:448). It has also sometimes been argued that due to the advances in media technology, its growing accessibility over time, and the multiplication of media devices in the home, the vision of a communal shared living room, which is often seen as central to family life, has been replaced by 'segmented series of mobile private spaces' (Groening, 2010:1340), with family members interacting with their personal devices more, than with each other, resulting in the lack of sociability, the 'denial of the collective in favour of the private individual' (Groening, 2010:1343) and 'living together but separately' (Chambers, 2012:71). The argument that has a particular relevance to this chapter, is that it has also been noted that the omnipresence of personal digital communication can have distractive effects on parents, with 'emails pinging in from afar on a device', distracting them from talking to their children, who are right there in front of them (Dunn, 2014).

The fact that contemporary television viewing is no longer limited to the television set, but also happens on various portable personal devices, which have the potential to separate and disconnect individuals from each other, leading to the decentralisation of 'the traditional television-set-in-the-living-room', and more instances of individual non-communal viewing (Uricchio, 2011:34; also see Hartley, 2009; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Morley, 2003; Strange, 2011; Turner, 2011; Turner and Tay, 2009), raises a question of how television is actually experienced today and what its relation to family togetherness and the practice of parenting is. This chapter aims to contribute to the debate in the field of media and family life

identified above, and explore how television and media technology are used and, more importantly, thought of in the context of family everyday life, family relationships and parenting by parents themselves, bringing in an often missing parenting audience perspective on the matter. As I will argue in the following discussion, it is not simply the use of media in the home that is potentially changing, with parents and children using a growing number of media technologies on a daily basis, with media practices often overlapping, shaping and altering family relationships in the process; but rather parents' very understanding of what counts as family togetherness both in the relationships between the parents, and between parents and their children, the understanding that is influenced by family's uses of media and media technology. The aim of the chapter is therefore not to examine television viewing and the use of media technology as 'positive' or 'negative' for family life, but rather to explore the experiences of parents, and the ways that media use and television viewing are contested and negotiated based on specific attitudes and views that parents have on family life, relationships and communication.

Television viewing and family time together

My study has shown that when discussing family togetherness, parents more often than not mentioned various media and media technologies in such conversations, pointing to the importance of media in family everyday life more broadly, and in family joint leisure time more specifically. Television was the media that has been mentioned most often in this regard, remaining central to the home media environment (also see Lee, 2013). Despite the academic and public hype around television increasingly becoming 'multi-screen', 'multi-platform', highly personal, private and customisable, leading to parents and children being able to access content from a growing amount of devices, platforms and spaces both inside and outside the home, therefore making it a less social experience (Bennett, 2011; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Rizzo, 2007; Strange, 2011; Turner and Tay, 2009); families still very often use it *together* in the shared living room. Parents drew a direct connection between television and the living room, which in all households was *the*

space used by parents and children to spend time together, often being referred to as the *family room*. As illustrated by Bethany's response: 'We often watch TV with sky as it's in the family room where we can all sit together and have access to all channels' (Bethany, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

The word 'social' was often used by participants in my study in their descriptions of television viewing²⁷, emphasising that no matter how many ways there are to watch television content in a private setting, shared social viewing together with one's partner and/or children is still central to the experience of watching television: 'television set as it is central in the house, so a social environment' (Hayley, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5); 'TV as is a social thing and all can see the screen easily' (Erin, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child, age not given). Similarly, as Nina wrote in the survey, 'We enjoy watching television at my sister's when we all get together, it becomes a social event for the whole family' (35-44 years old, London, one child aged 2). In this context television is used as a part of extended family gatherings, creating a shared 'bonding' experience for different family members, both adults and children, who might have different interests and tastes, bringing them together around the screen; as well as being an 'event', something special and memorable to experience, share and discuss. In the survey Donna also noted that television viewing 'gives us a common interest. Something to discuss, laugh about, watch intently – together' (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months). In this case watching television together again is more than simply spending a few hours in the presence of each other; it is also about having something in common, having a source of discussion and laughter. In the further interview Donna shared that after so many years together, her husband and herself often run out of things to talk about, particularly now that they have young children and spend most of their free time at home, having very limited social life. As Donna shared: 'Yeah. It gives you something to

²⁷ For more on social uses of television, see Jukka Kortti (2011) 'Multidimensional Social History of Television: Social Uses of Finnish Television from the 1950s to the 2000s'. *Television and New Media*, Vol. 12(4), pp. 293-313; James Lull (1980) 'Family Communication Patterns and the Social Uses of Television'. *Communication Research*, Vol. 7(3), pp. 319-333.

talk about, definitely. There isn't much you can talk about when you live with someone 24/7, and having young kids, you know... having something to watch can open up like a whole new conversation' (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months). Here television becomes a coping mechanism for parents to deal with the changes brought by the experience of parenting. Television in some ways has temporarily replaced going out for food, to the movies or meeting with friends. For Donna and her husband television was an important way to fuel the conversations and maintain communication with each other, as having two young children has temporarily limited their social life and interaction with others. Accounts like this demonstrate that for many viewers, television is still first and foremost an important social activity, a facilitator of communication and social interaction, to be shared with the rest of the family, very much like it used to be before its digitalisation (see Morley, 1988). As Claus-Dieter Rath has put it, television is not so much about viewing the programmes, as it is about being 'among those who have viewed them', being able to share the experience and discuss it with others (1988:37; also see Morley, 2012; Shepherd et al., 2006).

Watching television together with one's partner in the absence of children was also often named as an *activity* for parents, not some casual pastime that goes unnoticed, but dedicated and special '*us time*', which parents spent together with each other. In the context of parenting - time constraints imposed by the experience of having children and the need to devote them a lot of time and attention, as well as investing a lot of emotion and energy into the practice of parenting - television can thus be analysed as a tool used by parents for maintaining close loving and intimate relationships with each other. As some of the participants have discussed: 'I usually watch TV programmes with my husband as an "activity" to do together, snuggled on the sofa' (Gabby, 35-44 years old, Somerset, one child aged 2); 'It gives my husband and I a break together, not just if the kids are there for a bit of peace and quiet, but also for us, just the two of us, to unwind' (Paige, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 2 and 1). Television viewing was thus often seen as a relaxing and *intimate* time for parents: to be together in a close proximity of each other, and in physical contact - 'snuggled on the sofa', enjoying the presence of each other and being entertained at the same time. Particularly

parents of young children have talked about feeling exhausted by the time the evening comes, with television being a welcomed 'break' for them, one of the only activities that they had energy for, and which they could do together; something that takes the mind off things and allows relaxation in the close and intimate company of each other. For busy parents, who rarely had a chance to just be together with their partner, these moments of 'peace and quiet', uninterrupted by children, were experienced as highly intimate, and therefore were treasured and cherished.

As these examples have demonstrated, television is often seen and experienced as central to family togetherness – spending time with one's partner and/or children in the context of everyday life inside the family home. In certain circumstances media technology and media practices, such as watching television, was also a way to experience physical intimacy with one's partner after a long day of work and childcare – having 'us time', uninterrupted by children and household duties. In all these accounts family togetherness and intimacy in relation to media use were understood as sharing one space and one content, often being able to form conversations around it, and with it being the only media activity involved for all participating family members. Such past time was referred to by my participants as 'quality' time together, meaning it has the potential to enrich, maintain or reinforce relationships and communication between family members (also see Daly, 2001; Kingston and Nock, 1987; Kubey, 1990). However, as the following sections will examine and demonstrate, this definition of togetherness and intimacy is being increasingly challenged by new media technology and specific media practices, such as media multitasking, which more often than not require family members to re-visit their attitudes and practices, making them complex and contradictory at times. Without making a claim that the use of media and media technology is the only factor in this process, the following discussion will nevertheless examine instances when media use does pose a challenge to family relationships, communication and togetherness, leading to changes in attitudes towards family communication and togetherness.

Media multitasking, family relationships and gender

My research has shown that the idealistic vision of family collective television viewing together for the purposes of maintaining and reinforcing family relationships, which was shared by most of the participants in my study (86.8% of participants answered that television was important for their family life, with 79.6% of participants highlighting watching television mainly in the company of other family members, rather than by themselves), is becoming more and more difficult to achieve and is increasingly complicated by media multitasking, which is becoming very common in contemporary households. Hilde Voorveld and Margot van der Goot define media multitasking as 'engaging in more than one media activity at a time or multiple exposures to various media forms at a single point in time for the same media consumer' (2013:392). Although it is a popular notion that it is particularly young people who are media multitasking the most, with a majority of academic works focusing on youth and its media multitasking practices (for instance, see Bardhi et al., 2010; Christensen et. al, 2015; Jeong and Hwang, 2012), the very assumption that media multitasking is more prevalent among young people than among older age groups has not been thoroughly tested and there is no sufficient empirical evidence to support this claim. A recent Ofcom study of media multitasking shows that 'Media multitasking is undertaken by almost every person. Almost every adult (99%) in the Digital Day study recorded conducting two or more media activities at the same time at some point during the week. Adults spent an average of 2 hours 3 minutes per day simultaneously consuming two or more media services' (2015d:6; also see Evans, 2015b), and my study supports this finding as well. However, while providing some insight into how people consume broadcast media, how they use websites, and what people might do while media multitasking, most research on multitasking to date does not tell us anything about the actual *lived experience* of media multitasking practices, particularly in relation to family everyday life, relationships between family members, and the practice of parenting, which can be regarded as a serious limitation of such research, as it does not uncover the consequences of such media practices for individuals' lives. In the interviews I have conducted, I therefore tried to find answers to the questions of

how media multitasking was *experienced*, how it was affecting everyday life, family relationships and communication between family members, and whether it changed how parents understood and experienced family togetherness.

While media multitasking was an important part of my research, it often was not me who brought media multitasking up in conversations with my participants. Rather, it was something that participants would mention themselves when discussing their media use, pointing to the fact that media multitasking is an actual lived experience, of which audiences are very aware and conscious, which makes it deeply rooted in the contemporary everyday life, and thus an ever important object of academic inquiry. Participants talked about getting distracted from watching television with their mobile phones and tablets, often offering their own opinion of why it might be happening: 'It happens because I just think "Oh, I've got to check something!", so I do that and then I get drawn in... start checking everything else at the same time' (Victoria, 25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 and 6 months); 'it's just that life is busy, very very busy, and we all try to possibly do a bit too much' (Abigail, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2). These responses show that in the discussion of media multitasking, particularly in relation to family everyday life and parenting, it is important to mention that media multitasking is not always a pleasant experience, something that individuals simply *want* to do, but can also be experienced as a pressure: pressure to be 'on top of things', to catch up with news, friends and family, community pages, countless notifications, messages and updates; pressure to fit in more activities into the same amount of free time. This is particularly the case for parents as a specific audience group, who often experience time constraints and have to come up with solutions as to how to maintain and keep up with various aspects of their lives, including work, child care, social life, hobbies and interests (also see Roxburgh, 2006).

While media multitasking is often researched as a new phenomenon of the digital era, which suddenly happened and complicated individuals' lives to a great extent (Szekely, 2015:210), some of the parents, who took part in my study, did not see it as a radical change, rather seeing it as just one part of a much larger series of constant everyday life distractions. This was particularly the case for parents with

young children under the age of 5. For example, Colin did not see media multitasking being all that different from other distractions that he experienced on a day-to-day basis, having a busy life of full time work and caring for a young child:

‘I think you kind of get used to being distracted, like we’ve got, up there we’ve got a little monitor, like baby monitor, so we can hear if she cries upstairs in bed, that would go off, and then we sit here, thinking is it gonna stop or do we have to go upstairs, so you are forever pausing something and going upstairs, and then you probably put washing on and you have to take it out...’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2).

For Colin and his wife media multitasking was not a massive distracting force, because their attention and focus were already split into multiple segments, which was the result of their busy lifestyle, and having to combine work with child care. Media multitasking was used by Colin and his wife as the means of affording more time for all of their media-related interests, which had to be squeezed into very limited free time, a necessity like everything else (also see Collins, 2008; Foehr, 2006).

While being a necessity and often also experienced as a pressure, media multitasking is nevertheless becoming deeply integrated into the routines and ways of living, making it difficult for individuals to avoid. Abigail talked about *forcing* herself to stop media multitasking, just trying to focus on one thing – watching television with her husband in the evening, which required her to physically remove the device she got distracted with and place it out of reach:

‘...and I knew I wanted to properly watch the film, so I actually took my iPod out of... like completely away from me, because if it was on the edge of the sofa, I would check it quite regularly for Facebook, I belong to a lot of Facebook groups, and also my email thing...’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2).

The struggle of avoiding media multitasking was reported by other participants as well, some of which went as far as calling themselves media multitasking ‘addicts’:

'But I am addicted, I must admit. I am always on my phone. It all started with social media. So, it's like a way to keep in touch with your relatives, my mum... Then with like Facebook, you kind of want to see what other people do...' (Sonia, 35-44 years old, East Sussex, three children aged 3, 6 and 10).

Both Abigail and Sonia expressed frustration with their inability to avoid or stop media multitasking, as it becomes a familiar habit and a way of doing things, something that happens almost unconsciously.

It is particularly important to highlight here that it was mainly female participants who felt bad about their media multitasking practices. The previous chapter has already demonstrated that the use of media technology in the home is gendered, and that women (mothers) were more likely than men to be using personal portable devices for various media activities. However, what needs to be added to that finding is that women's use of portable personal devices was also often secondary, being conducted simultaneously with family television viewing or other activities, becoming a media multitasking practice. In this context, women often talked about 'getting better' at avoiding media multitasking and how important it was for them, their family life and relationship with a partner. This finding is new to the study of media multitasking, and why it might be considered and experienced as a negative practice by audiences. Previous research has looked at the negative effects of media multitasking, noting it increasing cognitive load and significantly decreasing information processing capacity (Christensen et al., 2015); disrupting comprehension of information (Jeong and Hwang, 2012; Voorveld and van der Goot, 2013); and decreasing memory (Zhang et al., 2010). However, my research has shown that what makes individuals see media multitasking as problematic goes far beyond these negative effects, being deeply rooted in individual's views on relationships, family communication and parenting, with gender being a specifically important factor in how media multitasking was regarded and experienced.

Women's responses about media multitasking pointed to the fact that the roles within the family are still highly gendered. Although some research provides evidence of the growing expectations of greater male participation in childcare, and therefore the blurring of the boundaries between the roles of a mother and a

father (Miller, 2011); several longitudinal studies showed an increase in gender differentiation during and after the transition to parenthood (Araujo Martins et al., 2014; Bjornberg and Kollind, 2005; Cowan and Cowan, 2000; Glabe et al., 2005; Katz-Wise et al., 2010). Cristina Araujo Martins et al.'s research showed that

'...during the transition to parenthood, the couples still organized themselves based on traditional frameworks, in which mothers assumed the role of primary caregivers and their entire availability, and fathers took a secondary role of provision and support, showing a relative absence towards child care' (2014:130).

Their research demonstrated the wide variety of experiences and differences between male and female practices, as well as showing how highly gendered social and cultural meanings assigned to the roles of a father and a mother determine how individuals experience these roles, as well as the expectations, values and beliefs they hold with regards to them (Araujo Martins et al., 2014). Women, mothers, who participated in my study, felt bad and guilty about media multitasking, because they felt that they were not doing things 'properly': not devoting full attention to the evening television viewing, not communicating 'right' with their partner and children, and not spending 'enough' time with the family. In the families that I have interviewed, both parents had certain expectations and ideas about family life and family relationships - what makes a happy family, how parents ought to communicate with each other and their children, how families ought to spend time together to maintain and reinforce strong family relationships – however, mothers had a more acute sense of responsibility when it came to actually working on achieving these ideals (also see Cowan and Cowan, 1999). As Ulla Bjornberg and Anna-Karin Kollind have pointed out:

'When women assume the responsibility to make sure that everybody in the family (particularly the children) are fine, they may risk ending up in a spiral of demands of good housekeeping and for providing the best possibilities for the children... These notions act as normative guidelines, and are more or less negotiable in the concrete relationship. However, it is based on the idea that women have the chief responsibility for the home and the children. This means that they will carry the blame if they cannot live up to

the levels of ambition - whether they belong to themselves, the husband or the remaining surroundings' (2005:37).

What needs to be added to this list of demands is the maintenance of the 'happy family', realisation of the vision of a happy family life and happy family relationships, which is yet another aspect of family life that women felt responsible for.

Thus media multitasking has often been reported as problematic by mothers due to it having the potential to disrupt family togetherness and ruin family intimacy, for instance, by causing disengagement and fragmentation during family collective television viewing. However, my research has also revealed that media multitasking was seen as not only 'stealing' attention away from watching television with the family, but from other family activities as well, such as playing with children or having a family meal together, which some of mothers found even more alarming and worrying. As Abigail described:

'I try to make a concentrated effort to just... I want to limit my kind of 'iPod device time' as much as possible actually. I will just say "OK, I need to put it away". And it's terrible at dinner as well, so we try not to have it at a dinner table, because you can easily look at something, and then she is sitting there eating, and we are both looking at something else, and then the telly is blaring and no one is watching it...' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2).

Although in theory media multitasking is a problem that can be solved easily – by turning all of the devices off – participants reported being stuck in their habits, when media multitasking happens almost unconsciously due to the time pressures. This example shows that media multitasking was experienced as negative because women felt that it was taking their attention away from their children and partner, replacing the actual face-to-face socialisation with other family members with virtual communication, which was not seen as the 'right' and 'proper' way to communicate with one's family. There is also a motif of guilt felt by mothers, who often regarded media multitasking as a kind of failure in their parental roles - not spending enough time with the children, and not devoting them full attention (this issue will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6). As Cristina Araujo Martins et al.

have argued, the accepted meanings of being a good mother, 'mothers who love, care for, are constantly vigilant and seek to know and respect the child's needs... dictate the pace and choices to be made rather than their own interests' (2014:129-130). In other words, mothers' experience of being a parent dictated the rules around other aspects of everyday life, including media consumption practices.

Thus the connection can be drawn between media multitasking being seen as problematic, for parenting in general and mothering in particular, as participants mentioned that media multitasking has not been a big issue for them before they had children, as they had more spare time and a lesser sense of responsibility. Female participants in my study expressed mixed feelings and a constant sense of dilemma in their everyday life in relation to media multitasking, which can be seen as an experience of 'collision' of interests between love, family, and personal interests and needs; between autonomy and family togetherness (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995:1-2; Bjornberg and Kollind, 2005:17). This was particularly the case in situations when contemporary practices, such as media multitasking, faced specific family ideals - a vision of a perfect family life that most of the participants had in their mind (also see Cutas, 2014). This vision was very often nostalgic, influenced by participants' own memories of their childhood, often idealised and romanticised. After talking about the importance of not using devices at a dinner table, Abigail continued by saying:

'And when we do do that properly, we enjoy it. And we are quite old fashioned, we were both born in the 1980s, so we are 80s kids, and we are probably the last generation where everyone sat around the table and, you know, had a roast on a Sunday and that kind of things, so I think it's just a nostalgia talking, it's done us well, so we want to kind of protect that as much as we can for her' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2).

Abigail uses a strong word 'protect' here, which refers to her feeling that media devices and family multitasking habits are somehow threatening family life and family togetherness, taking something important and integral away from it. This feeling was not unique to her, other female participants expressed similar feelings as well, particularly those with young children, who were still searching for a formula of a 'happy family' that combines the 'futurism' of contemporary

technologies and media practices with more traditional, nostalgic and idealised notions of what family life should be like, so that there is closeness and understanding between parents, parents and children (also see Spigel, 2001). Negotiating these mixed, often contradicting visions is a huge part of contemporary family everyday life and parenting, with there being no common shared rules and codes of behaviour, with individuals having to find and establish them for themselves.

As Ien Ang (1991) has argued, the relation between media and audiences is not just a matter of negotiations between the audiences and media texts. Rather, the process of media consumption creates 'new areas of constraints and possibilities for structuring social relationships, identities, and desires' (Ang, 1991:109). The discussion above has shown that the practice of media multitasking thus has direct connections with how individuals understand and experience family life, relationships, communication and parenting. It becomes not simply a theoretical concept, but an actual lived experience, which has to be negotiated and contested, and which can be experienced as a necessity and pressure. While media multitasking has been proved to be a practice undertaken by almost every person, the ways, in which it is experienced and thought of, differ significantly, with mothers often feeling guilty about media multitasking and therefore seeing it as highly problematic. Media multitasking becomes a problem when it is seen as threatening family relationships and togetherness, something that mothers in particular felt an acute sense of responsibility for. However, my study has also revealed that *what* individuals actually consider to be *being together with one's family* varies from family to family, as well as from individual to individual within the same family, which further complicates the relationship between television and media technology and family life, as I will discuss in what follows.

The varying and contradictory concept of family ‘togetherness’ in relation to television and media technology

As the discussion in this chapter has already shown, media multitasking has to be constantly negotiated and re-negotiated by parents, in order to find a balance between the need to engage with various media in a very limited free time, and the need and responsibility of spending quality time with the loved ones, uninterrupted by media multitasking. However, in the families that I have interviewed there was no shared consensus as to what place television and media technology and the practices revolving around them should occupy in family life for it to be considered ‘happy’ – with the right balance between work, leisure and individual interests/hobbies, where family members communicate, get along and spend time with each other. The concept of family togetherness was vital for all of the participants, nevertheless it was understood and experienced very differently, which had significant implications for family relationships.

Within one family attitudes towards family togetherness can vary greatly, creating misunderstanding, tensions and conflicts between family members. For instance, single mother Rachel had a completely different understanding of what it means to be ‘together’ from that of her daughters:

‘Olivia especially goes to this website called *deviantART* because she does and uploads her art, and it is also like a social network. And so sometimes when we are watching a movie, I catch her eye, and she grabs my phone and I catch her like on there like texting... and then I get kind of cross with her, yeah, because I figure it should be our time together. And Isla is the same with her iPad. She will sometimes, you know, like disengage, and... so I try... kind of when we are watching a family movie, then we should all be together watching it, discussing it as a family, as opposed to everybody kind of fragmented, like it sometimes happens with their devices’ (45-54 years old, Norfolk, three children aged 16, 12 and 7).

For Rachel, media multitasking was not only negative because it took away attention from the television programmes that were being watched by the family, but also because it stood in the way of *family* television viewing *together*, and it was this togetherness that she was trying to protect and reinforce. As Rachel has

shared, she found it extremely difficult to have time together with her daughters, free from media devices and media multitasking distractions, which for her was the definition of family quality time together. For Rachel watching television programmes or films together was of vital importance for family life and relationships, when the whole family comes together, united by one shared media text and social interaction around it, and not fragmented by individual media activities; as there were not that many other activities that she could do together with her daughters due to limited free time and resources (also see Schmitt et al., 2003). She therefore thought of media multitasking as social disengagement, which was taking away the closeness of collective family television viewing, feeling annoyed with her daughters and often hurt by their disregard of the family togetherness. Her daughters, on the other hand, did not see media multitasking as problematic or not 'being together', and often resisted Rachel's attempts to remove the devices, which was a constant cause of misunderstanding and conflict in the family, negatively affecting family relationships.

This example demonstrates that within one family there may be different understandings of what 'being together' means with regards to using or not using media, thus causing conflicts and upsetting feelings. However, while it can be argued that these disparities in the understanding of family togetherness were due to generational differences between Rachel and her daughters, a similar situation could be observed between Tom and his wife Samantha, who were of the same age. In the interview Tom was complaining about Samantha using her phone when watching television together with him, which he saw as rude and hurtful:

'I get very, very angry at you when you are always checking your phone.....It's just rude... I can understand why divorce rates are skyrocketing with all these devices and stuff like that. I mean it as a joke, but I can understand why it's become a bit of a conflict...' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

Tom used strong words, such as 'angry', 'insult', 'rude' and 'conflict' here. These feelings were caused by him not being able to relate to Samantha's experience of media multitasking, not seeing why she would get distracted by another device

while they were doing something together in the intimate presence of each other. However, Samantha's understanding of being together as a family or being intimate with one's partner was very different, which meant that she did not consider her actions hurtful or disrespectful: 'He doesn't like me using other devices while we are watching... Although I don't see it as a difference. But he sees it as an insult, I think' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5). For Samantha, togetherness and intimacy meant being together in the same room, even if doing separate things. She lovingly talked about sitting with her husband, while he was playing computer games, while watching something on her iPad or chatting on social media, sharing the space and time, not the activity. Similarly, she did not regard media multitasking as disengagement or 'not being present', for her it was just a different way of doing things together, which was no less intimate or shared. Previous research has found that women and men have different views on family togetherness, with women being more inclined to think about the best interests of the group, whereas men were more inclined towards individual needs (Bjornberg and Kollind, 2005:30). However, this example of how Tom and Samantha understand togetherness shows that just as individual's views on togetherness cannot always be explained by generational differences, they also cannot simply be explained by gender differences. Both men and women, who participated in my study, reasoned around ideas of autonomy and togetherness in a variety of ways.

It is important to note that Abigail, who was talking a lot about how multitasking is damaging for family togetherness, replacing face to face communication with virtual one, and how she wanted to protect her daughter from this (see the discussion above), in a different part of the interview expressed a completely different view on the concept of togetherness, when she said:

'We'll watch something together or at least be here together when one of us is watching the programme we like, while the other one is just on the iPod or reading a book or doing some paperwork, but we are together for the evening, you know, for that hour or so' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2).

While in her previous accounts media multitasking appeared to be detrimental to family togetherness, distracting family members from each other, here being in the same room as each other, even if doing separate things, counted as being together for her. Such contradiction was experienced by most of my participants to a greater or lesser degree, and can be seen as a symptom of the process of negotiation of the place of media technologies and practices in family everyday life, which takes effort and time.

For some of the participants using media technology with other family members did not count as family time together at all. As William and Megan explained:

William: And then the TV goes off about an hour before bed, so that they can calm down. And they can read books...

Megan: Yeah, we always make sure that it is off at least an hour before bed, and we usually do something together, like a family thing together, instead of watching a screen.

(35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

For William and Megan 'watching a screen', so viewing television together or playing video games, was not associated with family time together, which led to them creating specific rules around media use in their home, restricting it at certain times of the day. William and Megan contrasted using media technology with other activities, which for them were more meaningful, shared and family oriented, such as reading a story out loud, playing with Lego or playing board games together. However, contradictory to this account, in the same interview William has also talked about their family tradition – movie night on the weekends:

'We have movie night on weekends, so we make popcorn and we get all the chairs around... And Daniel will make little tickets, like cinema tickets and draw posters, you know, pretend we are at the movies, which is quite cute. That's good family fun' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

Here media activity, such as watching a movie, is surrounded by many other activities, which bring the family together for 'good family fun' – creating a viewing space by re-arranging furniture, making popcorn, making cinema tickets and drawing film posters, which William lovingly talked about, using it as an example of their happy family time. This example again contradicts William and Megan's earlier statement about not considering 'watching a screen' a family activity, and once again shows how family's relationship with media technology is not certain, straight forward or set in stone, but is rather constantly changing and evolving, while at the same time also changing family's understanding of family life, relationships and togetherness.

The discussion of the role of media use in family togetherness, how it is understood and practiced by families, makes an original contribution to the debate around family relationships. Previous research has already shown that families have to negotiate independence and subordination in relation to togetherness (Bjornberg and Kollind, 2005), however, the role of media in these processes have not been acknowledged until this current study. The examples discussed above show that the attitudes that parents had about the use of television and media technology in relation to family life, relationships and togetherness were not simple, straight forward and universal. They show that contemporary families can hold more varied forms of togetherness than was previously acknowledged and examined. The attitudes that individuals have towards media practices and family togetherness intersect with each other, can differ a great deal, and cannot simply be explained by generational or gender differences. Family life, relationships and communication is thus a complex and constantly evolving process, where family members have to negotiate media use, establish and re-establish rules around it, and make sure that it makes sense for their specific family at a specific point in time.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has aimed to investigate parents' experiences of family relationships and communication in relation to television and media technology. It has focused on how parents understand and experience family togetherness, and on how this experience is being affected by television viewing and the use of media technology in the home on a day-to-day basis. Following Ien Ang's theoretical position, this chapter has aimed to 'open up a space in which watching television can begin to be understood as a complex cultural practice full of dialogical negotiations and contestations, rather than as a singular occurrence whose meaning can be determined once and for all in the abstract' (1991:99). The chapter has thus looked at the personal narratives of home media use within family relationships, drawing out individual experiences and views, rather than trying to draw definitive conclusions as to how television and media technology affects family everyday relationships and communication. The chapter has shown that family's media use is central to family togetherness, and is more often than not regarded as quality time together, pointing to its potential to enrich and help to maintain communication between family members, with television viewing being the key activity regarded in this way. However, this chapter has also examined diverse ways, in which togetherness in relation to media use has to be constantly negotiated by parents, with media practices, such as media multitasking, posing challenges to family communication and relationships. Media multitasking has been examined as a lived experience, which is deeply rooted in the everyday practices of parents and ways of living. It was demonstrated that media multitasking can be experienced as a necessity and pressure, as well as being regarded as problematic for family life, with there being significant gender differences in how media multitasking is experienced and thought of in the context of family life.

This chapter has demonstrated that it is not simply the use of media in the home that is potentially changing, with families using a growing number of media technologies on a daily basis, with media practices often overlapping, shaping and altering family relationships in the process; but rather parents' very understanding of what counts as family togetherness both in the relationships between the

parents, and between parents and their children. The importance of this chapter lies on the fact that it brings television and media technology to the forefront of the discussion of family togetherness, and highlights the richness and complexity of parents' experiences of familial relationships in relation to home media practices. The chapter has demonstrated that television and media technology play an important role in how family togetherness is understood and practiced by families, contributing to existent knowledge of how families negotiate independence and subordination in relation to family life and relationships. It showed that contemporary families can hold more varied forms of togetherness than was previously acknowledged and examined.

This chapter has drawn a strong connection between media use in the home and the experiences of parenting, showing how children-related considerations lead to parents' changing, altering or re-thinking their media practices. The following two chapters will develop this idea further, with chapter 5 looking at how and why parents might encourage children to use television and media technology, seeing value in its use; and chapter 6 contrastingly examining the reasons motivating parents to manage, control and limit children's media use in specific ways and circumstances.

Chapter 5. Children, television, media technology, and parental views on the value of children's media use

Introduction

The previous chapters have already discussed how participants' television viewing and media use practices are directly linked to the experience of parenting, and various considerations that surround it. The last two chapters will continue this discussion and focus primarily on the television and media related rules (both allowances and restrictions) that parents establish, and that are influenced by what parents think about children, their upbringing, development, happiness, safety and future success. The last two chapters will demonstrate that the relationship between parenting and media technology is not straight forward, but rather often contradictory, with parents encouraging children's use of television and media technology in some instances (as it will be explored in this chapter), and limiting and controlling it in others (as discussed in chapter 6 that follows).

This chapter in particular is asking a question of whether there is any value in children's television viewing or the use of media technology in parents' opinion. While the majority of research on children's media use focuses on the perspectives of children, this chapter will specifically examine the attitudes and practices of parents in the context of children's media use, because as Charlotte Faircloth has argued, 'childhood has always been as much about the imagination and actions of adults as it is about physical children' (2014a:37). It therefore becomes important to examine the place of television and media technology in everyday childrearing, and examine children's media use in the context of contemporary parenting. Parenting literature on this issue is insufficient, and there are considerable gaps in knowledge of the place of television and media technology in childrearing and parents' everyday considerations around it. As such, the majority of research on children's television viewing and the use of media technology in the home in the context of parenting focuses on the risks surrounding children's use of media and parents' attempts to manage and limit it, leading to the academic knowledge of

parental mediation styles and strategies being extensive. However, at the same time, understanding of what motivates parents and also other members of the family to *encourage* children to use media technology is far from being comprehensive. Thus this chapter aims to fill in this gap, and examine the ways, in which parents understand and make sense of children's media use in the home in the context of parenting. It is exploring *why* parents see value in children's use of media, and *how* they encourage children to use media technology and maintain an ongoing relationship with it, introducing it into children's lives from the early months of infancy. By focusing on the positive and encouraging attitudes of parents towards children's media use in the context of UK homes, the aim of this chapter is to contribute towards a better understanding of the place of media technology in the home, children's lives and the practice of parenting.

As it has been the case with previous chapters, this chapter is engaging with the debates around children's television viewing and media use in both television and media studies, and parenting studies. And it is aiming to offer a new perspective on parenting and children's media use in the home in relation to these subject areas. In particular, the aim of this chapter is to move away from the discourse of 'risk' versus 'benefit', which is very common in television and media studies, because parental motivations are often so diverse and complicated, that they simply do not fit into this discourse. Similarly, I want to steer away from the analysis of parental encouragement of the use of media technology in terms of the lack of parent-child attachment, low parenting self-efficacy, or parental disinterest in childrearing, a common accusation in parenting culture, which is not often interrogated by academic research (Lee, 2014b:8; Nathanson, 2015:134). What it means to be a 'good' parent and a 'happy' child, what skills and knowledge will be required from children in the future are the examples of the factors that can motivate parents to encourage their children to use media technology and maintain an ongoing relationship with it, which makes this issue an important area of investigation for both media and parenting studies scholars, as it allows researchers not only to examine everyday television and media use in the home, but also parents' wider views on child upbringing and the cultural and social role of media technology for children and their future.

Literature review

Before I start the discussion of how parents understand and make sense of children's television viewing and media use, I first want to review some of the main academic arguments made about contemporary children and their media use, and draw attention to how this issue has been studied previously. As Leslie Haddon has pointed out:

'It is important to appreciate how... media have appeared gradually because there are often claims about the unique experiences of the current generation of children when in fact practices developed (and were negotiated with parents and other adults) over time by different generations of children and youth' (2013:89).

It is therefore not my aim to argue that media experiences of contemporary children are radically different from what has been observed before. However, as David Buckingham has argued, 'it would also be a mistake to conclude that we have seen it all before, and that nothing is new' (2009:128). Theorists have observed that 'family expenditure on entertainment media (both software and hardware) has been increasing exponentially over the past decade, both as a global figure and as a proportion of household income' (Buckingham, 2009:132), with the amount of time that British children spend on online media, for instance, doubling in the past decade (Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2016; Ofcom, 2014c, 2015a). As Kjartan Olafsson et al. have argued, 'Internet use, and the use of digital media in general, is thoroughly embedded in children's daily lives' (2013: 24). In other words, contemporary children do not simply occasionally have access to one or more media technology, rather they *live* in multi-media environments, saturated by media technology (Davies 2010:172; Goggin 2012:87; Livingstone 2007:8; Morley 2003:448; Vandewater et al., 2007:1009). David Buckingham discussed the rhetoric (that can be found in popular commentary in fields as diverse as academic, commerce, government, education and youth activism) of describing contemporary children and young people as a 'digital generation', 'a generation defined in and through its experience of digital computer technology' (2006:1). In both academic

and popular debates contemporary children are often being referred to as ‘digital natives’, ‘natural born net babes’ and ‘net savvy young’, because of their capability of interacting with a variety of digital media platforms and content (Buckingham, 2006:1; Selwyn, 2003:358; Steemers, 2011:160). As David Buckingham has argued, ‘young people, we are told, are ‘digital natives’, who have grown up with technology and have a natural fluency in using it – as compared with their parents, the ‘digital immigrants’, who will always be somewhat incompetent and uncomfortable’ (2013:7). However, despite the celebrated digital capabilities of children, media participation for children always depends on *access*, which has to be facilitated and granted by parents or caregivers, who will in turn play a considerable role in children’s exposure to media, attitudes towards media, and responses to media, although their role is not always acknowledged and examined in whole detail and complexity (Davies, 2010:177; Nathanson, 2015:133; Nikken and Schols, 2015:3424).

Research on children and media often focuses on the risks surrounding children’s use of media technology and parents’ attempts to manage and limit it (Cingel and Krcmar, 2013; Meirick et al., 2009; Schaan and Melzer, 2015; Vaala and Bleakley, 2015). Mediation and monitoring of children’s media activities, such as television viewing or gaming, has been established as an important parental responsibility (Faircloth, 2014a:30; Walsh et al., 1998:26). Excessive media use and ‘Internet addiction’ (Gentile et al., 2011; Griffiths, 1996); inappropriate sexually explicit or violent content that encourages ‘copycat’ behaviour (Provenzo 1991; Thornburgh and Lin, 2002; Tomopoulos et al., 2014; Wilson, 2008); cyber bullying, grooming and abuse (Olafsson et al., 2013) are just some of the widely researched and publicly discussed dangers that children can potentially face while using media and media technology, and parents are being actively encouraged by policy makers, journalists, parenting ‘experts’ and academics to take these risks seriously, and actively monitor and regulate children’s media use (Kehily, 2010:175; Lee, 2014a:69; Schaan and Melzer, 2015:58; Tomopoulos et al., 2014:546). As David Buckingham has argued, most of research of children’s media use ‘has been preoccupied with the search for evidence of negative effects; and much of it has been based on implicitly behaviourist assumptions’ (2009:134), with there being a

gap in academic knowledge of the positive aspects of children's use of media in the context of the home and contemporary parenting. While offering very useful insights into the issue of the contemporary mediated home, childhood, and their constant negotiation by parents, works focusing on media risks to children and parental mediation, however, pose a danger of creating a one-sided picture of children's media use, parental attitudes towards it, and parent-child relationship with regards to media technology.

Most recent research has already started to demonstrate that anxiety is not parents' main response to the media, and that in many respects parents can actually be rather positive about the internet and other digital technologies (Livingstone, 2016). Likewise, the everyday reality, which I had observed while conducting my study with UK families, is that media use is not always seen in a negative context, as risky and harmful, and children's media use is not always restricted by parents. On the contrary, children are often *encouraged* to use media technology in the home, in the family context. However, while our knowledge of parental mediation styles and strategies is extensive (for a summary, see Chakroff and Nathanson, 2008; Schaan and Melzer, 2015), our understanding of what motivates parents to *encourage* children to use media technology is far from being comprehensive. The issue of parents encouraging children to use media technology and to maintain an ongoing relationship with media is not addressed very often in the literature, however, even when it is, it frequently lacks empirical evidence, and is often presented in a limited context, mainly focusing on the reasons and motivations around '*convenience*' for parents, overlooking many other motivating factors (Buckingham, 2009:127, 2013:8; Vandewater et al., 2007:1007). In this chapter I will therefore focus particularly on this other less covered side of the debate, exploring *why* and *how* parents might encourage children to use media technology, introducing it into children's lives from early on; and how these parental practices are connected with parents' wider views on different aspects of contemporary society and culture. Approaching the issue of children's media use from this angle will allow the following discussion to examine children's media use in the context of parenting, emphasise the role of parents in children's home media

use, and investigate diverse parental views on the affordances of television and media technology for children.

Children and ‘screens’

Before starting the discussion of how and why parents might encourage children to use television and media technology in the home, I want first to introduce the ways, in which parents themselves talked about children’s media use, as parental accounts of children’s media use and their views on it are often absent from academic discussions on the issue. Yet, as I will argue in this section, it is very important to examine how parents make sense of children’s media use, as these ideas will then influence the rules that parents establish around media use inside the family home, allowing children’s media use in certain circumstances, and restricting it in others.

In those families, where children were allowed to use television and media technology on a daily basis (see chapter 1 for the discussion of anti-media homes, where parents seriously restricted children’s use of all media), parents discussed television and media technology as being of vital importance to children. Depending on the age of children, various media were rated differently in terms of their importance for children’s lives, with younger children being reported valuing television more than all other media, and older children spending considerably more time online²⁸. Since the majority of research participants had children under the age of 5, they often discussed the centrality of television for their children’s everyday lives, where television was the main media used by children on a day-to-day basis.

²⁸ In their recent *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report*, Ofcom has argued that the television set is ‘the only media device used almost every day by a majority of children’, as well as being the media device that would be most missed by children (2014a:6; also see Bhullar et al., 2014; Livingstone, 2010; Marsh et al, 2005; Steemers, 2011; Tomopoulos et al., 2014; Vandewater et al., 2007). Television has also been nominated as the main media activity that children aged 5-15 ‘would prefer to do when given the choice’ (Ofcom, 2014c:6). And while older children (12-15) also spend a considerable amount of time on their phones and going online, younger children prefer the television set to any other device, and spend more time in a typical week watching television than doing any other media activity (Ofcom, 2014c:4).

For instance, when asked if television would be missed if it was suddenly gone, William offered the following response: 'The kids will probably leave! And move in with grandma!' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

However, children's television viewing was not limited to the television set, but also occurred on other devices, such as PCs, tablets, mobile phones and other portable devices capable of playing video content (also see Marshall, 2009; Ofcom, 2014c). And the choice of content was not limited to live television broadcast or full length television programmes, but also included shorter video clips found on YouTube, which nevertheless were still referred to as 'watching television' by both parents and children. Parents thus often described their children as being at ease with all media technology, often choosing alternative devices to watch diverse television content, the trend that could be observed across all year groups. As Brian, a father of two teenagers, has mentioned, 'My kids watch more on iPad and YouTube' (45-54 years old, Bristol, two children aged 14 and 17). Similarly, as William, a father of two young children, shared:

'The kids are completely taken to technology and they'll watch TV on your phone or my phone if they are allowed to. You know, they'll run off with our phones and start watching stuff, or the iPads, or the laptop. They'll watch it on anything' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

In such discussions, parents would often finish their sentences with 'although it has a little screen', indicating that watching television on alternative devices with a smaller screen would not be *their* first choice (see chapter 3 for the discussion of parental viewing preferences and choices), while children did not mind it at all, often not seeing a difference between watching something on a television set and watching it on a smaller portable screen. It is also worth emphasising that none of the parents that I have interviewed had a television set in the children's bedroom, a trend that was highly popular less than a decade ago (Vandewater et al., 2007). Research conducted by Elizabeth Vandewater et al. showed that back in 2007 'many young children (one fifth of 0- to 2-year-olds and more than one third of 3- to 6-year-olds)' had a television set in their bedroom (2007:1006). In contrast, parents who participated in my study (both surveys and interviews) were much more likely to have

a portable device, such as a laptop, a tablet, a mobile phone or a game console for their children to use, rather than placing a separate television set in the children's bedroom. Parents often explained such a decision by highlighting the multi-functionality of portable media devices, which could not only be used for television viewing purposes, but also for playing games, going online and other media activities that children might want to pursue (see chapter 1 for the discussion of multi-functionality of media devices used in the home). Parents reported not seeing much purpose in a second television set, as it *'couldn't do much'*, and was not versatile enough to answer the needs of children's and parents' everyday media use, which highlights contemporary expectations that individuals have in relation to media technology. It can be argued that multi-functionality of media technology is becoming a cultural expectation, particularly in the context of everyday family life.

The fact that children are using multiple media devices in the home for a variety of purposes, experimenting with devices, applications, services and content, results in the boundaries between different media devices used in the home, as well as different media practices, becoming increasingly blurred (also see Buckingham, 2013). For instance, while I was interviewing Annabelle and Nick (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months), they gave their 3-year-old son an iPad to watch some cartoons via YouTube to keep him occupied. However, in an hour that I have spent in their home, he was not simply watching cartoons, holding the device still and sitting in one place, but rather moving around the room with the device, interacting with it, jumping from one media activity to another: leaving the YouTube app and playing a game, then going back to YouTube, and then moving on to other applications, up until the point when little Max returned the iPad to his mother saying 'he lost interest in the iPad' (not in 'watching cartoons' or 'playing games', but 'in the iPad'). It would therefore be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to isolate the television viewing activity from Max's overall engagement with the media device. In this particular context, television viewing becomes a complicated, messy, multimedia and multidimensional experience, particularly for the very young, who have shorter attention spans, and who are not afraid of experimenting with applications and content, 'packing more fragmented activities' (Haddon, 2013:91) into what used to be a relatively static and 'self-sufficient' media experience of watching television,

thus demonstrating 'their selective and autonomous relationships with contemporary communications media' (Buckingham, 2009:129). As Leslie Haddon has argued, 'the sheer proliferation of mobile media and of the functionality of specific devices... leads children to face a more complex set of options' when it comes to media practices (2013:90; also see Green and Haddon, 2009). Once again, as this example shows, when it comes to children's use of media in the contemporary home, instead of observing the displacement of older media technologies by newer one, what can be seen instead is *convergence*²⁹, 'a blurring of boundaries, a coming together of previously distinct technologies, cultural forms and practices' (Buckingham, 2009:129; Jenkins, 2006). Although previous research has argued that children's convergent media practices are mainly the result of changes in media technology (Buckingham, 2009:129), I want to argue that the practices of contemporary parenting also play an important role in this process, as parents are the ones who encourage such media activities, as they introduce their children to media technology, its various functions and different media practices. Parents' everyday multitasking practices, which have been discussed in the previous chapter, can also be seen as potentially influencing the ways, in which children use television and other media in the home. As the previous chapter has demonstrated, parents showed their awareness of how their own media practices are affecting those of their children, who often copied or imitated parents' behaviour. Growing up in a media multitasking environment therefore can potentially have implications on how children understand and approach their own media use, easily 'jumping' from one media activity to the next, as the example of Max has demonstrated.

Such convergence of children's media use - the blurring of boundaries between media devices and media practices - was also encouraged by the ways, in which parents approached children's media use in the home, and the rules that they established in relation to it. A common way for parents to make sense of and manage

²⁹For a discussion of the convergence in children's television and a specific case study of CBeebies iPlayer in the UK, see Jeanette Steemers (2011) 'Little Kids' TV: Downloading, Sampling, and Multiplatforming the Preschool TV Experiences of the Digital Era', in J. Bennett and N. Strange (eds.) *Television as Digital Media*. London: Duke University Press, pp. 158-181.

children's media use in the families that I have interviewed was to approach children's media use as *one* experience and *one* big activity. As such, Megan and William raised an issue of seeing no logic in timing and limiting children's media activities, such as watching television or playing games, *separately*, as children might not want to watch television for the entire half an hour, for instance. Similarly, they saw no point in limiting children's time spent using media devices, such as the television set, laptop, tablet and smartphone, *separately*, as one day their children might only be using the Smart TV, and another day do all their media activities on a tablet. Instead, they talked about 'screen time', and timing, allowing or limiting the use of 'screens'. And such approach had a direct impact on how children themselves understood media use:

William: And Daniel will say "can I have some screens on"?

Megan: Yeah, and also we are using it as a... if he is not behaving himself I'll say, you know, "you won't have any screens today" or "you won't have any screens this weekend", and he knows this means no iPad or phone or telly...

William: ...or laptop!

Megan: Yeah, anything that he watches, so...

(35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

Thus in this household both children and parents used the word 'screen' to talk about media use and all various media devices, practices, activities and experiences that it could potentially entail. For Megan and William this was a much more logical way to make sense of and approach children's media use, with media devices becoming multi-purposeful, and media practices becoming fluid and not bound to one particular media technology, making it difficult to identify or set boundaries between devices and media activities conducted on them. And in turn, such mediation practices were influencing how children themselves understood their media use, and how they approached it, being enabled to 'jump' from one media activity to another at their convenience. This finding is an important one, as it contradicts some of the previous research on children, parents and media use, which positions 'screen time'

as an 'obsolete concept' (Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2016). While in theory, it can be argued that 'as digital media become integrated into all aspects of daily life, it is more important to consider the context and content of digital media use, and the connections children and young people (and parents) are making, or not, than to consider arbitrary rules about time' (Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2016), in practice 'screens' and 'screen time' are the concepts that parents use in their everyday negotiation of children's media use, as well as in their own conceptual understanding of this use.

This section has thus demonstrated that children's media use is becoming increasingly complex, and revealed the role that parents play in this process. It emphasised that just as it is important to study how children watch television or use media technology in the context of the home, it is equally important to examine how parents understand and approach children's media use, as this has direct implications on when and why different media, media technologies and their functions are introduced into children's lives, and in how they end up being perceived by both parents and children.

Introducing media and media technology into children's lives

Although children's media use is often discussed in the academic literature, the issue of when, how and why children are *introduced* to media and media technology in the home is not covered that often, which means there is a gap in academic understanding of the origins of children's media use in the context of the family. Similarly, while it is a widely known and discussed fact that increasingly children's first introduction to media technology occurs during the early months of infancy, this age group (babies and toddlers) is underrepresented in academic research (Roberts and Howard, 2005:91; Vandewater et al., 2007:1007). Kjartan Olafsson, Sonia Livingstone and Leslie Haddon's systematic overview of academic works on children's use of media across multiple countries exposed an uneven coverage of children's media use by age, with the majority of research on children's use of media technology being conducted on teenagers (70%), with only a small fraction of studies looking at children under the age of 5 (6%) (2013:20). Due to my

research sample - 76% of participating families had at least 1 child under the age of 5, while for 61% of participating families all children in the household were under the age of 5 (see methodology chapter for more details) – my study has highlighted that children’s media use starts from an early age, and even the youngest children (babies and toddlers) were already reported by parents to be engaging with media and media technology in one way or another. It also provided some insight into how this introduction happens, and why parents might want to introduce their children to media and media technology from such an early age, encouraging children’s media use.

Parental responses have shown that even before children can properly walk or talk, they already ‘know what all these [media] devices are’ (Mary, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). Previous research has demonstrated that

‘...although younger children often experience difficulties in using apps on smart mobile devices, which includes uncontrolled swiping, tapping icons incorrectly, accidentally exiting the app and/or not being able to hear audible gaming instructions, many of them still are motivated to continue to use the device’ (Nikken and Schols, 2015:3423; also see Chiong and Shuler, 2010).

However, what motivates *parents* to continue to give young children media technologies to ‘try’, is the issue that has not been covered much in contemporary research. Parents, who participated in my study, shared that giving their children a media device to ‘try’ was motivated by the same parental feelings that urged them to give their children different foods to try or taking them to the beach for the first time, for instance (also see Bornstein, 2008a; Crocetti et al, 2004) – the desire to share everyday objects and experiences with their children, and seeing their children’s reaction when they have experienced something new for the first time.

Parents also shared an opinion that everyday experiences can be important learning experiences for children. This is why parents often showed their children media devices, allowing them to touch them and press buttons, before this interaction was ‘correct’ or ‘purposeful’. As Emily, a mother of a 5-month-old baby shared:

'Oh, yeah! Definitely, he is already [using the iPad]... he's got a few games that he doesn't play correctly, but I let him touch things, but I am just a bit worried for the amount of drizzle on my device! [laughing] But no, I would definitely let him use it, because I think it is good for him' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months).

Using media technology was often considered by parents to be 'good' for children, as it was seen as an important part of their exploration of the world. Barbara Tizard and Martin Hughes conceptualise the mundane daily activities in the home, such as cooking meals, doing laundry, looking after pets, watching television and using other media, as 'educational contexts of the home', which engage children in conversations and practices that are 'rich in potential for expanding their understanding of people and the social world' (2002:viii; also see Gordon, 1976). This discourse was definitely present in participants' discussion of young children's media use. Although at 5 months Emily's son could not yet do a lot on the iPad, he was already encouraged to experiment with it, with Emily checking almost every day whether he could do something new on it. Similarly, as Nick and Annabelle discussed:

Nick: It's started off with some quite simple games, like popping bubbles and stuff like that, and then it progressed to more and more complex things.

Annabelle: Yeah because he didn't know how to like swipe and drop. You'd say pick that up and he will go like that, but now he knows it means toodoodoodoo [does a hand gesture].

Nick: And now he is kind of realising that there is an application called YouTube and through YouTube you can find lots of stuff.

(25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

Here Nick and Annabelle discussed the progression of their son's digital competence in its various stages, which they followed very closely, being interested in how 3-year-old Max was developing skills of using media technology, something that once again can be compared with such childhood experiences, as learning to ride a bike or learning to read. As Chris Shepherd et al. have argued:

‘Today, ICT use is seen in the context of children’s growing maturity and relative independence. ICTs have become instrumental and iconic indicators of ages and stages of childhood development—in the sense that being permitted to sleep over at a friend’s house, having one’s own door-key, and being allowed to drive the family car, are some of the more traditional markers of stages of maturity’ (2006:218).

Parents have therefore often measured their child’s developmental stage by their ability to use media technology, which meant that children were introduced to media technology early on and encouraged to use it by parents.

It is important to emphasise that children’s ability to use media devices and their multiple functions, such as speech recognition, search for information and applications, was often a major source of pride for parents. It became obvious from the way parents talked about their children using media technology, providing detailed description of what their children could and could not do and at what age. For instance, when I was interviewing Mary and Stuart, their daughter was constantly trying to reach for their phones. One time, when she finally succeeded, Mary pointed my attention to it:

‘You are just about to see an example of... I will just see what she does with it. She knows how to turn it on. She doesn’t know the code. But she presses the buttons so you get voice activation, you know? She knows how to do that. Yes! Look! She does it!’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

Similarly, William and Megan were describing to me what their young son could do on a computer or a tablet. Megan said: ‘He can turn it on himself!’, to which William responded: ‘More than that, he can Google! He loves computers, it’s his favourite thing in school, ICT, so...’, then Megan continued: ‘He is really good with technology, he can just find what he wants and put it on’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2). In both these families, children’s ability to use media technology from an early age was encouraged and celebrated, being seen as an achievement and a sign of good healthy development and learning.

Media technologies, which young children were allowed or not allowed to use, varied from family to family. While in some households all devices, including personal mobile phones and tablets, were shared with children, other parents were

stricter and only allowed their children to use certain devices, restricting or forbidding the use of others. In a lot of cases the reason why parents did not let their young children to use certain media devices was because of the fear that the device might get damaged. As it was in the case of 3-year-old Max using the iPad discussed above, Annabelle was very worried that Max might damage the device, so was constantly reminding her son that the device had to stay in the cover, and that he should not press on the screen too strongly or hit it: 'Max, don't hit... Why is it out of the cover?! Is it the sound, is it gone? It needs to be in a cover!' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months). Similarly, Emily also showed worry about 'the amount of drizzle on her device', when it has been used by 5-months-old Mike (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months). Furthermore, Mary explained why her 1-year-old daughter was no longer allowed to use the laptop by saying 'No. Because she broke the MacBook already by mashing the keyboard with her fists. Well, the trackpad had to be replaced. So we are quite careful with that at the moment' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). Very often when a new device entered the home, the 'old'³⁰ one was then treated with less caution by parents, and children were either starting to be allowed to occasionally use it or were given this device for permanent use. For example, as Donna explained:

'The iPad is ours, if he does manage to get his hands on it... No, don't touch the iPad now! ... then maybe for 10 minutes, but that's it, because it is oh so very expensive, and he has sticky hands! The iPod is his. Yes, it's an old one, so...' (25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months).

When media devices were considered 'old', they were often seen as toys, rather than media technology by parents, hence their decision to give it to children for permanent use. Such devices were also often a kind of 'warm-up' or 'preparation' for children before they were allowed to have access to more 'valued' and 'high profile' media devices used by adult members of the family. This finding provides an illustration of children's journey of media access and use in the home from the early

³⁰ I am using the word 'old' in quotation marks here, because the device can often be only a few months old when a new one enters the home, thus changing the status of its predecessor to 'old'.

months of childhood, as facilitated and enabled by parents, emphasising the role of parents in this process.

This section has thus provided personal insight into the issue of how and when children begin to use media and media technology in the context of the home and family life. By focusing on the feelings and reasoning of parents, it showed that children's first introduction to media and media technology is a vital experience not only for children, but also for parents, who want to share media technology with their children, just like they want to share all other everyday experiences with them. Although parents are often worried about media devices getting damaged, this does not stop them from sharing them with their children, as they want to see their reaction and experience an acute sense of pride when children start experimenting with media technology, gradually experiencing and learning its different functions.

Parental views on the value of children's media use

Parental pride is an important reason why parents might encourage children to use media and media technology, however, there are also other considerations involved that can potentially make parents see value in children's media use, and I will be exploring them in the remaining part of this chapter. As I have already mentioned, the issue of parents encouraging children to use media technology and to maintain an ongoing relationship with media is not addressed very often in the literature in either parenting studies or in media and television studies³¹, however, even when it is, it is often presented in a limited context, mainly focusing on the reasons and motivations around 'convenience' (Chiong and Shuler 2010; Haines et al., 2013; Tomopoulos et al., 2014; Vaala and Hornik, 2014; Vandewater et al., 2007). As such, it has been widely argued that television and media technology provides a convenient and readily available way of entertaining and occupying

³¹ There are, however, some academic works that started to explore the benefits of media use for children and positive parental attitudes. See Maire Messenger Davies and Helen Thornham (2007) *Academic Literature Review: The Future of Children's Television Programming*. London: Ofcom.

children, when parents do not have another alternative, due to economic or time pressures, or have to engage in household tasks, take care of other siblings, or simply take a break from parenting duties (see Rideout and Hamel, 2006; Zimmerman et al., 2007). In my research parents have indeed discussed using television and media technology for entertainment and distraction both inside and outside the home, in situations like going on a long journey, waiting for public transport, at doctor's surgery or at hairdresser's. As Samantha explained:

'...if somebody is in a really... acting out or tired or whatever, I might put a show on on YouTube or something if the bus is really really late and they are needing, you know... Or if you have a doctor's appointment and you are waiting in the waiting room. Things like that. Just purely as a distraction, so they can get through the time waiting for whatever it is' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

Particularly in the households with young children, television and media technology were often used as a 'babysitter' - allowing parents to 'steal' some time to make tea, take a shower, do the cooking or washing up:

'My son is allowed a few minutes of Amazon TV on the tablet in the bedroom first thing in the morning, while my husband and I are getting up. He is also allowed a few minutes watching a DVD on the TV downstairs while I prepare his tea' (Susanne, 25-34 years old, Warwickshire, one child aged 2);

'I'm not one of those parents who spend the day with their children plonked in front of the TV, but when you really need to get the washing up done with a grumpy toddler, *Fireman Sam* is a life saver!' (Penny, 18-24 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2);

'To be honest, in a million years I never wanted to give him something like this really [iPod], something of his own, but because I have a little one as well, it's kind of like, "Ok, so you play with that, and mummy is just gonna feed her and get her ready", and he likes it as well' (Donna, 25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months).

Such responses indicate that using media in this way, however, often comes with a huge feeling of guilt, set against the everyday reality of parenting (what is considered to be 'good' or 'proper' parenting, and what is considered to be 'bad'

parenting in relation to children's media use will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter). As Tom shared, 'That's one of the things with kids, everyone says "oh when we become parents we will never do this", but we do use it [media technology] as a tool, because we need to get things done' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5). Furthermore, despite being a common reason for parents to encourage children to use media technology, 'convenience' is not, however, the only one, with the motivations behind this varying from family to family, and being quite diverse and complex, including educational benefits, socialisation, valuable skills for the future, and children's safety.

As my study has shown, children are often encouraged to use television and media technology for its educational benefits, with *all* media and media technology being regarded by parents as having an educational potential (also see Buckingham, 2009; Cuban, 1986; Melody, 1973). This is related to parents seeing children's media use as one whole experience, rather than differentiating between media practices and media devices, as it has been discussed earlier in this chapter. Thus, parents, who participated in the interviews, did not differentiate between 'passive'/'bad' and 'active'/'good' media technology when it came to children's media use, which complicates the previously observed binary 'television as passive' VS 'computer technology as active' (Seiter, 1999; Tapscott, 1998). As David Buckingham has argued, previous research on children and media tended to

'...set up a direct opposition between television and the Internet. Television is seen as passive, while the net is active; television 'dumbs down' its users, while the net raises their intelligence; television broadcasts a singular view of the world, while the net is democratic and interactive; television isolates, while the net builds communities; and so on' (2009:126).

However, parents, who participated in my study, tended not to differentiate between television and other media technologies, and not to consider one media device or one media activity as more active or intellectual than the other, rather talking about media technology more broadly as having educational potential.

For instance, parents noted television's educational potential 'to a certain point', meaning that television could assist children's learning but could not totally

solely fulfil this role: 'Some programmes are educational and can back up home learning' (Irene, 25-34 years old, East Sussex, two children aged 3 years and 6 months); 'It can provide information on topics that are interesting, can support children's learning to a point' (Julia, 25-34 years old, Devon, two children aged 6 and 2); 'Learning, exposure to ideas, prompts imagination' (Carry, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 4). Similarly, Hannah highlighted television's potential to provide diverse examples for the concepts, topics and issues that children were learning about, being a unique source of information that is difficult to replace or replicate: 'television gives knowledge, opinions, topics from sources that are broader than I can illustrate to my child by speech or picture' (25-34 years old, Cheshire, one child aged 7). Other media technology and media practices, such as children's use of computer technology, was also discussed in the same context. As Megan discussed in relation to letting her children watch television programmes and short videos, and play games on tablet and PC: 'I think it can be really educational if it's like framed in the right way and I think it introduces them to things that they probably wouldn't see... Introducing topics and concepts' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2). YouTube was also often mentioned by parents as being useful, informative and educational for children, because of its rich database of readily available video content, and children were actively encouraged to use it on a regular basis (in most cases purposefully, and under close supervision of parents). Deborah talked about YouTube assisting her son in doing his school homework:

'Arthur will come home with a project, like find out about Sri Lanka or something, and so he will watch something on there [YouTube]. Like if you need to find out about elephants, and there is an elephant video, that kind of thing' (25-34 years old, Kent, three children aged 6, 3 and 1).

Parents also mentioned doing 'research' into children's applications and downloading them for their children to use on a regular basis. Megan, whose 2 children were profoundly deaf, talked about how tablets assisted her children in language development:

‘Actually with iPads, there are some really brilliant apps for language development, because they are sort of linking the sound and action, and so this screen time is really, really good for their... for them learning to listen and learning to talk’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

These examples show how various media and media technologies are deeply integrated into children’s lives, with parents seeing them as a vital part of contemporary childhood, children’s development and learning. These parental attitudes were set against the moral panics around the dangers and negative effects of media technology for children in the public debate (De La Pava, 2014), which often presents media technology as damaging children’s brains (Dunckley, 2014) and harming children’s mental health (Martin, 2014). Despite these often negative views on media technology, parents, who participated in my study, did invest in media technology, and they did believe it helped children learn, something that Sonia Livingstone (2016) refers to as parents’ contemporary ‘everyday theory of learning in the digital age’ (also see Chambers, 2012). Such parental attitudes towards children’s beneficial use of media technology can be seen as a return to the earlier discourses around the educational potential of media technology. As David Buckingham has argued, amid current fears about the negative impact of television and media technology on children, ‘it is interesting to recall that television was initially promoted to parents as an educational medium’ (2009:125; also see Melody, 1973), just like other electronic technologies were widely seen as the future of schooling and education (Buckingham 2007; Carrington, 2005; Cuban 1986; Papert 1993).

Television and media technology was also often perceived by parents as an important element in children’s socialisation process, due to it being ‘a significant part of modern day culture’ (Mary, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1), something that can help children learn how to make sense of the world and specific social situations, and how to communicate with others:

'The children enjoy watching certain educational programmes, especially where they learn about new things, such as animals' languages and caring for others. It also seems to help them understand the difference between them and others; how different people live their lives, like to do that, go there etc.' (Laura, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 2).

Emily was particularly discussing how television was an important part of growing up and socialisation with peers for children, starting from an early age:

'...because when they play, I know that they like to act out different characters, so being able to recognise characters is important... and again it gives them something in common with other children, that they have something that they all sort of like' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

In this context television is seen as providing children with talking points among peers, and an opportunity to exercise imagination through role play.

The ways, in which parents discussed children's use of television and other media, pointed to the fact that parents saw media as having an important cultural value, as well as being a cultural currency that children had to use, in order to 'fit in' with rest of their peer group. As William discussed:

'I think TV is such a cultural thing, that if they don't see the same programmes as their friends at school, particularly Daniel, they'll have nothing to talk about... You know, the kid who doesn't have the telly is always the weird kid in the class... I am joking. But it's, you know, little boys, all they talk about in school is superheroes and *Star Wars* and *Ben 10*, that's kind of a cultural reference. So he is always desperate to watch things like *Ben 10*, but he is not old enough. But that is what they talk about, you know, they are all obsessed with superheroes, and if they never get to see any of that stuff, they'll be left out' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

William's account is quite interesting, as it reflects the fears that parents have regarding their children's socialisation with peers (also see Haddon, 2013). William did not prevent his son from watching age-appropriate content, because he believed it to be an important cultural reference and a symbolic cultural capital. He also feared that the absence of this knowledge or capital could result in his children

being labeled 'weird', and therefore being 'left out'. Other participants also discussed children's television viewing and the use of media technology as a way to achieve and maintain social inclusion. Once again, these parental attitudes were going against the ideas circulating in the public debate about media use being bad for children's social life, because of it standing in the way of face-to-face communication, causing 'young people to become antisocial, destroying normal human interaction' (Buckingham, 2009:127; Chambers, 2012:71; see Cellan-Jones, 2016; Kemp, 2016). Most parents expressed a view that media is an essential part of contemporary communication, and shielding children completely from it meant taking away their chance to be included into their social environment.

Television was also often used by parents to prepare their children for new unfamiliar and potentially scary social situations, reassure them and provide comfort. Nick and Annabelle used television references to teach their son about social situations, such as going to the dentist, using child-centered examples and language that their son could understand to make sense of what was about to happen:

'We've often invoked Mr Elephant, who is the dentist in *Peppa Pig*. We've used it sort of like a social exposure... When he has been anxious about things, we've sort of like referenced back episodes of particular programmes, we'll say like "Oh yeah you know how Peppa Pig is going to the dentist?", so that he knows, he can kind of remember that it's ok' (Nick, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months).

Similar to how parents described television as 'a tool', when they talked about using it to entertain and distract children while they were doing something else around the house, it was also described as 'a tool' that was 'used' in another sense – 'for social exposure' (also see Buckingham, 1990; Roberts and Howard, 2005). Parents shared that they often did not know how to explain certain experiences and social situations to their children, particularly to their young children, in the language that they would understand, and this is where television and other media would come in, easing this task for parents. As Laura discussed, television helped her children to 'understand different activities, like going to the hairdressers isn't scary as they've seen a programme with it in; helps to explain different situations'

(25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 2). Parents also shared that television often provided them with opportunities to start the discussion of certain sensitive issues with their children, such as sexuality. As such, Rachel talked about television's 'teachable moments':

'But sometimes I think that certain programmes that we watch could have teachable moments, especially with like sexuality or something like that, like a girl maybe has sex and you know, the boyfriend dumps her and she ends up being pregnant, it can be like a teachable moment for them, you know' (45-54 years old, Norfolk, three children aged 16, 12 and 7).

In this context, television references were used by Rachel to start the discussion of the sensitive issue of sex, and to teach her daughters about sexuality, relationships and responsibility that comes with them.

Another common reason motivating parents to encourage children to regularly use media and media technology was their concern about children's future in the highly mediated and computerised world, that requires everyone to have good technical knowledge and skills to succeed. As James pointed out, '...at the end of the day we all use computers in life, don't we, so if they are learning how to use iPads and tablets, it's got benefits, for the future, you know' (35-44 years old, East Sussex three children aged 3, 6 and 10). Esther Dermott and Marco Pomati have argued that with electronic media becoming so omnipresent, children's media education has become a major concern for parents, who are now under a lot of pressure to ensure that children have the needed skills to succeed in the future, something they start working towards from when their children are still infants (2015:1; also see Livingstone, 2016). Participants in my study often talked about how important it is for their children to be using media technology, as this will help them develop valuable IT skills. Deborah compared using media technology with crossing the road, something that she is very worried about as a parent, but also something her children have to learn and cannot live without:

'I think it's a bit like a road. Yes, it's going to be dangerous, but they have to know how to cross them. So, yes, we are concerned... about the amount of content that is out there... But I don't think that shutting them away from it is any use, they have to learn how to use it' (25-34 years old, Kent, three children aged 6, 3 and 1).

The ability to find needed information online was also highly valued by parents, who often asked their children to search for information on Google, encouraging investigative approach and 'discovery rather than the delivery of information' (Buckingham, 2006:9). As Megan discussed, 'Yeah, he can go... he knows how to go to the Google bit on the tool bar and put in "Lego", he'll write "Lego" every time to find like *Lego Movie* and things like that' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2). While the information their son was looking for might be considered trivial or unimportant, Megan and William believed that the skill of searching for information and knowing where to go to find it was worth developing from an early age, as it will be very useful for their children's future education and career. As Sonia Livingstone has observed, 'facing a precarious future, digital skills increase adaptability to whatever may come, maximising children's chances of getting on' (2016), the discourse that definitely influenced parents to encourage children's media use.

Deborah's point about the impossibility of avoiding media technology and children having to learn how to use it from an early age leads to the next motivating factor that parents often mentioned, that of children's safety, because no matter how positive parents could be about their children's media use, they were nevertheless aware of the potential risks of media use for children. However, the majority of parents, who participated in my study, did not think that preventing children from the use of media was the best way to approach the management of these risks. In contrast, encouraging children to use media technology, while also supervising them when they do so, was a common way used by parents to teach their children how to use it safely, preparing children for safe independent use in the future. For instance, parents talked about teaching their children to use smart TVs and DVRs to be able to find 'appropriate' and 'safe' content themselves, and skip through the adverts, which were commonly perceived of as 'risky' and

'harmful': 'We showed them, and now they can fast forward the commercials themselves...' (Samantha, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5); 'On Netflix, they will just use the remote and surf around and will look at something. We've got an account which is set up as kids profile so everything he can look for we know it's like age appropriate content' (Megan, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2). Deborah also actively encouraged her son to search the internet for information, while at the same time 'teaching him that there are safe sites and there are not safe sites' (25-34 years old, Kent, three children aged 6, 3 and 1).

Children's use of media technology was also encouraged by parents in situations, where the family had close relationships with distant relatives, such as aunts and uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers, and where using media technology was the only way of keeping in touch with distant relatives, who often lived in geographically or even culturally diverse locations (also see Peng and Zhu, 2011). My research has shown that media technology can be vital for maintaining relationships and connections with relatives, particularly with grandparents. Parents mentioned that their children literally grew up with Skype, FaceTime and similar applications, which were used to contact grandparents on a regular basis starting from day one of a child's life, to make sure that they can see their grandchildren and take an active part in their life. As Mary explained:

'We use the MacBook for Skyping and FaceTime, her grandparents, they live about 3 hours drive away, so we don't see them in person very often, but we do Skype regularly, so she is used to seeing them and talking to them on the MacBook' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

Communication via various media technologies allowed to maintain family ties, with parents mentioning that often children did not see a difference between 'seeing' and 'talking' to grandparents online and face-to-face. Mary further discussed that she found it fascinating that her daughter was so interactive when talking to her grandparents on FaceTime, 'talking and reacting', showing her grandparents her toys, what she has learned and so on. The maintenance of family ties, and children's relationship with the extended family was reported by parents to be one of their parental responsibilities (see Bornstein, 2008b; Canary and

Dainton, 2014), and media technology was used as a tool to fulfil that obligation in the situations, where other means of maintaining relationships were not possible due to time constraints and geographical distance.

Although parents are often seen as the key, if not *the only*, players in the process of facilitation of children's media use (Bulck and Bergh, 2000; Livingstone, 2007), my study showed that other relatives, such as grandparents, can also play an important role in how media technology is introduced into children's lives, and in how and why children's media use is encouraged. As such, grandparents were often the ones to buy children their first personal devices, with popular choices being tablets and iPod touch. As Samantha explained:

'They have a device each [iPod touch]. It's more to use for games and talking to... because my mother lives abroad, back in the States, my mum bought them for them, when they were around 3, and she bought them so that they can FaceTime her and message her' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

This 'gift' was then followed by both grandparents and parents teaching children how to use the device for communication purposes. This was in turn followed by establishing specific routines, when days of the week and times of the day were negotiated and chosen to make 'contact' with grandparents to ensure that communication was maintained on a regular basis.

In multilingual and multicultural families, where grandparents did not live in the UK and did not speak good English, media technology was also often used to make sure that children did not forget their grandparents' mother tongue and culture in order to be able to communicate with them and maintain close relationships. Sonia explained how she was using educational cartoons in Russian found on YouTube to make sure that her boys can understand and speak both languages, to be able to communicate with grandparents still living in Belarus: 'They don't have that much interaction with Russian speaking kids of their own age, and we only speak English at home, and my family lives so far away... so I show them videos in Russian and I think it's important' (Sonia, 35-44 years old, East Sussex, three children aged 3, 6 and 10). While foreign books or toys that promote

language development are difficult to find and are often expensive, YouTube offers an easy to access alternative, as well as being an application, which Sonia's boys already use, like and understand.

This section has shown that the motivating factors behind parents' decision to introduce children to media and media technology, and to encourage them to use it on a day-to-day basis, are diverse and complex. Parents considered media and media technology not only 'convenient' for family everyday life, occupying children when parents needed a short break; but also in many respects an irreplaceable part of childhood that facilitates learning, enables socialisation and social inclusion, and prepares children for the grown up world. These views were often set against the common discourses of risk, danger and harm of media technology for children in the public debate, emphasising the fact that parents have to negotiate both negative and positive impacts of media technology in the conditions of the absence of exact advice and information, using their own experiences and feelings as guiding principles. The findings highlight the importance of adding the discussion of media technology and media use to the examination of the experiences of contemporary parenting, as such research reveals wider parental views on childrearing, children's wellbeing, future and success, which in turn inform the everyday practices of parenting.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to highlight the importance of broadening the debate around children's use of media and media technology to include parental voices and attitudes towards children's media use; discussion of when, how and why children are being introduced to media and media technology by parents; and the exploration of the factors that motivate parents to see *value* in their children's media use, and to *encourage* children to use media technology and maintain an ongoing relationship with it. The chapter examined children's media use in the context of parenting, exploring how media technology is being introduced into children's lives, how children gradually acquire more access to it, and how their use is shaped by parents, their own media practices and attitudes towards media

technology and children's uses of it. This chapter therefore significantly adds to the understanding of the facilitation of children's use of television and media technology in the context of parenting and the family, by recognising the diversity of the motivating factors and the active role of parents in this process. By doing so, this chapter has destabilised the commonly accepted idea that children are the digital natives, while parents are the digital immigrants, who are struggling to understand media and keep up with it. As Sonia Livingstone has argued, 'it's time to rethink digital parenting and to leave behind what we might call the 'deficit model' of parenting. Digital parenting is no longer all about what parents don't know, or what they are failing to do' (2016; also see Blum-Ross, 2015). The discussion in this chapter, as well as what has been discussed in previous chapters, has demonstrated that parents themselves are confident users of media technology, using it on a day-to-day basis to cope with the pressures of work and family. This leads to parents' attitudes towards children's television viewing and the use of media technology in the home having an increasing influence on children's own experiences and understandings of media technology.

The chapter has shown that the motivations behind encouraging children to use media technology vary greatly from family to family, being quite diverse and complex, ranging from factors such as concern over children's safety or future success, to attempts to establish deeper and closer relationships with extended family, which points to the importance of studying individual narratives of family media use. It is important to note, however, that none of the factors that parents have reported focused on children's pleasure formed around the use of media technology, which highlights the workings of the contemporary parenting culture that prioritises children's development, safety and success over everything else. The next chapter will provide context for these parental attitudes (that children's leisure time should be occupied with educational and useful activities), by examining the role of children's media use in the construction of contemporary parental identities and approaches to parenting. Similarly, by focusing on how parents allow and encourage their children to use television and media technology in the home, this chapter, however, presented only one side of the issue. Although parents do see value in children's media use, they also often consider it to be

'risky', and thus limit and restrict children's use of media using diverse strategies. The next chapter will therefore focus on this other side of the debate, and examine how the restrictions parents establish around children's media use are deeply rooted in the contemporary intensive parenting ideology, and explore parents' views on what it means to be a 'good' and 'proper' parent in relation to television and media technology.

Chapter 6. Television, media technology, parental identities and the pressures of having to manage children's media use

Introduction

Previous chapters have all demonstrated how television and media technology are in varying ways built into the everyday experiences of parenting, the experiences that influence how and why media are used in certain ways and in specific everyday circumstances in the context of the home and everyday family life. This chapter will further examine the role of television and media technology in parenting, by positioning television and media technology as central to how individuals experience parenting and think of their own parental identity. Children's media use and its management by parents will be analysed not simply as a matter of parental choice, but rather as something that parents have to do, and that has the power to define parenting.

While previous research has largely focused on the specific strategies that parents employ in managing children's media use; this chapter is interested in *why* parents *feel the need* to manage children's media use in the first place, and in how parents conceptualise parenthood and their identity as parents in relation to their children's media use. This chapter emphasises that while it is important to understand children's media experiences, beneficial as well as harmful (Paus-Hasebrink et al., 2013:114), it is no less important to understand the experiences of *parents*, who do not only have to negotiate media use in the home for themselves, but also take on the added responsibility of doing so for their children, which adds extra pressure to the task of parenting. In parenting studies technology is often examined in the context of helping parents to achieve certain goals, for instance, adopting a state of 'hyper-vigilance' with the help of baby monitors and cell phones (Faircloth, 2014a:30). Rarely, however, is media technology investigated in relation to the everyday experiences of parents and the construction of parental identities. Similarly, in media and television studies there is a lot of work done on children, television viewing and the use of media technology in the family context, however, not enough emphasis is being put on parents, parenting culture and the complex

contemporary parental identities, which potentially influence how media use is negotiated and managed in the home.

This chapter will therefore examine the role of television and media technology in the intensive parenting ideology and in the construction of the notion of 'good parenting', revealing that parental mediation is considered by all parents as a parental responsibility and a commitment to parental identity. It will examine how participants themselves understand their experiences of contemporary intensive parenting ideology and the pressure of having to manage children's media use using class and gender considerations, examining whether belonging to a certain social class or gender influences parental experiences and feelings of mediation. It will also examine 'good parenting' with regards to children's media use as a discursive strategy and part of individuals' performance of 'good parenting'. By examining the role of television and media technology in the experience of parenting and parental identities, this chapter aims to contribute to a better understanding of contemporary parental experiences of media technology, which are in turn vital for academic understanding of parenting as a whole, as well as for the understanding of the origins of more specific parental practices, such as management of children's media use.

Literature review

For the purpose of laying a theoretical foundation for specific arguments discussed in this chapter, it is first essential to examine the discourses of children at risk and intensive parenting, as identified and explored in academic literature to date. This literature review aims to concisely present the research that has been conducted so far with regards to these discourses and concepts, as well as to stress the importance of studying them in relation to each other, as they are interconnected in a number of ways. As it has been observed in the introduction to this thesis, the concept of 'parenthood' is by no means static or 'natural', but rather the one that has always been changing throughout the ages, reflecting socio-economic and cultural changes in societies (Araujo Martins et al., 2014:122; Lee et al., 2010:294). Thus in the following discussion of 'parenting', and 'risk' in relation

to different aspects of contemporary society and culture, I will be examining these concepts as *socially and culturally constructed*, being reflective of the norms and values of a specific culture at a specific historical time (also see Haddon, 2013; James and Prout, 1997).

According to Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991), *risk* is one of the main consequences of modernisation, and the main organising principle of contemporary society, leading to theorists describing the modern society as ‘risk society’ (Beck, 1992, 1999; Giddens, 1999). What is meant by the term ‘risk society’ is that heightened awareness and knowledge of risk become the major force guiding both individual and institutional thinking and action in society, all of which are directed towards managing and containing various risks (Hall, 2002:175). All aspects of modern life – all life stages and all experiences - therefore become shadowed by risk, including childhood and parenthood. Theorists have particularly highlighted a shift in emphasis from the 1970s towards focusing on ‘risks’ around children (Best, 1993; Cunningham, 2006; Guldberg, 2009; Kehily, 2010; Lee, 2014b). While understandably, certain groups of children are considered to be more ‘at risk’ than others, it is important to note that the concept of ‘risk’ is now applied and related to *all children* in a much larger social context (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Lee, 2014b; Lee et al., 2010; Munro 2007; Parton 2006; Stearns, 2009). And these risks and threats are very often not real, but speculative in nature, uncertain or even unknown, a possibility rather than probability – the ‘‘what ifs’ of everyday life’, as Ellie Lee has put it (2014b:11), resulting in all children being marked by ‘risk’ from birth or even earlier when they are still in mother’s womb. For instance, Deborah Lupton (1999a, 1999b) has discussed in great detail how the earliest stages of parenthood (conception and pregnancy) are already heavily infused with risk discourses, with women being offered expert advice regarding all aspects of the experience, from what to eat and drink, to how to maintain a positive emotional state that will benefit, rather than harm, the future child. And as David Hall has pointed out, ‘while risk knowledge crucially defines the modern experience and meaning of pregnancy, if anything, parental risk awareness and anxiety increases once the children are actually born’ (2002:180).

As Charlotte Faircloth has argued, the very ‘presumption of children as, *de facto*, vulnerable, and at risk’ is the most distinctive aspect of the social construction of contemporary childhood, which also has great implications for the construction of contemporary mothering and fathering roles (2014a:44). Parenting has become a practice ‘infused with risk awareness and risk-based anxiety’ (Hall, 2002:180). According to Ellie Lee, such perception of risk ‘forms a key underpinning of the... construction of the parent as a manager of risk, who has in their power the ability to decide the fate of the child according to how well they perform this task’ (2014b:12; also see Lee, 2014a; Faircloth, 2014a; Faircloth and Lee, 2010; Stearns, 2009). As Charlotte Faircloth has further argued, ‘mothers are expected to become experts on all aspects of childrearing – making sure that those meal times, stories, and playing are not only safe, but also optimal for infant development’ (2014a:29; also see Wolf, 2011). It is therefore not surprising that parallel to the development of ‘risk society’ and the discourse of ‘all children at risk’, there has been a development of ‘intensive parenting’, which is also often referred to as ‘paranoid parenting’, ‘helicopter parenting’, ‘new momism’, ‘tiger mothers’, and ‘intensive motherhood’ (see Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Douglas and Michaels, 2004; Furedi, 2001; Hardyment, 2007; Lee et al., 2010; Palmer, 2006). As such, Sharon Hays proposed the term of ‘intensive motherhood’ to describe the ideology that pushes mothers towards spending ‘a tremendous amount of time, energy and money in raising their children’ in order to be considered ‘good mothers’ (1996: x; also see Elliott et al., 2015:352)³². She notes that ‘modern American mothers *do much more* than simply feed, change and shelter the child until age six’ (1996:5, original emphasis), highlighting the fact that in the recent years childrearing has expanded to include a growing range of activities, which were not previously

³² For more on the intensive mothering ideology, see Mary Blair-Loy (2003) *Competing devotions: Career and family among women executives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Linda M. Blum, (1999) *At the breast: Ideologies of breastfeeding and motherhood in the contemporary United States*. Boston, MA: Beacon; Chris Bobel (2002) *The paradox of natural mothering*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University; and Anita Iltta Garey (1999) *Weaving work and motherhood*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

considered obligatory to the task, all aiming to manage and contain countless risks that surround children (also see Douglas and Michels, 2004; Faircloth, 2014a, 2016; Lee et al., 2010). And while the ideas of 'new momism' or 'intensive mothering' are not followed in practice by every mother, they are nevertheless prevailing in media and public debate, being understood as 'the proper approach to the raising of a child by the majority of mothers' (Hays, 1996:9), and as 'the normative standard ... by which mothering practices and arrangements are evaluated' (Arendell, 2000:1195), and therefore applied to *all parents* (Faircloth, 2014a:45). What is noteworthy about these theoretical arguments, is that they more often than not focus specifically on motherhood and mothers, putting fathers at the margins of the debate. Since the aim of my research was to study *parenting*, rather than *mothering*, this chapter will interrogate this common assumption that the messages about parenting are adopted mainly by women, and examine fathers' experiences of intensive parenting ideology as well, arguing that it now addresses both fathers and mothers, with both fathers and mothers being aware of the 'children at risk' discourses, and both acting as the 'managers of risk', particularly with regards to managing children's media use.

It is also important to note that risk is increasingly seen and experienced as a product of human activities (Beck, 1995; Giddens, 1999), which has direct implications on how risk is perceived and experienced by parents. As David Hall has argued, 'the contemporary family can serve as a resource for coping with risk and anxiety, and as a source of risk and anxiety' (2002:179; also see Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). This idea is central to the concept of 'paranoid parenting' proposed Frank Furedi, who suggests that parents are not simply the main managers of risk for children, but that parents themselves constitute an important risk factor in children's lives (2002:58; also see Furedi, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2008). As Ellie Lee, Jan Macvarish and Jennie Bristow have put it:

'...attention has been drawn to the distinctiveness of a culture that now routinely represents 'parenting' as the single most important cause of impaired life chances, outstripping any other factor ... the idea that parents themselves constitute an important, and according to some perhaps the most significant, risk factor in children's lives' (2010:295).

And similarly how the discourse of 'risk' now applies to all children, it also applies to all parents: 'the risk parents present to children is not only considered significant when parents are considered to be 'bad'. Parenting is also problematised where parents are construed to be 'unaware' or 'out of touch'' (Faircloth, 2014a:45; also see Lee et al, 2010:295). Parenting in contemporary times is thus surrounded by feelings of fear, anxiety, paranoia and guilt, which results in parents focusing on every micro detail of children's lives, hovering over children and being over-protective, which then later results in such parents being labelled 'helicopter parents' and their children 'cotton wool kids', and parents being judged for preventing their children to develop the needed independence (Bristow, 2014:201; Furedi, 2001:xv; Kehily, 2010:173).

In the context of my research, it is important to note that technology in general and media technology in particular, are being considered 'risky' for children in an increasing number of ways. Although throughout modern history the introduction of new media has always been associated with new risks to both adults and children, the range of problems linked to media continues to expand. Helene Guldberg argues that screen-based technologies and digital toys are reportedly 'the culprits of all kinds of evil' in our contemporary culture (2009:7). She noted how both public and academic debates often present contemporary children as passive and apathetic, copped up indoors in front of television or computer screens, unable to create their own fun and entertainment due to the underdeveloped dulled imagination, curiosity and fantasy, and being corrupted by commerce and advertising to the point of no return (Guldberg, 2009:7-9; for an example of such accounts, see Elkind, 2007; Louv, 2005). Although the actual evidence of media's ominous effects on children is largely lacking (for instance, it has not been proven that more television viewing caused children to play outside less, or read less; similarly, there is no evidence to support the claim that media technologies are negatively affecting children's desire and ability to engage in real play), there are multiple concerns and anxieties around media technologies, including sexually explicit or violent content, bullying, harassment, paedophiles, pornography, addiction, loneliness, identity theft, stalking and many others (Guldberg, 2009:118-120; also see Gentile et al., 2011; Wilson, 2008). However,

what is particularly notable about the risks around media technology, is that 'screens' are threatening and dangerous for children *because* of the way parents use them, *because* of the potential inability of parents to deal with media technology in the home (Bristow, 2014:212; Lee, 2014a:69). Media technology that is coming from the 'adult world', such as television sets, computers, tablets and mobile phones is viewed as endangering children, who therefore have to be constantly monitored by parents.

While academic literature on parental mediation of children's media use is extensive (Chakroff and Nathanson, 2008; Livingstone and Helsper 2008; Livingstone et al., 2015; Mendoza, 2009; Nikken and Schols, 2015; Ofcom, 2014c, 2015a; Schaan and Melzer, 2015; Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016; Warren, 2001, 2003), the reasons that motivate parents to manage children's media use remain largely understudied. For instance, previous research indicates that 'parents who are concerned about risks and harm more often try to protect their children by monitoring, applying restrictions on media use, supervising the child, and by critically talking to the child about media content' (Nikken and Schols, 2015:3425; also see Sonck et al., 2013; Valkenburg et al. 1999; Warren 2003); or that parents who are less skilled in using media find it more difficult to control and restrict their children's media use, and discuss the content critically with the children (Austin, 1993; De Haan, 2010). Similarly, parental mediation research also indicates that parents adjust their mediation practices to the child's age (Nikken and Jansz, 2013). However, such research does not interrogate the reasons that make parents see parental mediation as important or necessary in the first place, as something that parents simply *have to do*, regardless of personal reasons, attitudes and circumstances. In this chapter I therefore want to contribute to the debate on parental mediation by arguing that parents' mediation strategies should not simply be examined in the context of parental attitudes on the effects of media on children, as the reasons for parental mediation go far beyond the risk-benefit paradigm, as I have already started to explore in the previous chapter. Instead, as this chapter will demonstrate, parenting, as a socially and culturally constructed concept, comes with certain ideologically charged views on children and media, and it is this ideology of intensive parenting, where parental mediation takes its origins.

Moreover, parental mediation does not just happen, but is deeply integrated into the practices of parenting and contemporary parental identities, and it is these intersections between parental mediation, everyday experience of parenting and parental identities that the following discussion aims to address.

'Good' parenting, parental identity and children's television viewing and the use of media technology

As the literature review has demonstrated, there is a wealth of academic research on intensive parenting ideology and the notion of 'good' and 'proper' parenting in relation to it. However, in the discussion of what constitutes 'good parenting' in the contemporary parenting culture, television and media technology are rarely devoted needed attention. Yet, as the following discussion will demonstrate, children's television viewing and the use of media technology in the home play a vital role in the construction of the notion of 'good parenting' and parental identities, which also has direct implications on parental management of children's media use. In both media and parenting studies, the fact that parents *have to* control and manage children's media use is more often than not taken matter-of-factly, as a given, and is therefore rarely questioned and investigated. In this section of the chapter I want to question the idea that managing children's media use is something that all parents *have to do*, and examine the possible reasons of why parents themselves might think of it as a necessary action and an important parental responsibility, bringing actual parental accounts into the discussion, and relating them back to the broader academic debates around contemporary intensive parenting ideology in the risk society identified and discussed above.

My study has highlighted a very strong connection between intensive parenting ideology, individuals' parental identities and children's media use. Trent Maurer, Joseph Pleck and Thomas Rane define parental identity as 'the degree to which an individual sees specific parenting domains as important to himself/herself' (2001:309). In other words, individuals' attitudes towards the task of parenting, as well as their own parenting practice and actions, have direct link to how individuals

feel about themselves, and their sense of self-worth and self-respect (also see Giddens, 1991; Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Taylor, 1989). Parental identity is not natural or neutral, however, but rather culturally and socially constructed, with 'the network of expectations of others external to the self... seen as critical in shaping not only one's behaviors in the [parenting] role but, indeed, one's very definition of self' (Fox and Bruce, 2001:395; also see Stryker, 1968). My study has shown that these external expectations, which were derived from the contemporary ideology of intensive parenting, significantly shaped participating parents' involvement into children's media use, with parental mediation becoming an important part of participants' commitment to parental identity (also see Burke and Reitzes, 1991; Fox and Bruce, 2001). And as Chris Shepherd et al. have argued, there is a very strong connection between the ways, in which parents manage children's media use, and parental identities:

'ICT thus provide a focus for what a parent is and does and should be, and what a child is and does and should be, and this focus runs thematically through the negotiations, in a transient and particularized way. The point is that rules and negotiations do not just circulate around the unchanging desirable and undesirable qualities of ICT, they circulate around... the desirable and undesirable qualities of parents and children' (2006:215).

Previous research has studied parents' mediation strategies and techniques, however, parental views on why this mediation was important to them were rarely brought to light. And I want to argue that it is important to also study the ways, in which parents talk about mediation more generally, as these views are reflective of parents' attitudes towards parenting, parental roles and parental identities: what a 'good' parent should do and should be, in order to raise 'good' and happy children, and the place of media use in this equation.

In the interviews participating parents used very specific language associated with the ideology of intensive parenting, mainly focusing on two binaries, which could be applied to parenting and parental identity in their view: 'involved' VS 'lazy' parenting, as well as 'good' VS 'bad' parent. Such binaries were reported to be an essential component of the everyday experience of parenting, in which the question 'How can I be a good parent?' had to be answered by parents in

numerous day-to-day decisions about how to behave in their parenting role (also see Giddens, 1991:14). And it is this terminology that was mainly used in the discussion of children's use of media and parental negotiation of it, which was seen as an important component of 'good' parenting. As it is the case with any binary oppositions, the opposites 'involved parenting' and 'lazy parenting', or 'good parent' and 'bad parent' were often defined and set off against one another. '*Just putting the TV on*' was regarded by all parents, who participated in my study, as 'bad', 'poor' and 'lazy' parenting, regardless of whether parents themselves did that from time to time: 'I don't know, I think it's associated with poor parenting I think, maybe, putting your children in front of the TV' (Annabelle, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months); 'That's a lazy way of parenting to me. If you've got to give your kids devices all the time...' (James, 35-44 years old, East Sussex three children aged 3, 6 and 10). Letting one's child watch television on his or her own was often contrasted with watching television *with* one's child, which was not regarded as a lazy 'television as a nanny' option, but as involved parenting: 'but I would just add that we always, at the moment, we always tend to watch it with her, so it's not like we are sticking the TV on to... to act like a nanny' (Mary, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1). As Megan further explained this difference between 'lazy' and 'involved' parenting when it comes to children's television viewing:

'Yeah, I suppose there is this assumption that if you just put the telly on, then you are just... not making an effort. And you are just... like it's a bit of a copout isn't it? A really easy thing to do. And I definitely do do that, I mean if I've got stuff... Because we don't... I think actually we don't have extended family around, which is quite important, because quite a few of friends have said that if you don't have grandparents who live in the same area as you, who can come and look after the kids, and you have to do something, then the easiest thing to do is to put the telly on...' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

Here Megan refers to letting children watch TV as an 'easy' option, 'not making an effort', and while she does acknowledge that sometimes she does that too, she immediately offers a justification for her actions – she allows her children to watch TV, because unlike some other parents out there, she does not have extended

family around, who will help her deal with the time pressures of parenthood, which means she *has* to find an alternative, and this is where television comes in.

This justification of one's parental choices was a common rhetoric in my study, with other participants feeling the need to explain their parenting choices to me as well, providing rich details of their lives in order to make me understand the reasoning behind their parental choices. For instance, Victoria provided details of her difficult pregnancy to explain why her older daughter watches a lot of television:

'I suppose I'd rather that I was entertaining her, rather than something else, that you know, getting that relationship time really, it's just not always possible. And you know, I think she started watching more television when I was pregnant, because I had quite a difficult pregnancy with Layla, so I've spent a lot of time, when it was quite difficult for me to move around...' (25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 years and 3 months).

As this quote demonstrates, another reason why letting one's child watch television can be considered 'lazy' parenting is because it does not require any *work* on behalf of the parent, and only those parental activities that require work, so entertaining one's child without the help of electronic devices, for instance, qualify for 'involved' parenting style. In situations where other entertainment options were not so easily available, for instance, during long journeys, the use of electronic devices was justified, as long as it was not the first thing that parents tried:

'My dad lives in France, and it's a twelve-hour drive, so in a twelve-hour drive she might sort of watch half an hour or an hour. If we want to keep her in her car seat, there are two things, well, mainly we use books and food, but we will use the iPad, the iPod sorry, as a last resort, but it's not her favourite, and it's not the first thing I go to or anything like that' (Abigail, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2).

Here Abigail emphasised twice that using media technology would not be the first thing she would try to entertain or distract her daughter by saying that it is 'the last resort' and 'not the first thing she goes to', demonstrating her awareness of the 'right' choices that 'good' parents should make. Similarly, when it came to management of children's media use, parents often favoured those mediation

strategies that could not only address the risk to children, but would also fall under the category of what 'good' and 'involved' parents should do – 'working' on their parenting, fulfilling the commitment to the parental identity. Examples of such mediation strategies that required 'work' were monitoring children's media use by watching together or being close by; talking to children about their media use; and examining content before allowing children's access to it.

An important question to be asked here is what television viewing is compared to, and if television viewing is associated with bad and lazy parenting, then what activities do 'good', 'involved' parents should rather choose? As it has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, the previously observed binary 'television as passive' VS 'computer technology as active', as identified by Ellen Seiter (1999:42), has been complicated by new media technology and children's uses of it. Parents, who participated in my study, tended not to differentiate between television and other media technologies, and not to consider one media device as more active or intellectual than the other, rather talking about managing all of media devices, often referring to them as 'screens'. Thus both television viewing and the use of media devices, such as PCs, laptops, tablets, game consoles and mobile phones were contrasted with other more 'involved' activities, which required more effort and participation from both parents and children, such as sports, going to the park, reading books, doing puzzles and playing with developing toys, such as Lego (also see Faircloth, 2014a, 2014b; Shaw, 2008). It is these activities that parents mentioned in contrast to 'screens' as more interactive, intellectual, healthy and encouraging the development of children and specific skills:

'I prefer to keep busy with other activities such as keeping children fit and healthy, going to sports clubs and classes rather than watching TV' (Betty, 25-34 years old, Lancashire, two children aged 5 and 11);

'I'd rather that she played with toys and there's lots of other ways to distract her - reading books and doing puzzles and things like that, rather than TV' (Abigail, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2);

‘I don’t want my kids to be sitting in front of boxes all the time. I want them to be out experiencing the world. You know, they’ve got Lego, which I think is a really good game, because you are playing and you are thinking about what you are doing and you are focusing on trying to achieve something, and that’s more important life skills to learn than to be sitting in front of the TV or a screen’ (James, 35-44 years old, East Sussex three children aged 3, 6 and 10).

Such labelling of all activities that children can potentially take part in in terms of them being optimal for children’s development or not, and the resulting hierarchy of activities, is a principle derived from intensive parenting ideology, which was practiced by parents participating in my study on a day-to-day basis (Faircloth, 2014a; Wolf, 2011).

These responses once again bring to the surface the ideology of intensive parenting and the myth of a ‘good parent’: someone who is *involved*, constantly spending purposeful, quality and goal-oriented time with his or her children, which results in educating children and supporting their development (also see Araujo Martins et al., 2014; Lee, 2014b; Ramaekers and Suissa, 2011). The responses my participants have given unveil the meaning of being a good parent with regards to media technology: only a bad parent is simply using media technology as a ‘babysitter’ to occupy children; a good parent is always using media technology *with children*, not relying on media devices to entertain them³³. As Emily explained, ‘I don’t think it’s necessarily that it’s bad for children but they just want to be the perfect mum and dad and not have to rely on sources outside and this kind of entertainment to look after their children’ (25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 5 months). As Frank Furedi has pointed out,

‘Traditionally, good parenting has been associated with nurturing, stimulating and socialising children. Today it is associated with monitoring their activities. An inflated sense of risk prevails, demanding that children should never be left on their own ... Permitting youngsters to be home on their own after school is presented as an act of parental irresponsibility’ (2002:5).

³³ For more on the meaning of being a good parent, see Deirdre D. Johnston and Debra H. Swanson (2006) ‘Constructing the ‘good mother’: The experience of mothering ideologies by work status’. *Sex Roles*, Vol. 54(7-8), pp. 509-519.

The same logic applies to letting children watch television or use other media technology on their own, as this is also seen as parental irresponsibility and traits of a bad parent (also see Dermott and Pomati, 2015). This explains why all of my participants, while being interviewed, tried to paint a picture of good parenthood and family that does not include vast amounts of television viewing, or at least point out that *other families* are doing an even poorer job, letting their children watch TV and be on media devices *all the time* (also see Finch, 2007; a more detailed discussion of the performance of parenting will be presented later in this chapter). Thus managing children's media use was considered by all parents as a parenting responsibility and commitment to parental identity: 'I don't know, the TV has got as much bad in it, as it's got good and you have to as a parent filter it out and be responsible and protect and insure that they are only seeing the very best' (Abigail, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2). Here Abigail demonstrates the awareness of the potential risks associated with children's media use, as well as accepting the role of a manager of these risks.

Television viewing and the use of media technology by children are thus vital components of the construction of the notion and experience of 'good parenting', and contemporary parental identities. There is a strong connection between intensive parenting ideology and individuals' experience of parental identity, with contemporary unrealistic expectations of 'good' and 'involved' parenting often leaving parents with a lower sense of self-worth, as they struggle to meet such expectations on an everyday basis. Many rules around what 'good' and 'involved' parents should do revolve around the use of media in the home, positioning it at the center of parental everyday considerations. And as this section has demonstrated, parents were acutely aware of the expectations of the intensive parenting ideology, and used these expectations to frame their discussion of children's media use. Parental mediation itself is therefore rooted in the intensive parenting ideology, becoming something that parents simply *have to do*, in order to feel 'right' about their parenting, regardless of their own individual views on media technology.

Children’s media use, intensive parenting ideology, and the issues of class and gender

When discussing the workings of the contemporary intensive parenting ideology, an important question to be asked is who these messages and discourses are targeted at, and whether they are targeted at *all* parents, or if there are any gender or class differences. The ideology of intensive parenting puts a pressure on parents to manage children’s media use, and in this section I will be examining whether there are gender and class differences in how this pressure is experienced by parents. As it has been discussed in the methodology chapter, class was not the key object of inquiry in this study, and it was when participants themselves brought the issue of class up, that it was considered in the analysis, in order to avoid understanding and analysing all parental views and practices through the narrow and limiting prism of belonging to a certain social class. As Esther Dermott and Marco Pomati have argued with regards to their own study,

‘...the findings support the view that associations made between low levels of education, poverty and poor parenting are ideologically driven rather than based on empirical evidence. Claims that families who are poor or are less well educated do not engage in high profile ‘good’ parenting practices are misplaced’ (2015:14).

This section therefore does not offer an extensive discussion of parenting in relation to class issues³⁴, but rather examines how participants themselves understood their experiences of contemporary intensive parenting ideology using class and gender considerations, arguing against popular claims that class and gender have a direct connection with individuals’ engagement in ‘good’ parenting.

The literature review, which has opened this chapter, has already positioned parenting as a gender issue by examining academic works on parenting, many of which have focused on intensive mothering and pressures of parenthood on

³⁴ For a more detailed discussion of class in relation to contemporary parenting, see Martina Klett-Davies (2010) *Is Parenting a Class Issue?* London: Family and Parenting Institute; and Val Gillies (2008) ‘Childrearing, class and the new politics of parenting’. *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 2(3), pp. 1079–1095.

mothers (for instance, see Hays, 1996). As Ann Phoenix, Anne Woollett and Eva Lloyd have pointed out, parenting remains heavily gendered, even though the term 'parenting' obscures the fact that 'mothers are still the people who do most childrearing and have most responsibility for children' (1991:5). However, although in all 12 families that I have interviewed it was the mothers who were the primary caregivers, and the fathers who tended to work full time hours (also see Araujo Martins et al., 2014; Gillies, 2009; Faircloth, 2014b), both mothers and fathers shared their opinions on childrearing during the interview, demonstrating interest, involvement and commitment to parental identity, and in most cases both mothers and fathers were involved in managing children's media use, which was considered to be an important parental responsibility by both. It therefore becomes important to question not simply whether fathers take part in managing children's media use or not, but whether gender has any effect on parental attitudes, experiences and practices of management of children's media use.

As Sharon Hays (1996) has pointed out, and as the discussion in the previous section has illustrated, although not all mothers follow the ideology of 'intensive mothering', most of them are nevertheless acutely aware of it. Based on the findings of my research, I want to argue in favour of the expansion of this argument to include fathers as well, as my study has indicated that fathers are acutely aware of 'intensive parenting' ideology too, also considering management of children's media use to be an important issue. Nevertheless, considering mediation an important issue and actually doing something about it are two separate things, and my study did provide examples of fathers leaving this responsibility to mothers. For instance, when asked about children's routines of media use and the amount of time spent using media, Andrew responded by saying 'this is really a question for Victoria' (25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 years and 3 months), thus redirecting the question to his wife, who was 'in charge' of children's media use. Victoria has also mentioned that sometimes Andrew accidentally interfered in her attempts to manage children's media use by turning the television on when it should have been off, because he was not that familiar with children's media routines: 'I suppose sometimes between me and Andy [there is a conflict], if I think he turned on the television too early for her in the morning... Or like if he

puts it after tea time...' (25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 years and 3 months). However, this example alone is not representative, as in another family it was the father, who took managing children's media use more seriously than the mother, being much stricter and more precise about the exact amount of time children spent using media devices:

James [who was out when children started to use media devices]: What time did they start playing the iPads?

Sonia: Emmm... [laughing] ten passed... No, twenty passed twelve? Not sure...

James: I asked you to time it!..

(35-44 years old, East Sussex three children aged 3, 6 and 10).

James also reported trying to watch television with his children whenever he could to supervise children's viewing and to spend time with them, while Sonia said she was not particularly keen on watching it with them, as she did not find the content interesting: 'He tends to watch it more with them. I would watch it with them if it's like a movie... I actually liked *Simpsons* before, but I don't like that programme anymore, so I don't watch it with them' (35-44 years old, East Sussex three children aged 3, 6 and 10). In a few families that I have interviewed, fathers were also more technologically savvy than mothers, which meant that setting parental controls and locks was much easier for them, or they were the only ones in the family who could do it. Such examples show that gender does not have direct connections to parental mediation, with both fathers and mothers expressing concerns about children's media use and taking part in mediation, in contrast to the research that claims that mothers are more engaged in most mediation practices (see Craig, 2006).

Similarly, both middle-class and working-class parents showed awareness of the intensive parenting ideology with regards to media technology. Participants also observed that the ideology of 'intensive parenting' and the ideas of 'good parenthood' derive from middle-class perspectives, with a certain middle-class bias towards what counts as 'good parenting', and therefore are a class, or rather, an

economic issue (also see Clark, 2012; Dermott and Pomati, 2015; Faircloth, 2014b; Gewirtz, 2001; Klett-Davies, 2010). This was particularly noticed by William and Megan, who discussed that the stigma around parents' allowing their children to watch television is culturally and socially constructed, with there being a clear middle-class bias:

Megan: I think the whole thing about kids not watching TV is a bit of a... there is a touch of snobbery a bit as well.

William: Yeah, it's middle-class mums, isn't it though? Who think that TV is bad, I think.

Megan: Yeah I think so. Just...

William: ...yummy mummy brigade.

(35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

Even though William and Megan self-identified as middle-class, William nevertheless was very critical of and even sarcastic about middle-class parenting ideologies, which see the world in black and white terms, and parenting as either 'good' or 'bad' with nothing in between, with there being little evidence to support the choice of certain parental choices and practices. As it has already been discussed in this chapter, when it comes to children's media use, the middle-class ideology of intensive parenting clearly states that relying on media for children's entertainment is lazy and even irresponsible, with parents having a 'duty' of using other more suitable means of entertaining children, such as such as sports, going to the park, reading books, doing puzzles and playing with developing toys, such as Lego. Based on my observations of middle-class homes, the compliance with the 'good parenting' standards of entertaining children required a significant investment on behalf of parents in books, toys and various equipment (also see Barford, 2011; Ito et al. 2010; Nikken and Schols, 2015). In comparison, the four homes that I have visited and categorised as working-class (see methodology chapter for the discussion of the interviews sample and its characteristics) did not have the same amount of children-related material goods due to the financial

constraints experienced by parents. Similarly, while middle-class parents mentioned going to the cinema with children, travelling or attending various sport and art groups or sections, working class parents did not mention such a wide range of leisure activities (also see Davidson and Power, 2007).

It is therefore not surprising that children growing up in working-class households would often consume more media, as other means of entertainment were simply not available to parents, as Helen, who self-identified as working class, shared:

‘Yeah, I kind of use it as a babysitter [laughing] to entertain them a bit when there is nothing else to do. Sometimes we might sit down and watch a movie or something or *Strictly Come Dancing* or something in the evening...’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 7 and 6).

As a single mother, Helen did not have many alternatives to television viewing, or enough time to engage in ‘good’ parenting activities on a regular basis. Similarly, while middle-class parents talked at length about recording content to make sure that children were not exposed to advertising or inappropriate content, Helen, who did not have a digital recorder or a ‘box’, and just had access to Freeview channels, simply did not have that option:

‘I don’t record anything. Sometimes we get DVDs out from the library or we just watch it live... There are always risks, but I don’t know... I am pretty flexible on that really. If they see it, they see it. They always browse and sometimes I do kind of think “Well, this is not really appropriate, we best turn it over”, but... this is just life’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 7 and 6).

Thus this ideological contrast between the ‘concerted cultivation’ of middle-class parents and the ‘natural growth’ arguably advocated by parents from working-class backgrounds (Dermott and Pomati, 2015:2) is not always simply a matter of preference and choice, but something that parents do not have control over due to high financial pressures, leading to material necessity having ‘a direct impact on one’s cultural orientation towards parenting’ (Faircloth, 2014a:33) or attitudes towards managing children’s media use. These observations point to a fact that

when discussing parental management of children's media use, it might make more sense to talk about the issue of economic resources, rather than class. This will allow to stay clear of labelling certain parental choices (which in reality might not be choices at all) as 'working-class parenting', and draw attention to the significance of economic factors that lie at the heart of intensive parenting ideology, making financial resources and the acquisition of material goods the primary definition of 'good parenting' and 'proper childcare'; thus leaving those parents, who lack access to 'parenting necessities', unable to fulfil the requirements of socially and culturally acceptable 'intensive', 'involved', 'good' parenting (also see Dermott and Pomati, 2015; Elliott et al., 2015; Faircloth and Lee, 2010; Lareau, 2003; Nelson, 2010).

Similarly, although children in working-class families were reported to consume more media, this does not mean, however, that working-class parents were unaware of the stigma surrounding children's television use or of the ideas of 'good parenthood' in relation to children's use of media technology. Working-class parents reported experiencing a feeling of guilt, as a result of allowing children to use a lot of media, set against expectations of the intensive parenting ideology. As Helen explained:

'One day they have watched TV and played on the iPad all day and I said to my friend "Oh, I feel guilty that they are just in front of the TV all day!" and she said "but you do so much with children! So one day is nothing!" So yeah... [long pause]' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 7 and 6).

When I asked Helen about this feeling of guilt, she could not explain why exactly was she feeling guilty, it was just an unconscious feeling that she was not supposed to let her children spend so much time on media devices. Such feeling of guilt was reported by both middle-class and working-class mothers, becoming a common parenting experience regardless of social class belonging. As Megan, who self-identified as middle-class, shared: 'Yeah, it's just guilt, like you should be doing something educational or like interacting with your children, rather than just putting the TV on' (Megan, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2). As Philip Simpson has argued:

‘...a greater source of anxiety for the parents... is television’s ability to expose what many mothers, in particular, see as their failings. The true source of this anxiety is not, of course, television, so much as the almost unconscious acceptance that a mother must, in all circumstances and at all times, be equal to the demands of a young child. When television is used to ease this impossible burden through its potential as a childminder, comforter or distractor, questions of guilt surface’ (1987:7).

Belonging to a certain social class thus did not make a difference in the experiences and feelings that parents reported in relation to children’s media use and assumed parental responsibility in relation to it.

It is important to mention, however, that although fathers demonstrated the awareness of intensive parenting ideology and considered the issue of managing children’s media use to be an important parental responsibility, the ideology of intensive parenting often did not affect them in the same way as it affected mothers. The interviews showed that fathers experienced a lesser feeling of guilt with regards to allowing children to use media than mothers, which in turn influenced the attitudes fathers had towards certain everyday situations, in which children were allowed to use media, in order to allow some time for parents to do other things, like cleaning or having a cup of tea. While in those situations mothers tended to express feelings of guilt and internal struggle, fathers talked about those instances as ‘part of life’, something that happens and does not necessarily mean a failure of parenting, as the example given by Stuart illustrates:

‘Well, there was a time when I tried to do some washing up, and it was quite hard... it took about an hour to do this tiny amount of washing up, as she was boozing around me all the time, wanting attention. So I, I am not ashamed to admit it, I said “right, for about 10 minutes...”, I think the *Dinopawses* is 10 minutes long, stuck it on and she just sat there. I mean I can give her books as well, but books tend to last about 30... about 2 or 3 minutes, and then she will start exploring. I mean, it got it done’ (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

Or, as William and Megan discussed:

William: I think dads are much more relaxed about it, putting the TV on for the kids.

Megan: You think so? Yeah, I suppose there is this assumption that if you just put the telly on, then you are just... not making an effort... It's like, it's just a balance all the time I think.

William: But then at 6 in the morning when they get up, it's really hard to come down and want to play Lego. Sometimes I just want to put the telly on, you know. And drink coffee.

Megan: Mmmm... I don't know...

(35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

These examples show that expectations around what it means to be 'a good parent' can affect men differently to women (also see Faircloth, 2014b; Shirani et al., 2012). While women were considering each time television was used as a babysitter to allow time for other things, such as domestic chores or having a coffee, a personal failure and a sign that not enough effort has been put into parenting, men were considering it a realistic and pragmatic approach to parenting. Fathers in my study also tended to be much more skeptical about all the 'expert' advice around children and media use than mothers (also see Shirani et al., 2012). As Stuart discussed:

'There's a lot of people we know, who will read something on the Internet, people discuss it, and there's always talk about studies that have been done about television, you know, damaging children, and you always hear people reciting it, but not actually... no one has ever read it, but they all seem to know about it, and it's always different sort of views on this study, what made me think that most of these people have never read it and, you know, some people say television is bad for children, which, you know, may be so, I think. I mean we are of a mind set, yes, everything is bad in... you know... if Lily was just watching TV all day, if television was on all day, then that wouldn't be good for her at all, we know that' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

It can be argued that risk consciousness is experienced more strongly by mothers, who are often positioned in both academic and public debates as the main managers of risk for the whole family (Kukla, 2005; Lee et al., 2010). Previous chapters have already shown that mothers felt a more acute sense of responsibility

for many diverse aspects of family life, and children's media use can be added to that list. Similarly, fathers also did not mention discussing childrearing in general, or managing children's media use in particular, with other fathers as often as mothers did, and when they did, they often dismissed these discussions as unimportant, which potentially means that there was less pressure felt by fathers to compete with other fathers for the title of a 'perfect dad', leaving fathers with a more secure sense of parental identity (also see Faircloth, 2014b; Lee et al., 2010).

This section of the chapter has thus examined how parents discussed and experienced intensive parenting ideology and the pressure to manage children's media use using class and gender considerations, arguing against popular claims that class and gender have a direct connection with individuals' engagement in 'good' parenting. It showed that gender does not have direct connections to parental mediation, with both fathers and mothers expressing concerns about children's media use and taking part in mediation. However, this section did expose the ways, in which expectations around what it means to be 'a good parent' can potentially affect fathers differently to mothers. Similarly, it was argued that both middle-class and working-class parents shared awareness of the intensive parenting ideology with regards to children's television viewing and the use of media technology, even though the ideology of 'intensive parenting' and the ideas of 'good parenthood' derive from middle-class perspectives, with there being a certain middle-class bias towards what counts as 'good parenting'.

Children's media use and the performance of parenting

The discussion in this chapter so far has demonstrated that children's television viewing and the use of media technology in certain aspects define what 'good parenting' is in intensive parenting ideology, and the cultural expectations around it. However, my research has shown that due to the unrealistic nature of many of the expectations of intensive parenting ideology, 'good parenting' was not so much a real experience for my participants, but rather often a discursive strategy. In other words, it was not only about fulfilling the expectations and commitments of intensive parenting, but also in many respects about *performing*

good parenting in front of others, particularly other parents (also see Shepherd et al., 2006). And as the remaining part of this chapter will discuss, the performance of good parenting is yet another difficult and emotionally challenging task for parents, with a potential of causing anxiety and stress.

As such, my research has shown that comparison with what other parents do in relation to children's use of media was vital to how individuals thought of their own parenting, and their parental identities. Parents rarely just talked about *their* children's media use or *their* own rules around it, but rather constantly referred to other parents, who to them were not doing a 'good enough' parenting job, whether the ones they knew personally or hypothetical ones: 'But we do have friends, you get to their house and then CBeebies is on all the time, you know. Some people just put it on first thing in the morning and just leave CBeebies on all day' (William, 35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2); 'I saw some parents, they have iPads for kids for watching even when they are driving in town, just to occupy them. We don't do that' (Sonia, 35-44 years old, East Sussex, three children aged 3, 6 and 10); 'I'm not one of those parents who spend the day with their children plonked in front of the TV' (Penny, 18-24 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2). These quotes illustrate that when discussing their own parental attitudes and practices around children's media use, parents often compared their own actions with those of others, and it is this comparison that enabled them to make judgments as to whether they were doing the 'right thing'. These quotes also support the idea discussed earlier in the chapter – that certain parental activities in relation to children's use of media technology immediately fall under the umbrella of 'bad parenting', putting a label on those parents who are not fulfilling the expectations of intensive parents with regards to children's use of media, even when there is no context for these activities being available.

The decision as to how to best approach children's television viewing and the use of media technology in the home was often not just discussed and made within the family, but also involved some online research, as well as the discussion with other parents. Children's media use was reported to be a common topic of conversation between parents in both face-to-face and online interactions. Mothers in particular tended to spend a considerable amount of time on online

forums or Facebook groups, often searching for answers to specific questions related to children's media use, or seeking advice from more experienced mothers or parenting 'experts' (also see McDaniel et al., 2012). For example, Sonia discussed looking at threads on *Mumsnet*, reading about how other parents limit their children's media use or whether they let their children play certain games or not, just to get an idea of what the common attitudes were, before she was to introduce the rules to her own children:

'They do discuss, for example, how much TV your 11-year-old or 10-year-old watches, just to see what other families do... Because, you see, we didn't have all these things when we were growing up, things have changed. And you know, I sometimes go on *Mumsnet*, especially to read about all these devices. Like for example, Freddie, he's just turned 7 last weekend, and I know that some kids do play this game, *Minecraft*, at this age, and others don't. So you just read and then you adjust it to your family needs' (35-44 years old, East Sussex, three children aged 3, 6 and 10).

Similarly, Victoria mentioned observing a fellow mother and the way she was negotiating media use for her children:

'I know a friend of ours who has a little boy very similar age to Poppy, they don't have a TV license, they watch everything through their PlayStation, so it's all done through the Internet. I know her little boy just gets to watch *In The Night Garden* and he watches *Bee* on CBeebies and a couple of other things, but I do think that they limit how much television he watches much more so than we do with Poppy. I suppose there is a bit of peer pressure...' (25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire, two children aged 2 and 6 months).

Victoria therefore talked about peer pressure with regards to children's media use – comparing your own rules about media use with that of other parents, evaluating them and trying to decide which way is appropriate, and which way to follow. Such discussions, both online and face-to-face, often reinforced the discourses of good parenting, creating binaries between 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' ways to approach children's media use. These examples also expose the fact that mothers do not feel confident enough to make decisions about children's media use themselves, as the intensive parenting ideology positions parenting not as a product of personal intuition and personal views on what is right and wrong, but

rather as a constant learning process, where mothers in particular are encouraged to constantly work on their parenting practice and seek expert information (Faircloth, 2014a).

While previous research has demonstrated that participation in forums, blogs and networking sites can be an empowering experience for parents through connection to wider parenting communities and information exchange (Hall and Irvine, 2009; McDaniel et al., 2012; Miyata, 2002; Youngs, 2001), I want to argue that when it comes to the discussion of children's media use online, parental experiences of participation in online spaces are much less positive, often causing anxiety and stress, as well as negatively affecting parental identities, rather than enhancing wellbeing. For example, Aimee Morrison has argued that parenting blogs

'...prize emotional support and community harmony over vigorous or abstract debate: they demonstrate this emphasis on fellow-feeling by employing humour, redirection, phatic statements, and metacritical commentary in authoring posts as well as comments, in order to support one another's participation in the community and minimize disagreement and conflict' (2014:287).

In contrast, participants in my study have described online (as well as face-to-face) discussions of children's media use as untruthful, deceitful, and highly judgmental. As Annabelle discussed: 'Oh, it's definitely on *Mumsnet*! [laughing] Oh, yes! Well on *Mumsnet*, if everyone is to be believed, they only ever let their children watch 10 minutes of it once a day, you know' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 3 and 6 months). Similarly, as Megan shared:

'I think there is a massive weight of... judgement on you as a parent as to how much TV your children watch... from other mums. So as soon as they are born, it's like "Oh I never let them watch TV" or whatever... Yeah and a lot of people sort of lie about it as well, they say like "Oh, such and such never watches television". And then they quite clearly do, you know. It's weird but, yeah, people lie about how much TV they watch I think' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, two children aged 5 and 2).

All mothers, who were regularly discussing children's media use with other parents both online and face-to-face, have shared these feelings of being deceived and

being judged, which made the topic of children's media use an uncomfortable subject of conversation for many.

When I asked parents why they thought it was the case that parents lied about their children's media use and presented an untruthful and deceitful image of it in front of others, they responded by saying:

'some parents are quite defensive about how much children are... how much their children are watching' (Abigail, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 2);

'Yeah, it's their children and they are bringing them up how they want. If someone criticised or said "you shouldn't do it" about something I do with my children, I would really be offended' (Donna, 25-34 years old, Suffolk, two children aged 2 and 6 months);

'Because your children are an extension of you... And the choices that you make... You'd like to think that you are making the best possible choices for your children... And when someone questions that it feels like an attack' (Samantha, 25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

These responses only reinforce the idea that managing children's media use is central to parenting and parental identities, to an extent that when children's media use is questioned, it is considered to be an attack on parenting as a whole, which can cause serious anger and offense to a degree of ruining relationships and friendships. Samantha shared how it is often impossible to talk to fellow mums about what children are viewing, because even when the conversation is meant to be friendly and helpful, it often causes offense:

'Usually if you are discussing something like that, it's either because you have similar views, in which case the conversation is fine, or you have got different views and it ends up being... It could come to blows with parents... I think parents are very particular about being criticised about their parenting choices. And some people have made choices that I would question... But if I questioned it, then it becomes a problem. Which is a shame, because I wonder then if the parent had thought about it? Have they realised the implications of showing their child that sort of stuff? You want to come at it from a helpful point of view... But it doesn't always come out like that...' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

Similarly, Stuart shared how his mother in law's comments about his daughter's television viewing made him feel annoyed, angry and insulted, causing a significant argument:

'She said something like, "Lily watches the most television than any other child I know", which I was incredulous at, because it is not true. It made me quite angry, A, because it wasn't true, and B, I don't think a lot of parents are open and honest about it. They are conservative with their estimate... because they don't want to be perceived to letting their children watch TV...' (35-44 years old, Norfolk, one child aged 1).

Stuart's response thus explains that parents often *have to lie* about their children's media use and perform 'good parenting', because otherwise they will become a target of judgment and disapproval, not only from distant strangers online, but also from people close to them (also see Hardyment, 2007).

Moreover, management of children's media use becomes important criteria to evaluate one's parenting capabilities. Samantha discussed how the amount of time children spend on media devices is used as a signifier of parenting success or failure, similar to other things, such as when children start sleeping through the night:

'And that happens with other things, not just television. Like in parenting groups, so and so says: Oh, little Johnny has been sleeping though the night since he was 2 weeks old... You therefore feel like... by her saying something about little Johnny, your 3 week old isn't sleeping through the night, therefore you are a bad parent' (25-34 years old, Norfolk, twins aged 5).

This is a significant finding, which to my knowledge has not been reported to date, and which highlights the importance of studying media in relation to parenting, as it is an integral part of the experience of contemporary parenting, and something that can put parents either into the category of a 'good' or a 'bad' parent both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others, having implications on individuals' sense of parental identity.

This section of the chapter therefore examined parental strategies of dealing with the unrealistic expectations and demands of contemporary intensive

parenting ideology by the means of hiding information about children's media use and performing 'good parenting' in relation to children's television viewing and the use of media technology. It demonstrated that due to the unrealistic nature of many of the expectations of intensive parenting ideology, 'good parenting' was not so much a real experience for my participants, but rather often a discursive strategy that had to be carefully thought through in order to avoid judgment and disapproval. Comparison with what other parents do in relation to children's use of media thus becomes vital to how individuals think of their own parenting, and their parental identities. At the same time, the discussion of children's media use either online or in face-to-face interactions with other parents was not a positive experience for parents, often causing anxiety and stress, as well as negatively affecting parental identities.

Conclusion

This chapter significantly adds to the understanding of the place that media technology occupies in contemporary parenting, as well as illustrating how individuals' everyday practices of parenting and their parental identities are influenced by cultural expectations of the intensive parenting ideology in the risk society. While previous research has largely focused on the specific strategies that parents employ in managing children's media use, this chapter has addressed the question of *why* parents feel the need to manage children's media use and find it an important parental responsibility in the first place, and examined the intersections between children's media use and parents' experiences and feelings with regards to their parenting choices and practices.

The chapter demonstrated that parental mediation is an important aspect of the intensive parenting ideology, and an important part of the notion of a 'good parent'. It unveiled the meaning of being a good parent with regards to children's use of television and media technology: only a bad, lazy and uninvolved parent is simply using television and media technology as a 'babysitter' to occupy children; a good parent is always using media technology *with children*, not primarily relying on media devices to entertain them, but rather continually *working* on their

parenting. The chapter showed that managing children's media use is now central to parenting responsibility and parental identity, regardless of individual's class and gender belonging. Both fathers and mothers participating in the study expressed concerns about children's media use and took part in mediation, although the ideology of intensive parenting often did not affect fathers' feelings in the same way as it affected mothers', as they tended to take a more pragmatic and skeptical approach to parenting. Similarly, both middle-class and working-class parents showed awareness of the intensive parenting ideology with regards to media technology, although parents expressed their feelings that the ideology of 'intensive parenting' and the ideas of 'good parenthood' derive from middle-class perspectives, with there being a certain middle-class bias towards what counts as 'good parenting'. Belonging to a certain social class thus did not make a difference in the experiences and feelings that parents reported in relation to children's media use and assumed parental responsibility in relation to it. The chapter thus emphasised the importance of discussing parental management of children's media use in the context of family's economic resources, rather than labelling certain parental choices as 'working-class parenting'.

This chapter has also demonstrated that due to the unrealistic nature of many of the expectations of intensive parenting ideology, 'good parenting' is often not so much a real experience, but rather a discursive strategy for parents. In other words, it was not only about fulfilling the expectations and commitments of intensive parenting, but also in many respects about hiding true accounts of children's media use from others and performing good parenting, in order to avoid often misplaced and unfair disapproval and judgment. While being a common object of discussion, children's media use is thus a very sensitive topic of discussion, which often causes offense among parents. The chapter has also revealed that management of children's media use becomes an important criterion to evaluate one's parenting capabilities, with the amount of time children spend on media devices being used as a signifier of parenting success or failure. To my knowledge, this is the first study that examines the correlations between intensive parenting ideology, parental identity and children's media use, which makes it an original

contribution to the fields of media and television studies, as well as to the field of parenting studies.

Conclusion

The study was set out to explore digital television viewing and the use of media technology in the home in the context of contemporary parenting. On the one hand, it can be seen as a continuation of the research tradition into the study of television in family everyday life. And on the other hand, it is a response to the changes in television technology, and current cultural interest (to the extent of obsession) with parenting and all its practices, no matter how small or big, public or private.

Previous academic works in the field of media and everyday life have established the centrality of television and media technology for family everyday life, providing diverse and rich examples of multiple everyday interactions and activities that revolve around media and media technology, which play a significant role in how everyday life, daily practices and relationships are organised and experienced by family members (Bovill and Livingstone, 2001; Briggs, 2010; Gauntlett and Hill, 1999; Hoover et al., 2004; Kayany and Yelsma, 2000; Lull, 1990; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Morley, 1988, 2000, 2003; Rogge, 1991; Silverstone, 1991; Spigel, 1990, 1992). However, in such research in media and television studies, *parenting* as a practice and as a specific experience is rarely acknowledged and rarely brought to the forefront of the discussion of family media use. Similarly, despite the wealth of research in parenting studies, which is concerned with the practices and experiences of contemporary parenting (Arendell, 2000; Blum, 1999; Bobel, 2002; Bristow, 2014; Dermott and Pomati, 2015; Douglas and Michels, 2004; Faircloth, 2014a, 2014b; Furedi, 2008; Lee, 2014a, 2014b; Reece, 2013; Shaw, 2008; Shirani et al., 2012), television and the use of media technology in these inquiries are not regarded and analysed as being an important part of parents' everyday experiences. Where parenting and media do meet, however, is in the discussions of parental guidance of children's media use, which populates all three subject areas (media studies, television studies and parenting studies), and for the past decade has been a 'hot' and popular debate that generates a lot of research (Bulck and Bergh, 2000; Chakroff and Nathanson, 2008; Livingstone and Helsper, 2008;

Mendoza, 2009; Nikken and Jansz, 2013; Nikken and Schols, 2015; Schaan and Melzer, 2015; Sonck et al., 2013; Warren, 2001, 2003). Thus in most studies on family media use, when parenting does enter the discussion, it is most often investigated through a narrow prism of children's media use and parental concerns, anxieties or hopes for children's wellbeing and development. In such research, parenting as a practice, and parents' own media use and how it fits in with the practice and everyday realities of parenting, are often overlooked or not examined in any particular detail, which puts significant limitations on academic understanding of media use in the context of the home, family everyday life and parenting. Thus the aim of this current study has been to address these gaps in existing research, and give research priority to the everyday media experiences of parents. It sought to examine parenting as a unique stage in the life course, which alters multiple aspects of individuals' everyday lives, including television viewing and other media consumption practices.

While interrogating the relationship between television viewing, the use of media technology in the home and parenting, the study was also concerned with the current diversity and complexity of the ways of accessing and viewing television content in the home, and how they were understood, experienced and practiced by parents in the context of family everyday life: the domestic space, daily routines, family communication and relationships, and most importantly, the practice of parenting. This focus on television, television technology, and on how they are understood and experienced by parents, is a distinguishable characteristic of my research, which makes it different from other studies that are also part of the emergent research inquiry into parenting and media, such as LSE's project *Parenting for a Digital Future* (LSE, 2015a, 2015b). Thus in my own research, I am not only concerned with the inquiry into parenting and parental experiences, but also with the inquiry into the uses and meanings of digital television for contemporary audiences, with a specific focus on parents as an audience group. Over the past decade, academic works in the field of television and digital media have highlighted and emphasised the changes happening to the medium of television at this current point of its development, noting that contemporary home television consumption is becoming increasingly complex, customisable, selective

and personal, with a constant growth in the ways of accessing and viewing content that elusive audiences are confronted with (Bennett, 2008, 2011; Carlson, 2006; Forgacs, 2001; Goggin, 2012; Hjorth, 2012; Kennedy, 2008; Kompare, 2006; Manovich, 2001; Parks, 2004; Rizzo, 2007; Turner and Tay, 2009; Uricchio, 2004). My study sought to find empirical evidence for the common claims that 'audiences have reconfigured their use of television' (Strangelove, 2015:10), and to address the question of what this 'reconfiguration' really means, and what are the actual meanings of watching television today, particularly in the context of the family and everyday parenting.

The study therefore sought to examine a specific audience – parents – and the intricate relationship between television viewing, the use of media technology in the home and the practice of contemporary parenting. The aim throughout the thesis has been to explore both how television and media technology is affecting the practice of parenting, and how parenting as a unique stage in a life course is affecting television viewing practices and the use of media technology in the home. The thesis aimed to answer the following research questions: 1) How do television and media technologies fit into domestic spaces, temporal routines and the everyday practice of parenting? 2) How do parents make decisions regarding various ways of accessing television content: devices, applications, formats? 3) What is the connection between television viewing, the use of media technology in the home and everyday communication and relationships between parents, parents and children? 4) What is the relationship between children's television viewing, media use in the home and parenting? In what follows, I will provide a synthesis of the empirical findings from the study with respect to these research questions; emphasise theoretical contributions and implications of the findings, and how they impinge on existing understanding of television and parenting; and make some recommendations for future research.

Empirical findings and theoretical implications

The focus on the family in general, and parents in particular, has been of vital importance to this study, as it sought to find evidence against those works on

digital television that argue in favour of the notion of family television audience gradually becoming obsolete, and television viewing 'as we know it' undergoing a radical transformation. As Michael Strangelove has argued:

'it may be true that visual culture remains "on the balance, anchored within the larger context of the home" but with each new generation of viewers this is less likely to be the case. It certainly is not for the university students who populate my classes' (2015:12).

In order to complicate such arguments, as well as to highlight the continuing importance of the family in the study of television, this research has positioned television as a matter of audience's life course, providing evidence for the fact that television viewing depends on audiences' stages in the life course, being a fluid and constantly changing experience and a set of daily practices. With a specific focus on parenting as a stage in the audience's life course, this research has analysed how a stage in the life course has the potential to alter individuals' attitudes, views and daily practices of media consumption. For instance, the majority of the participating parents could be characterised as 'time poor and goods rich' (Moen and Firebaugh, 1994:32; also see Clark, 2012), meaning that they had a wide range of media technologies in their homes, while at the same time struggling with constant time pressures, which made it difficult for parents to balance employment with childcare, constrained time for many everyday activities, including television viewing and media use, and required parents to develop new attitudes and strategies towards time, work, leisure, media use and child upbringing. In light of this context, all chapters aimed to present a detailed and nuanced account of 'television viewing', analysing it as a complex and multi-dimensional personal experience, which also has direct connections with individual's experience of everyday parenting.

The life course approach that this study has introduced for the research into home everyday television consumption and audiences' media practices is one of the main theoretical contributions of this research. The life course approach has previously been adopted for the study of family relationships and marriage (Becker and Moen, 1999; Moen, 2001; Moen and Firebaugh, 1994) and in fandom studies

(Harrington and Bielby, 2010; Harrington et al., 2011), rarely, however, has this approach been used in the study of cultural practices or television consumption³⁵, and it has never been used in the study of television viewing in the context of parenting. This research has proved that the life course approach is extremely useful for the contextualisation of the audience group under study, allowing to observe, acknowledge and draw direct connections between the circumstances and experiences of individuals and specific media consumption practices. The life course approach thus allows the study of media consumption, in this particular case - television viewing, as a *lived experience*, one that is dynamic and moving, constantly changing and transitioning together with its audience, following them throughout various stages of their life course. And most importantly, it recognises that the routines and viewing practices developed in the process are not set in stone, but are subject to constant change, linked to certain transitions and phases in the life course. Such an approach also draws attention to the fact that looking at statistical data or approaching the study of the audience as a homogenous group is not sufficient enough, as such research does not account for changes that audiences are undergoing and their 'journey' as individuals and members of the audience. By adopting the life course approach to the study, this thesis made a case for its particular suitability and relevance to media studies, television studies and audience studies, and provided an example of how it can be successfully used in these fields.

The study has also revealed the efforts that parents put into making sense and organising media technologies and ways of accessing television content, so that

³⁵ For instance, Simone Scherger (2009) explores how the concept of life course might be more beneficial than the concept of age for the study of cultural practices, however, while offering some empirical examples, her work does not provide a detailed examination of a specific cultural practice, such as television viewing for instance. Similarly, while there have been attempts to study audience's television and film viewing practices in the context of age (Chayko, 1993; Mares et al., 2008; Mares and Woodard, 2006), or examine the meanings of age for television content preferences (Harwood, 1997, 1999; Mares and Sun, 2010), none of the studies examined the relationship between a specific stage in the life course and television viewing, and how both have a potential to shape each other in diverse individual ways.

media consumption is not an accidental and chaotic part of everyday life, but rather a *purposeful* and *organised* one, aimed at easing the pressures and everyday disturbances of parenting. Whether it is organising home television viewing options into a logical, easily accessible and therefore time saving domestic digital estate, or using television viewing routines as a work-family strategy aimed at organising limited free time more efficiently – for parents as the audience group, at a particular stage in the life course, television viewing is rarely accidental, but rather carefully thought through and planned. By valuing control over leisure time and consequently over television consumption, parents often establish their own viewing sequences that are personalised and tailored to specific circumstances, with television often being experienced as a database of content, rather than the medium of fleeting and ephemeral content that flows, and differentiations are being made by parents between ‘watching television’ and having live television on the background.

These findings offer an original contribution to both the field of television studies and parenting studies, as on the one hand they reveal that the role that media play in audience’s everyday life is specific to a stage in audience’s life course, with audiences appropriating the media to suit their particular circumstances and experiences, with even core elements of the mediums being open for contestation; while on the other hand positioning media and media technology as central to how parents negotiate and deal with the everyday tasks of parenting. This study did not impose fixed boundaries of what counts as ‘television’ or ‘watching television’ on the data, being attentive to how participants themselves discussed and made sense of their everyday television viewing. As a result, this study presented a case of television viewing as not strictly limited to television programmes, but inclusive of other video forms, such as films and shorter videos, as parents often talked about all video content consumed in the home as ‘television’. By being sensitive to the accounts provided by participants, the study has provided examples of the blurring of boundaries around television as a medium, such as what is considered to be a television technology; which home video services and content count as television viewing in the eyes of the audience; and how the traditional modes of television viewing, such as watching television live following broadcaster’s flow, are being

contested and challenged by audience members to suit the specific circumstances and experiences of everyday life, thus contributing to the current debates on the future of television as a medium (Bennett, 2008; Bennett and Brown, 2008; Bennett and Strange, 2011; Grainge, 2011; Spiegel and Olsson, 2004; Turner and Tay, 2009).

The focus on digital television pursued by this study has also allowed space for the exploration of television as a technology, and parents everyday experiences of it. The thesis has significantly expanded the discussion of television consumption in the home by including wider aspects of digital television, such as the discussion of its diverse technologies - devices, services, applications and formats - and complex ways, in which these are negotiated, chosen and used by parents as a specific audience group on a daily basis. As such, media devices, television services, applications and formats of content have been studied as central to the contemporary experience of television viewing in the home, as parents have to negotiate, make sense of and practically deal with the variety of ways of accessing and viewing of television content in the home. The study has shown that the issue of how parents decide to access television content, with regards to the media device, television services, applications and formats of content, and the motivations behind such choice, is highly complex and individual in nature, being deeply rooted in the experience of parenting. Just as children play an important role in what the domestic digital estate consists of and how it is organised (motivating parents to acquire more portable media devices, as well as those that allow recorded or On Demand television viewing, and using more devices for television viewing in general); they also encourage parents to re-think how television content should be accessed in each instance on a case by case basis – to evaluate all the options available at that specific moment for that specific content, and answer various questions before this decision is made, such as will it be watched once or repeatedly by parents and/or children? What is the most cost-effective, convenient, time- and space-saving way of accessing content that parents and/or children like? What is the safest way? Parental decision-making process is therefore very complex, with there being no 'right' or 'wrong' or 'commonly acceptable' way of accessing television content for parents, as well as being highly personal and individual, reflecting parental attitudes towards television, media technology, the

domestic space, family leisure time, family finances and children's wellbeing and safety. And although for parents, the television set continues to hold its position at the top of the domestic digital estate, being a common 'first choice' when it comes to television consumption, considered by parents as the ultimate way of television viewing – most convenient, easy, comfortable and instant; children were reported not to see much difference between watching something on a television set and watching it on a smaller portable screen, experimenting with ways of accessing and viewing of television content, and introducing more instances of alternative television viewing into family routines. Parenting can thus be seen as a stage in the audience's life course that is likely to bring with it the diversification of ways, in which media is accessed and consumed in the home, with children playing a key role in altering parents' home media consumption practices.

The focus on different aspects of media technology in relation to television has therefore allowed this study to document and acknowledge various instances of both parents and children using multiple media technologies in the home for a variety of purposes, experimenting with devices, applications, services and formats of content, which often results in the boundaries between different media devices in the home, as well as different media practices, becoming increasingly blurred, contributing to a better understanding of the uses of television and its technology in the home, as well as the relationships audiences establish with the media. Following the research tradition of the domestication approach (Bakardjieva, 2006; Haddon, 2006, 2011; Hartmann, 2013; Morley, 2003; Silverstone, 1991, 2005, 2006), this study analysed television not simply as a 'box' in the living room, but as an integral part of family everyday life and everyday practices; a medium that can be used and appropriated in diverse and unique ways that often exceed what the intentions and predictions of the makers and the industry. The study has re-worked, to some extent, the domestication approach to media consumption, adding cloud television technologies to the examination, and using the concept of domestic digital estate, in order to make sense of the contemporary home television environment, which now consists of both physical and cloud media technologies. Although the findings about the spaces that television and its technologies occupy in the family home were in line with what has been reported

previously (Briggs, 2010; Lull, 1988a; Mackay and Ivey, 2004; Morley, 1986, 1992; Silverstone, 1991, 1994), the study has highlighted a significant change in the home media environment, that of the increasing multi-functionality of media technology, meaning that while media technology can occupy a traditional space in the family home, its uses and purposes, as well as the ways, in which media technologies within the home are connected to each other to form a domestic digital estate, can vary greatly, problematising understanding of what these devices are for and what meanings they hold for their users.

While approaching the issue of media, family communication and relationships, which has become a key inquiry for media and family scholars over the last few decades, this thesis had an original focus on parents' everyday media practices, and how they were understood and experienced by parents in different everyday situations. The study has also approached the issue of family communication and relationships from the standpoint of parental views, attitudes and experiences, exploring how parents themselves understand and experience togetherness and intimacy both between the parents, and between parents and children, and the role of television and media technology in them. Like other previous studies on media multitasking (Bardhi et al., 2010; Christensen et al., 2015; Ofcom, 2015d), my research has revealed that media multitasking is a common media practice in the home. However, my research has also shown that it is a big part of the experience of contemporary parenting, deeply rooted in parents' everyday routines and ways of living, which was not always a pleasant experience for parents or something they necessarily wanted to do; but rather a result of the time pressures, time constraints and parental attempts to manage their everyday life – work, leisure, childcare, social life, personal interests and hobbies. Thus media multitasking has often been regarded as a problem in family communication that had to be solved, with there being a noticeable gender difference in the practices of and attitudes towards it. As such, mothers were more likely than fathers to use personal media devices, such as mobile phones, laptops and tablets, to access television content, as well as using them for other media activities, valuing such personal media use, and regarding it as quality 'me time', a chance to be alone with oneself, to relax and find a balance between being oneself and being a parent.

However, the research has shown that mothers' use of portable personal devices would often be conducted simultaneously with family television viewing or other activities due to time constraints, becoming a media multitasking practice, and leading to a feeling of guilt over what was described as a failure of 'being present' with one's family. This finding points to the fact that roles within the family are still highly gendered, with women being both externally (by other members of the family and society) and internally (by themselves) policed in their roles as wives and mothers, with there being family-specific expectations and 'standards' of family life and family relationships – what makes a happy family, how parents ought to communicate with each other and their children, how parents ought to spend time together to maintain and reinforce family relationships. By examining the intricate relationships between media practices, attitudes towards media, mothering and fathering roles, the study has proved that media is central to family everyday life, and that media activities, such as media multitasking, have direct connections with how individuals understand and experience everyday family life, relationships, communication and parenting, at the same time exposing the differences in individuals' experiences of media in family life. The study has argued that family life, relationships and communication is a complex and constantly evolving process, where parents have to negotiate media use, establish and re-establish rules around it, and make sure that it makes sense for *their specific family at a specific point in time*.

However, this thesis has also argued that it is not only parents' own media use that is central to the experience of contemporary parenting, but also media use of children. While a common point of academic inquiry is children's media use from the perspective of children themselves, this study has taken a different approach and examined the relationship between parental reports of children's television viewing and media use in the home, and the experience of parenting. The study has shown that just as children's media use is becoming increasingly complex and multi-dimensional, so are parental attitudes towards children's media use and parental strategies of negotiating and managing it. And just as it is important to study how children watch television and use media technology in the context of the home, it is equally important to examine how parents understand, make sense of, negotiate

and manage children's media use, as it has direct implications on when, why and how media and media technologies are introduced into children's lives, and on how children's media use affects the experiences of contemporary parenting and parental identities.

The study has demonstrated that the relationship between parenting, television and media technology is not a straight forward one, but rather complex and often contradictory, with parents encouraging children's media use in some instances, and restricting it in others, for a variety of reasons, most of which are highly personal in nature, rather than being common and widely acceptable, pointing to the need to steer analysis away from a narrow discourse of parental concerns and anxieties about the risks surrounding children in the digital world. Although my research did observe instances when parents discussed children's media use using risk discourse, parental views on children's media use were not, however, limited to it. The study has shown that children's media use is encouraged by parents when parents see value in such use – when it is considered to be important for children's development, learning about the world, socialisation, communication with peers and family members, safety or future success - the reasons that go far beyond the traditional 'risk' versus 'benefit' discourse, and expose the complexity of contemporary parenting, where parents have to consider and manage more aspects of childhood than ever. At the same time, the study has shown that children's media use *has to be* carefully evaluated, negotiated and managed by parents on an everyday basis due to the expectations of the contemporary intensive parenting ideology, which positions children's media use at the centre of parental responsibility and identity. The study has revealed that often unrealistic expectations and standards of intensive parenting ideology shape parental involvement in children's media use, with parental mediation becoming an important part of individuals' commitment to parental identity. This finding drew a strong connection between television, media technology and parenting, positioning television and media technology as central to how individuals experience and practice parenting, and think of their own parental identity, while also revealing that parental mediation is now a compulsory part of contemporary parenting, often regardless of parents' own personal views on and attitudes towards media;

exposing the ways, in which parenting, many of its views and practices, are socially and culturally constructed.

The interdisciplinary approach that this study has followed – combining theories and concepts from media and television studies with parenting and family studies – has therefore allowed this study to primarily examine media and parenting in relation to each other, something that has not been done before in either of the fields. As it has been mentioned previously, parenting and family studies have a tendency to downplay the role of media in parenting, focusing on a very narrow range of issues, and television and media studies tend to focus more on children, young people, their media use and its mediation by parents, rather than on parents' use of media and media's role in the practice of contemporary parenting. Contrastingly, this study thoroughly examined the relationship between parenting and media from various angles, pointing to its complexity. In contrast to the research in both media and parenting studies that largely discusses parenting and media in the context of the risks to childhood and parental attempts to manage and minimise these risks (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Cingel and Krcmar, 2013; Faircloth, 2014a; Gentile et al., 2011; Kehily, 2010; Lee, 2014a; Lupton, 1999a, 1999b; Meirick et al., 2009; Olafsson et al., 2013; Schaan and Melzer, 2015; Vaala and Bleakley, 2015; Walsh et al., 1998; Wilson, 2008), in my discussion of parenting and media, I thus aimed to go further in the analysis than the 'risk' versus 'benefit' discourse, as well as past the analysis of parental use of the media simply for 'convenience' reasons, to conveniently occupy the children to allow more time for other activities (Tomopoulos et al., 2014; Vandewater et al., 2007), focusing instead on different diverse aspects of the media – parenting paradigm. In doing this, however, I was not dismissing the previous research on parenting and media, but simply acknowledging that there might be more issues to be uncovered and discussed to add to the current debate, such as television viewing and media use as a *strategy* used by parents to deal with the experiences and pressures of parenting; specific media practices, such as media multitasking, leading to parents' re-evaluating and re-negotiating how they understand and experience family communication, togetherness and intimacy; media adding further gender differentiation to already gendered roles of fathering and mothering; and media

being an important aspect of the ideological cultural and social construction of parenting.

Future research

Just like I opened this thesis with a personal story of what made me interested in the topic in the first place, and how the idea of the research was born, I want to end with another story that raises the need for further research into television audiences and television viewing practices using a life course approach. One evening I picked up the phone and FaceTimed my parents. Mum answered the call and we started talking, but I could not help but notice the constant disapproving groaning noises that my father was making on the background. Finally, after a few minutes or so, I asked him if everything was ok. My parents exchanged looks and finally my mother spilled it out: 'Dear, do you mind if I call you back? I want to talk to you, I really do, but we've been watching new episodes of *Game of Thrones* the entire evening, and we are on the last episode, and we really want to know what happens *now!*'. This was coming from my mother, who has never watched television in her life, always busy with work or housework or taking care of us, dismissing television viewing as something 'those, who have nothing better to do, do'. I left the family home 9 years ago when I started university, and my younger brother has left for university a year ago. Not much has changed in my parents' lives: they work long hours, occasionally go on holidays or visit relatives. However, their everyday television viewing has changed in dramatic ways. Now it is my parents who ask me if I have seen the recent episode of *Game of Thrones* or *House of Cards* or *Suits*. It is my parents who introduce me to the new series, not the other way around. And they do not just 'catch it on the telly', watching an episode a week as it is being broadcasted, rather they download the series they like and then 'binge watch' them, sometimes going through an entire season in a matter of a few days or weeks. This example shows the importance of conducting further research into other specific stages of the life course that can dramatically change individual's viewing practices, such as children moving towards adulthood; children growing up and leaving the family home; or early stages of retirement.

Such research will not only expand academic knowledge on how media consumption practices are being altered by audience's specific circumstances and experiences; but also provide an insight into how parents experience a transition from one role to another, how they hold on or let go of these roles, how the experience of parenting and parental identities shifts and changes, and what the media's role in these processes is.

Similarly, my discussions with friends from back home (Russia), many of whom have recently become first time parents, as well as one of the interviews that I have conducted with a mother who was originally from Belarus as part of this research, also point to significant differences in the practices of everyday parenting and attitudes towards childrearing and media's role in it in the developing East as opposed to the developed West. For instance, grandparents play a much more central role in the processes of parenting in Eastern Europe than in the UK, and their often conservative views on media technology and children's access to it have a potential to create a completely different media environment in the home, and lead to different rules around the use of media established for both parents and children. Previous research on digital television viewing markets in different countries has examined how viewers are making sense of and valuing television services available to them by looking at the intersections between global trends and local infrastructures more generally (Evans et al., 2016:408), as there is a need to start with the fundamentals, when it comes to the research of the under-studied non-Western television markets and audience's viewing practices. However, I want to argue in favour of the need to study how digital television services are experienced and practiced in developing countries, such as India, Russia, Brazil and others, by examining television viewing in the context of family structures, hierarchies and traditions. A comparative study of the cultural experiences of contemporary parenting and their influences on television consumption and media use will undoubtedly broaden and significantly enrich the academic knowledge of how television is viewed and experienced in different national and cultural contexts; and how parenting is culturally and socially constructed, with there potentially being some significant differences among different nations.

Overall, what this thesis has pointed at, is the fact that contemporary family life is a messy endeavour, and although media technologies certainly characterise the experiences of contemporary parenthood and childhood; families, their values, personal narratives and experiences vary considerably, undermining any simple or sweeping conclusions about the role of television and media technology in everyday life. Set against the backdrop of the speculations around the uncertain future of television as a medium, and anxieties about media use and its harmful effects on family life, this research presented a case of television viewing as a lived experience, deeply rooted in family everyday life and everyday experiences of contemporary parenting, highlighting both challenges and affordances of television and media technology for parents as a specific audience group. This study has significantly contributed to the research into parenting and media, by analysing parenting as a unique and distinctive stage in individuals' life course, and television viewing and the use of media technology as being central to the everyday tasks and experiences of parents. My hope is that this study has provided a convincing case for the inclusion of the discussion of media and media technology into any academic exploration of contemporary experiences of everyday living. As media is becoming increasingly personalised, so are the ways, in which it connects with everyday lives and experiences of individuals, making it vital to study personal narratives and life stories, in order to grasp and comprehend what it means to be living in the contemporary world, and as it is the case with this particular research, what it means and how it feels to be a parent in an increasingly mediated home environment.

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Wolf, Joan (2011) *Is Breast Best? Taking on the breastfeeding experts and the new high stakes of motherhood*. New York: New York University Press

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Teleography

Ben 10. 2005 – 2008. Cartoon Network

Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. 2009 – present. Nickelodeon UK

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. 2000-2015. CBS

Dinopaws. 2014 – present. CBeebies

Fireman Sam. 1987 – present. Channel 5

Game of Thrones. 2011 – present. HBO

House of Cards. 2013 – present. Netflix

In the night garden. 2007 – 2009. CBeebies

New Tricks. 2003 – 2015. BBC One

Panorama. 1953 – present. BBC One

Peppa Pig. 2004 – present. Channel 5

Sherlock. 2010 – present. BBC One

Strictly Come Dancing (Dancing with the stars). 2004 – present. BBC One

Suits. 2011 – present. USA Network

The Apprentice. 2007 - present. BBC One

The Jeremy Kyle Show. 2005 – present. ITV

The One Show. 2006 – present. BBC One

The Simpsons. 1989 – present. Fox

The X-Factor. 2004 – present. ITV

Tickle On The Tum. 1984 – 1988. ITV

Tumble Leaf. 2014. Amazon Video

Filmography

Despicable Me. 2010. [Film]. Pierre Coffin and Chris Renaud (directors). USA: Illumination Entertainment

Mary Poppins. 1964. [Film]. Robert Stevenson (director). USA: Walt Disney Productions

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation. 1989. [Film]. Jeremiah Chechik (director). USA: Warner Bros. and Hughes Entertainment

Star Wars. 1977 – 2015. [Film series originally created by George Lucas]

Swallows and Amazons. 1974. [Film]. Claude Whatham (director). UK: Theatre Projects Film Productions Ltd

The Lego Movie. 2014. [Film]. Phil Lord and Christopher Miller (directors). USA, Australia and Denmark: Village Roadshow Pictures, Lego System A/S, Vertigo Entertainment, Lin Pictures, Animal Logic, RatPac-Dune Entertainment, Warner Animation Group

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Terminology

When it comes to the discussion of digital television and its experience, I find it highly important to address and clarify the issue of terminology used by the researcher, as there is currently a lot of confusion over some of the terms used in relation to digital television. For instance, terms such as ‘digital’, ‘device’ and ‘platform’ are often used quite differently in different works, with a specific definition often going unsaid. As such, the term ‘*digital* content’ is often used to refer to online streaming, in contrast with physical copies of content, such as DVD or Blu-Ray. However, DVDs and Blu-Rays are also digital in nature. Thus in the context of this study, I use the term ‘digital’ to refer to electronic technologies that generate, store, and process data or information in the form of digital signals (and contrasted with analogue). Thus when using the term ‘digital television’, I refer to television’s transmission and reception of audio and video by digitally processed and multiplexed signal (in contrast to the totally analogue and channel separated signals used by analogue television), which allows television to broadcast better quality sound, higher definition picture, and a wider range of content and means of accessing this content than ever before. The term ‘media technology’ is used in this study as a generic and a very broad term that includes media device, platform, application, service, content and its formats – what I believe to be essential components of the contemporary experience of digital television (also see David Croteau et al., 2012). Here ‘media device’ refers to physical devices that audiences have in their homes, such as the television set, PC, tablet, mobile phone, game console and others. Media device goes together and is bound to ‘platform’, the term that refers to the means of operating system (such as Apple OS, Android, LG Smart TV OS and others) on each of the media devices. The term ‘application’ refers to a programme or a software solution that delivers a particular service to audiences on the media devices that they are using, for instance, Netflix, YouTube or Amazon Prime. ‘Service’ is what is offered to the audiences by the means of an application, for example, On Demand television programmes and films. The term ‘content’ is used to refer to what audiences are viewing. Content can come in a variety of ‘formats’, such as ‘physical carrier’ (DVD or Blu-Ray) or ‘cloud services delivery’ (or ‘cloud’ format, such as online streaming, whether rental or purchase).

Appendix 2 – Participant recruitment

Advertising text:

Hello everyone!

I am a PhD student at the University of East Anglia conducting a study on television viewing and family life. I am interested in how media and media technologies (television in particular) affect everyday family life and relationships between parents and children.

At the moment I am conducting a survey, which is online and takes less than 10 minutes to fill in. The survey can be accessed following this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7YT2SVN>

If you would like to know more about my research, please contact me on K.Malykh@uea.ac.uk.

Thank you ever so much for your attention!

Advertising flyer

Research Participants Needed!

Digital television, technology and everyday family life



I am a PhD student at the University of East Anglia conducting a study of how families watch television and use its technologies on a day-to-day basis. I am interested in your family television viewing and television technologies that you have and use at home, along with the stories behind them. I would like you to participate in my study, so that I can better understand how television and its technologies fit in with your everyday family life.

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to participate in one or two stages of the research:

1. Questionnaire (online or printed on request)
2. One hour family interview at your home at your convenience (not all of the participants who completed the questionnaire will be asked for an interview due to the scale of the research)

Families with children of all ages are invited to participate. Children will only be interviewed in the presence of parents (the researcher has a recent DBS check).

Participation is entirely voluntary.
Your personal information will be treated in complete confidence.

To volunteer for this study or to ask any questions related to this research, please contact me, **Ksenia Malykh** via K.Malykh@uea.ac.uk

You can see my profile on the **university website**: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/film-television-media/people/profile/k-malykh> or on **LinkedIn**: <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/ksenia-malykh/46/3a7/a71>

The study is being funded by the University of East Anglia.

Online spaces targeted:

AVF Forum (Parenting): <http://www.avforums.com/threads/parenting-and-technology.1904294/>

Baby led weaning forum (1 post in things to do):
<http://www.babyledweaning.com/forum/>

Dad info forum (posted in media requests): <http://www.dad.info/forum/media-requests>

Essex mums (posted in media requests):
<http://www.essexmums.org/forum/viewforum.php?f=53>

Friday-ad (2 adverts): <http://www.friday-ad.co.uk>

Gransnet (posted in forum):
http://www.gransnet.com/forums/television_and_radio

Gumtree (1 advert): www.gumtree.com

Made for mums (posted in chat):
<http://www.madeformums.com/forum/area/school-and-family-chat/5.html>

Mumszone forum: <http://www.mumszone.co.uk/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=19>

Netmums Noticeboard South Norfolk: <http://www.netmums.com/south-norfolk/noticeboard>

Netmums Noticeboard West Norfolk: <http://www.netmums.com/west-norfolk/noticeboard>

Net mums Media Requests: <http://www.netmums.com/coffeehouse/>

Network Norwich (emailed content manager):
<http://www.networknorwich.co.uk/Group/Group.aspx?ID=15282>

Network Norwich Noticeboard:
<http://www.networknorwich.co.uk/Forums/Threads.aspx?ForumID=16134>

Norwich evening news: <http://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/home>

Facebook groups:

Attachment parenting UK:

https://www.facebook.com/attachmentparentinguk?ref=br_rs

Babes with babies:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/Norwichbabeswithbabies/?ref=br_rs

Baby Centre: <https://www.facebook.com/BabyCentreUK>

Babycup: <https://www.facebook.com/BabycupUK?ref=profile>

Babydino: <https://www.facebook.com/Babydino.com?fref=ts>

Baby led: <https://www.facebook.com/babyledweaning?ref=profile>

Babyworld:

https://www.facebook.com/Babyworld.co.uk?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Banham Zoo: <https://www.facebook.com/banhamzoo?ref=profile>

Brighton mums:

https://www.facebook.com/brightonmums?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Bumps to bambino: <https://www.facebook.com/BumpsToBambino?ref=profile>

Cheeky monkeys: <https://www.facebook.com/cheekimonkeys?ref=profile>

Children's activities in Norfolk:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/201491926579915/?ref=br_rs

Children's cinema club:

<https://www.facebook.com/ChildrensCinemaClub?ref=profile>

Cinema city kids club: <https://www.facebook.com/cckidsclub?ref=profile>

Clutter City Norwich Art centre:

<https://www.facebook.com/norwichartscentre.cluttercity?ref=profile>

Dad info: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dad-Info/19505547614?fref=ts>

Dads house:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dadshouse/89340038808?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Dad talk:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/DADTALK/94248320617?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Dorset dads:

https://www.facebook.com/DorsetDads?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

East Anglian Film Network Group:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/eastanglianfn/?notification_group_r2j_approved

Families and friends of lesbians and gays:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Families-and-Friends-of-Lesbians-and-Gays-fflag/126552394066483?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Families Gloucestershire:

https://www.facebook.com/FamiliesGlos?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Families London-Surrey:

https://www.facebook.com/FamiliesLSB?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Family matters institute:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Family-Matters-Institute/146824261994458?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Father and child resource centre:

https://www.facebook.com/fatherchild?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Fatherhood institute:

https://www.facebook.com/fatherhoodinstitute?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Gentle parenting Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GentleParentingUK/>

Glad you're my dad:

https://www.facebook.com/gladyouremydad?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Great Gizmos:

https://www.facebook.com/GreatGizmos?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Hackney Family Information Service: <https://www.facebook.com/hackneyfis>

Happy child: <https://www.facebook.com/happychildinfo/timeline>

Harminnies: <https://www.facebook.com/harminnies?ref=profile>

I love my MOM:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/I-love-my-MOM/454081901332345>

Jo jingles: <https://www.facebook.com/jojinglesnorwicharea?ref=profile>

Just bambinos:

https://www.facebook.com/JustBambinos?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Kalinka Brighton: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/113020838801385/?fref=ts>

London mums:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/London-Mums/120070321401597?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Lovedbyparents: <https://www.facebook.com/Lovedbyparents>

Made for mums: <https://www.facebook.com/madeformums/timeline>

Mam UK: <https://www.facebook.com/mambabyuk?ref=profile>

Mamas and papas UK:

https://www.facebook.com/mamasandpapasuk?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Mini Monkey Gym: <https://www.facebook.com/minimonkeygym?ref=profile>

More than mummies:

https://www.facebook.com/morethanmummies?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Mumandworking:

https://www.facebook.com/mumandworking?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Mummy's room: <https://www.facebook.com/beautifulsmilepage/timeline>

Mums baby magazine:

https://www.facebook.com/mumsbabymag?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Mumpreneur: <https://www.facebook.com/mumpreneuruk?ref=profile>

Mumsnet Bloggers network:

https://www.facebook.com/MumsnetBloggersNetwork?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Mumzy-not:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mumzy-not/172566189467118?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Munchkin UK: <https://www.facebook.com/MunchkinUK?ref=profile>

Norfolk multilingual families:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/385371188230155/?ref=br_rs

Norfolk mums: <https://www.facebook.com/NorfolkMumsDotCom?ref=profile>

Norwich Network: https://www.facebook.com/groups/norwichnetwork/?ref=br_rs

Norwich Sling Meet: <https://www.facebook.com/Norwichslingmeet?ref=profile>

Parentdish UK:

https://www.facebook.com/parentdishuk?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Parenting teenagers:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Parenting-Teenagers/547043688662514?sk=timeline>

Separated dads:

https://www.facebook.com/SeparatedDads?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Single parents support group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/307548776031454/>

Softplay2u: <https://www.facebook.com/Softplay2uNorwich?ref=profile>

Suffolk Family YMCA: https://www.facebook.com/SuffolkFamilyYMCA?ref=br_rs

Suffolk parents: https://www.facebook.com/suffolkparents?ref=br_rs

Sunflower mama:

https://www.facebook.com/sunflowermama?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

The baby show: <https://www.facebook.com/thebabyshow/timeline>

The magical elf: <https://www.facebook.com/themagicaelf?ref=profile>

Tiny talk:

<https://www.facebook.com/TinyTalknorthnorwichandnortheastnorfolk?ref=profile>

Toddler Approved:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Toddler-Approved/179029702145360?ref=profile>

UK mums who make:

https://www.facebook.com/UKMUMSWHOMAKE?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

West Sussex parents forum:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/West-Sussex-Parents-Forum/357548895577>

World's best father:

https://www.facebook.com/EngledowArtPhotography?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

Yummy mummy maternity:

<https://www.facebook.com/YummyMummyMaternity?ref=profile>

Yummy mummies and mummies to be:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Yummy-Mummies-and-Mummies-To-Be/120662551356607?sk=timeline>

Appendix 3 – Survey questions

Q1: Please indicate your consent below

Q2: Are other members of your household filling in the questionnaire as well?

Q3: In which part of the UK do you live?

Q4: What is your age?

Q5: What is your gender?

Q6: What is your marital status?

Q7: Are you currently...? [multiple-choice question about employment status]

Q8: Do you have children?

Q9: How many children do you have and what are their ages?

Q10: Do your children live with you?

Q11: How important is television to you?

Q12: Where do you watch television most often: at your home or outside your home?

Q13: Do you usually watch television on your own or with other members of the household?

Q14: Do you use any other media technologies when watching television?

Q15: What kind of media technologies do you have in your home?

Q16: Which media technologies do you consider your own, rather than shared with other family members?

Q17: Which television services do you use on these technologies?

Q18: Which devices and services do you use most often to access television content when you watch television on your own and why?

Q19: When watching television with other family members, which devices and services do you use most often to access television content and why?

Q20: How often do you watch television programmes on devices other than the TV set?

Q21: Please choose how much you agree with the below statements:

Q22: If there is anything else about your television use that you wanted to discuss and felt was not addressed by the questionnaire, please share it here:

Q23: Would you be interested in being interviewed on this subject? If so, please provide your name and email address:

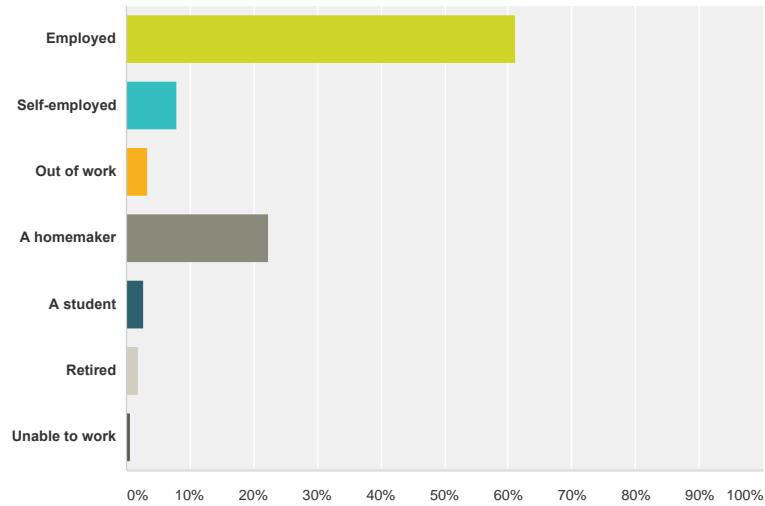
Appendix 4 – Survey question 7: Are you currently...?

Digital television, technology and everyday family life

SurveyMonkey

Q7 Are you currently...?

Answered: 152 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Employed	61.18%	93
Self-employed	7.89%	12
Out of work	3.29%	5
A homemaker	22.37%	34
A student	2.63%	4
Retired	1.97%	3
Unable to work	0.66%	1
Total		152

Appendix 5 - Interviewed families (*all names are pseudonyms*)

1. Rachel Wilson, 45-54 years old, Norfolk. Rachel is a student and a part-time teaching assistant. Single mother of three daughters: Olivia aged 16, Isla aged 12 and Ava aged 7.
2. Victoria and Andrew Smith, 25-34 years old, Nottinghamshire. Victoria is a homemaker, and Andrew is a teaching assistant. Parents of two daughters: Poppy aged 2 and Layla aged 5 months.
3. Mary and Stuart Powell, 35-44 years old, Norfolk. Mary is an education officer and a part time student, and Andrew is a sound recordist. Parents of Lily aged 1.
4. Deborah and Robert West, 25-34 years old, Kent. Deborah is a homemaker, and Robert works in IT. Parents of there children: Arthur aged 6, Ross aged 3 and Maggie aged 1.
5. Megan and William Adams, 35-44 years old, Norfolk. Megan works part-time as a marketing manager, and William is a full-time university lecturer. Parents of two sons: Daniel aged 5 and Lucas aged 2.
6. Annabelle and Nick Campbell, 25-34 years old, Norfolk. Annabelle is a homemaker, and Nick is a web-developer. Parents of two children: Max aged 3, and Nicole aged 6 months.
7. Sonia and James Cooke, 35-44 years old, East Sussex. Sonia is a homemaker, and James works as a managing director. Parents to three sons: Tom aged 10, Freddie aged 6 and Alex aged 3.
8. Samantha and Tom Atkinson, 25-34 years old, Norfolk. Samantha is a homemaker, and Tom is a teaching assistant. Parents to twins: Iris and Amelia aged 5.

9. Abigail and Colin Fox, 25-34 years old, Norfolk. Abigail works full-time as a managing director, and Colin works full-time for a housing association. Parents to Stephanie aged 2.

10. Emily and Jason Davies, 25-34 years old, Norfolk. Emily is on maternity leave from her job as a recruitment coordinator, and Jason is a teacher. Parents to Mike aged 5 months.

11. Helen Jones, 35-44 years old, Norfolk. Helen works part-time for the after school club. Single mother of two children: Peter aged 7 and Anna aged 6.

12. Donna Foster, 25-34 years old, Suffolk. Husband refused to take part in the interview. Donna is on maternity leave from her job in retail. Mother of two children: Jack aged 2 and Sophie aged 6 months.

Appendix 6 – Interview questions

1. What television technologies do you have and use, and what is used more often?
2. Do you usually tune in for a specific programme, or do you *watch television*?
3. Do you watch live or recorded/DVD/Catch Up? Why do you prefer this?
4. Do you think it is a different experience when you don't watch programmes as they are broadcasted/live?
5. How do you find things that you watch on iPlayer/Netflix/YouTube?
6. Do you get distracted by other media or things to do when watching the programmes?
7. How many television sets do you have in your home? What other devices do you use to watch television?
8. Where do you watch television most often, in the living room or in different places around the house?
9. What is the space/place that television technology occupies in the home/room? What made you put it in this particular place, why do you think it IS its place?
10. Has it always been there or did you move it? In the past 30 days, have you moved television-viewing equipment around, including either within a room or from room to room?
11. What about more 'fluid' media technologies, such as phones, laptops and tablets? Do they have a 'place' or are they moving around the house?
12. Do you ever watch television/videos outside the home? On the move? In what kind of situations?
13. *What is the mise-en-scene of the living room? Do people want to hide wires? Do they want television to 'sink' into the living room, become part of it, or does it stand out?*
14. Is it important for you to have TV/film on DVDs/Blurays or do you prefer the cloud format? What do you think about renting films/TV online?
15. What was the motivation behind buying a certain media technology?

16. Do you 'upgrade' your media technologies often? Why? What are the next media technologies you want to/wish you could buy? Why, what do you think these new media technologies will improve?
17. Do you have any routines of television viewing, or do you watch it at different times everyday?
18. What place does television occupy in your family life? If we imagine that it is suddenly gone, do you think you will notice?
19. Do these viewing routines change when you get a new device (DVR, tablet etc.)?
20. Do these rules/daily routines change? When it's weekend? School holiday? Summer?
21. What is television for you, what counts as television? It is broadcast channels, amateur content, full feature films or documentary? Is it even possible to draw a distinctive line? Can anything watched on a screen be considered television you think?
22. Do you feel that you have a relationship with the medium or with media technology, or is just on the background of your life?
23. Is it important for you that you can control the programmes? Does it change your attitudes to them?
24. Which media technologies are shared and which are individual, for instance, exclusively used by children? How are they split between siblings?
25. What devices do children use, are they allowed to use them on their own?
26. Do you always watch programmes/films together?
27. Do you think television is an individual or social experience?
28. Do you think traditional broadcast television and online alternatives are the same in this respect?
29. How are viewing decisions made? Do you discuss it as a family, or does someone initiate it/is in charge of what will be watched?
30. Are there instances when only one person is watching, or you watch different things at the same time?
31. What are your thoughts on children and television viewing as a pastime? Is it a good pastime in your view?

32. What do you think are the risks of television viewing for children? And what are the benefits/positives?
33. Do you think your children can make decisions about what to watch and what not to watch? Or do you think it is the role of a parent/part of parenting to manage what children are watching, regulate, advise them?
34. Do you feel the need to control/manage your children's television viewing? How do you do it in practical terms?
35. Are there any rules for children using television and technology [guidelines regarding the types of material and the amount of media you allow children to consume]?
36. Can you think of a situation when television/media technologies became a source of conflict? How was it resolved?
37. Have you ever been given advice/comment from grandparents/family/friends with regards to children and media use?
38. What is in your view a good alternative to television viewing?
39. Did your television viewing/attitudes towards television/relationship with television changed after you had children? Did you have to adapt your media habits?
40. Do you control/manage television differently/tougher than other media use?
41. How is regulating/managing children's media use in your family? Do you do it together with your partner?

Appendix 7 – Overview of the components of participants’ domestic digital estates

Q15 What kind of media technologies do you have in your home?

Answered: 152 Skipped: 0

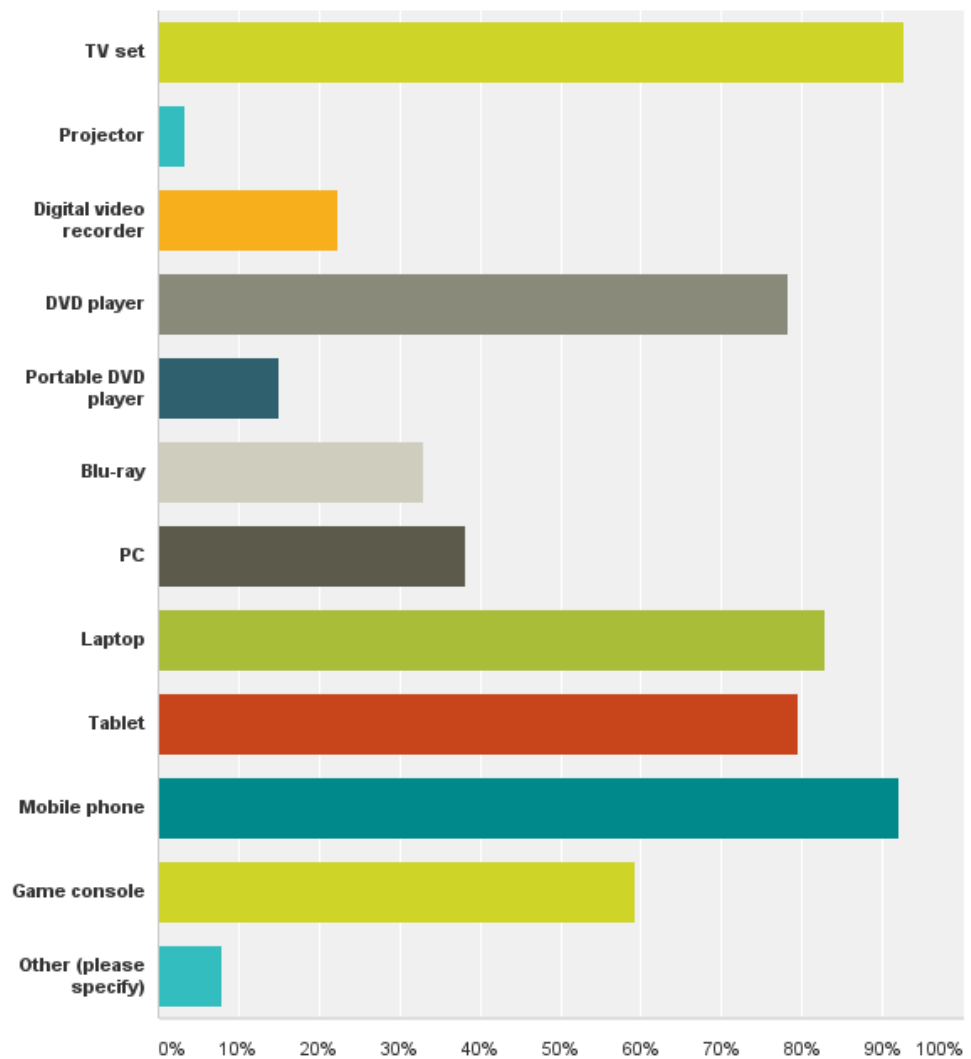


Figure 1. Survey question 15 – What kind of media technologies do you have in your home?

Q16 Which media technologies do you consider your own, rather than shared with other family members?

Answered: 152 Skipped: 0

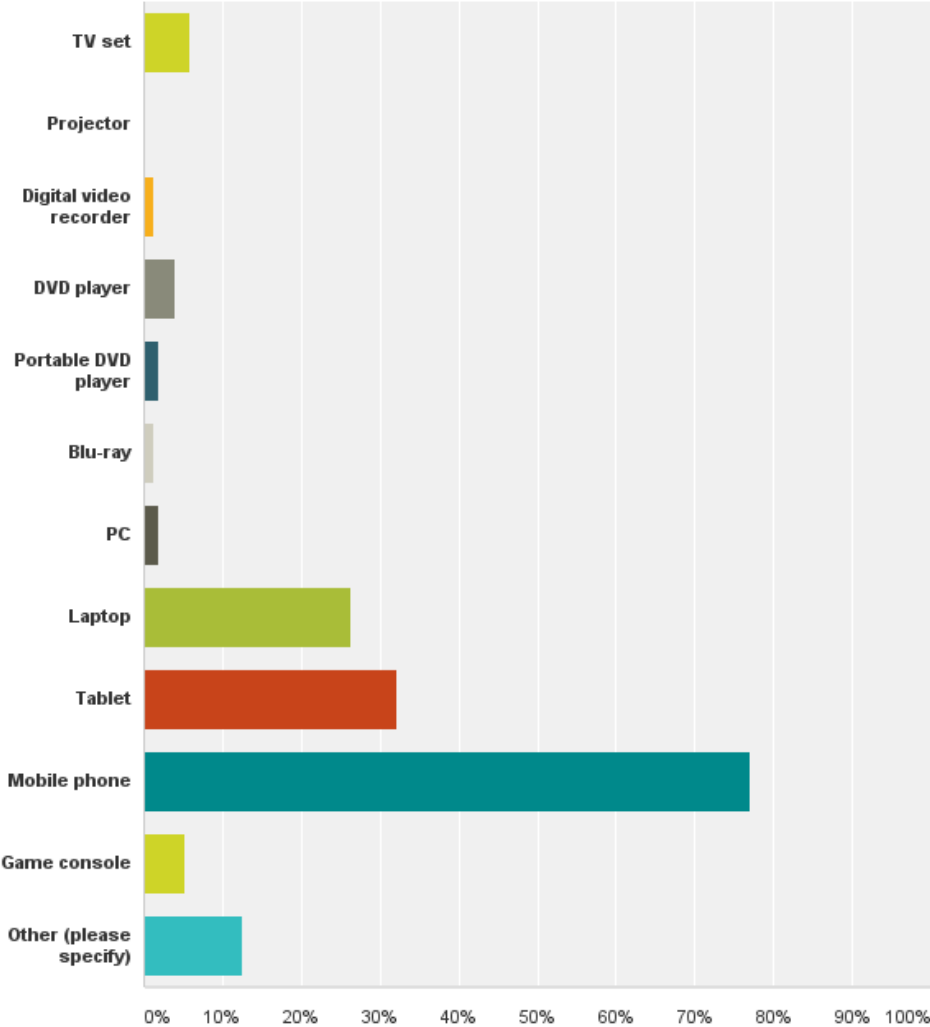


Figure 2. Survey question 16 – Which media technologies do you consider your own, rather than shared with other family members?

Q17 Which television services do you use on these technologies?

Answered: 152 Skipped: 0

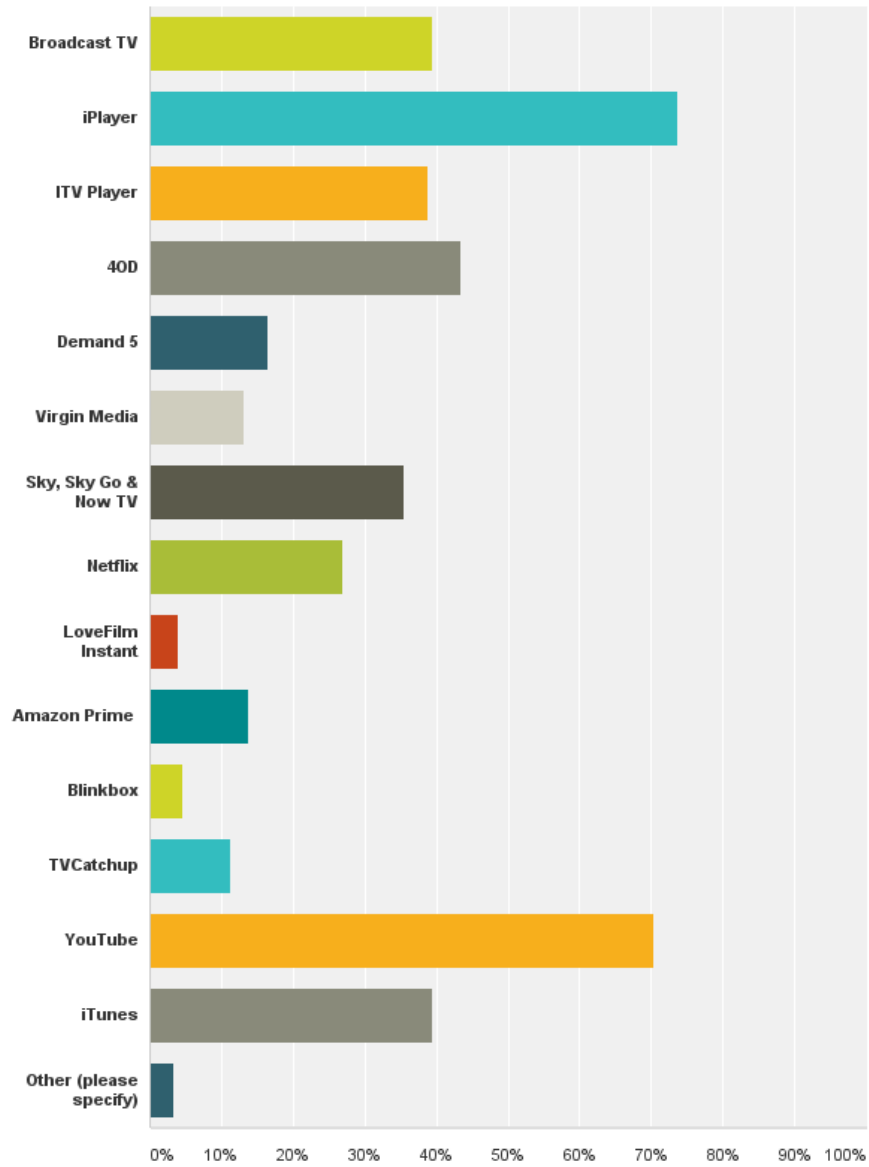


Figure 3. Survey question 17 – Which television services do you use on these technologies?

Appendix 8 – Parental attitudes on digital television viewing

Survey Q21 - 'Please choose how much you agree with the below statements'.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Average Rating
It is important to me that I can watch television programmes on different devices	13.16% 20	25.00% 38	27.63% 42	19.74% 30	14.47% 22	152	2.97
It is important to me that I can watch television programmes in different places around the house and outside the home	16.45% 25	26.97% 41	26.32% 40	20.39% 31	9.87% 15	152	2.80
I like to watch television programmes at my own time, rather than according to the TV schedule	1.32% 2	5.30% 8	11.26% 17	34.44% 52	47.68% 72	151	4.22
I often use the pause/resume option when I am watching television	9.93% 15	7.95% 12	11.26% 17	33.11% 50	37.75% 57	151	3.81
I often record television programmes to watch them at a later time/date	16.45% 25	7.89% 12	7.24% 11	26.32% 40	42.11% 64	152	3.70
I often use television catch-up services to catch up with the programmes that I have missed	8.55% 13	7.89% 12	13.16% 20	37.50% 57	32.89% 50	152	3.78
I often download television programmes via television set to watch them later on	31.29% 46	20.41% 30	15.65% 23	14.97% 22	17.69% 26	147	2.67
I often download television programmes via computer, tablet or phone to watch them later on	36.42% 55	22.52% 34	17.22% 26	13.91% 21	9.93% 15	151	2.38

Appendix 9 – First stage of coding

Children and media	0	0	3 Feb 2015, 13:11	KM	3 Feb 2015, 13:34	KM
Children and internet	5	23	3 Feb 2015, 13:11	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:41	KM
Children and technology	4	20	3 Feb 2015, 13:07	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:41	KM
Children and TV	5	30	3 Feb 2015, 13:12	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:41	KM
Digital generation discourse	1	1	11 Mar 2015, 17:41	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:41	KM
Risks and safety	3	15	4 Feb 2015, 08:54	KM	4 Feb 2015, 09:14	KM
Young people and TV-devices	3	5	10 Feb 2015, 10:45	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:43	KM
Choice of device-platform	0	0	30 Jan 2015, 15:02	KM	11 Feb 2015, 13:45	KM
Decision making process of TV practices	1	11	28 Jan 2015, 11:47	KM	19 Feb 2015, 12:15	KM
Avoiding conflicts	2	8	30 Jan 2015, 16:21	KM	12 Feb 2015, 09:25	KM
Broadband speed	2	3	6 Feb 2015, 11:13	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:26	KM
Caters for diversity of tastes	2	8	28 Jan 2015, 16:41	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:20	KM
Content dependent	2	8	30 Jan 2015, 16:08	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:31	KM
Convenience	2	22	28 Jan 2015, 12:37	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:49	KM
Device flexibility	2	11	28 Jan 2015, 16:57	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:49	KM
Logic of use	6	44	28 Jan 2015, 15:54	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:45	KM
Personal and private	1	3	10 Feb 2015, 16:04	KM	10 Feb 2015, 16:12	KM
Technical knowledge	2	7	28 Jan 2015, 16:12	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:41	KM
Time, temporality	2	11	28 Jan 2015, 15:25	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:38	KM
Digital estate	6	9	23 Feb 2015, 09:11	KM	18 Mar 2015, 09:46	KM
Hierarchy of devices-mediums	4	7	3 Feb 2015, 13:32	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:40	KM
Multifunctionality of devices	5	8	10 Feb 2015, 11:03	KM	13 Mar 2015, 11:29	KM
No traditional TV	4	22	28 Jan 2015, 16:11	KM	18 Mar 2015, 09:51	KM
Nostalgia	1	2	11 Mar 2015, 14:15	KM	11 Mar 2015, 14:16	KM
Other device instead of TV	2	6	26 Jan 2015, 12:26	KM	18 Mar 2015, 09:53	KM
Other device instead of second TV	3	10	26 Jan 2015, 12:27	KM	23 Feb 2015, 09:14	KM
Other device instead of TV	3	31	28 Jan 2015, 16:10	KM	18 Feb 2015, 15:51	KM
Replicating TV experience	2	3	12 Feb 2015, 13:42	KM	18 Feb 2015, 15:51	KM
Preferring TV	2	4	10 Feb 2015, 10:33	KM	18 Mar 2015, 09:53	KM
TV - family room	3	16	28 Jan 2015, 16:36	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:45	KM
TV - traditionalist	2	12	30 Jan 2015, 16:26	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:26	KM
TV as easiest	2	10	28 Jan 2015, 15:32	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:27	KM
TV the biggest screen	3	15	28 Jan 2015, 15:11	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:45	KM
Tablet-iPad	3	5	28 Jan 2015, 15:11	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:31	KM
Technologies in the home	11	47	3 Feb 2015, 13:09	KM	18 Mar 2015, 09:53	KM
User-viewer	3	4	12 Feb 2015, 13:38	KM	13 Mar 2015, 11:29	KM
Content - what is watched	1	1	28 Jan 2015, 13:41	KM	6 Feb 2015, 10:13	KM
Content hierarchy	3	4	10 Feb 2015, 10:38	KM	7 Apr 2015, 14:00	KM
Discovering content	4	7	3 Feb 2015, 13:43	KM	7 Apr 2015, 11:35	KM
Personalised suggestions	0	0	18 Feb 2015, 16:11	KM	18 Feb 2015, 16:12	KM
Recommendations from people	2	2	18 Feb 2015, 16:11	KM	7 Apr 2015, 11:35	KM
Distractions when watching	4	7	10 Feb 2015, 15:52	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:39	KM
Flow	1	3	7 Apr 2015, 11:34	KM	7 Apr 2015, 11:35	KM
TV VS Film	2	12	28 Jan 2015, 13:42	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:15	KM
Good VS failing parenting	0	0	28 Jan 2015, 15:40	KM	28 Jan 2015, 15:40	KM
Cautious about TV	3	17	28 Jan 2015, 15:40	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:15	KM
Control-manage children's viewing-use	5	22	30 Jan 2015, 15:28	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:15	KM
Judgements about parenting	1	2	30 Jan 2015, 16:31	KM	10 Feb 2015, 10:30	KM
Parental concerns	4	15	3 Feb 2015, 13:14	KM	4 Feb 2015, 14:37	KM
Live TV VS everything else	0	0	28 Jan 2015, 11:49	KM	10 Feb 2015, 10:35	KM
Catch up	3	29	26 Jan 2015, 12:25	KM	18 Feb 2015, 16:33	KM
Downloading	2	2	28 Jan 2015, 16:11	KM	12 Feb 2015, 10:09	KM
DVD	2	11	30 Jan 2015, 15:33	KM	12 Feb 2015, 09:34	KM
live TV	3	17	28 Jan 2015, 16:53	KM	7 Apr 2015, 14:00	KM
On demand	4	35	28 Jan 2015, 15:22	KM	18 Mar 2015, 09:51	KM
Purpose VS background viewing	0	0	28 Jan 2015, 11:51	KM	28 Jan 2015, 13:43	KM
Recording	4	15	28 Jan 2015, 12:42	KM	7 Apr 2015, 14:00	KM
What's the difference	5	7	18 Feb 2015, 16:19	KM	7 Apr 2015, 12:13	KM
WHY	2	3	7 Apr 2015, 11:58	KM	7 Apr 2015, 14:00	KM
YouTube	3	10	28 Jan 2015, 11:56	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:55	KM

TV and family life	0	0	28 Jan 2015, 11:51	KM	11 Mar 2015, 14:14	KM
Babysitting service	2	22	28 Jan 2015, 15:39	KM	12 Feb 2015, 10:17	KM
Busy lifestyle	3	11	11 Feb 2015, 13:43	KM	7 Apr 2015, 12:13	KM
Children influence	6	18	26 Jan 2015, 12:39	KM	7 Apr 2015, 12:06	KM
Everyday routine	15	27	30 Jan 2015, 15:33	KM	7 Apr 2015, 12:15	KM
Family finances	1	1	18 Feb 2015, 16:23	KM	18 Feb 2015, 16:33	KM
Family time together	2	36	26 Jan 2015, 12:08	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:55	KM
Home	1	4	11 Mar 2015, 14:14	KM	11 Mar 2015, 14:18	KM
Individual viewing	0	0	18 Feb 2015, 16:36	KM	18 Feb 2015, 16:36	KM
Life cycle	2	3	11 Mar 2015, 17:42	KM	7 Apr 2015, 11:51	KM
Multitasking	2	2	12 Feb 2015, 13:12	KM	18 Mar 2015, 09:54	KM
Negative responses to television	1	1	28 Jan 2015, 13:36	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:51	KM
Attitudes to advertising	2	2	28 Jan 2015, 11:46	KM	7 Apr 2015, 11:59	KM
Ads bad for children	1	1	28 Jan 2015, 15:20	KM	28 Jan 2015, 15:21	KM
Irritating advertising	1	2	26 Jan 2015, 12:41	KM	28 Jan 2015, 13:39	KM
Skipping ads	2	2	26 Jan 2015, 12:41	KM	12 Feb 2015, 10:18	KM
Expensive	1	1	18 Feb 2015, 16:24	KM	18 Feb 2015, 16:30	KM
Inactive	1	1	10 Feb 2015, 10:28	KM	10 Feb 2015, 10:30	KM
Poor quality and value for money	1	2	28 Jan 2015, 13:39	KM	30 Jan 2015, 15:18	KM
Repetitiveness	1	2	28 Jan 2015, 13:38	KM	28 Jan 2015, 15:34	KM
TV as a distraction	2	2	4 Feb 2015, 11:32	KM	18 Feb 2015, 16:35	KM
Outside the home	4	6	25 Feb 2015, 14:31	KM	25 Feb 2015, 14:49	KM
Overlapping media practices	2	2	18 Feb 2015, 15:53	KM	18 Feb 2015, 15:56	KM
Purchasing devices	5	10	10 Feb 2015, 16:08	KM	11 Mar 2015, 14:58	KM
Reasons for watching TV - why important	0	0	28 Jan 2015, 11:54	KM	30 Jan 2015, 15:54	KM
Available	1	2	26 Jan 2015, 12:35	KM	10 Feb 2015, 16:13	KM
Comfort	1	1	28 Jan 2015, 15:53	KM	28 Jan 2015, 15:53	KM
Companionship	1	2	28 Jan 2015, 15:29	KM	30 Jan 2015, 16:19	KM
Culture	3	3	26 Jan 2015, 12:34	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:40	KM
Educational	2	17	26 Jan 2015, 12:07	KM	12 Feb 2015, 10:07	KM
Entertainment	2	17	26 Jan 2015, 12:34	KM	12 Feb 2015, 10:22	KM
Free	1	1	26 Jan 2015, 12:34	KM	26 Jan 2015, 12:35	KM
Keep up to date, news	3	14	28 Jan 2015, 15:15	KM	18 Feb 2015, 16:18	KM
Pasttime	2	9	26 Jan 2015, 12:22	KM	12 Feb 2015, 10:22	KM
Relax, unwind, escape	2	30	26 Jan 2015, 12:19	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:19	KM
Social connection to people	4	9	30 Jan 2015, 15:53	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:40	KM
Source of discussion	3	6	28 Jan 2015, 15:29	KM	11 Mar 2015, 17:40	KM
TV hype	1	1	26 Jan 2015, 12:19	KM	26 Jan 2015, 12:24	KM
Space	5	14	25 Feb 2015, 09:58	KM	7 Apr 2015, 12:03	KM
Special occasions	2	10	10 Feb 2015, 16:07	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:56	KM
What is television	3	3	18 Feb 2015, 15:52	KM	13 Mar 2015, 11:30	KM
Women and media-devices	2	36	30 Jan 2015, 16:09	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:31	KM
ME' time	2	15	30 Jan 2015, 16:09	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:21	KM
Television and Gender	2	7	18 Mar 2015, 09:48	KM	1 Apr 2015, 11:25	KM
Time constraints	2	4	10 Feb 2015, 10:32	KM	12 Feb 2015, 13:11	KM
TV and mothering	2	19	28 Jan 2015, 16:23	KM	12 Feb 2015, 10:17	KM

Appendix 10 – Second stage of coding, additional/edited codes

Gender	8	22	15 Sep 2015, 07:10	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:27	KF
Child care	11	17	15 Sep 2015, 07:10	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:44	KF
Devison of labour, responsibility	7	16	15 Sep 2015, 10:26	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:23	KF
Time for oneself	8	21	15 Sep 2015, 10:29	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:16	KF
What having a child means	2	2	15 Sep 2015, 07:37	KF	15 Sep 2015, 10:38	KF
Women and media technology	7	31	15 Sep 2015, 10:28	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:36	KF
Media devices in the home	12	58	15 Sep 2015, 07:11	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:36	KF
DVD, DVD VS Digital	10	16	15 Sep 2015, 07:18	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:04	KF
Logistics of media choice and use	7	15	15 Sep 2015, 07:18	KF	18 Sep 2015, 07:49	KF
Media technology and space	12	21	15 Sep 2015, 07:27	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:01	KF
Methodology	3	4	15 Sep 2015, 07:53	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:55	KF
Parenting and children's TV	1	1	15 Sep 2015, 07:38	KF	16 Sep 2015, 08:12	KF
'Good parent' and children's TV	12	68	15 Sep 2015, 07:35	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:36	KF
Advice from others on children's TV	7	12	15 Sep 2015, 07:54	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:19	KF
Children and media devices	12	80	15 Sep 2015, 07:19	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:34	KF
Children and TV	12	117	15 Sep 2015, 07:16	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:33	KF
Children background viewing	4	11	15 Sep 2015, 15:16	KF	18 Sep 2015, 07:01	KF
Content children watch	11	46	15 Sep 2015, 07:13	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:30	KF
Discussing TV with other parents	10	25	15 Sep 2015, 10:44	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:34	KF
Fatherhood	6	18	15 Sep 2015, 07:36	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:34	KF
Fighting the stigma around technology	1	1	15 Sep 2015, 07:51	KF	15 Sep 2015, 07:52	KF
Gender approach to parenting	5	15	15 Sep 2015, 07:36	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:34	KF
Intensive parenting VS lazy parenting	10	33	15 Sep 2015, 07:42	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:36	KF
Memory and parenting	9	13	15 Sep 2015, 07:45	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:34	KF
Parenting and consumerism	5	7	16 Sep 2015, 08:11	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:20	KF
Parenting, TV as class issue	4	22	15 Sep 2015, 13:00	KF	18 Sep 2015, 07:45	KF
RISK	12	46	15 Sep 2015, 07:15	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:28	KF
Addict	1	1	15 Sep 2015, 10:41	KF	15 Sep 2015, 10:42	KF
Advertising as risky	8	12	15 Sep 2015, 07:14	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:22	KF
Danger of inappropriate content	9	12	15 Sep 2015, 07:55	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:02	KF
Danger of too much TV for children	2	4	15 Sep 2015, 07:33	KF	16 Sep 2015, 08:26	KF
TV in bedroom as risk	4	5	15 Sep 2015, 07:23	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:28	KF
Screens and discipline	5	11	15 Sep 2015, 12:29	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:32	KF
Stigma around children's TV viewing	10	33	15 Sep 2015, 07:34	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:03	KF
Strategies of managing media and TV	12	90	15 Sep 2015, 07:45	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:33	KF
Technology and generations	3	3	15 Sep 2015, 07:50	KF	17 Sep 2015, 07:38	KF
Technology as connecting	3	3	15 Sep 2015, 07:49	KF	17 Sep 2015, 07:38	KF
Technology for education development	9	18	15 Sep 2015, 12:49	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:31	KF
TV and conflict	10	23	15 Sep 2015, 07:21	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:27	KF
TV as a babysitter	10	18	15 Sep 2015, 07:34	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:01	KF
TV as socialisation for children	10	19	15 Sep 2015, 12:45	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:20	KF
What childhood should be like	10	19	15 Sep 2015, 07:44	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:34	KF
What and How parents watch	11	38	15 Sep 2015, 07:17	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:30	KF
Binge watching	2	4	15 Sep 2015, 12:39	KF	17 Sep 2015, 08:39	KF
Busy lifestyle	2	3	16 Sep 2015, 06:59	KF	16 Sep 2015, 10:57	KF
Discovering content	10	13	15 Sep 2015, 10:43	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:55	KF
Home with no TV	2	13	17 Sep 2015, 11:43	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:17	KF
Life course	6	14	15 Sep 2015, 07:23	KF	18 Sep 2015, 07:47	KF
Live TV VS the rest	11	18	15 Sep 2015, 07:20	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:54	KF
Media multitasking, multiple screens	10	22	15 Sep 2015, 07:26	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:27	KF
Television viewing routine	12	20	15 Sep 2015, 07:28	KF	18 Sep 2015, 11:49	KF
TV as a social experience	7	12	16 Sep 2015, 08:15	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:30	KF
TV as central for family entertainment	8	11	15 Sep 2015, 12:44	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:30	KF
TV viewing negotiation	9	24	15 Sep 2015, 15:45	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:17	KF
Watching outside the home	4	5	17 Sep 2015, 07:56	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:34	KF
Watching TV together	12	37	15 Sep 2015, 07:21	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:30	KF
What counts as watching TV	2	3	18 Sep 2015, 07:41	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:17	KF
What is television	12	30	15 Sep 2015, 12:46	KF	18 Sep 2015, 12:30	KF