

Culture and Citizenship: a case study of practice in the BBC

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I declare that the work contained presented within this thesis is my own.

Laurence Pawley, 30 September 2009

ABSTRACT: This thesis constitutes a critique of current citizenship theory, focussed on the ways in which various definitions of ‘culture’ have gained recognition as part of citizenship’s theoretical terrain. Through a qualitative case study of practice within the BBC, the thesis reflects on the limitations and potentialities of current scholarship, and suggests how a pragmatic cultural citizenship might offer a way forward.

The thesis begins through an engagement with existing literature which produces distinct ‘models’ of citizenship: liberal, liberal cosmopolitan, multi-cultural, and ‘deep cultural’. These models function as a conceptual ‘toolkit’, and the following chapter demonstrates how, via public sphere theory, they can be applied to understand the relationship between communicative institutions and citizens. The relationship between citizenship theory and media practice is thereby made explicit, laying the foundations for subsequent empirical work.

The empirical chapters take the form of a qualitative case study of policy and practice in the BBC. This begins with a brief analysis of the institution’s policy history with respect to citizenship, and subsequently focuses on the 2006 broadcast *Manchester Passion*. The case study reveals how policy relating to issues including identity and participation was implemented at the micro-level. In doing so, the thesis explores how which different conceptualisations of citizenship function in concert with practical ‘logics’ (including economy, cultural difference, and genre).

Building on this analysis, the thesis concludes by suggesting that the BBC’s practice was most effective when it adopted a pragmatic approach to cultural conflicts. This argument (described in terms of ‘cultural balance’) is mapped back onto the models developed earlier in the theses, and used to propose that citizenship theory should seek to reimagine itself on a more fluid basis; one that recognises that citizenship is inevitably realised in socially and culturally specific circumstances.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The motivation behind this thesis rests in the juxtaposition of dual, long-standing interests: the status of the concept of citizenship, and the role of communicative institutions (most obviously those of the mass media) in contemporary political communities. To explicate the dynamic between these strands of thought, it is helpful initially to discuss the first. When asked to conceptualise the notion of being a *citizen*, most people would undoubtedly refer to their political membership of a nation-state, and perhaps to notions of individual rights. In doing so, we discursively wed citizenship to a Westphalian political settlement that has, particularly since the 1990's, been the subject of intense problematisation and critique. In the rush of social theory towards alternative discourses (notably those based around fluid accounts of identity, and a politics decoupled from institutions of the nation-state) citizenship as it was historically formulated might appear obsolete.

This analysis has, however, met with resistance, for what I believe are two distinct reasons. Firstly, the demise of the 'old' politics has been over-stated; institutions and norms created at the national level continue to form a key determinant of the lives of communities. While the position of the nation-state is undoubtedly subject to new contestations, the result has been a renewed focus on citizenship and its application in modern societies. Many of these ideas form a familiar part of our political landscape: the relationship between the nation-state and trans-national or supra-national sites of power, the status of minority communities and the pluralisation of national identity, and a renewed concern with social cohesion and participation in the context of a fragmented, heavily mediated public discourse. Even, for example, in an established nation-state like the United Kingdom, recent policy initiatives have included citizenship classes in schools, and proposals have been made by members of the ruling Labour Party for an annual 'British Day' and new cultural stipulations for migrants (Kelly and Byrne, 2007: 6). Citizenship remains a 'live' political concept, albeit one mobilised in reference to a wider range of debates that reflect the prominence of cultural and identity politics.

Secondly, there is something about the concept of citizenship itself which points to its survival even in the event of its de-coupling from its institutional history. In considering

ourselves as citizens, we capture a set of intersections that speak to our social lives. Citizenship exists between the public and private, acknowledging the status of individuals as members of a bounded community. It implies the consequent existence of rights *and* responsibilities, demonstrating both the existence of social norms and principles, and our mutual interdependence in ensuring that these conditions are fulfilled. It also speaks strongly to discourses of inclusion and exclusion: the naming of ‘citizen’ as a category presumes that its opposite, that of ‘non-citizen’, is also possible. Through these intersections amongst others, citizenship is revealed as a rich theoretical site from which to consider our relationship with any form of political society, and with the other selves who inhabit it. Whether this society takes the form of a nation-state or otherwise, citizenship would, I believe, retain its conceptual force.

The continual relevance of citizenship is emphasised by a glut of recent scholarly interventions into the concept: interventions which, generally speaking, seek to rework citizenship as realised in modern nation-states (usually Western liberal democracies) by responding to shifts in social theory. This work has come from a number of scholarly traditions and disciplines, but oscillates around the role of ‘culture’ (and specifically, the ways in which traditional citizenship theory has failed to account for culture's effects on the status of citizens as members of a political community). By “culture”, I refer specifically to the multiple definitions supplied by Williams: respectively referring to the customs of a community, texts and artefacts, and a broad ‘way of life’ (Williams, 1958).

It was an awareness of these disparate interventions which particularly motivated this research. Political theorists, seeking to respond to a transfer of political power to supra and trans-national levels have encouraged debate on ‘global citizenship’, evoking a sense of kinship which transcends the nation. Anthropologists and sociologists have considered the actualities of citizenship for minority groups, often arguing for a concept of ‘group rights’ as a means of redressing inequalities predicated on cultural difference. And the development of cultural studies has emphasised the role of texts and discourse in shaping our political and social relations. This latter development, typified most recently by Miller’s diatribes against the limiting effects of neo-liberalism on mediated discourse (Miller, 2007), establishes a direct link between the mass media and

citizenship; the former becomes a site through which the possibilities of the latter can be stated or contested.

Far from citizenship being a staid concept, it instead appears in flux to the extent that clearly defining it becomes an increasingly partial task (dependent to a large degree, as I will argue in this thesis, on one's own engagement with the idea of 'culture'). In addition, there appears to be a developing, troubling disconnect between the theory of citizenship, and its actuality. I have already partially alluded to this in reference to the over-enthusiastic move of theorists to herald the demise of the nation-state; it is similarly described by Skrbis, Kendall and Woodward's critique of 'excessive theorization' around notions of *cosmopolitan* citizenship which appeal to an abstracted cosmopolitan mentality (Skrbis *et al*, 2004: 4). If citizenship theorists wish to make relevant contributions to progressive politics, it seems essential that their work avoids this tendency towards utopian speculation, and concentrates instead on the lived experiences of citizens themselves.

A particularly central text when formulating this position was Stevenson's 2003 text *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitan Questions*. As Chapter 2 will describe, Stevenson offers a broad reimagination of citizenship that integrates elements from a variety of recent interventions, and which is absolutely centred on the status of "culture". At a theoretical level, it offers a bold agenda for citizenship which focuses on the centrality of dialogue and communication in modern society. Broadly put, Stevenson argues that citizenship emerges not simply from a codified system of rights, but from everyday culture and discourse. On this basis, it becomes essential that public communication is democratic, inclusive, and plural, thereby ensuring that *all* citizens become equal participants in the ongoing negotiation of citizenship. However, in common with similar recent work, Stevenson is less forthcoming about how his agenda could be put into practice, a reticence which stems from the contention that, in order not to privilege certain positions; this 'new' citizenship must avoid a dogmatic attachment to particular policies.

At the outset, I should acknowledge a normative sympathy with Stevenson's goals, and his general assessment of the spaces in which citizenship is contested and made. In this context, the purpose of this thesis emerges as an attempt to bridge the perceived gap that

exists between theory and practice in current citizenship theory. To fulfil this task, the thesis will describe an empirical case study that engages with both policy development and cultural practice. By examining a socially specific attempt to work through the tensions associated with ‘culturalised’ accounts of citizenship, I intend to develop a rich illustrative account of how these theories might be deployed in lived contexts. In doing so, I seek to be able to present implications for the future development both of citizenship theory itself, and of best practice for policy-makers and practitioners.

In seeking a site for this work, the mass media is an obvious and powerful possibility. If we increasingly think about citizenship as formulated through communication, then the dominant position of mass media institutions in our cultural lives renders them significant actors in determining the qualities of citizenship. This is of course a long-standing position in social theory, best exemplified by Habermas’s work on the ‘public sphere’; the arena(s) wherein individual citizens engage in discourse that enables them to hold government to account (and which is realised in modernity via the mass media). Alternatively, we can relate the media’s role to more recent citizenship theory. In terms of multiculturalism or global citizenship for example, we might think of the role of media representations in enabling a sense (or absence) of communality with ‘distant others’, the importance of cultural texts and artefacts as expressions of marginalised identities, or the way in which coverage of global politics has revealed the importance of trans- and supra-national flows of power. In acting as a conduit for the flow of information between the public and private spheres, the media functions as a *technology* of citizenship; a tool through which we experience ourselves and our peers as citizens.

Nowhere is this function more explicit than in the case of public service media: institutions whose existence is predicated on their perceived relation to citizenship, providing communications services and content deemed by the state to have the capacity to enhance public life. In the United Kingdom, the BBC structurally and rhetorically embodies the peculiar status of citizenship. It is guaranteed by the state and yet legally separate from it, responsible instead directly to citizens via the licence fee; a public body funded by ‘private’ individuals. As for rhetoric, the BBC has historically taken on the burden of social betterment, a sentiment most famously captured in Lord Reith’s triptych: to ‘inform, educate and entertain’ the nation. Such statements of

purpose, as will be explored as this project develops, reproduce a very particular notion of citizenship.

It is for these reasons that a study of practice and policy within the BBC will form the empirical basis of this thesis. This work will be operationalised initially through an analysis of policy documents, but primarily through a case study of the 2006 broadcast *Manchester Passion*, a live portrayal of the Christian Easter narrative on the streets of Manchester. The intent of this work is to ‘trace’ ideas relating to citizenship as they are embodied in institutional discourse and practice, analysing a variety of relevant data: including policy documents, recollections from staff and other stakeholders, *Manchester Passion* itself, and audience responses. The broadly chronological path of this work (which begins with an examination of historical patterns in BBC policy documents) allows for an explication of continuity and change, of how ideas are contested and reworked by other ‘logics’ (such as economics and logistics) inherent in practice. By juxtaposing theory and practice in this way, the conditions are created for a grounded critique of theory, one which responds to the charge of ‘excessive theorisation’ by rethinking theory on the basis of a specific, socially situated example.

Based on the exposition in this introduction, it is possible to state the research questions of this thesis as follows:

- How have citizenship scholars sought to rework the ‘traditional’, liberal model of citizenship with reference to the role of *culture*?
- What does the BBC’s thinking and practice in the case of *Manchester Passion* reveal about the applicability of these theories in a specific communicative institution?
- What are the implications of the *Manchester Passion* case for citizenship theory and policy?

The first two substantive chapters of the thesis deal with the first of these questions as companion pieces, combining the process of reviewing the literature with the development of theoretical models to be deployed throughout the project. The first chapter will provide an exploration of the literature around citizenship as a political and

sociological concept. Starting from the work of T. H. Marshall (1950), it will identify four competing theories of citizenship (liberal, cosmopolitan, multi-cultural, and ‘deep cultural’), and will demonstrate that these can be usefully delineated according to three ‘dimensions’: the political relationship which each model emphasises, their concept of identity, and their assessment of the role of culture. Essentially, it will be argued that the concept of citizenship is now highly contested across each of these dimensions, with the recognition of *difference* proving a particularly crucial concept; the means by which citizenship theory has developed a substantive account of the cultural.

The following chapter begins the move towards practice by introducing the concept of the public sphere as a central means by which theorists have described the political import of the mass media. In this project, the public sphere functions as an analytical category, providing the means to examine attempts to realise mediated citizenship in the policies of communicative institutions. This is a model in which these institutions become, in effect, *technologies* of citizenship. Specifically, the chapter argues that debates on the nature of the public sphere (or spheres) have much in common with those on the nature of citizenship; each is problematised by notions of identity, difference and participation. In support of this hypothesis, this chapter also demonstrates that recent media policy debates can be accurately analysed by reference to competing visions of the public sphere implicit within them. On this basis, Chapter 3 shows both that a) there is a clear connection between media institutions and citizenship, and that b) this relationship can be accurately analysed by combining the models identified in Chapter 2 with an engagement with public sphere theory.

Having isolated the theoretical ‘toolkit’ for the thesis, the focus then moves to empirical study. Chapter 4 is a methodological discussion, and will focus particularly on the logic behind the use of the *Manchester Passion* case study to explore the project’s research questions. It will be argued that the case study technique is a valuable tool for qualitative research, and one which is particularly suited to the exploration and refinement of existing theoretical positions (a specific type of inquiry which has methodological implications in its own right). This chapter will also include a reflection on the specific selection of *Manchester Passion*, and on the various types of data and data analysis deployed to capture the realisation of citizenship within the BBC.

Chapter 5 begins the process of data analysis with a consideration of selected historical and recent BBC policy documents in which the BBC reveals its own implicit conceptions of citizenship, culminating with the 2004 publication *Building Public Value*. The purpose of this chapter is twofold: firstly, it demonstrates the applicability of the models developed in Chapters 2 and 3 to a specific ‘manifestation’ of policy related to citizenship. Secondly, it has a contextual role, providing a backdrop to the detailed case study work of the chapters that follow by locating it within the wider institutional history of the BBC. In order to maintain theoretical coherency with the rest of the thesis, the analysis in this chapter is based around the three ‘dimensions’ of citizenship theory identified in Chapter 2, and their realisation in communicative institutions through approaches to the public sphere, as identified in Chapter 3. Through this process, the chapter builds an account of the discursive evolution of citizenship in BBC policy.

The final two empirical chapters involve a shift in emphasis away from broad theories and policies, turning to a specific case study of the BBC’s practices. This requires a close analysis of a selection of recent BBC output with the intention of identifying continuities and disjunctures between stated policy (as was outlined in the previous chapter), and specific attempts to realise these goals in programming. In common with the rest of the thesis, these chapters work through a chronological narrative, tracing the path of ideas of citizenship through the production, text and effects of a specific piece of cultural product (the 2006 broadcast *Manchester Passion*).

Chapter 6 begins by continuing the contextualisation of *Manchester Passion* through a brief segment on recent BBC religious policy, outlining the specific pressures which faced those involved in this case (and which might logically moderate its relationship with citizenship theory). The programme’s production is then considered through analysis of interviews with relevant practitioners within the BBC- interrogating the interplay between BBC ‘political’ policy and other priorities, and the intentions and intentionality of programme-makers and their partners. In this way, the thesis begins to reveal how the theoretical and policy debates of earlier chapters are played out in an institutional reality, by reference to questions including community consultation, the scripting process, and *Manchester Passion*'s perceived purpose within the BBC.

Subsequently, the thesis will consider *Manchester Passion* as a cultural text. By conducting a close analysis of its content, language and themes, this chapter will examine how (and indeed, if) ideas pertinent to particular visions of citizenship make the transition from policy to text in a ‘flagship’ BBC product. Using concepts developed in the theoretical analysis of Chapter 2 and 3, Chapter 7 continues the work of the previous chapter by asking:

- a) What notions of citizenship can ultimately be said to be present in *Manchester Passion*?
- b) To what degree these reflect the intentions of the BBC and the programme-makers?
- c) What might account for differences between a) and b)?

My own responses to these questions will be augmented by consideration of the programme’s observable impact, actioned through documentary analysis of the media and audience responses that followed *Manchester Passion*’s broadcast.

Following the conclusion of the empirical work, the final segment of the thesis will seek to pull together its findings into a broader reflective piece. Returning to the literature which provided the initial motivation for this research, the goal of the analysis will be to produce a critical, post-practice reading of citizenship discourses, through their interaction and realisation in the BBC’s public sphere contributions (both in terms of policy, and the specific case of *Manchester Passion*). In doing so, it will form a contribution towards answering the final research question raised in Chapter 1 by drawing out the broader theoretical and policy implications of the *Manchester Passion* study.

More specifically, the analysis will be oriented towards two distinct research outcomes. Firstly, it provides an evaluation of how the ‘culturalisation’ of citizenship which culminates around the deep cultural model might be translated into practice, and how it might function within a specific institutional context. In this way, this chapter will aim to point towards new directions for research in citizenship, building on the work of theorists such as Stevenson and Delanty. Complementing this will be a concern with best practice for policy-makers and institutions (specifically those concerned with

media and communications). By way of its narrative structure, the project will constitute a detailed survey of the dynamic between theory, policy and practice. Accordingly, this section will provide valuable data and ideas as to how the practice of a cultural institution can be more effectively oriented around the services and resources it seeks to provide to citizens, and how the concept of citizenship might be better embedded in decision-making processes.

Chapter 2: Citizenship: Theory, Contestation, Typology.

Introduction

This chapter serves three distinct purposes within the thesis. Most obviously, it functions as a literature review, introducing a series of interventions in citizenship theory which emerged in the post World War II period. Beginning with the work of T.H. Marshall, this review is organised around a set of subsequent re-assessments and critiques of his work, examining its relationship with concepts including space, capitalism and identity. This review will also serve the purpose of providing a greater explication of my own motivation for pursuing this project; it reveals both the literature which I initially engaged with in developing the project, and the way in which I have sought to approach this literature through an over-arching concern with the status of *culture* within citizenship theory.

In addition, the chapter goes beyond the remit of the traditional literature review insofar as it pursues a constructive agenda. Specifically, the second half of the chapter seeks to assimilate the theoretical positions under discussion into four discrete ‘models’ of citizenship. Inevitably, these models involve an element of generalisation; they constitute broad ‘ideal-types’ which will not by themselves capture the complexity of theoretical works, or the interplay between them. However, the process does serve both as a valuable summary for the work of the chapter, and a ‘toolkit’ for the empirical work of the project.

2.1. T.H. Marshall and beyond: the problematisation of citizenship

A study of contemporary citizenship theory reveals an open, contested field, within which competing theories intersect and diverge around multiple points of tension. Yet this disputed terrain often claims a common point of origin: T. H. Marshall's essay 'Citizenship and Social Class' (Marshall, 1950). Whilst Marshall's text has been subject to much criticism, and is now often employed as a counterfoil against which the author's own contribution is launched, its importance should not be under-estimated.

In particular, 'Citizenship and Social Class'¹ should be recognised for its classification of differing 'spheres' of citizenship beneath an overarching definition of 'full membership of a community' (8). Marshall locates the manifestation of these spheres to various institutional settings, a move which had the effect of adding greater social precision to an idea more commonly discussed in the abstract terms of political philosophy. His three elements of citizenship are doubtless well known to any scholar within the field, but nonetheless bear repetition here (all quotations from Marshall, 1950: 10-11):

- **Civil-** 'the rights necessary for individual freedom'. These include the rule of law, freedom of expression and property rights amongst others. As such, they are most commonly associated with the judicial system.
- **Political-** 'the right to participate in the exercise of political power'. This refers primarily to democratic sovereignty, realised through representative and/or participative systems of government.
- **Social-** 'the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security... to share in full in the social heritage... to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society'. This element was (and continues to be) the most contested of those identified in CASC, where it is represented by 'the educational system and the social services'.

¹ Hereafter denoted by 'CASC'

Although Marshall's concern with social class would seem to indicate a predilection towards the social element as primal, *CASC* in fact views the fulfilment of social rights as teleologically dependent on the establishment of effective civil and political equality; to claim social rights, one must first be fully recognised *as a citizen* (as Marshall points out, earlier moves towards social justice were accepted only insofar as they did not interfere with existing civil rights to conclude a contract (24-25)).

CASC is focussed throughout on the specific development of citizenship in the UK. This emphasis has often proven a source of contention, the argument being that to employ Marshall's work as a paradigm for citizenship studies is to generalise from what is effectively a case study (Turner, 1993: 8). In Turner's (1990) analysis, the historical development of citizenship can be categorised across two axes: active/passive (concerning the level of political agency ascribed to citizens) and public/private (concerning the level of individual autonomy and state intervention). For example, citizenship in the United States developed in a qualitatively different, more 'active' form to that in the United Kingdom; this reflects the revolutionary development of the nation-state, and its republican tradition.

Furthermore, it is possible to argue that the social-historical *moment* in which *CASC* emerged impacts on its generalisability. Marshall's emphasis on a centralised welfare state and corporatist economics is amenable to evaluation in terms of the post-war political settlement to some degree common in Western democracies, but specifically associated with the UK (Van Gunsteren, 1998: 13). As this wider political consensus began to disintegrate, *CASC* accordingly appeared unsuitable to deployment in rapidly changing contexts: including the rise of neo-liberalism and globalisation, and the growth of identity politics.

What these critiques reveal is that the narrative of *CASC* hides an inherent limitation: its account of citizenship struggles when confronted with the complexities of a heterogeneous society, or the disruption of the discrete nation-state. To draw this argument out, consider Marshall's basic definition of citizenship as consisting of 'full membership of a community'. In the first instance, the notion of 'full membership' is open to contestation: does this implied equality of this membership allow for differentiated access to resources? Is membership to be defined in a civil/political

context, or extended to include social rights? The reference to ‘community’ is equally complex: how are communities to be defined in an age of global communication and population flows? Can a citizen have membership of multiple communities simultaneously?

Even if the intricacies *present* in Marshall’s definition can be resolved, this may not prove sufficient; it is perhaps what remains *absent* that represents the most significant challenge. In *CASC* this is most clearly manifest in the assumption of a pre-existing subject, the implied individual who adopts (or is denied) the status of citizen. In his analysis of citizenship and class, Marshall transcends this absence (by acknowledging social inequalities) and is hence able to undertake an effective analysis, ultimately arguing that ‘citizenship operates as an instrument of social stratification’ (67).

However, insofar as Marshall’s problematisation is solely focussed on the class system, it remains structurally limited, failing for example to consider the relationship of citizenship to issues of ethnicity or gender. What is absent, in effect is a sustained consideration of the problematics of *difference*. This difference, it will be noted, is manifest within the realm of what we might broadly call the *cultural*; it refers to the identities, orientations and affiliations that an individual citizen might bring to their engagement in public life.

Accordingly, much of the citizenship literature to emerge post-Marshall can be read as attempting to paint in various aspects of the cultural, recognising the lived existence of the absent subject of *CASC*. The task of this literature review is therefore to explicate this ‘painting in’, in doing so identifying the theoretical climate(s) within which institutional policy is produced. This process will ultimately coalesce around the work of Stevenson (2003), who can be read as having produced a comprehensive (if cautious) agenda for the renewal of the Marshallian ideal, via a strong, broadened engagement with the cultural.

2.2. Citizenship and Capitalism

One of the most obvious critiques of the Marshallian account is that which works from his own terms, problematising *CASC*'s reconciliation of developing, public rights with a privately-oriented capitalist economy. For Marshall, the concepts of citizenship and of the class system exist in a relation of flux. On the one hand, there is an acknowledged conflict between the equality implied by citizenship, and the reality of socio-economic imbalance that a capitalist system demands. Yet at the same time, the development of citizenship rights in the UK coincides with that of the market economy. As Marshall himself is led to ask: 'How is it that these two opposing principles could grow and flourish side by side in the same soil?' (29).

The solution described in *CASC* takes the form of an uneasy alliance. Undoubtedly, the increasing recognition of citizenship 'imposed modifications' (68) upon the capitalist hierarchy, particularly the redistribution demanded by recognition of *social* citizenship. However, such shifts remain subject to two qualifications. Firstly, Marshall's political framework remains rooted in liberal individualism (founded initially on the 'rights necessary for individual freedom' including property rights), meaning that any extension of social rights is subject to criticism from within his own terms as an attack on liberty. Secondly, Marshall emphasises the accommodation of inequality of resources within a democratising UK, stressing the 'limits inherent in the egalitarian movement' and the development of citizenship as *modifying* an existing system (77). For his part, Marshall recognises the tension inherent in this interaction, describing the policies of social citizenship as 'a compromise which is not dictated by logic' (84).

Marshall's inability to resolve this tension has led to predictable attacks on *CASC*. From the left, the argument is that the Marshallian paradigm represents an over-accommodation with hegemonic interests. Insofar as citizenship develops only within an existing capitalist settlement, it serves as a mechanism paralleling Marxist ideas of false consciousness, the totalising rhetoric of 'equal rights' positioning individuals within a paradigm that hinders the pursuit of substantive equality. As Faulks (1995: 1247) argues, even the period of alleged welfare state 'consensus' can be read, not as a

triumph of social solidarity, but rather as ‘a trade off between capital and labour which suited the interests of the ruling class of the time... limited social rights were put into place to partly buy off, and partly to incorporate the working class into capitalist society’. The implication of such readings is clear: that the negotiation of social rights within a capitalist framework (both structural and discursive) diminishes the egalitarian potential of citizenship by consecrating existing inequalities. Similar critiques echo through recent work on consumer politics; Edwards suggests that even the most explicitly political acts of consumption can ultimately represent only a ‘spoke in the wheel and not a spanner in the works’ (2000: 99).

Under attack is citizenship as a specific reflexive position: a relation to other selves, and to the state, which transcends the schema of private consumption to include questions of rights and obligations. In the context of this debate, the increasingly prevalent tendency towards privatisation/marketisation of public service provision constitutes a restriction of social citizenship. In recasting the relationship between individuals and the state from that of citizen to that of consumer, such measures subjugate the collective obligations of citizenship to the individual obligations of contract (within which, Marshall argues, the ‘incentive of personal gain’ becomes paramount (74)). Insofar as the market fails to maintain a ‘balance between personal and impersonal social relations’ (Dean, 2003: 85) it is deemed (both by Marshall and many of his subsequent critics) to be an unsatisfactory basis for citizenship.

A similar concern with the dynamic between individuals and society exists within the New Right response to Marshall, albeit one centred on liberty rather than equality. Following from the critique of state intervention advanced by Nozick (1974) and Hayek (1976, 1982), the subjugation of the market to the state is viewed as inefficient, and as restrictive of individual freedom (or, to describe it in the terms of *CASC*, as restrictive of civil rights of property and the conclusion of contract). Marshall responds by highlighting the role of social intervention in the provision of infrastructure at the *national* level: for example, the provision of education is deemed necessary to produce a balanced work-force, and is constituted accordingly (62-65). Yet whilst this response makes a case around efficiency, it does not address the wider neo-liberal concern with the validity of state intervention.

Whilst New Right positions are often presented as purely libertarian, their most powerful political articulations have, paradoxically, often occurred in tandem with a neo-conservative attachment to communitarian cohesion. Perhaps the most notorious (and selectively quoted) example of this synthesis is Margaret Thatcher's 1987 declaration that 'there is no such thing [society]! There are individual men and women, and there are families... It's our duty to look after ourselves and then, also to look after our neighbour' (Thatcher, 1987). This rhetoric entails a compromise in comparison to the 'pure' neo-liberal position. Insofar as it acknowledges a degree of communal obligation between citizens, it renders the task of rejecting state intervention significantly harder (particularly if, for example, it can be shown that markets or other non-state actors are unable to make adequate social provision in their own right). However as Harris (1996) argues, such conjunctions give New Right thinkers the ability to make a greater claim on concepts traditionally associated with citizenship (such as cohesion and participation) than that suggested by their critics. Notably, this is achieved through an engagement of sorts with *cultural* ideas: the nation, cohesion etc. Accordingly, we might think of it as a progression from the Marshallian position. However, to what degree the New Right had a genuine concern with culture is questioned by writers like Hall, who argued that they adopted a strategy of 'authoritarianism populism' (1979), in which a strictly limited cultural symbolism was deployed as a means to maintain existing hierarchies.

The continual ripple of New Right ideas is demonstrated by the reconstituted social democracy of the 'Third Way' theorists, who have sought to adapt the rhetoric of the market to a program which transcends legal/economic relations of contract. Hutton's seminal *The State We're In* attempts to reconcile public and private self-interest, and calls for a 'stakeholder capitalism' which 'embodies a morality of citizenship. There needs to be a sense... that individuals are contributing to their own well-being' (1996: 309). While Hutton suggests an accommodation with the individualist framework of capitalism, he often echoes the language of Marshall (going so far as to describe the welfare state as 'an expression of social citizenship'), and calls for wide-ranging structural reform within the UK to limit the imposition of the market.

In implementation, however, purportedly 'third way' policies have often proven less radical, described as conceiving of public life 'merely as an adjunct to capitalist

enterprise' (Patten, 2002). Andrews (2004) suggests that this imbalance is inevitable, seeing the stakeholding project as torn between republican and individualist models of public participation. Following Elster (1997; 3-34), Andrews argues that the compromise between these models is unsustainable; it reiterates the tension between public and private, and thus fails to provide an adequate basis for anything beyond a passive, relatively minimal citizenship.

Similar arguments can be made against recent evocations of the citizen-consumer (Scammell, 2000; McKee, 2002; DTI/DCMS, 2000) which claim to identify or promote the employment of individual resources (often, admittedly, within the prosperous sections of society) for communal ends, the exponential growth of the FairTrade movement being an obvious example. Scammell counters the traditional public/private dichotomy in arguing for a redefinition of consumer practice:

A model of citizenship, with some of the classical republican dimensions of civic duty, public-spiritedness, and self-education, is an increasingly apt description of consumer behaviour (Scammell, 2000: 352)

What is particularly interesting about this argument is the connection it makes between the explicitly political and the explicitly cultural. Whereas arguments about the balance between liberty and equality seem to exist at a far remove from everyday life, the citizen-consumer model demonstrates that ostensibly private acts can be conceived as enacting a particular vision of citizenship.

However, whatever claims one might make on behalf of ethical consumerism, it is a strategy inherently limited to those with available income and access to information (with the question of the 'digital divide' making this particularly relevant when considering Scammell's emphasis on the Internet as a political locus). The additional weakness in the citizen-consumer concept in particular is perhaps in its failure to emphasise the importance of *political* equality as a basis for consumer 'citizenship'. By situating the political as something to be resolved through the manipulation of a capitalist framework, the discursive space from within which questions of equality of opportunity *within* that framework might emerge appears limited. Again, it is difficult

to escape the notion that citizenship and capital exist, if not in a relationship of conflict, then at least in one of tension.

What might be less clear from the analysis above is how this relationship speaks – if indeed it does at all – to the interest in culture and difference which dominates this project. Undoubtedly, questions of economic theory are of a more material nature than that which we might associate with the cultural, for example. However, it is equally true to say that these questions are concerned explicitly with *difference*; they are driven, at heart, by a recognition of inequality. Furthermore, the preceding analysis at least implicitly engages with the cultural. Marshall's interest in class can itself be held to have a cultural dimension, class being a category defined as much in cultural terms as in economic ones. This relationship is made more explicit by the New Right's direct association between an economic program and a set of communal values, and by the link drawn between 'private' consumption and public life by the citizen-consumer position.

2.3. Citizenship beyond the nation-state: liberal cosmopolitanism.

Much as would be expected from an account associated with a specific national experience, *CASC* employs a simplistic spatial model of citizenship, dominated by the nation-state. Throughout the work, it is accepted that citizenship is realized within a singular, self-contained polity; it is ‘a history in which England’s economic and political relationships with other countries were never referred to’ (Hewitt, 1996: 251). The nation-state is the guarantor of citizenship, from the extension of the franchise to the establishment of the welfare state. While this emphasis is somewhat qualified by his caution regarding the power of national *identity* with regards communality, described as ‘too large and remote... to make of it a continual driving force’ (80), it is nonetheless the case that *CASC* invokes an assumed, unitary national heritage as the basis of citizenship: ‘a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilization which is a common possession’ (41).

Since the publication of *CASC*, the primacy of the nation-state has been called into question by scholars collectively defined as representing a liberal cosmopolitan tradition. Although the ideal of cosmopolitanism has a long history (perhaps dating, in its modern form, to Kant’s 1795 essay *Toward Perpetual Peace*) its recent re-emergence owes much to the paradigmatical status currently afforded to globalization. Responding to work stressing increasing inter-dependence between nation-states, and enhanced awareness of ‘global risk’ (e.g. Beck, 1992, 1999; Giddens 1991, 2002), liberal cosmopolitan theorists conceive of political organisation as being at a ‘fundamental point of transition’ (Held, 1996: 353), coming to encompass activity from the transnational to the local.

Liberal cosmopolitan theorists have developed a conception of citizenship in which opportunities for participation reflect the existence of plural ‘modalities of political agency’ (Benahib, 2003). Thus, while liberal cosmopolitan citizenship is often concerned to develop a coherent strategy for global democracy, it is equally involved with principles of subsidiarity, acknowledging Elliott’s claim that ‘globalization is

always experienced (and constructed) from highly local situations' (Elliott, 2001:54-55). It might be claimed that Marshall is also able to find a role for the local (and in particular the industrial-local) in delivering 'the vigour that citizenship in general appears to lack' (Marshall, 1992: 47). However, localism for Marshall is conceived of only as an adjunct to the national. Liberal cosmopolitanism, by contrast, views the various spatial levels of politics as complementary.

Clearly, the recognition of 'non-national' political activity within liberal cosmopolitanism offers a significant departure from *CASC*, challenging the essential link between citizenship and the nation-state. Nonetheless, its ability to develop a coherent, practicable program remains open to debate, particularly in the context of the absence of democratically accountable structures at the transnational level. Without such a formally constituted basis for political equality, transnational forms of citizenship remain 'only an inherent possibility' (Chandler, 2003: 347). This practical elusiveness, coupled with the emergence of several complementary but distinct cosmopolitan agendas in recent citizenship theory (see for example Held, 1995; Delanty, 2000; Beck, 2006) has led to a critique of the strand of work as suffering from 'excessive theorisation' (Skrbis, Kendall and Woodward, 2004, p. 117).

In addition, persistent problems remain in defining the liberal cosmopolitan agenda, elements of which are elsewhere described in terms of global and post-national citizenship (see Dower and Williams (eds.) 2002 for a useful summary of the former). Held has posited the following as clarification:

I take cosmopolitanism to be a way of specifying a democratic multilayered, multilevel system of authority marked by multilayered, multilevel citizenship, enshrined by and defending the equal worth and dignity of each human being (Held, 2004: no page reference available)

In this understanding, the specificity of liberal cosmopolitanism appears to emerge from a commitment to plural sites of political legitimacy (thus distinguishing itself from the particular focus on world governance found within the global citizenship tradition), and the maintenance of individual rights. However, this position has been criticised for offering a reiteration of a conservative model of political activity on a wider scale.

Calhoun (2001) argues that the work of Held - influenced by a relatively bounded canon of political theory - lacks a 'thick' account of social solidarity. In the absence of such an account, what remains is a concept founded upon 'a fairly abstract notion of person as a bearer of rights and obligations' (2001: 15), overlooking issues of lived experience (including the continuing strength of nationalist narratives and national identity) in favour of what Calhoun dubs a 'view from nowhere' (2001: 17). Consequently, theories of liberal cosmopolitanism encounter the problematic task of squaring an ultimately universalist conception of the individual against the legitimate claims of institutions that emerge from a panoply of distinct cultural positions.

In failing to acknowledge the particularities of cultures, liberal cosmopolitan theories remain vulnerable to similar charges to those levelled at *CASC*. Whilst it acknowledges the simultaneous existence of citizenship across multiple polities, it adds little to our understanding of the realisation of citizenship for specific, socially located persons *within* said polities; it ultimately neglects the cultural. In fact, in moving beyond the specificity of the national to a relatively abstract transnational space, liberal cosmopolitan theories risk losing the limited efficacy of the Marshallian model, by diminishing the 'pull' of national identities. While liberal cosmopolitanism undoubtedly has much to offer as a means of problematising the reification of the nation-state, its capacity to supplant earlier frameworks remains restricted by its lack of institutional and cultural precision.

2.4 Citizenship and culture: multiculturalism

Following a more general ‘cultural turn’ in academia (visible in the development of Cultural Studies, or the concern with life/identity politics), theories of citizenship have recently been concerned to produce detailed accounts of *cultural* effects on citizenship. In defining culture, these theorists have often engaged with the work of Williams. Amongst Williams’ contributions is to distinguish between culture as ‘a whole way of life’, and as ‘the arts and learning--the special processes of discovery and creative effort’ (1958). Later, this binary was extended to encompass a further meaning: that of culture as referring ‘primarily to *signifying* or *symbolic* systems’ (Williams, 1983: 91). Various elements of William’s definition have been applied to citizenship theory; the first of these is the initial subject of this section.

The clear implication of this turn to culture is to suggest an absence in previous theory, especially within *CASC*. Although there are grounds for this claim, it is important to avoid over-generalisation. To argue, for example, that Marshall’s work on citizenship contains *no* awareness of culture would be inaccurate. Whilst Marshall does not identify cultural rights as a distinct strand of citizenship, he nonetheless makes explicit reference to the importance of cultural resources. In this vein, we might include the previously mentioned emphasis on communal heritage, or the evocation of education as a means of maintaining social cohesion (75-76). It is not the absence of culture which limits Marshall's account- rather, it is the *unitary* nature. The framework he describes is singular, and not engaged with the possibilities of cultural difference.

To clarify by returning to Williams, the definition of culture as a ‘way of life’ allows us to make a distinction: between an individual’s identity as a member of a culture, and of their identity as citizen of a political community. In the Marshallian model the two are often implicitly conflated (social class is the only marker of cultural difference considered in *CASC*, and even this is described as manageable within the context of a shared national heritage). Clearly, such a model is less applicable in polities exhibiting a significant degree of cultural heterogeneity: ‘if there is no longer a shared ‘common heritage’ or ‘way of life’ by reference to which citizen’s rights can be defined, how are

we to arrive at the conception of social justice that defines citizenship?’ (Miller, 2000: 44).

Given this impasse, and the tangible political problems in which it results, attempts have been made to re-invent citizenship in the context of cultural plurality. Within this debate, perhaps the dominant schism is that between liberal and communitarian theorists. Liberal theorists such as Kymlicka (1995, 1998) have attempted to manage multi-culturalism within the context of existing political settlements. Kymlicka argues for a differentiated citizenship which allows special protection of minority groups. However this is conceived of as a necessary adjunct to the achievement of social stability within an existing universalist liberal schematic, in which private conceptions of ‘the good’ should secede to an over-arching system of rights.

Kymlicka's position reflects his persistent belief in the appeal of universality, which leads him to argue that many claims to group rights stem from ‘a desire for inclusion which is consistent with participation in, and commitment to, the mainstream institutions that underlie social unity’ (Kymlicka, 1998:171). Once a particular group achieves this inclusion, the maintenance of its distinct group ‘citizenship’ would therefore appear unnecessary, although it is arguable as to whether such inclusion can even be fully realized in practice (for example, because socio-economic inequality may restrict the capacities of a particular group). Kymlicka is prepared to support permanent group rights where necessary for social stability, for example where an established liberal state contains a stable ‘national minority’ (his chosen illustration being the Quebecois in Canada). For such minorities, the maintenance of cultural distinction is fundamental; it becomes a condition of their participation in a liberal state.

The common critique of the liberal position attacks its goal as either unrealistic (in asking citizens to subvert meaningful aspects of their identity to an abstracted value-system) or as in fact illiberal (in that any rights system will itself not be neutral, but will consecrate certain values). Amongst the most influential of such critiques is the communitarian response provided by Sandel. Sandel links discourses of community and republicanism, and suggests that the enforced subservience of private ‘encumbrances’ (such as ethnic or religious ties) to a rights system is counter-productive, ‘impoverishing political discourse and eroding the moral and civic resources necessary to self-

government' (Sandel, 1996: 23). Under his proposals, citizenship does not emerge in the moment of denying one's social location (which at its best can produce only a weak tolerance of others (1996: 107)), but in its deployment as a basis for one's participation in public life.

However, this rooting of politics in communal experience and tradition is itself problematic. Conceptually, Kymlicka himself contends that Sandel misrepresents the possibilities of liberal individualism (ignoring the capacity of the self to conceive of itself prior to current, contingent encumbrances), and in doing so collapses individual agency in favour of a unitary conception of the good (Kymlicka, 2002: 225).

Furthermore, the practical consequence of this move may be to risk the status of minorities, failing to challenge the power relations underlying historical communal 'goods' (Lydon Shanley, 1998; Steiner, 1999). Whilst this latter critique might be applied to any rights system, it appears especially pertinent for Sandel's communitarianism, due both to the refusal of neutrality as a political goal, and the enshrined power of majority perspectives in a polity that takes them as its organising feature.

An alternative stance is presented by the politics of difference or recognition; a set of theories whose key thinkers have argued for a more nuanced approach to minority rights. Charles Taylor (1992) marks this distinction in his conceptualisation of identity as a *dialogical* project, created through language and interaction. Given this position, the just organisation of a polity is possible only on the grounds that we correctly and equitably recognise groups of Others and their cultural histories. To deploy a negative misrecognition of a culture is to 'distort and oppress' (35), restricting the development of its subjects and providing a justification for inequality.

Accordingly, Taylor (whilst rarely speaking of citizenship directly) argues for a political settlement that specifies rights of cultural recognition, and (crucially) an engagement with the Other from the perspective of a presumption of their equal worth. His major example is the granting of 'distinct society' rights, such as language and signage provisions, to the Quebecker group within the procedurally liberal Canada, a move Taylor endorses as ensuring the cultural 'survival' necessary for recognition (51-61).

While his rhetoric often has much in common with that of Sandel (for example, he acknowledges that cultural recognition is ‘grounded very much on judgements about what makes a good life’ (61)), Taylor maintains an attachment to a concept of universal rights, coming in his later work to argue for an abstracted core of norms ‘undisturbed by the differences of profound underlying belief’ (1999: 124). In Walzer’s analysis, this allows Taylor’s position to shift between culturally neutral and particular liberalisms, dependent upon the cultural demographics of the polity concerned (1992). Walzer’s crucial distinction here is that the latter is ‘permissive, not deterministic’ (1992: 99-100). The management of difference is organised not by a dogmatic attachment to universalist or particularist ideals, but by lived experience of recognition and respect, maintained by dialogue. Quite how this ideal might be achieved is unclear: in particular, the project of objective study of the Other requires greater elucidation. In addition, Taylor’s preservation of a rights discourse is problematic, given that he endorses Sandel’s critique of purported liberal ‘neutrality’ (Taylor, 1992: 43). Nonetheless, Taylor’s attempt at a reconciliation between cultural and political identities represents an important contribution, avoiding both the limitations of *CASC* and the apparent extremes of the liberal/communitarian debate.

A more radical perspective on difference is offered by Young. The recognition of cultural difference has thus far been seen as constitutive- whether of a liberal settlement, a cohesive community, or a dialogical engagement. For Young however, this recognition has a *deconstructive* power. Starting from the assumption that the recognition of negotiable group rights is necessary as a permanent feature of citizenship (as a counterweight to structural and discursive inequality); Young argues that the provision of these rights denormalises the pre-existing, prejudicial structures against which they act. Again, this relates to the dynamic between the universal and the particular:

In a society where some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, insisting that as citizens persons should leave behind their particular affiliations and experiences to adopt a general point of view serves only to reinforce that privilege; for the perspectives and interests of the privileged will tend to dominate this unified public marginalizing or silencing those of other groups. (1989: 381)

If, as follows from the above, it is necessary to endow marginalized groups with a particular status, the suggestion that a universal perspective can adequately account for their needs is inherently destabilised. Ultimately, this creates the conditions for a re-imagining of political space, in which disadvantaged groups gain institutionalised political power- including the right of veto in social policy (1998). For Young, such measures represent not merely a contingent practical response, but a permanent shift in our understanding of the nature of citizenship: ‘a democratic public should provide mechanisms for the effective recognition and representation of the distinct voices and perspectives of those of its constituent groups that are oppressed or disadvantaged (Young, 1990: 184). Group rights do not *support* universal citizenship- rather; the recognition of these rights is *constitutive* of universal citizenship.

While this position carries considerable conceptual force, the counter-argument is equally powerful- for, in repudiating the institutions upon which citizenship is rooted, the de-constructive approach creates a vacuum which may prove difficult to replace (Miller, 2000: 75). Miller contends that Young’s negativity towards historically privileged narratives (such as the nation-state) may prove counter-productive- for without a conception of a shared ‘way of life’ (returning to Williams), there is little to prevent the collapse of political discourse into ‘interest group politics with the gloves off’ (2000: 77).

In Young’s defence, it is arguable that this line of criticism over-simplifies the role of culture. The deconstruction of embedded cultural practice and hierarchies is not seen as an end in itself- or at least, not as a primary end in Young’s greater project of social redistribution. As Fraser puts it, Young’s cultural politics are often a single stage of a structural project, functioning as ‘transitional socialist demands’ (Fraser, 1997). There is a parallel here with a further development in the work of Williams: namely his later delineation of culture as signifying practice, as distinct from the material (Williams, 1983: 91). If demands for cultural recognition have a symbolic role in relation to other inequalities (such as those of gender, or class), then the idea that such recognition destroys the prospects for a communal mindset is repudiated. Instead, a communal orientation emerges from a shared commitment to justice that responds to and contests social inequalities (of course, this in turn begs the question of how such commitments might be fostered).

We might suggest that the complexities for Young's theory are in fact common across the perspectives outlined in this section. While a robust account of culture is clearly essential for a modern, heterogeneous citizenship, seeking to account for heterogeneity in practice inevitably leads to the contestation of relations between the state, individuals and groups. This contestation has no obvious resolution, perhaps reflecting inherent theoretical tensions. However, Walzer's interpretation of Charles Taylor as allowing for contingent shifts in the status afforded to group identities may provide a route for reconciliation- for, if the ideas outlined here hold a single principle in common, it is the assertion that the attribution of cultural 'rights' must be responsive to social realities.

2.5 Citizenship and culture: deconstructing identity

However in the act of defining these realities, a further level of contestation emerges. The approaches examined in the previous section were broadly concerned with an extension of the Marshallian paradigm, accounting for distinct cultural identities within citizenship. Yet these theories (with the exception of that offered by Iris Young, who might equally be considered in this section) leave the validity of cultural identities themselves largely unchallenged. An alternative approach to citizenship begins with a *deconstructionist* impulse similar to that deployed by Young; it claims to expose underlying 'traditional' elements of society as socially constructed- supportive not of essential truths, but of specific historical power relations. The potentialities of this premise for Marshall's work are substantial; if the cultural specificities underpinning *CASC* are recognised as reflective of power, then the work's account of citizenship is exposed as not merely unitary, but as imbued with normative values supportive of a historical hegemony.

In exploring how this challenge might operate, a particularly powerful example is that offered by Benedict Anderson. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson exposes the nation-state and national identity to the deconstructive project, concluding of modern nationalism that it 'was, and is... *official*... serving the interests of the state first and foremost' (1991: 159). If this hypothesis is accepted, then Marshall's suggestion that the nation-state might constitute an effective site for equitable citizenship becomes difficult to maintain. Furthermore, Anderson demonstrates that the construction of nations is to be attributed not merely to the formal political sphere, but to cultural practices and narratives. The logical implication is that citizenship itself (as a position held in relation to a political community) cannot be conceived of outside of culture, and cannot be understood solely by reference to institutionalised politics. Complementing this attack on the locations of citizenship is an attack on its objects, the unitary 'citizens' of political theory. One aspect of this move has been alluded to previously: the deconstructive treatment of multi-culturalism posited by certain proponents of the

‘politics of recognition’. Much of this work has emerged in relation to the feminist re-imagining of politics.

Marshall’s account is focussed on social class as expressed through occupation, and political activity as expressed through the state. As such, it subordinates from citizenship activities and social relations which do not fit this model. The consequence of this has been the exclusion from debate of inequalities within the private sphere, regardless of their ultimate impact upon an individual’s (usually a woman’s) resources as a citizen (Walby, 1994). For example, feminists argue that models of social rights are often based around the ideal of full-time employment, adversely stigmatising women- particularly single mothers- due to their proportionally larger child-care responsibilities (Fraser and Gordon, 1994). This should perhaps not come as a surprise- citizenship as described within *CASC* developed in a male-dominated historical context. Nonetheless, the feminist critique makes clear that to attribute neutrality to the term ‘citizen’ is to risk masking its historically gendered nature.

This argument can be extended by reference to discourses of anti-essentialism associated with social constructionist and post-structuralist feminist theory. In the work of Butler, gender categories (in common with other identity categories) are seen as *performative, having* no objective basis but sustained by their reiteration in everyday practice (1990, 1993). We might easily conceive of citizenship in this way- as reflexively ‘performed’ in our relationships with political institutions and contemporaries. If Butler’s assertion is accepted, then simply to deconstruct the gendered nature of citizenship is not sufficient. By interrogating citizenship in terms of a male/female binary, feminist critique inevitably serves to *sustain* this binary (and the inequalities of power of which it is both constituent and result) by its continual performance- functioning to support gender as the ‘truth effects of a discourse of a primary and stable identity’ (Butler, 1990: 137). On this basis, equality between citizens can only be obtained when both the category ‘citizen’ itself, and the identities of those seeking citizenship have been ‘de-normalized’: exposing, and hence disrupting, the reified constructs upon which they are currently based.

Similar work has taken place across a range of identity categories. Diasporic and post-racial theories have problematised relationships between race, the individual and

society, locating hybrid identities emergent in a complex negotiation that intrinsically rejects absolutism, and which in doing so further problematises the use of national or ethnic identities as ‘given’ within citizenship (Hall, 1992; Gilroy, 1993²; Eze, 2001). Weeks has formulated the concept of ‘sexual citizenship’, drawing on queer theory’s analysis of performativity and transgression as a means to establish politicised sexual identities capable of claiming citizen rights. Weeks roots this process in a wider call to the problematisation of identity:

The claim to a new form of belonging, which is what citizenship is ultimately about, arises from and reflects the remaking of the self and the multiplicity and diversity of possible identities that characterize the late, or post-, modern world (Weeks, 1998: 35)

The disruptive potential of such examples to the Marshallian orthodoxy should be clear: not only do they establish new ‘fields’ within which citizenship must be established and maintained, but simultaneously undermine the categories previously employed in this task.

What may be less apparent, however, is how these deconstructionist frameworks might be employed to construct an alternative politics. In common with much post-modern theory, the deconstructionist approach to identity has been attacked as politically self-defeating, collapsing into a relativism that renders progressive action impossible (Hartsock, 1998). In countering this claim, arguments are made regarding the conception of politics, and of power, with which post-structuralist theories are concerned. Such theories tend towards a wider definition of the political sphere, in which ‘if it is not the case that everything is political, everything is at least potentially political’ (Nash, 2000: 30). In this conceptualisation, politics involves the creation and contestation of meaning and therefore cannot be bounded within the formal institutions of representation. Accordingly, the political models emergent from this branch of theory place a large emphasis upon informal action in culture, representation and lived practice, and might therefore be described as belonging to the realm of ‘cultural politics’.

² Gilroy’s work cannot be accurately identified with post-structuralism and is explicitly concerned with counter-cultures within *modernity*. However, it shares a concern with the political potentialities of cultural practice, and the rejection of essentialist notions of identity.

2.6 Deep cultural Citizenship

To a degree, this re-working of citizenship is foregrounded in the earlier literature; elements of it can be located in political cosmopolitanism³ and multicultural theory. At the time of writing, perhaps the strongest attempt at cohesion is provided by Stevenson. In his 2003 work *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitan Questions*, Stevenson argues for a dialogical, open conception of citizenship, often realised through the symbolic goods of a mediated society (echoing Williams' symbolic definition of culture):

Cultural citizenship poses the question: how is it possible to maintain solidarity with others while emphasising the creativity of the self, or indeed to pursue justice while recognizing difference? If cultural citizenship is overwhelmingly concerned with communication and power, how we answer these questions inevitably involves interpretation and conflict (Stevenson, 2003: 33).

The above quotation poses a question of terminology: arguments around multiculturalism are often described in terms of “cultural citizenship” (see Pakulski, 1997), and there is clearly a need to distinguish between such interventions and Stevenson's broader agenda and deployment of ‘culture’.

Additionally, writers in the Cultural Studies tradition have deployed the term ‘cultural citizenship’ as a means of describing the political import of specific texts or institutions. A quintessential example is Bennett's writing on the role of the museum in public life; Bennett argues forcefully that access to such institutions is a ‘cultural right’ due to the way in which it enables participation in the community (1995, 2001). Elsewhere, Miller has used “cultural citizenship” to describe his arguments around the political capacities enabled or disabled by specific cultural texts, most recently the claim that various mass

³ Caution is required in establishing a link between liberal cosmopolitan theory and that emanating from a deconstructionist identity politics; the former often (as in the work of Held) retains an instrumental view of the political. While the cosmopolitan/transnational project has made an important contribution in de-coupling citizenship from the nation-state, this is not deconstructive in the sense common in much post-modernist thought.

cultural forms reiterate an existing neo-liberal political settlement whilst excluding other potentialities (Miller; 2007).

Such work has a clear resonance for this project, given that it seeks to examine both a cultural institution (the BBC) and a specific text. However, the work of writers like Miller and Bennett retain a limitation common to earlier interventions. Whereas multicultural theorists are concerned with cultural groups, Bennett and Miller are concerned with cultural *products*. Yet in both their streams of thought, culture seems to refer to a limited sphere of meaning, one which is analysed in terms of its impact on a delineated political realm⁴. By contrast, in Stevenson's work culture is pertinent to citizenship not only because of its interaction with 'harder' structures (such as liberal constitutionalism, or media political economies). Rather, culture, as a system of meaning, is a constitutive force which is engaged in the formation, maintenance and possible contestation of these structures.

Given that Stevenson attributes a wider constitutive role to culture, an appropriate response would be the description of his position as representing *deep cultural* citizenship, concerned with the re-imagination of politics through culture. This is not to suggest that cultural difference becomes the central axis of politics. In common with Young, Stevenson links issues of recognition to other structural inequalities (17-18). Following Melucci (1996), Stevenson is interested in questions of interplay between the material and the symbolic, how 'control over powerful symbolic codes' (Stevenson, 2003: 17) impacts on political dynamics. Cultural politics does not supplant other forms of politics, but its relationship with these forms is made explicit, and given appropriate weighting in determining policies for equitable citizenship.

In upholding Stevenson's work as paradigmatic of a new wave in citizenship theory, there is a risk of creating a false dichotomy against the Marshallian perspective. Stevenson supports many of the criticisms levelled at *CASC* (particularly with regards its lack of cultural analysis), and concludes that Marshall's work 'cannot be resurrected to resolve analytically the dilemmas of the present' (9). Nonetheless, he remains

⁴ It should be noted that Bennett and Miller both work with a wider notion of the political than that associated with liberal theory (both are influenced by Foucauldian notions of governmentality), and that this notion blurs the distinction between politics and culture. However, their empirical analysis retains a tendency to cast the latter as an *effect* of the former.

primarily concerned with ‘questions of inclusion and exclusion’ (18), or to rephrase, questions of membership (or otherwise) of a community. The ‘end-game’ of citizenship remains constant; it is the spaces and conceptual frameworks within which these questions are posed which are subject to reimagination.

In mapping the contours of this ‘culturalised’ approach, Stevenson draws upon many of the ideas outlined in this chapter. Cosmopolitanism is a consistent theme, defined here not primarily in the spatial sense associated with Held, but as a marker of a shift in subjectivity, associated with the ‘intellectual and emotional capacities to engage in dialogue confidently with others in new public spaces’ (42)⁵. It is in communication that citizenship is made and re-made; Stevenson argues for the necessity of deliberative engagement between heterogeneous citizens, influenced by Parekh’s conception of reflexive ‘operative public values’ (Parekh, 2000; cited in Stevenson, 2003: 52). These ideas are contextualised by an explicit theoretical interest in post-structuralist deconstruction (influenced notably by the work of Michel Foucault) within which discourse is seen as offering ‘the possibility of a radical politics... thereby radically questioning what is usually accepted as the politics of citizenship’ (29). Nonetheless, Stevenson is also careful to maintain a concern with material realities, for example arguing for a necessary engagement with consumer cultures, albeit while cautioning against ‘the exclusionary logic of neo-liberalism’ and uninterrogated populism (149).

It is evident that *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitan Questions* can be read as inclusive of many of the post-Marshallian ‘themes’ outlined in earlier sections. Yet this is not to suggest that it represents an endpoint for the development of theory. While Stevenson argues at various points for more deliberative forms of participation, and the protection/cultivation of ‘non-market’ spaces and identities, he often appears reluctant (or unable) to propose a clear agenda for deep cultural citizenship, preferring instead to pose a series of questions. This may be the inevitable compromise of a post-structuralist position; Stevenson himself contends that ‘there is no ‘system’ to overthrow and no revolutionary strategy adequate to these aims’ (153). Instead, Stevenson develops a clear sense of cultural citizenship as an ongoing *process*. Tellingly, the most insistent

⁵ This vision of cosmopolitanism is also present in the theories of writers like Ulrich Beck, whose recent work (2005, 2006) is particularly concerned with the acknowledgement of Otherness. Such ideas (which seem to oscillate around a looser idea of a ‘cosmopolitan mindset’) often have much in common with multi-cultural and deconstructive theories, and hence should be considered distinct from more instrumental, liberal cosmopolitan agendas.

demand of the book is for the promotion of dialogue, itself qualified by a suggestion of incompleteness:

Cultural citizenship aims to promote conversation where previously there was silence, suspicion, fragmentation or the voices of the powerful. We need to go beyond liberal demands for tolerance and instead edge towards more intercultural levels of communication (Stevenson, 2003: 152).

Deep cultural citizenship, then, begins to reveal itself not merely as a result of institutional change, but as a way of being in the world, a set of symbolic understandings about our status which we base our interactions. Delanty's conceptualisation of citizenship as a learning process provides an additional illustration of this position (2007). Like Stevenson, Delanty views citizenship as an 'ongoing process that is conducted in communicative links' (2007: 6). From this position, he seeks to challenge what he sees as the reductive 'disciplinary' construction of citizens through formal learning. This is exemplified by the rights-and-responsibilities based teaching of citizenship in the UK: a system of 'codes, categories and modes of classification that reflect a governmental strategy into which the individual as citizen is inserted' (3). The alternative he proposes emphasises cultural citizenship as a process of *collective, constructivist* learning, in which a society continually develops new competencies and ideas by sharing experiences and interpretations. In Delanty's words, this change 'shifts the focus of citizenship away from the fact of membership of a polity onto common experiences, cognitive processes, forms of cultural translation and discourses of empowerment' (5). With this rejection of the historical epicentre of liberal citizenship, the extent to which this approach constitutes a conceptual transformation of the field begins to become clear. Communicative cultural citizens cannot be defined in the abstract; they must *do*.

The open nature of the 'deep cultural' project, and the current dearth of research into its practical implementation constitute a significant issue. For example, it is unclear whether Stevenson is able to bypass tensions between his theoretical orientation and his concern with the development of a substantive political program. Ultimately, his advocacy of measures associated with radical democracy may itself be dependent on a more institutionally-centred conception of rights and politics as a focal point for change.

As the author himself admits (152), an emphasis on deliberation and evolving cosmopolitanism (while undoubtedly emergent from progressive intentions) risks a collapse into individualism, contrary to the Other-regarding mindset required by deep cultural citizenship. Nonetheless, the development of a deep cultural citizenship adds a new dimension to the debate, drawing on deconstructionist and post-structuralist thought to conceptualise a highly fluid citizenship, the spaces of which extend beyond the formal politics that dominated preceding models.

2.7. Towards a Typology of Citizenship

Despite Marshall's undoubted influence on citizenship theory, it seems reasonable to state that the model he outlines in *CASC* is no longer seen as satisfactory. The model presented in *CASC* is a specific, teleological record of a British polity presented largely (with the exception of class schisms) as culturally homogeneous, and described almost entirely in terms of the formal political sphere. Accordingly, the application of Marshall's conclusions to polities exhibiting cultural difference - of place, ethnicity, gender, or a multiplicity of others - is, as demonstrated in this piece, likely to prove problematic in the extreme.

On this basis, the task of interventions in citizenship theory post-Marshall has been to develop means of accommodating cultural heterogeneity. In examining the literature, one can identify a series of debates around which this task has crystallised: issues of political spatiality, of the role of the state, of our understanding of identity and the potential of dialogue. Many of the theories examined in this chapter emerge from distinct scholarly traditions, but retain a capacity for synthesis. In particular, agendas for cosmopolitan and cultural citizenship (encompassing multi-cultural and deep cultural theory) repeatedly cross over, to the extent that Delanty (2002) describes Stevenson's 2001 volume 'Culture and Citizenship' in terms of cosmopolitanism.

In the first instance, these connections can be made through a shared recognition of the importance of empathy with, and inclusion of, the Other. Cosmopolitan citizenship involves a degree of self-recognition within a plurality of political spaces: the 'global community', the nation-state, life-politics movements. Clearly, such recognition must involve contingent definition of those within, and outside of, the 'space' within which an individual expresses agency at a given point. As Delanty puts it: 'the cosmopolitan moment occurs when context-bound cultures encounter each other and undergo transformation as a result' (2000: 145). Comparable processes can be located within the multi-culturalist strand of cultural citizenship, while that emanating from post-structuralist traditions is intrinsically amenable to the recognition of 'Others', being embedded in the interrogation of 'the particularity of liberalism, our own personal identities and strategies that seek to normalize political viewpoints' (Stevenson, 2003: 152).

A further point of convergence is one of process: namely, a mutual emphasis on communication. From the perspective of cosmopolitanism, global communication flows are a primary means for the production of the 'cosmopolitan mind', with an awareness of cultural connections and global risk (Urry, 2000). For the cultural citizenship theorists, their concern with representation and discourse renders dialogue a central element of their work, whether this is explored in terms of identity, structures of the public sphere, or issues of content in popular culture.

At the same time as recognising these connections, we must remain aware of their limits. Cosmopolitanism (particularly in its liberal form) and deep cultural theories often operate from distinct conceptions of the 'political'; many proposals for transnational governance would no doubt be rejected by the latter group as subjugating cultural identities to a hegemonic discourse. And while it might be argued that recognition politics and communitarianism both place heavy emphasis on pre-existing cultural identities, the former does so in the context of a robust critique of their marginalising effects.

Given the complexity and multiplicity of the current citizenship debate, the task of mapping points of juncture and disjuncture is potentially without end-. Yet, as stressed at the beginning of this section, a concern with the implications of cultural difference emerges strongly in this chapter. In considering the implications of this concern for the development of policy, it may be useful to briefly return to *CASC*, and specifically, its initial definition of citizenship as 'full membership of a community'. Close interrogation of this phrase is richly indicative of the parameters of debate, particularly in terms of its absent subject, the citizen. Despite the evident diversity in its theoretical underpinnings and implications, the literature on citizenship post-Marshall can be read as a series of attempts to reveal the concrete, specific qualities of this previously implicit being. In doing so, theorists have opened both the identity (or identities) of the subject, and its relationship to the structures which produce the status of citizenship, into question.

To the extent that the latter segment of this chapter has focussed on the work of Stevenson, this is because his work seems to represent a coalescence of these concerns:

acknowledging the impacts of globalisation, multi-culturalism, mediation and identity politics on citizenship, and consequently producing an 'alternative' agenda rooted in the centrality of culture. This shift towards the cultural, while fundamental, does not dismiss the contribution of Marshall or other earlier models of citizenship (indeed, it works from a similar central premise). However, the idea of 'full membership of a community' is here exposed to a new set of assumptions, which might be expressed as binaries in their relationship to the Marshallian paradigm: singular/multiple, national/cosmopolitan, identity/identities, passive/active, and so on.

By embedding these understandings within a firm commitment to equitable citizenship, deep cultural theory might provide a means of transcending the limitations of more unitary, 'political' accounts. However, these possibilities currently remain subject to strict qualification by the absence of empirical research into how the cultural agenda might operate in practice. As Couldry (2005) states: 'there are still major uncertainties about what types of link between cultures of belonging and forms of public or political action are necessary to qualify for the term 'citizenship', or at least contribute to the sustaining of citizenship'. The task for citizenship research then would seem to be a 'painting in' of these spaces, ascertaining how the potentialities offered by new understandings of citizenship might be realised, or fail to be realised, within specific social realities.

In practical terms, the task of conducting such an analysis requires that we move towards a typology of theoretical positions. In doing so, we can establish a workable classification for the study of citizenship policy in lived settings. An initial response to this task might be to seek out competing definitions of citizenship. However, the content of this chapter suggests that competing alternatives are absent, with current theory broadly endorsing the Marshallian premise of 'full membership of a community'. Instead, a more appropriate means of distinguishing between approaches involves the isolation of three distinct dimensions of citizenship.

The first of these is the *political relationship* (or *relationships*) emphasised by each model. For Marshall, for example, this relationship exists between the state and the individual, the nature of citizenship being defined in *CASC* by the negotiation of rights between the two. Such a relationship is clearly political in nature; it is concerned with

the nodes and paths of power which construct citizenship). Accordingly, we might also conceive of it as an expression of the nature of politics with which each model is concerned; the scope of the relationship with which each theory works serving to define the scope of the political. For example, while Marshall's model is focussed on links between citizens and the state, the deep cultural alternative would give much greater weight to extra-institutional relationships. The centrality of this emphasis to the practicalities of citizenship should be clear. For example, the prioritisation of relationships involving groups in multi-cultural models gives rise to a new site of political power (the group), and requires a distinct stance on the part of individuals towards civil society (as expressed in ideas such as Taylor's 'cultural recognition', which entails a greater burden of communication and education with/towards Others).

The second dimension is *identity*. This variable is demonstrated most clearly by deconstructionist and deep cultural theorists who, in revealing identity as a social construction, inevitably extend the realm of citizenship politics far beyond its institutional settings, revealing the power relations inherent in ostensibly apolitical discourses. Understandings of identity can for our purposes be defined according to two (albeit simplistic) binaries. The first of these is between essentialism and contingency, describing theorists' valorisation or rejection of identity categories such as nationality, gender or ethnicity as representative of an objective truth. The further distinction is between singular and multiple identities. Put simply, these terms represent a dichotomy between theories which conceive of citizen identity largely by reference to a single dominant factor (e.g. the nation-state in Marshallian liberalism) and those in which identity is inclusive of multiple, simultaneously held allegiances.

The final distinction revolves explicitly (whereas the others relate *implicitly*) around the status and understandings of *culture* within citizenship; it reflects the degree to which many post-Marshall interventions originate from a concern with the import of culture (albeit with the caveat that the term 'culture' itself is defined in a number of ways). It appears reasonable to distinguish between conceptualisations of culture as a *reflective* or *constitutive* force in relation to notions of the political. The former term might be applied to the Marshallian model, in which the cultural aspects of citizenship are conceived either as apolitical (and hence ignored) or as a resource/effect of the political sphere. Marshall's analysis of education is notable in this regard, focussing on its role

in the production of social stratification and cohesion as opposed to a valuation of cultural capacities for their own sake (Marshall, 1950: 75-76).

Standing in contrast to this are models of culture as *constitutive*: contributing to the development, maintenance and transformation of citizens and citizenship. While differing in their treatment of identity, multi-cultural and deep cultural approaches to citizenship might both be said to exhibit a constitutive framework insofar as they conceive of culture as a constant presence within the political process, and emphasise the consequences of 'everyday' cultural practices like dialogue (and therefore, of relationships between citizens, an interaction which attracts little comment in theories operating from the reflective position). It should be stressed that this argument need not come at the expense of a more formal, explicit relation between the political and cultural. The nation-state, for example, embodies an amalgamation of the nation (cultural) and the state (political), and has a large part in regulating the spaces in within which cultural practice and resources are deployed. However, where reflective theories depart from constitutive ones is in their treatment of culture as a *resource* in the everyday operation of citizenship, conceptually subjugated to a more obviously political definition (as demonstrated by the treatment of culture and education in *CASC*, for example). Within the constitutive approach, the cultural is defined not as a means to a political end, but as a political field in its own right

One critique of the delineation thus far might suggest that the notions of culture and identity could be usefully combined. Both concepts have been employed in reference to an 'extra-political' sphere (taking a formalistic definition of politics), and are often conflated within associated theory. To illustrate, one might point to the significant crossover between theories of identity politics and cultural politics. However, it is the contention of this piece that the two must be considered separately. Identity, as it appears vis-à-vis citizenship theory, should be taken to refer to the allegiances or subjectification of a self; it is therefore an ultimately individual concept. By contrast, culture (utilising any of the definitions adopted earlier from Williams) necessarily implies communication, and hence a collective space in which this communication can occur. Whilst in some strands of thought (notably within the deconstructionist approach) the two might appear concomitant, this is not necessarily the case. It is, for example, possible for a constitutive account of culture to coincide with a more objective

conception of identity (as might be argued is the case within certain strands of multi-culturalist citizenship theory).

Having established these criteria, it becomes possible to begin the task of grouping approaches to citizenship into broad theoretical camps. The first of these is 'liberal citizenship', under which we can include not only T.H. Marshall and many early accounts of citizenship, but also critiques of the former emanating from New Right and Third Way perspectives. While, as discussed, these approaches on the one hand exhibit clear differences regarding the precise scope of citizenship rights and their relationship with market processes, they share a common notion of citizenship itself. This is dominated by a relatively linear relationship between a singular nation-state and the individual, the former charged with protecting the rights of the latter.

Framing citizenship in these contractual terms has had the effect of largely subjugating questions of identity and culture within the context of their effects on the dominant national identity (as explored in more detail within earlier critiques of these models from deconstructionist and multi-cultural perspectives). In a modern policy context, such an analysis might easily be applied to the introduction of compulsory citizenship classes in UK schools, which has led several commentators to question its relationship to the ongoing political discourse of an overarching 'Britishness' (Leighton, 2005; Bourne/DEA, 2006). The ideal of a bounded, singular nation-state remains the driver of liberal citizenship as described in this thesis, and it is notable that even comparatively radical Third Way writers like Hutton couch their conclusions in defence of 'the traditional British milk round' (1996: 328), and of values 'deep-rooted in British culture' (343).

Liberal cosmopolitanism can be seen in this typology as a spatial extension of the liberal model. The institutionally dominated, formal conception of the political sphere (and subsequently of citizenship) remains, the shift being from a single nation-state to a multiplicity of political nodes. This change requires a corresponding adjustment in its account of identity, allowing for individuals possessive of a variety of correspondent political attachments (e.g. local, regional, national, trans-national). This development of identity is however largely limited to the organisation of accountable institutions. Rather than difference itself gaining a role in the construction and realisation of politics

(as is the case for many multi-culturalists), it is ‘traditional’ liberal politics that is charged with the task of ‘mediating and adjudicating difference’ in an asymmetrical dynamic (Held, in Guibernau, 2001: 10). From this, and from the limitation of the literature to the mapping out of a formalised global politics, we can infer a similarly restricted role for culture as something separate from, and to be ‘worked out’ by the public political realm. While cosmopolitan rhetoric might feature a heavy focus on communication as the driver of processes of globalization, its readiness to support the macro-management of cultural difference nonetheless suggests that such communication is conceived of as having a limited, disseminatory nature.

By contrast, the proponents of multicultural theory begin with a markedly ‘thicker’ (to adopt Calhoun’s terminology) account of the cultural. For these theorists, it is culture that provides the urge to community essential for an equitable polity. Therefore, citizenship must reflect the cultural conditions from which it seeks to emerge. This requirement is realised by the intrusion of the *group* into the institution-individual relationship of liberal and cosmopolitan theories. By acknowledging both the legitimacy of group rights and the role of cultural precedents in political debate, multiculturalism supplants liberalism’s linearity⁶ with a triadic relationship between individuals, the cultural groups in which they claim membership (or have it claimed on their behalf), and political institutions.

As argued, this shift results in a qualitatively distinct model for citizenship, in which the presence of both individual and group identities carries the capacity for conflict. This is perhaps because such identities remain conceived of as both stable and powerful; the notion of a reified ‘good life’ leaves limited space, particularly within the stronger accounts of communitarianism, for empathic communication. In attempting to transcend such problems, writers like Taylor and Young have produced more nuanced accounts of cultural belonging, as something amenable to contestation and transformation.

It is from such perspectives that the final strand of citizenship theory is produced, emerging from deconstructionist critiques and culminating in the deep cultural position.

⁶ Although its purpose in so doing may vary- Kymlicka for example acknowledges group rights as a means of supporting the liberal settlement in a heterogeneous polity.

Beginning from an assumption of claimed cultural 'truths' as founded on historically specific dynamics of power, this approach aims to produce a conjunction of culture and politics, revealing them as artificially separated examples of social practice. Culture is therefore constitutive not merely in providing a cohesive basis for a political sphere, but rather as political in its own right. It is here that deep cultural theories depart from multi-culturalism, the latter retaining a conception of culture as something to be 'worked out' within the public, political arena via the acknowledgement of group encumbrances.

Extending the sphere of politics to include the cultural has large implications for citizenship, necessarily supplanting the dominance of the individual-state dynamic in favour of a cyclical interaction between the individual and social experience/discourse, each continually impacting on the construction of its counterpart. Citizenship therefore cannot be 'achieved' in a sense that might be possible for a more rights-focussed theory; it is the continual practice of citizenship through social interaction that becomes central. This is, of course, reflective of the deconstructionist account of identity as performative and subject to continuous (re)construction, which would consequently lead to the rejection of citizenship policy underpinned by an objective social truth (such as that implicit in many liberal and communitarian theories).

By employing these distinctions, it ultimately becomes possible to develop four relatively discrete (albeit inevitably generalised) models of citizenship. As should be clear, these models reflect the problematisation of the Marshallian orthodoxy which has formed the basis of this chapter. Hence, the employed criteria are all in one way or another concerned with the negotiation of difference and the intrusion of culture into the political philosophy of citizenship. The models as developed thus far are summarised in the following table:

Table 1: Models of citizenship

Theory	Key Relationship	Concept of identity	Role of Culture	Theorists
Liberal	Individual-state	Stable/unitary	Reflective, focus on singular national culture	Marshall, Third Way theorists, New Right
Liberal Cosmopolitan	Individual-multiple polities	Stable/multiple	Reflective, formalised, traversing political 'levels'	Held, Dower
Multicultural	Individual-group-state	Stable/unitary	Constitutive (with regards to group identity)	Taylor, Kymlicka, Young, Sandel
Deep cultural	Individual-social experience/discourse	Unstable/multiple	Constitutive	Stevenson, Delanty

Clearly, these models are only effective at a broad level, and may fail to capture the nuances of specific theories. Opportunities for synthesis between these groups have been a significant focus of this review, and this strand of thought must be augmented by the difficulty inherent in allocating certain theorists to the stated categories. For instance, Kymlicka's attempt to reconcile individual liberalism with claims to group identity might equally position him as a multicultural and liberal theorist. Similarly, Young approaches issues of multi-culturalism from within the context of a deconstructive account of identity, while Stevenson's work can be read as combining elements of all four approaches (and emphasises the rhetorical 'slippage' which often occurs between some cosmopolitan and deep cultural models).

However, to equate complexity and commonalities with substantive synthesis is ultimately misleading. Despite their limitations, the models described provide tangibly distinct bases for citizenship, and thus carry the potential for distinct political outcomes. To give a very brief illustration, we might consider how debates regarding the status of minority groups in multi-cultural societies have produced possible policy solutions based variously on the primacy of human rights, the value judgements of an existing community, the emphasis of cultural difference or a call for a program of

communication (see for example de Wenden, 1999; Modood, 2005). Clearly, the theoretical foundations for these outcomes function *only* in concert with specific social-historical realities, and thus we must be cautious in making deterministic shifts from theory to policy. Nonetheless, it should not be contentious to suggest that the deployment of models such as those described at least indicate a predisposition towards certain policy outcomes.

In addition, the shift to policy construction might illuminate another means of delineating between theoretical stances. This task involves returning to an important critique of *CASC*: namely, Turner's response to Marshall's unacknowledged historical specificity. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Turner argues that the development of citizenship within a given political space can be categorised along two axes: active/passive, and public/private. While Turner uses these terms in a historical sense, it is a relatively straightforward task to map them onto current policy choices; the active/passive binary for example comes to mirror debates over participation. In this way, we can distinguish between *passive* liberal citizenship (likely to be based on a strong centralised state and representative democracy), and a more *active* version (which might include a federal structure and more deliberative/direct forms of political sovereignty). The same distinction can to some degree be applied across alternate models, with the caveat that some have an implicit tendency towards one of the two poles. For example, policies influenced by deconstructionist/deep cultural theory are inherently disposed towards *active* citizenship, echoing the theoretical concern with communication and necessitated by the ubiquity of the political.

The second of Turner's axes is that of public/private, associated specifically with the level of outwardly 'political' intervention in the lives of individuals, and the orientation of a society towards the public sphere. This certainly has some relevance; we might for example differentiate between libertarian and strong welfare state models within the liberal tradition in this way, the former having a greater orientation to the private. However, applying this distinction across the theoretical sets is more problematic. Essentially, the difficulty emerges from the fact that those theories where culture plays a more constitutive role might be said to refuse the public/private dichotomy. In this group we might include communitarian theories such as Sandel's, which seems to call for a public polity comprised of the sum of the private adherences of its constituents.

Deconstructionist theories go further in denying the public/private distinction altogether, often arguing that its employment has more to do with the valorisation of certain behaviours and identities (such as that of the publicly active male in feminist theory) than an objective analysis of social reality. The latter qualification in particular suggests that the public/private partition is itself a product of a historically embedded liberalism. This is not to discount its use entirely, but indicates that its application outside the liberal position must be undertaken with caution.

While Turner's distinctions might therefore seem to provide an unnecessary complication to the previously elucidated models, they nonetheless serve an important purpose in emphasising the connection between theory and practice. The use of the active/passive and public/private axes, drawing from a historical perspective, reiterates the contention that citizenship might develop differently within distinct (and historically contingent) political spaces. This is not to suggest that the possibilities of citizenship policy are *determined* by their temporal/spatial location, but rather to call attention to interplay between the 'material' (referring to a specific social or institutional circumstance) and the theoretical.

Given this recognition, it is possible to move towards a strategy for the analysis of precise, socially located policy debates and outcomes. Just as Turner critiques *CASC* for its (unacknowledged) social specificity, so we might deploy the same notion as an approach to the resolution of apparent problematics in the evolution of policy. To give a simple illustration, consider Andrews' (2004) critique of Third Way citizenship politics in the UK. As previously outlined, Andrews states that the Third Way is unable to contribute to a renewal of active citizenship: 'The ideal of stakeholding citizenship does not meet these criteria because viewing citizens as stakeholders strips citizenship of its ethical and political foundations' (2004: 8). If we consider this critique in light of the Third Way's evolution in the UK (as a politically pragmatic response to the ascendancy of neo-liberalism), one might be able to analyse the limitations suggested by Andrews not as a 'pure' theoretical choice, but as at least in part a product of the Third Way's historicity. When one adds to this dynamic the impact of additional 'on-the-ground' inputs to policy (including but not limited to organisational structure, available economic resources, and public demographics), the complexity of the theory-policy 'path' begins to become apparent.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter has performed two distinct tasks with the thesis. Firstly, it provides a literature review which describes what we can conceive of as a ‘culturation’ of citizenship theory. Beginning with Marshall’s account (within which culture is essentially absent) this section culminated around the work of writers like Stevenson and Delanty, who conceive of citizenship as a communicative process manifested across social practice. The second part of this chapter performed an act of delineation, describing four ideal-type ‘models’ of citizenship theory. While the project acknowledges the limitations of these models, it was argued that they constitute a useful means of describing the various ways in which citizenship theory has sought to engage with culture.

What these models provide then is a theoretical toolkit, a starting point from which to formulate an analysis of citizenship discourse within a given socially situated institution. In order to effectively undertake such an analysis, it is first necessary to develop a more specific account of how traces of these theoretical positions might be located and analysed within a specific site. Accordingly, the following chapter will comprise of an examination of the relationship between culture, citizenship and institutions of the mass media, with the intent of clarifying the precise schema via which it will be necessary to study the BBC. This discussion will focus on notions of the ‘public sphere’ as a lens through which ideas and debates related to citizenship are expressed in relation to media institutions.

Chapter 3: Citizenship, the Public Sphere and communicative institutions.

Introduction

The chapter which preceded this worked in the realm of abstract theory; it compared a variety of approaches to citizenship drawn from literature. Yet at the heart of this comparison was a claim about practice: the argument that citizenship is only ever realised in specific social settings, and through specific practices within those settings. Consequently, this chapter takes up this claim to conduct a more precise investigation of the relationship between citizenship and the work of communicative institutions (i.e. those engaged primarily in communication with citizens, such as the mass media), and how this relationship might be usefully analysed.

The first part of the chapter introduces the idea of *mediation* to describe the conduit function of communicative institutions; the transmission of information between citizens, their peers, and the state. The chapter identifies communicative institutions as *technologies* of citizenship, foregrounding the recognition that such institutions can support a variety of different citizenship models (an argument supported by a brief analysis of some issues in media theory). Following this assertion, the chapter argues that Habermas's concept of the *public sphere* is a particularly useful framework with which to examine the political import of practice and policy in media institutions. Specifically, it is argued that the theoretical evolution of the public sphere parallels the process of 'culturalisation' in citizenship theory. Yet at the same time, the framework of the public sphere allows us to more effectively capture what it is that communicative institutions actually *do*, by focussing discussion on the contribution they make to discourse, and the opportunities they provide for citizens to communicate.

The addition of the public sphere carries distinct benefits for this thesis. It emphasises the role of culture and communication, echoing a similar emphasis in recent citizenship models and the deep cultural model in particular. Consequently, it contextualises the empirical work of later chapters by drawing a conceptual connection between citizenship theory and media practices and structures. This is a particularly important move, insofar as such a connection is not necessarily prominent in social and political theory. As Livingstone and Lunt put it, 'an analysis of the public sphere is

indispensable to critical social theory because, broadly speaking, political theory has hitherto neglected the role of public communication in the democratic process' (1994: 29). The pattern of neglect is largely reflected in citizenship literature: of the theories examined in Chapter 2, it is only amongst the proponents of cultural citizenship that we find a sustained engagement, for example, of the role of media practice and institutions.

What the analysis in Chapter 3 does, then, is both to explicate the relevance of communicative institutions to an account of citizenship, and to provide a typology by which this relevance might be studied in a specific setting. The latter (which takes the form of the delineation of two 'axes' of a particular public sphere contribution: centred/decentred, and active/passive) is central to the work which follows; it recognises that the path between theory, policy and practice is not an explicit one. Media institutions and practitioners cannot, of course, be expected to consider citizenship theory as part of their situated practice. However, the nature of their work requires that they *do* have a relationship with their audience, one which is both reflected and constructed in the choices they make about the institutional structures in which they operate, and the texts which are the products of their labour. Chapter 3 employs examples from existing and hypothetical media practice to demonstrate how the vocabulary of the public sphere allows us to isolate the relationship between producer and audience (and its consequences for citizenship). By providing the framework for reflection on specific examples of practice, this analysis links the theoretical and empirical portions of the thesis.

3.1 Mediation and Technologies of citizenship

In looking towards the enactment of an increasingly culturalised citizenship, this research aims to demonstrate that institutions of the media (and in particular, those charged with a public service remit) are of central importance. The tenets underlying this assumption are familiar from basic theories of the relationship between media and politics, within which the media functions as a '4th estate' of democracy, providing a conduit for information and opinion. Recontextualising this argument within the terrain of citizenship, we might look to Leca's position that 'citizenship exists only if there is a space between the public and private' (1992: 21). Media institutions (and in a particularly literal sense, broadcasting institutions) can be seen as the modern manifestation of this citizen-space, traversing public and private and thereby providing resources for a connection between the individual and his/her community(ies) (Thompson, 1991). This assertion is particularly appropriate to Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) organisations such as the BBC who, although to some degree embedded within the apparatus of the state, both structurally and ideologically occupy what Keane has called a 'non-state, non-market' position (Keane, 1991).

Given this premise, it would seem likely that political discourse surrounding media institutions on the one hand, and concepts such as democracy or citizenship on the other should exist in an almost symbiotic relationship, in which debates regarding the former are effectively microcosmic of those regarding the latter (Pawley, 2004). For example, arguments for (and against) the deregulation of broadcasting in the UK are consistently couched in the rhetoric of democratic theory, with the value of individual liberty set against the protection of plurality and equitable access. Admittedly, similar claims might be made on behalf of any public service institution (education being an example which features prominently in *CASC*, for example). However, much recent citizenship discourse situates public service media as a particularly rich locus for study. Put simply, the inclination towards considering citizenship through the lens of culture and communication imbues a society's cultural institutions with a particular resonance. Writers influenced by reflexivity and the importance of self-narrative have echoed this stance, isolating cultural products as a central organising frame in late modernity:

'No one need feel left out. And even if you yourself are not physically

present on the screen or in the studio, then at least you recognise them as being people just like you... In a society which has lost the knack of recognising people, visibility is a considerable asset. To be "Helen off Big Brother ", or "that guy Anne Robinson humiliated on The Weakest Link", bestows a sense of identity and meaning' (Clarke, 2003: no page reference available)

If assertions like Clarke's carry any validity, then the manner and status of representation accorded to an individual (or group) has inevitable repercussions for their capacities to enjoy 'full membership of a community'. To return to Leca, it is through spaces such as the media that the public and private can come to recognise one another, and thus it is through such spaces that citizenship is manifested.

The role of the media should therefore be extended beyond the restricted vocabulary of representation. It is not simply that a public (or plurality of publics) is represented via the media; the same technologies *constitute* the object of a public in the first instance (Dahlgren, 1991). This argument is best expressed within concepts of *mediation*: the notion that in modernity, media technologies are a path through which mass societies (unable to convene in face-to-face communication) are constructed, maintained and contested. Simons therefore argues that the relationship between state and public is dependent on this process:

'The public is a mediated public, in which individuals and groups are connected to each other through media technologies which constitute the public as a terrain or object of government. Media technologies are technologies of government that work in two directions: they allow the public to govern the government to some extent... and they require that government to constitute the adult population as a political public amenable to representation' (Simons, 2002: 171)

It is the underlying contention of this project that a similar dynamic is visible across varied dimensions of citizenship. Media institutions and products have a capacity to valorise, enable and disable certain possibilities of citizenship; they are a factor in

defining the relation of individuals to society, its institutions and values. Silverstone suggests that mediation 'requires us to understand how processes of communication change the social and cultural environments that support them as well as the relationships that participants, both individual and institutional, have to that environment and each other' (Silverstone, 2005: 189). Crucially, this process takes place within the context of relations of power, with media actors 'both producer and product of hierarchy... This makes all mediated communication, in one sense or another, political' (191).

On this basis, we can conceive of a communicative institution as a *technology* of citizenship. Itself constituted on the basis of prevailing power relations and ideologies, a communicative institution in effect transposes these same conditions onto citizens, the result being their continual reconstitution as a public in a parallel image. This is not to suggest a deterministic position; it is evidently not the case either that processes of communication are the sole constitutor of social relations, or that any perceived 'public' exists as a pure *object* of these processes, 'governed as a passive consumer of commodified culture' (Simons, 2002: 175). Citizens respond to and negotiate cultural texts from within their own social experience. However, if we acknowledge that in large-scale modern polities, the public (or citizenry) is a *mediated* one, the institutions and processes that make up this mediation will inevitably have a framing effect, emphasising certain projections of publicness at the expense of others.

This framing impact is recognised (albeit to varying degrees, and within different constructions of the political) across different theoretical approaches to citizenship. Broadly speaking, liberal and cosmopolitan theories would acknowledge the media's role in supporting political and civil rights in particular, for example ensuring that governing institutions receive an accurate reflection of public opinion. Multicultural and deep cultural theories, by contrast, would be inclined to develop 'thicker' accounts of mediated citizenship, focusing on the representation of difference and the maintenance of heterogeneous forums for communication between others (such ideas are of particular concern in the work of Stevenson, allowing him to effectively capture a sense of widely-pervading mediation in modern societies). Held in common across theoretical spaces, however, is a concern with the means through which citizens

communicate: both with each other, and with the institutions which enable their citizenship.

The notion of communicative institutions as ‘technologies’ of citizenship is particularly resonant for Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) organisations, such as the BBC. Such institutions have an explicit responsibility to citizens, and would be expected to have a keen self-awareness of their own contribution to public life. The BBC therefore becomes a pertinent locus from which to study the institutional progress of citizenship theory resultant both from its particular status, and its position as a significant communicative institution (situating it in a central position with regards the mediation of citizenship in the UK).

Moving to the established literature within communication and media theory, the association between the media and politics reinforces notions of communicative institutions as technologies of citizenship. While it does not always address citizenship directly, media theory is concerned with many of the same issues surrounding the position of individuals in society. To illustrate, we might consider Curran and Seaton’s *Power Without Responsibility*, a dominant text on the political history of the mass media in the United Kingdom. Curran and Seaton categorise media policy according to four ideological and organisational traditions: Traditional Public Service, Free Market, Social Market, and Radical Public Service (1997: 332-333).

The first three positions are recognisable from the debates in Chapter 2 on the relationship between citizenship and capitalism. At stake is the manner and scale of intervention in media practices to be tolerated (or blocked) in the interests of a pre-existing idealisation of (liberal) democracy. Hence, the free market position advocates de-regulation in the name of individual liberty, whereas a traditional public service perspective ‘stresses the merits of social cohesion and mutual obligation’ (336). The radical public service position is slightly different, insofar as the ‘regulated pluralism’ advocated by writers like Keane and Thompson seems to stem from a more nuanced account of identity, or at least an awareness of what Keane calls ‘the facts of complexity, diversity and difference’ (Keane, quoted in Curran and Seaton, 1997: 346). It is perhaps not surprising then that we can find traces of such ideas within literature previously described as ‘deep cultural’, notably in Stevenson’s emphasis on processes

of deliberative communication. The commonality across all four positions is their acceptance of the import of media policy for democratic engagement.

Curran and Seaton stress that these are neither stable nor complete distinctions, emphasising the inadequacies of ‘the simple dichotomy of left and right’ (1997: 353). There are further parallels with citizenship theory here; in overlaying their initial ideological categories with a distinction between paternalist and libertarian stances (349-354), Curran and Seaton to some degree reiterate Turner’s active/passive binary for citizenship. In making arguments about issues like censorship and privacy, Curran and Seaton demonstrate a concern, shared with citizenship theorists, with the capacities of citizens to define their role in the ‘political’, and in defining their rights and responsibilities as members of a community.

From this brief analysis, it appears that the exercise of systematically considering the organisation of media in terms of citizenship is a fruitful one, offering a means for examination of the construction, representation and engagement of publics in society. The above recontextualisation of *Power Without Responsibility* is only a single example of how such investigations might operate. In fact, conflict between underlying political ideas remains a consistent presence across the corpus of media theory, as outlined by McQuail:

‘Included in our assemblage of theory is much that is speculative and also essentially normative, prompting value judgements rather than providing explanations or a basis for prediction. In respect of the normative tendencies of theory, there is no reason to apologize. The workings of mass media are deeply involved with political, social ethical and moral issues...’
(McQuail, 2000: 479)

In acknowledging the relationship between normative theories of media and those of citizenship, we begin to demonstrate the potentiality of the proposed research: namely, to employ a case study of public service media to explore the ‘enactment’ of citizenship within a specific institutional setting, one which itself is contended to be of particular significance as a mediating technology. The question which follows is one of process: just as the previous chapter sought to establish models of citizenship, how might we

begin to produce an equivalent systematisation for its actualisation in a communicative institution? This is necessary because, as will be argued later, it is crucial not to conflate a model with the means of its realisation. To put it another way, communicative institutions do not directly implement theoretical models of citizenship. However, they *do* produce cultural texts which are received by citizens, and which therefore may have ramifications for citizenship (as suggested by arguments on mediation).

Such an undertaking requires a structural thematic, if only as a counterweight to what McQuail describes as the multiple ‘logics’ (referring to ‘a framework of meaning in which elements of a phenomenon are coherently related to each other’ (2000: 483)), and ‘domains of meaning’ (‘the topics... in which mass media operate for individuals and wider collectives’ (485)) by which the mass media might be understood. For our purposes, domains of meaning are effectively a reiteration of the concerns of citizenship discourse outlined in Chapter 2, i.e. the relationship between individuals and society, concepts of identity, the role of culture. As argued in this chapter, media institutions commonly articulate such concerns in modernity.

The issue of logics is more complex. To some extent, it is the stated task of this research to deal precisely with *multiple* logics; to examine how the ideological works in relation to the commercial, the historical, the technological. Nonetheless, the goals of the project suggest a clear orientation towards the *political*, albeit one which seeks to work with a wider understanding of the term than McQuail’s terminology (which, for example, delineates between the political and cultural) might suggest. When dealing with citizenship we are inevitably interested in issues connected to power: what capacities an individual possesses to claim or enact their citizenship, and what impact the institutional and discursive structures of a polity have on these capacities. With regards the media, we are therefore concerned with the manner in which it engages with the political; the possibilities it enables or disables, via processes of mediation, for the enactment of citizenship.

3.2 The Public Sphere

In recent social and political theory, discussion of the ‘political logic’ of the media has been focussed through a dominant organising concept: the public sphere. This term is highly contested, and its deployment in this thesis is not intended to suggest an adherence to any given definition. Rather, this project works from the supposition that the normative underpinning of the public sphere concept (namely, a commitment to the provision of equitable means of communication) represents a resonant distillation of the dynamic between media technologies and citizenship theory; it is ultimately concerned with the capacities of citizens within a mediated society. As such, the public sphere concept effectively cuts across models of citizenship.

The caveat to this contention is that the term ‘public sphere’ itself would not find equal favour with the proponents of each model (for example, we would not expect deconstructionist theories to adhere to a terminology which, as will be discussed, evokes a singular public). Nonetheless, the types of ideas articulated within the evocation and subsequent problematisation of the public sphere concept are relevant across theoretical divisions. On this basis, the concept can be deployed particularly appropriate means by which to trace the ‘passage’ of citizenship discourses within communicative institutions. Regardless of whether they recognise it, communicative institutions make a contribution to the public sphere through their output. What the remainder of this chapter will argue is that the nature of this contribution has implications for citizenship, and relates – if not always explicitly – to the models described in Chapter 2.

In modern political theory, the public sphere is commonly associated with the work of Habermas. Habermas’s early work conceives of the public sphere as the ‘realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed’ (1974: 198), and finds it increasingly mediated through mass communication (as opposed to a somewhat idealistic notion of personal contact, the ‘coffee house’ model of bourgeois communication much derided by his critics). The public sphere’s perceived role is akin to that ascribed to the press in ‘4th estate’ arguments, providing the resources for an informed public opinion, capable of holding the state to account (see Habermas, 1989). Perhaps the attraction of the public sphere concept comes from the reconciliation it

promises between the ‘political’ and the private realms, implicitly echoing the transcendent ‘citizen-space’ drawn from Leca. In advanced industrial societies, it is a perceived distance between the two that is commonly deemed to weaken the validity of representative government, ultimately traceable to Rousseau’s contention that ‘every law that the people have not ratified in person is null and void’ (1762: no page reference available).

Translating this argument into the rhetoric of citizenship suggests that to embed distance between state and public is an attack on the political rights of the latter, limiting the citizen’s role in ‘the exercise of political power’ (Marshall, 1950: 10). The maintenance of a vibrant public sphere reduces this distance, creating a discursive space in which citizens experience themselves as members of a community, share knowledge and ideas with others, and in doing so hold their representatives to account. Habermas initially establishes an opposition between this idealised situation and its absence via the binary of *systems* and *lifeworld*, and the forms of communication that emanate from each side (1987). The former (manifested in bureaucracy, centralised hierarchy and expert knowledge) reduces the public sphere to a linear, aggregative communication, and in doing so denies the opportunity for deliberation that is crucial for democratic accountability.

If systems-led communication ‘colonises’ the deliberative lifeworld of communication between rational individuals (as processes of organised capitalism suggest it is likely to do), then the public sphere is diminished; individuals are no longer able to communicate in terms outside of those employed by hegemonic structures. Democracy, according to Barnett (2003) is therefore conceived of by Habermas as a negative as much as a positive, a ‘defensive modality against encroachment by administrative and commodified processes’ (59).

The obvious parallel in media theory is with arguments for public service broadcasting as a means of resisting commercial logics: see for example Seaton’s argument that deregulation of broadcasting in the US led to a sensationalised approach to news, that of following ‘bombs around the world’ (2001). By contrast the development of new, publicly-oriented communication streams (such as the BBC’s digital services) can be presented as having an ameliorative impact on democracy. The mass media then can be

a technology of either systems or lifeworld-focussed communication; it is the political discourse underpinning an institution's interactions with citizens that will determine which. The contestable nature of the contribution of institutions underpins Habermas's call for the democratization of organizations dealing with the state: an internal commitment to 'publicness' serving to counteract the bureaucratizing trends of modernity (Habermas, 1973: 236).

The public sphere, however, remains a highly contested concept. Habermas' early work in particular has been criticised as over-simplistic, and as privileging a gendered, rationalistic model of communication, for example by limiting the political agency of women by devaluing private and family life (Fraser, 1995; Calhoun, 1992; Crossley and Roberts, 2004). Peters (1999) goes a step further, arguing that Habermas infers a utopian historical fantasy of face-to-face communication from within the context of its conceptual opposite: 'Communication as a person-to-person activity became thinkable only in the shadow of mediated communication. Mass communication came first' (1999: 6). The possibility of a 'pure' exchange of information is, according to Peters, unachievable: it ignores the inevitability that all communication is historically and culturally contingent, and thus already mediated by the conditions in which it takes place.

In terms of our analysis, what is interesting about these criticisms is the manner in which they echo those of 'traditional' liberal perspectives on citizenship, implying that Habermas can be read as holding a similar alignment. In this vein, Roberts and Crossley contend that Habermas tends to 'overlook the more coercive and power-driven attributes of the bourgeois public sphere... the bourgeois public sphere disparages the emancipatory potential of 'counter-public spheres'' (2004: 11). Parallels can be drawn with the feminist critique of liberal citizenship, which draws on similar ideas of valorisation (of a rational, male ideal of the political) and exclusion. We might reach the same conclusions from Peters: insofar as public sphere theory relies on an implausible wish for pure exchange, it is conceptually incapable of addressing communicative circumstances which deviate from this ideal (just as the Marshallian citizenship model appeared unable to account for cultural heterogeneity).

Despite these limitations, the ideal of egalitarian public communication has understandably remained a compelling one (if only as a normative rallying call), and features prominently in seemingly diverse literatures. Within the liberal cosmopolitan tradition, it is within the public sphere that an effective ‘global citizenship’ can emerge; effective communication is deemed central to the search for transnational political accountability (Dower, 2000). Theories of deep cultural citizenship inevitably reach similar conclusions: if power relations are constructed and reiterated through discourse, then access to discursive facilities (both consumptive and productive) becomes a condition of citizenship (Delanty, 2002; Stevenson, 2003).

Following the concern to sustain democratic communication, attempts have been made to reconstitute Habermas’ ideas within the context of a more diverse politics. This has often taken the form of a simple act of pluralisation, proposing a set of coterminous public spheres in which distinct forms of communication can be privileged, Keane’s proposal for a media heterarchy being an obvious illustration of this line of thought (Keane, 1991). However while such interventions undoubtedly recognise the centrality of communicative space to citizenship, it does not follow that they fully work through the implications of their position. Put simply, the problem is that plurality or heterarchy, whilst valuable in their own rights, do not deny the possibility of hierarchy. This distinction is pertinent both in a socially situated sense (in that certain public sphere(s) may remain comparatively valorised in the context of existing power structures, or that issues of *capacities* may impact on the efficacy of ‘counter’ public spheres) and also in abstracted theory. The latter follows from Barnett’s argument that early Habermasian theory is limited by a failure to engage fully with the notion of identity:

‘The conceptual separation of material reproduction from symbolic reproduction, system and lifeworld is indicative of an understanding of identity-formation as a process undertaken wholly in the private realm, prior to and outside of the public sphere of rational debate’ (Barnett, 2003: 66)

If identity is conceived of as pre-given and private, then the emancipatory potential of *any* public sphere suffers from the same limitation as Marshall’s account of citizenship; both effectively bracket off issues of difference.

In response, Barnett takes up Iris Young's notion of communicative democracy to provide an alternative scenario, dependent 'on a shift from a self-centred understanding of needs to the recognition of other perspectives and a commitment to negotiation' (62). This stance allows for the intrusion of heterarchy not merely at the organisational level, but in terms of the types, and explicit *purposes* of communications made in the name of a claim for justice (for which we can substitute those of citizenship): 'The important element of a claim for justice is its illocutionary status as a claim, its trajectory as an appeal addressed to others' (63). Nancy Fraser's move towards a 'post-bourgeois' conception of the public sphere works in a similar way, arguing that *public* acknowledgement of a multiplicity of social positions, and of the types of communication that these entail (as expressed in her delineation of 'strong' and 'weak' publics) is essential for a functional mediated democracy (1990).

The nature of public spheres is therefore transformed: they no longer exclude or deny an isolated notion of the private, but accommodate passionate, encumbered claims for citizenship within forums predicated on an open communication with others. It is the public nature of this communication that guards against the dominance of self-interest; it draws actors into the citizen-space with an awareness of the dependence of said space on their fellow participants. Barnett credits Habermas with acknowledging such criticisms in his later work, which encompasses multiplicity, fluidity, and a permeable conception of public and private. This new conceptualisation is highly decentralised, consisting of a variety of 'streams of public communication' (Habermas, 1994: 92-93).

Assuming that these streams are better able to include 'non-rational' communication than the early Habermasian model, we can begin to see how the public sphere concept might function outside of a narrowly 'political' context, and how it might be open to translation in terms of the more radical citizenship models outlined in Chapter 2. A manifestation of this new understanding can be seen in Mouffe's model of a 'agonistic' public sphere, which acknowledges the permanence of difference and conflict and seeks to build communicative forums around said permanence, abandoning what Mouffe sees as the fantasy of unencumbered deliberation (2005: 128-130). For Mouffe, the focus in the early Habermasian model on a search for consensus through rational communication is destructive; it seeks to isolate legitimate conflicts and, in doing so, discourages

meaningful civic debate (2000, 2005). Such a position might be identified as representing a 'culturation' of the public sphere debate, mirroring the intervention of broader understandings of the 'political' brought about by feminist and deconstructionist interventions in social theory.

When locating manifestations of the modern public sphere, most theorists have followed Habermas in attaching increased importance to mass communication media (Dahlgren, 2000; Van Dijk, 1999; Calabrese and Burgelman, 1999). Stevenson makes a similar claim: 'Today there is no knowledge of citizenship that has not passed at some point through the media' (2003: 124-125). Following this premise, it is a relatively simple task to draw connections between the public sphere concept and questions of citizenship. For example, the advent of multiculturalism would seem imply a need for a corresponding plurality in cultural representation within mass media institutions with a public service remit. Kymlicka, for example, has isolated the funding of 'ethnic media' as a potentially useful group right (Kymlicka, 1997).

Such ideas are prominent in current discourse in the UK, illustrated by Harker's recent complaint that new BBC drama 'Shoot The Messenger' presents a negative stereotype of Afro-Caribbean culture (2006). The argument in Harker's piece is that the BBC has a responsibility to provide positive images that reflect the 'true depth and breadth of black British life'. This position is clearly redolent of multi-cultural arguments; the suggestion being that failure to provide an accurate portrayal of a group is effectively to 'distort and oppress' (Taylor, 1992: 35). Furthermore, this charge is not merely brought against a particular cultural text, but against an institution as a whole. Harker's position (that the BBC *consistently* fails to produce appropriate representations of the black community) implies that the institution's conception and/or realisation of the public sphere is itself flawed, providing a distorted basis for public discourse and the enactment of citizenship.

Just as it proves necessary to expand our understanding of the public sphere vis-à-vis identity, the same claim can (and must, in accordance with any attempt to contextualise the public sphere in terms of the models of citizenship in Chapter 2) be made both with regards the *spaces* within which public communication occurs, and with the relationship of this communication to the wider *culture* of these spaces.

The first of these debates returns us to the globalisation paradigm, conceived of as fundamentally disruptive of established ideas of the public and of the relationship of communication and democracy to a spatial territory. This argument is taken up by Keane, who suggests that any discussion of the public sphere must now operate on a continuum of micro, meso, and macro-public spheres; equivalent in terms of scale to the sub-national, national and supra-national terminology common to the globalisation literature (Keane, 1995: 1-22). This formulation is in some senses emancipatory: insofar as Keane identifies communicative power as functioning through a 'complex mosaic' (8) of public spaces, it follows that control of these networks by a centralised hegemony is likely to prove limited. It is this line of thought that underpins Keane's earlier (1991) proposals for increased media heterarchy, the thought being that unconventional ownership structures (including increased roles for community and journalist-controlled media) function as a buttress for democracy via plurality. The difficulty with this assertion is that it risks an uncritical celebration of difference and extra-state activity, denying the public sphere's original value as an arena in which embedded power is called to account. The debate then is about the value of universality, or at least of the *possibility* of universality in terms of a claim of political agency held in common (a notion central to citizenship).

Such arguments are prevalent in the emerging literature on new media, particularly web-based forums such as blogs and messageboards. On the one hand, there is a claim that these mediums might effect a revitalisation of public communication at multiple levels, providing easy access to deliberative forms of communication and activism. Set against this are the arguments of writers like Jodi Dean. Dean contextualises concerns about the fragmentation of social bonds within a vision of the network society as dominated by 'communicative capitalism', which reduces politics to questions of administration of existing systems (echoing Habermas's systems/lifeworld binary). In the absence of a substantive oppositional politics based on universal claims to rights, participation in online communication substitutes active citizenship with a techno-political fetishism:

'They believe that they are active, maybe even that they are making a difference, simply by clicking on a button, adding their name to a petition or

commenting on a blog... the form of our involvement ultimately empowers those it is supposed to resist'(Dean, 2005: 60-61).

In this argument, a public sphere has effectively failed to materialise. Communicative technologies provide a fantasy both of political action and of communal participation, allowing individuals the belief that 'we are after all informed, engaged citizens' (63). Yet these communications fail to form anything equivalent to the ideal of a 'public voice', circulating largely within their own 'bubbles of opinions with which they already agree' (69). If performative use of communicative technologies is allowed to substitute for substantive political communication, then we are returned to Habermas's dystopian conception; the colonisation of the lifeworld by systems which themselves emerge from a hegemonic structure. As stated earlier, contributions to the public sphere in this instance might still function as a realisation of citizenship; it does not however follow that their impact will be progressive.

Garnham seeks to overcome this impasse by reference to a Kantian model of public action echoed in Young's model of communicative democracy (her deconstructionist impulses notwithstanding). Garnham states that public reason 'must be offered in such a way that it is potentially acceptable by any other human being, and this in its turn involves the effort of putting oneself in the position of the Other' (2000: 181). Simultaneously however, such reason must seek to enact some form of political agency, concerned with 'questions of the institutional structures, forms of social relationship, and of the social effectivity of the sphere of discourse and action we can call public' (179).

It is at this point that an assimilation of the two positions becomes possible: one which acknowledges a sense of shared 'publicness', but in terms of purpose as opposed to structure or identity. Barnett (who remains generally supportive of Keane's 'mosaic' formulation) makes the point well:

'The fundamental issue is not whether effective democratic media politics can be constituted at the same global level to match the jump of scale by capital and by administrative and regulatory authorities. It is, rather, whether and how actors embedded as particular territorial scales are able to

mobilise support and resources... in order to pursue their interests' (Barnett, 2003: 78)

In this formulation, policy should retain a pragmatic focus on individual resources and capacities (i.e. it should relate to the broad normative goals of the public sphere concept, being aimed at maintaining equitable communicative streams). A similar argument is made by Garnham in his attempt to employ Sen's 'capabilities' approach to welfare to communications policy: a commitment to democratic communication entails a need to know 'what the users themselves do with the opportunities presented and... where the barriers lie...' (Garnham, 1999: 122). This is not to deny the importance of the spatial dimensions of the public sphere, but to assert that these dimensions *function* only insofar as they impact on situated actors. In this sense, we arrive at an echo of Calhoun's (2001) critique of cosmopolitanism, outlined in Chapter 2. While the recognition of spaces beyond the nation-state is of obvious structural importance, the shift in scale in itself adds little to our understanding either of the situated enactment of citizenship, or of the situated operation of public sphere(s).

A further issue in the post-Habermas literature is that of cultural practice, referring specifically in this instance to the types of practice held to constitute a contribution to the public sphere. This is bound up with the critique of public sphere theory from deconstructionist perspectives, insofar as it involves 'opening' the public sphere concept to variant forms of communication: in particular, those emanating from outside a narrowly bounded concept of the 'political'. When thinking in terms of the early, mechanistic model of the public sphere, it is easy to focus on its most explicit media representations: television news, or access for minority audiences. Indeed, the majority of literature on media and politics works within this framework (e.g. Street, 2001; Curran and Seaton, 2003), and it is obviously an important locus for research.

However, the extension and deconstruction of citizenship which is the subject of much of the post-Marshall literature (and particularly its association with culturally situated practice) can be repeated with regards the public sphere. Turner (in Stevenson (ed.), 2001) makes the point (regarding Marshall) that the problematisation of high/low cultural distinctions which occurs with post-modernism means we can no longer interrogate representations of citizenship simply within 'finite and specific structures'

(12). Turner's position looks to a wider definition of the political beyond explicit, institutionally-focussed forms. Translated to the public sphere, this would seem to imply that any public cultural product has potential as a site of political discourse (including, of course, discourse on citizenship).

This analysis (which to a large degree coalesces with a Cultural Studies tradition) has been taken up by writers like Miller (1998), who states that "[the] public is formed and reformed on a routine basis through technologies of truth- popular logics for establishing fact... and their embodiment in communicative forms' (Miller, 1998: 5; see also Corner and Pels, 2003). As is the case for Stevenson, Miller's arguments are predicated on the notion of discursive forms of power, in which the deployment of specific vocabularies can serve to alter possibilities for political action. Thus the notion of genre, for example, becomes a political signifier: 'Genres both train the population as readers and agents and are themselves understood as representative of that population, spatial markers of governance and resistance' (Miller, 1998: 18-19). Essentially, different genres act as agenda-setting and framing processes, encouraging audiences to conceive of themselves, Others and the state in a particular way. Returning to the vocabulary of the start of this chapter, they have a role in the mediation of public life.

Following this position, several recent studies have sought to trace specific symbolisms of citizenship within popular culture. Such analyses undertake detailed analysis of ostensibly apolitical cultural product, isolating the textual cues by which the public might be 'formed and reformed' in Miller's words. The attempt to locate the political within the explicitly cultural is representative of extended scope in understandings of the public sphere, encompassing new forms of its production (i.e. genre), and consumption (including private leisure).

Looking in more detail (given the locus of this research) at television studies, it is possible to trace such an extension. Hartley argues that initial academic engagement with television was broadly disciplinary in purpose; television was 'persistently treated as a symptom of something other than itself' (2003: xii) to be classified as an agent of existing power structures. Thinking about this position in terms of the models outlined in Chapter 2, it is clear that we are looking at a *reflective* view of culture. Yet a combination of the maturation of the medium itself with the rise of identity politics and

the 'cultural turn' in social theory led to a new engagement both in what television might do in and of itself, and in particular what constitutive uses its audience might make of it. As Hartley puts it: 'Even the most sober critics came to believe that television could promote new forms of citizenship based on affinity, culture, affect, identity. Television began to be recognised, albeit cautiously and belatedly, as part of the public sphere' (2003: xv).

The 'caution' that Hartley refers to is clearly expressed in the persistence of a line of thought that seems to position television as antithetical to civic and political engagement. One strand of this argument revolves around the proposition that television is inherently *individualising*, a largely private activity which has supplanted leisure activities entailing an engagement with fellow citizens (see Putnam, 2000). Another focuses on the nature and genre of television, positioning it as a transitory, visually-led form that, where it deals with political issues, does so in a style that precludes rational debate (Postman, 1985). Finally, there is a critique of television as an inherently *conservative* medium which is ill-suited (both for reasons of political economy and the preponderance of large corporate interests, and of conventions of style) to carry progressive messages, and which thereby skews the public sphere to the degree that Scheuer describes it as 'a central factor in the resurgence of American conservatism' (Scheuer, 2001: 10; see also Miller, 2007).

The ideas sketched above seem to share a pervading idea of television as part of a centralised public sphere, imposing the conditions of its consumption on citizens. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that contrary positions seek a focus on *audiences* themselves, and have produced readings of the uses made of television which echo the arguments earlier in this chapter regarding the re-configuration of the public sphere concept. John Fiske (1987, 1989, 1991) has provided perhaps the most strident rejection of the 'imposition' of television, instead seeking to demonstrate the capacities of audiences to make oppositional meanings of cultural product as part of a process of active resistance. Television for Fiske is polysemic (1987, Chap. 6), intrinsically capable of provoking multiple readings dependent on the interests and experiences of the socially situated audience. Fiske has often been critiqued for an overly celebratory approach which fails to recognise the limits on the capacity of audiences to set agendas and effect change, exemplified by McGuigan's critique of populist cultural studies as

'bracketing off history, macro-politics and economics' (1992:72). Nonetheless, he exemplifies attempts to rethink the role of television in the modern public sphere through new focus on the audience.

Elsewhere, this concern with the politics of television and television audiences has inevitably led to a crossover between television studies and citizenship. For Hartley, television is both reflective and constitutive of 'DIY citizenship', described in terms of 'the practice of putting together an identity from the available choice, patterns and opportunities on offer in the semiosphere and the mediasphere' (1999: 178). DIY citizenship acknowledges the individualizing effects of television but reframes this as a recognition of difference and tolerance thereof, the historical consequence of identity politics where the latter has succeeded or begun to succeed (159). Using the example of the 1990's children's show 'Clarissa Explains It All', Hartley argues that television can assist the claiming of DIY citizenship by its viewers not through its representation of a particular identity, but by offering a way of being in the world based on 'knowing how things work' and making choices accordingly (182). Hartley's argument has an obvious correlation with notions of deep cultural citizenship as a continual, fluid process, but like Fiske seems to lack sufficient focus on power: what, for example, happens when the 'choices, patterns and opportunities on offer' from the remote control are severely restricted in the manner described by Miller or Scheuer?

Hermes seeks to approach the response of audiences to cultural texts from a midpoint, rejecting both Hartley's optimism and the pessimism of accounts that deny the agency of audiences (2005: 10). In *Re-Reading Popular Culture*, Hermes undertakes a number of case studies which examine the use of cultural texts in terms of the inclusion and exclusion that is a necessary cohort of the definition of identities and communities, recognising the creative production of meaning alongside the 'structures of control' which come with it as a 'package deal' (148). Reflecting on a study of responses to detective novels, Hermes discusses the tension between moments of resistance and the broader hegemonic practices (including the roles of consumer, and the reiteration of gender roles) in the context of which such moments take place: 'popular culture produces the consumer-citizen in a series of dialectical moves in which "empowerment" and the "energy to go on again" are rewards for keeping in line' (77). Hermes however remains convinced of the value of popular culture as part of an active public sphere, of

the way it allows us to 'bond and build communities' within a heavily mediated society (155). For this value to be fully realised, Hermes argues that society and policy-makers need to 'work *with* rather than *against* what is so high on the agendas of the citizens' (158), and, in a striking parallel with the deep cultural citizenship theorists, to pay closer attention to the act of listening to the sometimes contrary uses made of disparate, often ostensibly apolitical cultural product in everyday life.

Van Zoonen (2005) follows Hermes in calling for a greater engagement with 'entertainment', but differs in her focus not on an informal cultural politics, but on the relationship between pleasure in popular culture and engagement in more explicitly 'political' discourse and processes (i.e. that related to elections and the party system). In doing so, Van Zoonen presents a challenge to writers like Postman, who argues that the entertainment prerogative of television inherently debases the political life of a society. Following a set of case studies (for example on the celebritisation of politics, or of online responses to programmes like *The West Wing*), Van Zoonen concludes that 'citizenship can be entertained through the popular vocabularies offered by personalization and dramatization... they make citizenship simply more pleasurable for more people, but they also offer instruments to think about what citizenship should mean, and they invite a hospitable surrounding for the performance of citizenship' (2005: 147). Van Zoonen offers a particular challenge to theorists who seek to reinvigorate citizenship through the creation of new deliberative forums, arguing that these should integrate popular modes of discourse if they are not to risk re-inscribing the privileged status of a modernist political communication (148-149).

Taken together, these interventions both help to link debates on the scope and nature of the public sphere to situated practice, and to highlight the role of citizens in making creative use of the resources that the public sphere provides. In focussing on cultural product and reception, there is a risk of a fetishisation of everyday practice at the expense of analysis of macro-level politics and resources, as stated by McGuigan in response to Fiske and others. This tension has been a constant source of debate through the history of cultural analysis. It is however a complex dynamic: as Van Zoonen suggests, an attribution of naïve populism may be indicative of a failure to recognise societal counter-currents against professionalized, elitist politics, and in itself denies

agency to citizens in its assumption that they are somehow powerless to resist populist modes of communication (2005: 147-148).

In any case, a deep cultural understanding of citizenship (with its emphasis on symbolic power and communication) would demand that we engage with cultural practice as well as theory. The appropriate task would seem to be analysis of texts both as consumed by an audience of citizens, and as productive of this audience in their own right. This line of argument echoes this project's central problematisation of citizenship: that of how, via their increased focus on culture, citizenship theorists have sought to 'name' or call into focus the individual citizens who are both the subject and object of citizenship discourses. Scannell makes a similar call in his discussion of public service broadcasting:

'If broadcasting today is defensible as a public service it can only be as a service to the public. And yet what the word *public* means in the context of broadcasting remains remarkably underexamined in debates about the social role of radio and television' (Scannell, 1989: 135)

Scannell was writing two decades ago, and there is documentary evidence to suggest a more coherent effort to identify and include the 'public' in recent policy debates. Examples of such projects within the BBC, such as the publication of *Building Public Value*, will form a starting point for the empirical work of this research. And yet the deployment of the term 'public' in this context presents a challenge: if the assumed purpose is to allow the institution to respond to the needs of a differentiated, contingent citizenry, then the conflation of said citizenry under the banner of 'public' appears counter-productive. Such complexities are a common limitation in existing media literature. While the earlier quotation from Scannell for example implied a critical engagement with notions of the public, the same article nonetheless subscribes to the notion of a 'general public', called into being by 'a totality, a universe of discourse' provided by a powerful public service broadcaster (1989: 153). In a social reality increasingly defined by heterogeneity and fragmentation, the suitability of such all-encompassing frameworks for public communication must surely be open to

contestation, particularly in the context of audience research that emphasises the contingent response of differing audiences to texts.

Perhaps then, the ambitions of writers like Scannell are better expressed by maintaining the communicative ambitions of the public sphere concept through an engagement of culture: both as creative product, and of ways of life/lived practice. Broadcasters and audiences might thereby be conceptualised within a cyclical relation of cultural production in which the content and dynamic of this relation either (dependent on one's theoretical stance) impacts on audience's orientation and capabilities vis-à-vis a separate political sphere, or has the same effect within an over-lapping cultural politics. While we would therefore acknowledge the capacity of broadcasting to enable and frame new forms of 'public' experience, it should not be seen as in a totalising, determinate relation to audiences.

A further argument, and one which links closely to Habermasian ideals, conceives of 'public' as a term that carries specific political implications. Livingstone and Lunt develop this position by showing how social theory has opposed an active 'public' with a passive 'mass':

'In contrast with the mass, Mills (1959) characterized the public as egalitarian, for as many people express opinions as receive them, as operating a form of communication which permits immediate and effective feedback, as affording the translation of public opinion into effective action even against the *status quo* or authority; and as constructing an autonomous public opinion.' (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994: 18)

What characterises the 'public' in this analysis? It is composed of citizens, certainly, but more specifically of *active* citizens who participate in the public sphere. Consequently, the term 'public' is revealed as having a normative quality. Furthermore, this normative aspect can be mobilised in service of radically different ideologies. Arguably, members of the public are as 'active' when expressing their preferences within a de-regulated market as when voting or debating in a forum where they are explicitly constructed as citizens.

These arguments lead us into territory that emphasises the depth of the connection between the public sphere and citizenship. What is at stake for Livingstone and Lunt, just as it is for writers like Miller (who, it will be recalled from Chapter 2, was concerned with the scope of political action and choices foregrounded by communicative institutions) is the way in which citizens and their capacities for agency are constructed within a heavily mediated public sphere. For Livingstone and Lunt (and indeed, for cultural studies scholars like Fiske), it is *participation* that is of central importance, transforming a passive 'mass' of individuals into an active 'public' of citizens. Participation "raises questions about the rights and responsibilities of the ordinary person when he or she is transformed into a public social actor and hence about his or her relations to those in power' (29). This position has much in common with the deep cultural model; the transformative centrality of communication for Stevenson and Delanty requires a similar call to participate in public life.

It should be remembered that this is a normative position; it rests in a particular conception of what 'counts' as publicness, as citizenship. On this basis however, the normative choices a communicative institution makes regarding its conceptualisation of the public (and its relationship with them) can have powerful repercussions for citizenship. An organisation which thinks of its audience primarily as consumers rather than citizens, for example, would not have the same impetus to develop participative opportunities (unless reflecting consumer demand for such opportunities). Returning to the argument made throughout this chapter: given the importance that deep cultural theorists attach to processes of communication, and given the degree to which these processes are manifested through large institutions, deep cultural theory in particular seems to demand that such institutions make an engagement with competing concepts of 'publicness' a central element of their practice.

It is for precisely this reason that the BBC was identified as a resonant site for this research. While I would argue that any media institution makes a contribution to the public sphere (and that this contribution both reflects and constitutes political ideas), the BBC is rare insofar as it has an *explicit* responsibility to citizens. At a fundamental level, an institution such as the BBC is both *of* the public (mediating the presence of the public to the state) and *constitutive* of it (disseminating information and ideas which contribute to the forms this presence can take). On this basis, we would expect the ideas

discussed in this chapter to play a significant role in the BBC's policy-making processes (and, it follows, for the BBC itself to be an excellent locale from which to consider the potentialities of deep cultural citizenship in a specific setting).

The last section demonstrated that it is possible to delineate (in the same way as was done for citizenship in Chapter 2) a range of variant understandings of the 'public sphere', understandings which can be used to describe the contribution of media institutions to public life. The clear temptation is to produce an analogous categorisation to the preceding Chapter: to produce models for a 'liberal' public sphere, a 'multi-cultural' public sphere and so on. Yet whether this is satisfactory is open to question: it appears to risk conflating a *function* of a theoretical position (the public sphere) with the position itself (a conception of citizenship). This is perhaps best realised via the earlier discussion of space. Within the bounds of theory or nation-state politics the cosmopolitan extension of the territoriality of citizenship has a tangible grounding. However, one is not a 'citizen' or 'member' of a public sphere in the same manner as is true of a nation-state (and yet, one's capacities to participate in the former will undoubtedly impact on the capacities one develops with regards the latter). The public sphere is therefore best seen not as an expression of citizenship itself, but as an arena within which citizenship is manifested and practised. Similar reasoning can be applied to the media/capital dynamic underlying the delineations made by Curran and Seaton. These do not necessarily reflect divergent stances on the political logic of the media, but rather variant means of realising these stances (to give an obvious example, both free-market media 'barons' and stoic defenders of public broadcasting lay claim to notions of democracy and the freedom of the press).

What remains, however, is an argument regarding the interaction of the public sphere with culture, and with identity. These topics are more amenable to description in terms of the political; they emerge from a dynamic between variant concepts of the political upon which a public sphere contribution might be based. In working towards a modelling of this dynamic that reflects the complexity of existing public spheres, we might utilise a conceptual distinction from Habermas's later thought: that of centred and de-centred public spheres (1994). Put crudely, the former can be deployed to stand for the original concept of the public sphere- homogeneous, rational, working from a narrow conception of politics. De-centred public spheres can be located in opposition

to this: fragmented, heterogeneous, and more open to the 'private'. Based on the analysis in the preceding chapter, the correlation between this opposition and its contribution to a manifestation of citizenship should be clear (both being concentrated around problems of culture and difference).

In seeking to illuminate the distinction between centred and de-centred practice, we might consider the continual 'nichefication' of television. Television has traditionally been thought of as a medium amenable to centralised forms of communication, involving high start-up costs and substantial technological expertise. Much of the literature surrounding its social impact has worked from this premise. As Miller describes, theorists of television have generally deployed notions of an anonymous mass audience, whose reaction to programming is to be measured by statistics and behavioural psychology (Miller, 1998: 22-27). This model fits well with notions of a centred public sphere; television can be deployed as a means of informing citizens and creating the conditions for a coherent 'public conversation'.

The capacity of particular societies or institutions to enact such coherency may have always, in practice, been limited. As Miller notes, people's reaction to television is often more 'casual or chaotic' than ordered (25). Yet the appeal of a cogent public debate realised through mediated communication remains strong, as evidenced by the continued attention paid to the public sphere concept. The role of large-scale television broadcasters in this debate, however, is in a state of flux. With the advent of satellite and Internet communication, and the increased accessibility of technology, television broadcast has become a serious option for a variety of actors, increasingly likely to encompass individuals and non-corporate organisations with the rise of niche-based Internet broadcasting (see Norris, 2005).

These new outlets are contributing to (and reflecting) a perceived erosion of the idealised 'mass audience', in favour of fragmented viewing better able to respond to the interests of a targeted demographic. There is inevitable concern about the impact of this shift on public discourse: Hutton speaks of 'weakening public values and experiences held in common' (2005). Yet we might also think of this as the 'de-centring' of the public sphere, supplanting an unrealistic monolith with a series of communicative

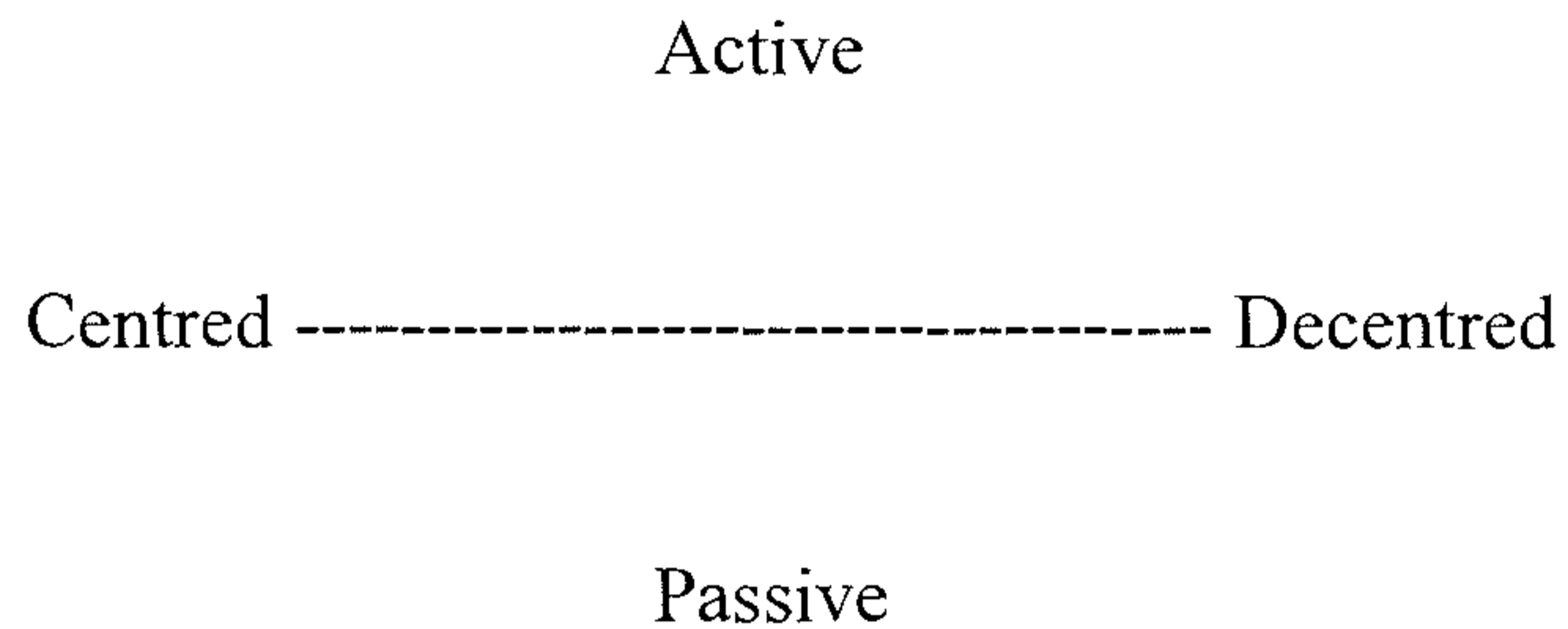
streams in which the 'political' might take on different forms, located in the cultural experiences of specific audiences.

Television policy-makers aiming to support public discourse therefore might appear faced with a choice: to bulwark a primary communicative stream, or to enable plural networks of communication. In actuality, this 'choice' is likely to take the form of a spectrum of mid-points as opposed to a simple binary, reflecting the status of the centred/de-centred dichotomy as ideal-types. To give an example (without wishing to pre-empt the empirical work of this project), one focus of interest could be the means by which the BBC has aimed to facilitate new, 'de-centred' communications (such as the user-driven Action Network forums at www.bbc.co.uk/actionnetwork, which provided a space for bottom-up political activism until their withdrawal in 2008) whilst maintaining its dominant national presence, and how logics such as technology, economics and genre have interacted with these goals. This reflects the over-riding approach and concern of the project: to examine citizenship and attempts to realise it via the public sphere within the lived, multi-faceted circumstances within which this process is actualised.

The centred/de-centred distinction is usefully supplemented by recourse to Turner's active/passive binary for citizenship. For example, how might we conceive of a media policy that embraces audience fragmentation based on arguments surrounding free choice and the primacy of the market, set against an argument for bottom-up media heterarchy? Both permutations can be described as de-centred; they are equally predicated on the rejection of a singular forum for the mediated expression of public life. Yet the former functions from a *passive* paradigm, constituting citizens largely within a private, market-led domain. Radical media theorists, by contrast, call for high levels of public participation as users, responders to and producers of media output. The same distinction can be drawn between comparatively centred public sphere options, i.e. between a paternalist broadcasting ideology within a dominant PSB organisation, and one which seeks to engage with notions of interactivity and an active, decision-making audience. Just as the active/passive binary overlays a theoretical discussion of citizenship, so the nature and extent of desired participation overlays policy choices for the communicative technologies which mediate it.

To surmise, we can conceptualise approaches to the public sphere as positions across dual, supplementary axes:

Table 2: mapping the public sphere



Care is needed in attempts to associate these poles with specific theoretical and practical interventions; as previously stated with regards to centred and de-centred spheres, the poles themselves represent ideal-types free of the nuances of social realities. However, we can tentatively link a centred-active position to early Habermasian thought (the ideal of a rational, identifiable public participating in effective political debate). By contrast, the administrative ‘colonisation’ of communication feared by Habermas could be described as centred-passive, insofar as the boundaries of public sphere discourse are prescribed by dominant systems. De-centred public spheres would, generally, be associated with post-Habermasian positions such as those posited by Young or Fraser, in which multiple strata of communication are held to represent heterogeneous communities, and to reflect the wider notions of public discourse and politics that these theorists employ. Such positions would (ideally) tend towards the active pole, as they work from a conception of political discourse emergent from the lived experience of individuals (who, therefore, are inevitably active participants in its construction).

Given that these positions and points in-between can be motivated by variant discourses of citizenship, it is necessary to simultaneously describe their specific manifestation in terms of these discourses. Hence, a national communicative institution within a Marshallian political settlement might be conceptualised as representing a liberal-centred-passive position, while we might expect someone like Stevenson to advocate for deep cultural-decentred-active media forms. While this typology is unwieldy, it allows us to accurately classify discourses of citizenship within the media both in terms

of their prevailing ideology, and in terms of the policy frameworks generated at the institutional level. This multi-layered approach appears preferable to a model that simply re-maps citizenship theory onto media practice, avoiding an overly simplified assumption of policy from the perspective of ideology.

Whilst it might be tempting (and often accurate) to associate, for example, de-centred public spheres and deep cultural citizenship, this delineation precludes other possibilities. A de-centred public sphere might easily emanate from a liberal perspective for example: a de-regulatory policy could develop in response to a discourse of political rights (to freedom of information), and civil rights (to conclude a contract). Similarly, it is conceivable that deep cultural positions might in some instances promote centred and/or passive public sphere contributions as part of a broader strategy (for example, in an attempt to provide a pool of educative resources suitable for a shift towards wider deliberation). Again, what becomes clear is that public sphere concepts do not necessarily stand in for citizenship theories. However, what they *do* provide is a means of isolating the political 'logic' of communicative institutions and their products; the impact which they seek to have on public life.

Accordingly, the public sphere provides a means of thinking about how those concerned with citizenship might seek to work through communicative institutions to achieve their goals. We can conceptualise this work by giving examples of the questions we might wish to ask of a particular public sphere contribution. Who does it address, and who does it exclude? Does it address the public as active citizens, or as a passive mass? Does it reflect cultural difference within the polity? What opportunities exist for citizens themselves to contribute? These questions speak directly to the task of calling a 'culturalised' citizenship into being; they are concerned with the way in which citizens are empowered or disempowered within the cultural life of a polity. Given the import of communicative institutions in a mediated society, theories of cultural citizenship must logically develop effective ways of working through such institutions to actualise their agenda. What this project will seek to undertake, via a case study that includes a strong engagement with public sphere theory, is an investigation into what these ways of working might look like, and what problems they may encounter in the 'real' world of situated practice.

In seeking precedents for this work, a number of inquires into the relationship between media and political engagement provide potential questions and points of comparison. Dahlgren (2003, 2005) has developed a framework for what he terms a 'civic culture', the 'storehouse of assets that individuals and groups draw upon and make use of in their activities as citizens' (2003: 155) and comprised of values, affinity, knowledge, practices, identities and discussion (156-159). Dahlgren's empirical projects have often focussed on the potentiality of new media as a resource for civic cultures, looking at the 'advocacy/activist domain of online public spheres' (2005: 159) as a means of counteracting the destabilisation of 'old' communication. The questions raised in the preceding paragraph have much in common with the framework of Dahlgren's 'civic culture', and this project might be read as a complementary piece of work, looking at how an established mass media institution takes up the challenge of avoiding what Dahlgren sees as an inbuilt inertia towards becoming 'remote and immune' from civil society (1995: 155).

Coleman has also explored new participative opportunities and ways of thinking about the political through modern cultural output, for example through his examination of attitudes towards politics and political engagement amongst viewers of the reality show *Big Brother* (2003). Coleman seems to concur with audience researchers such as Hermes and Van Zoonen, and with public sphere theorists like Fraser, in arguing that political discourse must go beyond the rational, suggesting that the 'drama of actual self-presentation' (2003: 757) is a driver for citizen engagement. In seeking to operationalise this idea, Coleman has extolled the virtues of a sampled, remixed civic culture, suggesting that governments and institutions need to create opportunities for participation centred on the 'capacity to re-order and reconstruct the elements of civic life so that it conforms to one's own needs and feelings rather than predetermined structures' (Coleman and Rowe, 2005: 19). Elsewhere, Coleman has contrasted perceptions of participative opportunities for young people as *managed* or *autonomous*, and called upon policy-makers to find ways of integrating the latter (which are often far removed from formal political structures and discourses) into decision-making processes (2007).

This concern about the efficacy of civic engagement through media is also taken up by Couldry, Livingstone and Markham (2007), followed a substantial diary and survey

study into the UK public's engagement in public life. They note that while mediated public connection remains substantial, there exist 'crucial missing links' with 'any opportunities for effective deliberation of public action' (188). Of particular interest to this project is the consequent recommendation that 'regular interaction between citizens and media professionals is as important as regular interaction between citizens and political representatives' (193). Given this chapter's acknowledgement of the mediation of citizenship this appears a reasonable proposal, and one which would be expected to be supported by deep cultural citizenship models in particular as a means of securing adequate and appropriate representation of citizens in societal discourse. Accordingly, a key question during the case study will be to examine the ways (if any) in which the BBC sought to interact with citizens during the production of *Manchester Passion*, and what can be learnt from such interaction for future policy and theory development.

3.3 Conclusion

The substantive argument of this chapter has been developed in two stages. Firstly, the contention has been made that the operation of the mass media is a crucial locus of study for the realisation of citizenship, owing to its role as a mediating space between government and public(s). Secondly, the notion of the public sphere has been isolated as an appropriate frame through which to encounter this space: it both oscillates around ideas similar to those located within citizenship discourses (including membership, identity and participation), and is contested in an analogous fashion by problems of difference and the definition of culture.

What this chapter has *not* sought to achieve, however, is a working definition of the public sphere against which we might seek to assess a particular communicative institution. Whilst it is not my intent to deny a normative sympathy with the principles of the public sphere, such a position would be held in common by diverse theorists of citizenship (theorists who would conceivably propose equally diverse policy frameworks). Consequently, the use of the term here is intended as descriptive as opposed to prescriptive. By identifying a continuum of potential public spheres in the abstract, we open up the concept as a means of isolating continuities and discordances in the enactment of citizenship policy, enabling the following series of questions as a map for empirical research:

What are the characteristics of an idealised public sphere as implied by discourse(s) and stated policy vis-à-vis citizenship within an institution (the BBC)?

What are the characteristics of the public sphere contribution constructed by the output of this institution in a specific case (*Manchester Passion*)?

What factors might account for deviations between the two?

What are the implications of said deviations for policy-making and theorizing within citizenship?

Approaching these tasks with a valorised definition of the public sphere would prove problematic, effectively seeking to impose an idealisation of citizenship onto research intended to trace its social enactment. By maintaining an engaged yet normatively ambiguous relationship with its central concepts, this project seeks to work instead from a theoretically inductive framework. The following chapter will explore the implications of this position in more detail, before providing a methodological skeleton for the subsequent empirical process.

Chapter 4. Methodology and Method.

Introduction

The intent of this project is to produce a critique of current citizenship *theory*, mobilised via an examination of related *practice* (responding to a perceived paucity of such work in scholarly literature to date). This examination is to take place within the BBC, for reasons which are more fully explored in Chapter 3 but which essentially relate to its particular institutional concern with citizenship as a public service broadcaster. At the end of Chapter 1, I articulated the intent of the thesis in the following set of research questions:

How have citizenship scholars sought to rework the ‘traditional’, liberal model of citizenship (particularly with reference to the role of *culture*)?

What does the BBC’s thinking and practice in the case of *Manchester Passion* reveal about the applicability of these theories in a specific communicative institution?

What are the implications of the *Manchester Passion* case for citizenship theory and policy?

The purpose of the chapter that follows is to show how my emerging methodology and related decisions were shaped closely by these research questions. The over-riding theme that will emerge from this process is the *inductive* nature of the research, which in turn relates to the type of knowledge it seeks to produce. The goal of this thesis is to enable a critique and reflection on citizenship theory, grounded in study of socially situated institutional practices. As a consequence, my methodological planning and decision-making was structured around the need to conduct research in which practice ‘spoke to’ and informed theory (as opposed, for example, to a more deductive research design in which a pre-determined hypothesis itself structured subsequent empirical work). While the project begins with a sustained engagement with citizenship theory, it does not seek to prove or refute a particular theoretical claim, but to refine existing theory based on reflections following from empirical observation, and in this sense is inductive. This chapter will demonstrate the suitability of the qualitative *case study*

method for this type of research, and will show how the chronological development of the project was focussed on maintaining this dynamic relationship between theory and practice.

4.1 From theory to practice: the case study

Much of this work took the form of decisions regarding the *empirical* portion of the project: selecting cases and methods of enquiry that enabled me to ‘trace’ ideas relating to citizenship as they appeared within institutional practice. However, this process itself was dependent on the theoretical modelling which took place in Chapters 2 and 3. This work was central to the workability of the project insofar as it provided an effective means of relating complex theoretical ideas to institutional practice. It also represents a contribution to knowledge in its own right; the analysis that was required revealed both the distinctions between different conceptions of citizenship, and opportunities for synthesis. The practical outcome of this work was the production of a series of theoretical models that would be deployed as a conceptual ‘toolkit’ for the rest of the thesis. Producing these models was a complex task; it required maintaining a balance between accurate, appropriately engaged analysis on the one hand, and the requirement to develop a typology that could easily be ‘mapped’ onto situated practice.

Consequently, the development of the models was itself an opportunity for in-depth analysis. In the process of writing the early chapters, I consistently found that the need to produce clear delineations between theoretical positions helped to focus my analysis on their central characteristics for this project. To illustrate, we might consider the discussion of culture in Chapter 2, in which the distinction between *reflective* and *constitutive* accounts emerged as a direct result of my attempts to produce discrete models. While the expansion of citizenship theory to encompass a more substantive account of culture was always an informing factor for the project, my understanding of its precise nature was itself informed by the inductive nature of the modelling process. Similarly, the choice of the terms *active* and *passive* to describe potential public spheres in Chapter 3 developed as an adaptation of my reading of Turner's work on citizenship, utilising the modelling process to better articulate the connections between citizenship theory and its realisation in communicative institutions.

As I worked through these chapters, this pattern of theory-refinement occurring as a result of the pre-empirical ‘groundwork’ of modelling was a repeated feature. This was a positive outcome insofar as it suggested my over-arching research design was feasible; it demonstrated that citizenship theory could be usefully critiqued via its examination in

a more 'applied' context. In addition, it was an outcome which supported my inductive methodological stance. Chapters 2 and 3 were not intended to present a specific normative position. Rather, they initially seek merely to describe and compare existing theories. The more innovative content of these chapters emerges out of the applied processes of modelling and synthesis which follow. The theoretical refinement that results from these processes therefore embodies precisely the dynamic relationship between theory and 'practice' that forms the research strategy for the project as a whole.

When searching for a research design appropriate for the empirical portion of the thesis, I was minded both to maintain this relationship, and to select a method which would enable me to produce a multi-faceted account of practice in a communicative institution. The intent of the research is to analyse how the models of citizenship theory described in Chapter 2 are articulated in such an institution, and what the complexities of this articulation reveal about the theories themselves. Accordingly, it is essential that the selected methodology responds to these demands by remaining rooted in 'real-world' settings, and by providing a means of collecting information from different points in an institutional chronology (in order to effectively trace patterns of continuity and change). These requirements legislated against the use of certain research methods. Specifically, those in which the research act is strongly 'present' (such as experiments or interactive methods of data collection including surveys and interviews) carry a risk of distortion insofar as they ask participants to respond to ideas of citizenship explicitly, outside of their usual embedded context.

Because I was looking to produce analysis based on a sustained engagement with institutional practice, I additionally recognised that the use of a range of methods was likely to be appropriate. This has the advantage of responding to institutional practice as it exists; it may not be the case, for example, that an institution produces appropriate and available documentary evidence for each stage of the process that a researcher seeks to analyse. Furthermore, it carries the potential for a qualitative 'triangulation' of data, cross-checking one form of evidence against another as a means of testing my initial interpretations. The capacity for such comparisons is particularly beneficial for a project that works from an inductive framework; they provide an extra means by which the researcher can modulate and reflect upon his/her confidence in eventual conclusions.

Based on the guiding characteristics outlined in the preceding paragraphs, I quickly came to the conclusion that the research questions could be most appropriately realised via a qualitative case study. The term ‘case study’ encompasses a wide range of scholarly and non-scholarly interventions, across a range of disciplines including law, history, and both the natural and social sciences. Berlant’s description of a case as representing a ‘problem-event that has animated some kind of judgement’ (Berlant, 2007: 663) gives a useful insight into the breadth of the concept. However in the social sciences as elsewhere, its usual format is a recognisable one: an in-depth study of a particular event, group or individual which is held to contain some broader significance. A commonly cited example is Whyte’s 1955 work *Street Corner Society*, which documented the social make-up of a Boston slum; alternatively, we might move closer to the sphere of this project by noting Born’s ethnography of the BBC (2004).

The case study format provides a strong fit with the methodological requirements articulated by the project’s research goals. In the first instance, it is clear that the case study makes a willing trade-off between scope and intensity; it focuses on a single case or a very small number of cases in order that these can be the objects of in-depth research⁷. In doing so, it enables the close study of an institutional ‘path’, tracking ideas related to citizenship as they move from policy to practice and interact with other outcome-altering contextual factors (such as economics, logistics, or a pre-existing institutional culture). Research strategies which focussed on a large set of cases would, given the limited resources of the project, be comparatively poorly-placed to capture the complexity of these shifts; they would be unable to provide a nuanced understanding of institutional process.

A further advantage is that the case study is inherently steeped in actually-existing practice. It does not create an experimental or contrived environment, but seeks to illuminate a socially situated process which was itself the inspiration for the researcher’s intervention. Clearly, this is beneficial for a project in which the central goal is the production of a reflection on the relationship between theory and practice. In addition, it

⁷ This is a standard definition of a case study which is challenged by some theorists. Becker and Ragin make the point that one’s definition of ‘case-study’ is dependent entirely on one’s prior definition of ‘case’ - a large quantitative investigation into a population might be considered a single case, for example (1992). For the purposes of this discussion however, ‘case study’ will be identified with a tradition of intense qualitative study of a discrete subject (in the case of this project, the development of a media text).

lends the case-study format an inductive bias which is sympathetic to the research agenda of the thesis. A deductive research model might begin with a hypothesis and shape a piece of empirical research around it. Conversely, the effect of employing a case study (particularly within projects such as this one, which do *not* feature a clear hypothesis) is effectively to begin with the *case*, and to construct or refine theoretical positions around its findings. This is particularly true of case studies where the research methods involve a low level of intervention, and there is therefore ostensibly little opportunity for the researcher to impact or shape the data which emerges.

In such instances the pattern and focus of the research will be led by the case: an appropriate match for this project's intended production of a practice-led critique of citizenship theory. Ragin takes this argument a stage further, suggesting that the researcher may not even become aware of the *subject* of his/her case until the research process is complete: 'What *it* is a *case of* will coalesce gradually, sometimes catalytically, and the final realization of the case's nature may be the most important part of the interaction between ideas and evidence' (Ragin, 1992: 6). The case study's relation with theory therefore remains open to contestation throughout the research process; it is not until this process is complete that a full assessment can be made of what its theoretical implications may be. Accordingly, this ensures that conclusions emerge from the defining characteristics of the case itself.

The case study methodology is not without its critics; it is commonly attacked for a failure to adhere to 'traditional' expectations regarding internal and external validity, and consequently as an unsatisfactory basis for generalisation (owing to its use of a single or small number of samples). Flyvbjerg (2006) expands on this critique, suggesting that distrust of case studies stems from their reliance on *context-dependent* knowledge (that is, knowledge which emerges from a specific situated case and is not amenable to generalisation), and a bias towards verification, with the latter stemming from the case study's relative high levels of subjectivity (2006: 234). These represent important critiques and qualifiers for this project. The process of reflecting on citizenship theories through the lens of a case study will inevitably be both subjective and context-dependent, and therefore the levels of confidence I attach to my conclusions will be of importance; it is likely that conclusions will be tentative and presented as a basis for further research.

At the same time as acknowledging these critiques, it is both possible and necessary to mount a defence of the case study approach, particularly as it relates to my research goals. The first point to emphasise here is that the project is oriented towards what Chima describes as '*theory-building* and especially *theory-elaboration* (or *theory-reconstruction*)' (2005: 4). The empirical portion of the thesis does not seek to carry a burden of proof, but to provide illustrative data which acts as a catalyst for my own theoretical reflection. The case study is an appropriate tool for this type of investigation: it not only produces rich data, but in addition benefits from a flexible approach to theory that would be lacking in more 'scientific' methodologies. As Chima puts it: 'the case-study method is accurately described as being a dynamic analytical approach in which there is a constant movement back and forth between data and theory' (2005: 10-11).

The nature of the claims this project will make also provides a partial response to the suggestion that knowledge produced by case studies is inherently context-dependent (as there is no necessary reason why such knowledge cannot contribute to a process of theory development or elaboration). As Chapter 2 made clear, citizenship theory is currently characterised by stark disagreement about its basis and scope; there is no agreed set of 'rules' from which context-independent hypotheses could be generated and tested. Instead, investigations into citizenship will be framed by the *normative* and theoretical position and interests of the researchers (as is the case with my own concern with culture, and the choices made in my selection and development of citizenship models). This should not be seen as a limitation, but as a characteristic appropriate to the social value of the research. Citizenship and citizenship policy are put into practice not in an abstract theoretical space, but in specific political spaces at specific times. Accordingly, research which seeks to optimise outcomes for citizens by advancing the development of theory should similarly work from such specific contexts.

Similar responses apply to the charge that the case study contains a bias towards verification, owing to an absence of what Diamond terms 'scientific methods... curbing one's tendencies to stamp out one's pre-existing interpretations on data as they accumulate' (Diamond, 1996: 6, quoted in Flyvbjerg, 2006: 234). Once again, the absence of a testable hypothesis is important: without such a guiding theoretical proposition, there is arguably little to verify or falsify (indeed, the motivation for this

research was precisely a paucity of attempts at ‘verification’ in the scholarly field, at least in relation to actually existing experience). Instead, the work will proceed by attempting to map the models described in Chapters 2 and 3 onto policy and practice in a specific context. In doing so, it must respond primarily to what is present or absent in the case. Inevitably, this process is somewhat subjective, and the prospect of a bias towards verification (or at least, towards *selection*) remains at certain points: for example, in my choice both of a case, and of the data used to operationalise it. I would suggest, however, that such risks are an inherent part of work in the social sciences, and it is ultimately my conclusions and interpretive work that will carry the weight of judgement. However, the goal of the thesis provides a certain degree of latitude even at this juncture. Provided that my interpretations are reasonable in relation to the evidence, any consequent decision I make to concentrate on specific aspects of theory does *not* de-value the project, but simply responds to the notable features of the case.

The adoption of a case study methodology undoubtedly offers a rare degree of flexibility, and is thus an attractive option for those oriented towards an interpretivist frame. At the same time however, it requires some crucial decisions at an early stage in the research process, the most obvious of which is the selection of a case. To put it bluntly, where $N=1$, the selection of N will have an exponentially greater impact on the outcome of the research than when $N=10$, $N=1000$, and so on. Accordingly, researchers have sought to justify their selection of a case by reference to its particular characteristics (which in turn, reflect on their research goals and may give advantages over a random or representative sampling method). For example, it is common to read descriptions of a case as *typical* (exhibiting characteristics common to a wider population to whom it is consequently possible to generalise), as *extreme* (representing a unusual case which is hence peculiarly well-suited to providing insight into a given research question), or as *critical* (possessing features which, whilst not necessarily unusual, carry the potential for producing particularly rich data). These justifications co-exist with other, more prosaic considerations, such as access to data and the logistics of researching a particular case.

4.2 *Manchester Passion* as a case

When searching for an appropriate case for this project, I went through a number of possibilities based on some of the ideas expressed above. The available ‘pool’ of potential cases was the entirety of the BBC’s output, all of which could (given the BBC’s status as a public service broadcaster,) conceivably possess a relation to ideas of citizenship. Accordingly, my goal was to locate a text that might have something in particular to add to the debate, whether as a typical, extreme, or other type of case. The first candidate was the long-running soap opera *Eastenders*, an emblematic broadcast for the BBC since its inception in 1985. *Eastenders* had an obvious appeal both as a typical case (as a long-running broadcast in an established genre), and conversely as an extreme case (as one of the BBC’s most explicitly populist pieces of output). There were also a number of interesting routes into discussion of citizenship: in a presentation during the early period of the project, I discussed how *Eastenders* constructed multiple ‘spaces’ of citizenship (geographic, cultural and generic) even within its title sequence (Pawley, 2006). A converse possibility was an online participatory project launched by the BBC in 2003: *iCan*, later renamed *Action Network*. *Action Network*, an innovation designed to facilitate community campaigning, was an extreme case which embodied many of the tensions that had motivated my interest in citizenship. As I argued in a short article, it sought to articulate a highly *de-centred*, *active* model of citizenship that was far removed from the majority of BBC practice, and as such brought a particular focus to the interaction between citizenship theory and its situated manifestation (Pawley, 2007).

Either of these possibilities would have formed the basis for worthwhile projects, but each was ultimately unsatisfactory for what I wanted to achieve. In the case of *Eastenders*, one intervening factor was a large degree of existing research on the broadcast, some of which I was familiar with from previous pieces of work (see for example Madill and Goldmeier, 2003; Buckingham, 1987). Given that I was keen that my conclusions be led by the case itself, I felt uneasy about approaching a text about which there were well-established academic perceptions. In addition, the choice of *Eastenders* would have created a problem of selection. Four broadcasts per week are currently produced by an extensive team: as such, it does not represent a discrete ‘case’ for study (or at least, its division into a discrete case would have had to be made on an

arbitrary basis). Certainly, the episodic and ongoing nature of the text would make the task of mapping clear ‘processes’ of citizenship a complex one, as the boundaries of input and outcome would be difficult to draw.

Action Network offered an easy means of avoiding this problem; the site was divided into a number of ‘campaigns’ organised by individuals, each of which would have offered a discrete site for the research. However, its characterisation as an *extreme* case – while an exciting possibility – led to the concern that it lacked an effective ‘fit’ with my research goals. The motivation of my research is to consider how interventions in citizenship might function within a communicative institutional context. The difficulty with *Action Network* was that it existed at a far remove from ‘usual’ BBC practice: content was generated in the first instance by citizens, and there was no clear process of production through which to trace ideas of citizenship. The very features which made it an exciting candidate for research were therefore ultimately those which rendered it unsuitable for this particular project: both in terms of logistics (because its networked nature legislated against its study via my research design) and of likely outcome (because the data produced would have a weaker relation to my research questions than that from alternative cases). There is nonetheless much to be said about the initiative (which was halted in 2008) and its relationship with the BBC’s construction both of citizenship and of its own audience. These ideas are touched upon briefly by my own writing on the topic, and developed in much greater detail elsewhere (see Sujon, 2008).

The eventual selection of *Manchester Passion* happened almost by chance. I was dimly aware that the broadcast was planned but had not considered it as a site for research. However, while watching it (which itself happened by chance during a visit to see family members), I was struck by the number of thematic links with my work: participation, identity, the relationship between institution and individual. Like *Action Network*, *Manchester Passion* was an arguably extreme case; it articulated explicit messages about participation and community which set it apart from the majority of BBC output. But unlike *Action Network*, it produced these messages through what appeared to be a typical piece of institutional practice; a television broadcast produced by a national public service broadcaster, and transmitted to a national audience. And unlike *Eastenders* or similar series, it was a one-off production and hence a clearly discrete ‘case’.

Manchester Passion then exhibited elements both of typical and of extreme cases, making it a potentially rich site for study. In addition, it could be held to represent a *critical* case, defined by Flyvbjerg as one ‘having strategic importance in relation to the general problem’ (2006: 229). Flyvbjerg states that a critical case (due to the particular circumstances that surround it) allows us to make generalisations based on reasoned judgements of likeliness or unlikeliness: along the lines of ‘if it is true/not true in case x, it is likely/unlikely to be true for cases a/b/c...’. Looking at *Manchester Passion*, my immediate intuition was that given its subject matter and context, this was a broadcast in which the BBC would be under considerable pressure to pay regard to issues of cultural identity and the role of the audience⁸. Therefore, if the BBC was unable to implement its stated citizenship policies in the development of *Manchester Passion*, it would be unlikely to implement them in other cases, consequently suggesting a weakness at the theoretical or policy level. This juxtaposition of the typical, the extreme and the critical established *Manchester Passion* as a strikingly rich site for study in relation to my research goals.

The role of intuition in the selection process could be considered problematic (referring back, to example, to the discussion of potential bias towards verification). However, it is effectively unavoidable in case study research and perhaps in its more quantitative equivalents. At some point in the research process, one will surely be guided by a sense of what one suspects will prove an interesting or particularly relevant locus for study; a position which in turn reflects an existing ontological perspective (Gerring, 2002: 29). If we accept this as an irresolvable inevitability, then it has no significant bearing on the validity of the work which follows. On the contrary, I would argue for a position which reflects the nature of this project, therein embracing the intuitive moment as an exemplar of being ‘guided by the case’. The next task was therefore to (following Becker and Ragin) design a method of study that would enable me to determine precisely what *Manchester Passion* was a case of: supplanting an abstract intuition with specific data.

⁸ This argument will be developed more fully in Chapter 6.

4.3. Constructing a research design

In seeking to realise my research goals, I was minded to produce a design that enabled broadly chronological analysis of the case. By identifying data which was produced at different stages of the process, it might be possible to effectively trace the passage of ideas by analysing patterns of continuity and change. My immediate strategy was therefore to make use of the existing Media Studies chronology of production/text/reception as a description of the three stages of an act of communication, described by Ytreberg (2000) as forming a continuum which is central to the development of an 'integrated perspective on the processes of mass communication (2000: 53).

This model is somewhat a mechanistic one insofar as it inscribes a delineation between different communicative stages, and therefore, arguably, ignores their inter-relation and their interaction with the social conditions in which they are produced and received. As Ostertag puts it: 'scholars have traditionally treated the media as a separate branch (albeit a large one) on the larger cultural tree. As they focused on institutional analyses and production studies, content and text studies, and reception/effect studies, researchers tended to conceptualize the media as separate from social existence' (Ostertag, 2008). Given that the fundamental purpose of this thesis is to draw out the implications for social existence of a case of media practice, it was important that my research design did not isolate the case study from its wider context. My conceptualisation of the production/text/reception narrative is not as a closed, linear system of transmission, but as one which is constructed within (and constructive of) social discourse, and which is open to interpretation and distortion at all stages.

Therefore, I made only a limited use of the model to create an initial sense of chronology, of the stages and shifts an idea might go through within a communicative institution and as received by audiences. In response to critiques of mechanism and isolation, two responses emerged. Firstly, I was confident that the project was strongly rooted in a connection to the broader social themes of citizenship, and that this connection would be strongly articulated in the analysis of the case (which would be mobilised via its relation to the models developed in Chapters 2 and 3).

Secondly, I made the decision to commence my analysis *prior* to the production stage. The intent instead was to firstly consider the institutional context in which production took place, responding to the thesis's central contention that citizenship is always practiced in specific, socially situated environments. Without an exploration of context, the analysis of *Manchester Passion* would lack the ability to reflect on the dynamic between micro-level practice and the backdrop against it occurs. Consequently, it would become harder to make accurate assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of the theory articulated in this practice (because it would be impossible to ascertain the role of external mediating factors in this process, and harder to ascertain the *intentions* of the BBC as an institution concerned with citizenship).

Working from these considerations, I initially proposed the following research design:

Context: an analysis of BBC policy documents, establishing the institution's historical relation to the models of citizenship described in Chapters 2 and 3.

Production: No primary documentary source available, analysis to be operationalised via the text (supported by secondary sources including news articles quoting BBC staff).

Text: textual analysis of the *Manchester Passion* broadcast.

Reception: a series of focus groups centred on a showing of *Manchester Passion*, asking citizens to respond to questions emerging from the previous elements of analysis.

The design was rejected for two reasons. Firstly, the absence of primary resources at the stage of *production* became an increasingly crucial limitation as I began to consider the relationship between theory, policy, and practice. Without the voices of those involved in the production process, it would be impossible to make judgements regarding the intentionality behind *Manchester Passion*, what ideas it was designed to embody, and how these ideas interacted with and were modified by the practicalities of production. The broadcast itself (and limited secondary sources, generally taking the form of short quotes in news articles) would offer traces of this data, but would be insufficient to capture the 'path' of ideas between policy and practice.

In addition, the deployment of focus groups struck a discordant note within the thesis. Elsewhere, there is an emphasis on working with ‘actually existing data’, limiting the role of the researcher and allowing the evidence of the case to make itself. By contrast, focus groups are an inevitably contrived setting. In asking groups questions about citizenship and identity (whether these terms were implicit or explicit), the project would be positioning them – and encouraging them to position themselves – as citizens in a manner divorced from their everyday, situated experience. This positioning would be augmented by the introduction of a sampling process, within which the research effectively pre-selects and delineates individuals according to an agenda determined by theory. My concern was that such practices would inherently ‘skew’ the data that emerged.

By relying instead on data that audiences themselves produced in response to the broadcast, the ‘agency’ of evidence production remains with the case. In a focus group, participants would be aware that they had been asked to respond to a specific text; their status as audience would be reified. By contrast, data which emerged from public responses at the time retains a greater connection to the social context of the case. We can draw a connection here to Media Studies literature which (often responding to public sphere theory) seeks to analyse the role of *publics*, as opposed to the isolated reception of audiences. Such work has taken a number of forms, including direct analysis of public participation in media (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994; Lewis, Inthorn and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2005), and studies that consider the relationship between media engagement and participation in what we might loosely define as ‘public life’ or the ‘political’ (Van Zoonen, 2005; Couldry, Livingstone and Markham, 2007). By examining socially situated responses to *Manchester Passion*, my own work would contribute to this strand of scholarship by considering how citizens negotiated mediated ideas relating to citizenship within their everyday practice.

Following these concerns with the initial design, a modified version was eventually adopted:

Context: an analysis of BBC policy documents, establishing the institution’s historical and contemporary relation to the models of citizenship described in Chapters 2 and 3.

Production: Interviews with BBC staff and other stakeholders involved in commissioning and production, providing both evidence of intentionality and more specific context on the institutional backdrop against which *Manchester Passion* was produced.

Text: textual analysis of the *Manchester Passion* broadcast.

Reception: textual analysis of available audience responses, including blog and forum posts from a variety of sites as well as letters to *Manchester Evening News*, and national press reviews.

These modifications provide a closer fit with my research goals; they allow for a more coherent tracing of notions of citizenship, and rely wherever possible on actually existing data. The obvious critique of this model is the incongruity of the use of interviews in the ‘production’ segment; a choice which contradicts my general opposition to ‘contrived’ data. While such a critique is valid, I would suggest that the compromise is a worthwhile one given that there was no other obvious means of obtaining the required data on intentionality and the production process. In addition, the interviews represent a qualitatively different form of data to that which would have been produced by focus groups. The former ask practitioners to recall and reflect upon historical events in which they were situated participants; the latter would invite responses to a text of which participants may have no experience outside of the experimental setting. While the interviews are a ‘contrived’ form of data, they enable the articulation of a historically situated connection to the case that would simply not be present in the proposed focus groups.

Having settled on a research design, the subsequent step involved the selection of evidence that would be placed in an intertextual relation to the *Manchester Passion* broadcast. This process is where the role of the researcher is most explicit; as it would not be possible to examine every relevant piece of evidence, selection decisions are inevitably partial. However, this is not an issue in and of itself (because the project *as a whole* is a partial one, explicitly employing an interpretivist methodology and mobilised by the intuitive selection of *Manchester Passion*). On this basis, what is appropriate is

for the selection process where possible to reflect this broader methodological position, to allow it to be ‘guided by the case’ as argued at several points in this chapter.

At two points in particular, I was able to put this idea into practice. During the selection and identification of interviewees, I followed a process whereby initial contacts recommended (and in some cases, initiated contact with) future interviewees based on the issues and questions which had emerged from our discussions. For example, a conversation with Sue Judd (*Manchester Passion*’s executive producer) regarding the dynamic between different BBC departments led to contact with Ged Gray in the Religion section in Manchester. In this way, the processes of data gathering and refinement of my particular interests, were directly led by the ‘case’ as embodied by my initial contacts. The one unobtainable interviewee was Stuart Murphy, who was controller of BBC3 at the time of *Manchester Passion*. It was hoped that he would provide commentary on how the broadcast was contextualised within BBC3’s broader mission and remit; this is instead operationalised by comments from other interviewees within the BBC, and by secondary sources which quote Murphy.

During the interviews themselves, I sought to augment this orientation to data by deploying a very loose interview schema. Questions were posed on a broadly chronological basis: asking about the subject’s initial involvement with the production, followed by their input into and reflections on the production process, and finally analysis of the broadcast and its aftermath. Beyond this broad schematic I was keen to allow the conversation to develop organically, allowing me to follow-up leads and points of interest in a manner which was an effective microcosm of the case study process. This strategy had the additional benefit of allowing the interviewees to effectively ‘set’ the rhetoric and themes of the interview. I was reluctant to use terms like ‘citizenship’ for fear both of imposing my own analytical frame, and (conscious of my privileged access) of provoking a negative response from elite interviewees⁹ who were unused to describing their practice in these terms. I therefore attempted to frame the interviews as an open opportunity for subjects to ‘tell their story’ regarding *Manchester Passion*, establishing an environment in which the most useful data emerged without prompting on specific issues¹⁰. This technique was appropriate given

⁹ See Livingstone, Lunt and Miller (2007) for a useful discussion of similar methodological concerns when interviewing elite subjects in media practice.

¹⁰ Ethical conditions: All interviews were conducted ‘on the record’, digitally recorded and fully

that collation of the interview data was, in effect, a 'fact-finding' exercise for the thesis, insofar as I entered the process without a pre-existing hypothesis as to the intentionality of the practitioners involved in the specific case.

Corollary techniques were deployed when gathering online data on reception. Personal blogs were a common location for responses to *Manchester Passion*, and these were primarily located via the use of the 'impartial' search term 'Manchester Passion' in the search engines Google and Technorati. Using these search results, I located blogs or forums that provided commentary and critique. What these sites also provided was hyper-links to other sources of data (such as sites run by associates of the author, or those which took an opposing view). By following these pathways to sources that might have been missed by my own search and analysis, I again allowed the case to 'speak' within the data gathering process, highlighting debates and responses that were seen as important by *audiences*¹¹.

The expectation was that the data this process would produce would be partial, but in a manner which effectively complemented my research goals. It would be partial because the research design was limited to the contributions of those with the means and inclination to have produced written responses to *Manchester Passion* (a sample which one might logically expect to yield a relatively 'extreme' dataset). This would be problematic for a project which sought to generalise regarding a *population*; however the research questions in this case only seek to generalise regarding *theory*. In this instance, an emphasis on 'extreme', engaged responses becomes beneficial; it is precisely this data which is most likely to provoke theoretical reflection by foregrounding the most contentious elements of the case.

The result of this data collection was slightly under 400 pieces of audience response. These were primarily comprised of 366 posts to online forums, divided as below:

Rllmuk forum (music)- 35 posts <http://www.rllmukforum.com/index.php?>

transcribed, and the scope and intent of my project was described to all interviewees prior to their giving explicit consent to participate, both via email in advance and in person at the commencement of the interview. Copies of transcripts have been offered to participants, along with copies of chapters of the thesis in which their comments feature.

¹¹ The use of search engines augments this process, insofar as they rank results according to their contemporary popularity as expressed by page views, links from other sites, etc.

[showtopic=123903](#)

BBC England (general) - 74 posts <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/england/F2770282?thread=2090395&skip=60&show=20>

MEN 'Easter marked with a Passion' (Manchester)- 52 posts
http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/s/210/210768_easter_marked_with_a_passion.html

Digital Spy – (general) – 139 posts
<http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/forums/showthread.php?t=365356&pp=25>

Youthwork (Christian) – 6 posts
<http://www.youthwork.co.uk/community/Forum/posts.asp?subject=1911&catid=7>

ILXOR forum (music) – 61 posts
<http://www.ilxor.com/ILX/ThreadSelectedControllerServlet?action=showall&boardid=41&threadid=49929#msg51>

The forum posts were augmented by 11 blog posts, and other articles in newspapers and community group websites. All of this material is freely available in the public domain, and web addresses are given for all direct quotes in the interests of transparency.

In analysing the forum data, I first filtered by date, removing comments which were made either before the first broadcast or after April 2006. This decision was taken to ensure a focus on the immediate and short-term responses to *Manchester Passion* as a contribution to the public sphere. Next I categorised the remaining data using the broad 'audiences' which had emerged from the work in Chapter 6 (religious, Manchester, music fans). This categorisation was done primarily through self-identification within the data (i.e. where subjects defined themselves by religion, or as Manchester residents, etc.) Where such self-identification was absent, data was placed in a 'non-affiliated' category. Where a piece of data could be said to exhibit identification with more than one category (usually where a Manchester resident also identified as a Christian or music fan), it was allocated to the category which was most emphasised in the text.

While this represented a simplification, it of course did not preclude recognition and analysis of multiple identifications present in individual responses.

This process produced four broad groupings of data by expressed cultural identity, enabling preliminary reflection on the responses of particular groups to *Manchester Passion* (and therefore enabling a reflection of the BBC's success or failure in its attempts to engage multiple audiences). To aid this work, I marked within each dataset pieces of data which expressed a strongly negative or positive opinion of the broadcast (or particular elements within it), allowing me to note, for example, the greater proportion of negative reactions from the 'music' audience, and the exceptionally positive response of self-identified Christians. The data was divided as follows (note that the total number of cases is reduced by comparison with the figures given above; this results from the exclusion of some cases by date):

Table 3: categorisation of forum and blog data

	Positive	Negative	Neutral/None
Christian	40	0	3
Manchester	29	2	3
Music	23	52	33
None	75	15	66

When writing the chapter, I would use these datasets to produce 'clusters' of data which commented on a particular topic of interest (such as the vox-pop interviews), allowing quick comparison of opinion on specific issues across and within groups. Subsequently, I went through a filtering process to isolate the data relevant to my research questions, ignoring 'commentary' posted during broadcast which simply described events, and any off-topic discussion. What remained was data that commented, whether implicitly or explicitly, on the 'citizen value' of *Manchester Passion*, and specifically on one or more of the issues outlined in the introduction of Chapter 6 (and themselves based on analysis of BBC policy and interview evidence): participation, representation (both of religion, and of Manchester), and cultural product.

The selection of the other elements of data was relatively straightforward: the text of *Manchester Passion* itself was of course self-selecting, and the policy documents that were chosen to provide institutional context were selected on the basis (as explored

within Chapter 5) that they are representative of key stages in the institution's history, and were documents of a type that saw the BBC make explicit statements about its purpose, and its relation to citizens. There is a slight issue of incongruity insofar as the most recent document (*Building Public Value*) is of a slightly different type to the previous three¹². However, this is because no equivalent to the Peacock, Pilkington and Crawford Committee's has taken place in the 21st century; what is important (and what is clear from the analysis in Chapter 5) is that the documents share the same essential purpose.

What emerged from this process was a disparate range of data: four policy documents or sets of policy documents, seven interviews of approximately forty minutes each with key practitioners, an hour-long television broadcast, and audience and press responses from a variety of online and print media. This data was then subject to my own interpretive analysis, mobilised both by the issues described above and by emerging themes from the data itself. This analysis was loosely semiotic in nature, examining how the semantic and syntactic choices of BBC staff and the *Manchester Passion* audiences might be analysed as signifying ideas or positions relating to citizenship. For example, when considering the issue of representation in audience responses, I read the clustered data to ascertain who the commenting individual felt the broadcast was representing, whether they considered said representation to be accurate or inaccurate, positive or negative, 'authentic' or imposed by the BBC. Note that my intention in drawing these interpretations was not to quantify the prevalence of any particular position, or to generalise to a population, but to synthesise from said positions to construct a critical reflection on *Manchester Passion* (and thereby on citizenship theory).

While therefore I did not 'code' the data in the manner that might be expected of a quantitative textual analysis, I did perform a series of categorisations and filtering processes that enabled me to test my initial interpretations of the case and isolate sub-groups of data (Bruhn Jensen describes such a process in terms of qualitative or thematic coding, capable of supporting comparative analysis and interpretive inference

¹² *Building Public Value* was the BBC's contribution to the most recent Charter Review process, whereas the other documents subject to analysis took the form of written evidence to Government Committees on Broadcasting.

(2002: 246-247)). This process additionally functioned as an important barrier against the risk of verification bias. To give an example, my collation of the data from the 'Manchester' audience contradicted my analysis in Chapter 6 (that the script's focus on the regenerated city centre served to exclude much of the population). The largely positive response in the data (with only one piece of evidence directly supporting my interpretation) necessitated a refinement of my working theory and a more nuanced reflection on representation and notions of authenticity. Similarly, data categorisation made it explicit that, for some audience commentators, the vox-pop segments appeared to provide an opportunity for transformative dialogue (again, countering my own negative reading of these segments). In both these cases, my initial interpretation of the case was modified through a systematic analysis of the data.

Three additional characteristics of the research design and method serve to mediate against verification bias or other purposefully erroneous interpretation. Firstly, the majority of the data for the case study (with the exception of the interview elements) are in the public domain, and therefore open to easy contestation. Secondly, and as previously discussed, the research design builds in a process of triangulation: the intentions of BBC staff are cross-checked against the broadcast itself, and my analysis of the latter is (as demonstrated in the preceding paragraph) subject to qualification by evidence of audience response. This is a benefit of the chronological design of the analysis, which builds in opportunities for theory-refinement after each stage.

Finally, there is a point to make regarding the scope and intent of the project. Specifically, it is *not* the case that the case study is oriented towards the production of generalisations regarding a population; it is not intended to be read as a reception/audience study which makes assertions based on an ethnographic approach. Rather, it seeks to: examine how specific ideas related to citizenship translated into practice, consider the success or failure of this translation (partially through audience response, but also through my own analysis), and to use this analysis to reflect on citizenship theories. Accordingly, the subject of interest in the audience response is on the nature and cause of the engagements and reactions that Manchester Passion facilitated. This abstracted focus is shared with other investigations into cultural citizenship, such as Van Zoonen's explanation of her analysis of online responses to *The West Wing*: 'the results are aimed to be representative for kinds of civic performance

rather than for kinds of people' (2005: 124). Similarly, Hermes describes her data in *Re-reading popular culture as* 'theorized, rather than generalized across populations or used for the description of actual practice' (2005: 14).

The import of this distinction is that the case study does not seek to verify a hypothesis, but to extrapolate the most notable features of the case in relation to the stated research questions in what is an explicitly interpretivist exercise. The use of audience responses in this project is, without apology, at points selective; for example emphasising particularly challenging responses to *Manchester Passion* within a dataset that was predominantly positive about the broadcast. Such selection responds effectively to the research goals of the thesis, isolating potential difficulties in the realisation of citizenship theory in order to enable a process of theory-refinement.

It should be stressed that this does not entirely disallow questions regarding selection bias; it would remain problematic for example to misrepresent the reaction of a particular group in the service of a particular interpretation, (even if this misrepresentation was not subsequently generalised). Where assertions are made about the relative position of a particular group (e.g. the positive response of Christians, and the more challenging reaction of the 'music' audience) I am confident that these are supported by the data, as made clear in Table 3. These assertions, however, are not intended to verify or falsify a particular claim about their subjects, but to frame theoretical claims regarding the strengths and weaknesses of citizenship models.

4.4. Conclusion

Throughout the development of my research design and strategy, I was minded to prioritise a particular relationship between theory, data and the act of research. In this relationship, the data that would take a prominent role in a process of theory-refinement, providing the inspiration for an engagement with theory in which the scope and content of my conclusions would remain unresolved until a late stage in the analytical process. The motivation behind this design was its close alignment with the research goals of the project: to produce a critique of citizenship theory that responds to its realisation in socially situated practice. The qualitative case study is an ideal methodology by which to deliver this goal; it allows for a high degree of flexibility, an intense study of the processes of change and interaction between different factors that characterise complex social relations, and emphasises an inductive approach to data. The weakness of the case study approach for some is the heavy burden of interpretation it places on the researcher; however for the purposes of this project, this is simultaneously its strength.

Indeed, in the process of data analysis and consequent theory-refinement, I was repeatedly struck to the degree by which my thoughts had been guided by my engagement with *Manchester Passion: a case*, it should be emphasised, which was not primarily predicated as an intervention in citizenship but as a piece of entertainment. As a direct result of my reading of the case, I adopted positions in the concluding chapter of the thesis that I would never have predicted at the outset; the notion of ‘cultural balance’, for example, formed entirely out of the case study. On this basis, I am confident in stating that the work that follows this chapter provides more than adequate justification for my methodological decisions.

Chapter 5: Citizenship and the BBC- History and Policy, 1925-2004

Introduction

This chapter follows the concern of cultural citizenship theorists with symbolic codes and embedded forms of power. Accordingly, it works from the position that patterns and practices from the past will inevitably have a framing those that exist today, creating an institutional environment amenable to certain policies whilst relatively hostile to others. What this chapter seeks to do, then, is to establish the institutional policy context within which *Manchester Passion* would come to be produced. In doing so, it ensures that the case study is not seen in isolation, but is analysed in a manner which recognises that *Manchester Passion*, like any other practice related to citizenship, exists only in a specific historical and social moment.

Clearly, it is not possible with the confines of this project to produce a complete history of the BBC and its relations with citizens and citizenship¹³. The decision has been taken to limit discussion to selected official statements of policy: specifically, the BBC's submissions to three government Committees on Broadcasting, and the '*Building Public Value*' strategy document. Such statements are among the BBC's most explicit attempts to define its purpose; its relation to the public in whose name it broadcasts.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the BBC's history. The selected documents provide a broad chronological spread across the history of the institution, beginning in 1925 (two years after the BBC's initial foundation as a private company) and running to 1986. In addition, each source is of a comparable type, and emanates from a salient historical moment, at times when the BBC, responding to external pressure from the Government in particular, was required to produce a clear elucidation of its worth to the populace of the UK. The argument of this section is that these documents exhibit a high degree of continuity; they operationalise a common conceptualisation of the relationship between the BBC and the public. Deploying the models of citizenship and the public sphere from Chapters 2 and 3, we can confidently express this position as *liberal-*

¹³ Although as an aside, such a volume might be a useful course for future research. While Scannell and Cardiff's *A Social History of Broadcasting* goes some way to fulfilling this task, it currently only covers the period 1923-1939, and has a broader focus on the relationship between genre development and audiences.

centred-passive. Key features of this analysis include the BBC's strong connection with the state, its centralised structure, and the prevalence of a detached relationship with citizens, evident both in rhetoric and in specific policy decisions.

The second section undertakes a similar analysis of the more recent policy document *Building Public Value*, released in 2004. This section demonstrates that while elements of the previous *liberal-centred-passive* model remain in place, they have begun to be contested by ideas associated with more recent interventions on citizenship. In particular, the 21st century BBC places a stronger emphasis on the recognition of cultural diversity, drawing on discourses of multiculturalism and in doing so calling into question its association with a particular notion of 'Britishness'. In addition, the BBC suggests a willingness to experiment with more active public sphere contributions, and claims to desire a more sustained engagement with the lives and preferences of citizens. Accordingly, the chapter concludes with the contention that *Manchester Passion* emerged in a contested institutional context: one in which 'competing' discourses of citizenship were simultaneously in play, and in which a clear sense of direction at the meso-level of policy was absent. At the same time, the BBC remained dependent on the goodwill of governments for its continued status and funding, and was left with little option but to respond to shifting external agendas.

5.1 From Crawford to Peacock, 1925-1986.

As outlined above, this section produces a historical sketch on BBC policy, actioned via an analysis of three sets of submissions to Government Committees on Broadcasting. The selected documents are as follows¹⁴:

1) BBC Submissions to the Crawford Committee, 1925-1926. In 1923, the BBC was granted a licence that effectively amounted to a national monopoly on radio broadcasting in the UK. Yet the organisation at this point was a very different creature from its 21st century incarnation; the result of a coalition of radio manufacturers reacting against commercial pressures, and a wide body of opinion seeking to avoid British repetition of the ‘chaotic’, unregulated American system (Briggs, 1985: 20-33). In July of the same year, the government announced plans for a committee to consider the future organisation and finance of broadcasting. The BBC, led by the domineering John Reith, made the (successful) case to Crawford that broadcasting should be controlled by a public BBC, leading to the commencement of the BBC’s first Royal Charter in 1927.

2) BBC Submissions to the Pilkington Committee, 1960-1962. The Pilkington Committee was convened in 1960 with a wide remit to consider the status of broadcasting in the UK. As the first such Committee to be called after the launch of ITV in 1955, it pushed the BBC into new territory. For the first time, the BBC and its ideology were to be held to account in the context of national competition, following an extensive lobbying campaign by commercial operators. This presented an obvious threat to the BBC’s established discourse. If the ITA (Independent Television Authority) and the various ITV companies were able to produce an alternative definition of public service broadcasting, or an effective argument for its delivery via commercial television, the BBC’s justification of its institutional position would be under threat.

3) BBC Submissions to the Peacock Committee, 1985-1986. Two decades after Pilkington, the BBC’s position was again under pressure. On this occasion, the BBC (perhaps in part due to a perceived left-wing bias) faced a hostile government under Margaret Thatcher, which viewed the BBC as being at odds with its neo-liberal, privatising agenda (Curran and Seaton, 1997: Chapter 15). As a result, the Peacock

¹⁴ Bibliographic details are given in Appendix A

Committee was convened to consider alternative funding mechanisms in broadcasting, with the possible replacement of the licence fee by subscription, advertising or pay-per-view mechanisms high on the agenda.

It is the primary contention of this section that collectively, these documents exhibit ideas associable with those of a *liberal citizenship*, realised through a *centred* and *passive* public sphere contribution. This analysis suggests a high degree of coherence between these documents and Marshall's description of citizenship in the UK (which is to be expected, given that the BBC developed during the period with which Marshall is concerned). As established in Chapter 2, the Marshallian model can be defined via reference to three characteristics:

- Citizenship is primarily realized in relations with the state: as opposed to other theories which develop a role for groups, trans or sub-national institutions, and 'lived' experience, Marshall roots citizenship firmly in a linear 'transmission' of rights from state to citizen, via institutions such as parliaments, the courts, and social services.
- A unitary, stable notion of identity: this linearity is made possible by the assumption of cultural homogeneity, based around a shared national heritage.
- A disengaged approach to culture: an idea of 'cultural rights' is not developed. Rather, the cultural sphere appears largely as a stable resource, to be manipulated for social or political ends.

The analysis which follows will examine each of these areas in turn, detailing how and to what extent historical BBC policy appears to have conformed to the Marshallian 'ideal-type'.

i) Citizenship and the State

What is abundantly clear from these documents is that the BBC from the outset conceptualised its role as a conduit between state and public. This much is evident in the emphasis on universality, and educative intent as part of a positive liberalism (redolent of the rhetoric of the development of the welfare state, in the context of which

Marshall produced his analysis). One of the most effective - and consistent – statements of this position comes in the documents’ definitions of Public Service Broadcasting, which are repeated below:

‘The Broadcasting service should bring into the greatest possible number of homes in the fullest degree all that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement. Rightly developed and controlled it will become a world influence with immense potentialities for good... Popularity must not be sought in ways where it is soonest found’ (BBC, 1925: p.1-2)

‘It is the compound of a system of control, an attitude of mind, and an aim... The system of control is full independence... The attitude of mind is an intelligent one capable of attracting to the service the highest quality of character and intellect. The aim is to give the best and the most comprehensive service of broadcasting to the public that is possible’ ((BBC/ 1, 1960: p. 3)

‘[public service broadcasting] is the expression of a commitment to producing, on a universally available basis, a range of programming which best satisfies existing needs and extends the bounds of appreciation’- (*Supplementary Answers to the Oral Replies Given by the BBC to the Peacock Committee*, 1986: p. 1)

Through such definitions, the BBC locates itself as a publicly-oriented institution, its aim being to provide the public with programming. It is clear that the BBC is based on a model that views the public as citizens rather than as consumers, aiming to serve the ‘greatest number of homes’ with no differentiation on the grounds of cost. This model is supported by the final quotation, which suggests that the provision of programming had become established as a *need*. The perception here is of the BBC as on a par with other organisations of the welfare state, guaranteeing the rights of *social* citizenship. Although it could be suggested that the method of delivery suggests we are dealing with a recognition of cultural rights, it will be demonstrated later that the BBC did not

primarily value cultural products for their own sake, but for their contribution towards a social agenda.

Direct references to citizenship however are notable only by their absence. This is perhaps evidence either of a simple rhetorical distinction (in which the BBC uses ‘public’, or ‘viewer’, where these subjects have the rights of citizens), or suggests that, for the BBC, the status and nature of citizenship did not require problematisation. The BBC certainly seems aware of the *issues* of citizenship. In the evidence to Crawford, for example, Reith eulogizes on the potential of broadcasting to provide a ‘new and mighty weight of public opinion’ (1925: 4) by which governments can be held to account. The parallel to evocations of the public sphere here is notable, the BBC fulfilling a typically liberal ‘4th estate’ role in a representative democracy (as described in Chapter 3). It is also notable that the public is seen as an *active*, autonomous entity, as opposed to a more passive ‘mass’ formulation. However, this Chapter will argue that the model of an active public is one which plays a limited role within these documents, and that elsewhere the BBC appears to seek to promulgate a more passive public sphere.

The BBC’s political role is complemented by an explicitly cultural and social purpose. In evidence to Pilkington, the BBC suggests that beyond entertainment, it might also stimulate interest in sports and games where ‘the amateur element is predominant’ (BBC/13, 1961: p. 5). Such specific socio-cultural interventions are coupled with a limited emphasis on community: in evidence to Peacock, the BBC states an aim of ‘reflecting at local and regional level the distinctiveness of life as it is experienced throughout the United Kingdom’ (Initial Submission, 1985: p. 2), while the Crawford papers contain John Reith’s famous description of the BBC ‘making the nation as one man’ (1925, p. 4). Translating this into the language of citizenship, we might look to Marshall’s definition of social citizenship, which includes ‘... the right to share in full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society’ (1950: 11)

For this to be a truly Marshallian picture, such services must be provided centrally, via the state. The BBC’s relationship with the state was, and remains, a complex one. Notionally, the two remain separate; the public BBC was established (as a result of the Crawford Committee) as a trust, guaranteed by Royal Charter. This was a crucial point

of principle for the BBC: as it proudly stated at the time, the BBC was 'no Department of State' (BBC Handbook, 1927, quoted in Curran and Seaton, 1997: 113). However, the government has always retained significant powers over the BBC, and its early years were marked by debates on the broadcast of controversial issues, leading to an institutional culture in which outward impartiality was coupled with internal self-censorship. The quintessential illustration of these pressures occurred during the General Strike of 1926, when the BBC denied airtime to union activists under the threat of government assuming control of the airwaves (Briggs, 1985: 96-106).

This position was justified in terms of the national interest: an argument which insofar as it was a response to government pressure, effectively conflated nation and state. While this move may have been made for pragmatic reasons (avoiding the threat of greater government interference), it encapsulates a vulnerability in the BBC's position, manifested to the present day in debates on the licence fee and renewal of the BBC's charter. While the BBC may be independent of the state, it (and by default, the services it provides to citizens) remains legally and economically dependent on its goodwill. Assessing the organisation's history, Born has argued that the BBC's need to constantly attend to its relationship with the state has led to a restrictive impartiality that 'aided a widespread depoliticisation' (2004: 33), severely qualifying its capacity to challenge the status quo.

The licence fee provides further illustration of the unique pressures under which the BBC operates. At an explicit level, it gives the state the power to determine the BBC's funding levels, and thereby acts as a mechanism of control. Responding to the build-up of a £6 billion deficit in the BBC accounts by 1971, Murdock was led to conclude that 'the bailing out of the BBC is now a permanent feature of its political environment' (1973: 212), inevitably increasing pressure on the organisation to maintain good relations with the government. What it also represents, however, is the envelopment of the public sphere into bureaucratic processes, which, according to Habermasian theory (see Chapter 3), results in an alienation of patterns of political communication from those of everyday life (perhaps obliquely alluded to in the common description of the BBC as an aloof 'Auntie'). While the licence fee may go directly to the BBC, it is administered through an external body and set by governments, creating a distance (according to Habermas) between the institution and public.

This is of course a double-edged sword insofar as the intrusion of the state is a means of excluding market pressures, a point made by the BBC in evidence to all three Committees (this appears reflective of the tension between citizenship and capitalism outlined by Marshall in *CASC*, the BBC effectively arguing that consumers and citizens are necessarily distinct¹⁵). Nonetheless, the bureaucratisation of the BBC's finances situates it, if not as an agent of any specific government, then at least as an agent of state systems. Given its central claim to be responsible to citizens, this situation inevitably complicates the BBC's position.

Such structural dynamics were complemented by the BBC's own willingness to integrate with the Establishment: both in its formal sense (through links with institutions such as government and monarchy), and in a 'soft' formulation (the Establishment as conservative elite¹⁶). This stemmed in part from Reith's own social conservatism: in his submission to Crawford; he speaks of broadcasting as a space for the opinions of 'prominent men' (1925: 5), and for the 'right pronunciation of the English tongue' (6). This orientation extended throughout the BBC, from its overwhelming male and middle-class staffing (which persisted throughout the 20th century, see Hood and Tabary-Petersen, 1997: 18) to programming. For example, consider the BBC's anxiousness to secure broadcast rights for important Establishment events which begun with a succession of royal broadcasts, including the first monarch's Christmas address in 1932. Such undertakings can be seen as part of a sustained effort to enmesh the BBC with the workings of state, with the result that by the late 1930's, Curran and Seaton describe the BBC as an 'august institution' (1997: 125)

Examining later documentation, these linkages are embedded in the BBC's institutional culture (as in this extract from evidence to Pilkington, which comes during an argument for the maintenance of a centralised BBC):

¹⁵ Although by the end of the period, pressures from commercial competition and the rise of neo-liberalism in the UK had begun the process of marketisation in the BBC. In evidence to Peacock, for example, the licence fee is analysed explicitly in terms of 'value for money' (supplementary responses, p. 22).

¹⁶ We might think of this 'soft' Establishment in terms of cultural hegemony, the BBC aligning itself with prevailing cultural norms that were inevitably conservative in nature. While this alignment does not explicitly associate the BBC with the state, it implies a link with the settlement of which the state is a key institution.

‘The BBC’s governors are convinced that the capacity of the BBC for useful service to the nation depends on this unity... The BBC’s national standing was the foundation on which the External Services are built’ (BBC/1, 1960: 22)

The BBC, while a *public* service, defines its role in terms of ‘service to the nation’, raising a question of whether the two can or should be treated as equivalent. The BBC’s rhetoric suggests that this is the case; it conceptualises its own mission in terms of a collective, singular national interest: ‘closing the gap between experts and plain man and creating a general common culture’ (*Education in Broadcasting: a statement of policy by the BBC*, 1961: 3). This discourse places the BBC in a ‘trustee’ role, acting in what it perceives to be the public interest. In addition, it places it squarely alongside the state, for while the above quotation speaks solely of the nation, it is the state which defines the ‘national interest’ in a modern liberal polity. Such a settlement would (because of its focus on a singular ‘common good’) likely call for the centralisation of institutional power, as espoused by the BBC throughout its evidence to Pilkington¹⁷.

Twenty years later in evidence to Peacock, the settlement between state and BBC is presented as self-evident. Hence we are informed that ‘there is much to be proud of in Britain’s history of well-judged regulation, solidly based on the framework of our Parliamentary democracy’ (2nd submission: 4). The position of citizens in this process is notable:

“Many of these achievements go unsung on a daily basis, perhaps because viewers and listeners have come to regard them as part of what the BBC does ‘naturally’” (ibid)

The BBC, if these two statements are to be believed, has developed as a result of co-operation between itself and the state. Citizens appear only at arms length: not as active contributors to the construction of the BBC, but as passive ‘viewers and listeners’. Whereas the BBC elsewhere extols the virtues of an active public sphere where explicitly political institutions are concerned, it does not appear to expect similar

¹⁷ This analysis also reflects the chronology of Pilkington, which came during a period of (relative) consensus around Keynesian state intervention.

scrutiny of its own development, which it sees as self-evidently positive. Even by 1986, the BBC exhibits a somewhat cursory awareness of its own public standing, which it dubs overwhelmingly positive ‘despite grumbles’ (Initial Submission, 1985: section 3:1). With no mention made of what these ‘grumbles’ might be, or from precisely whom they emanate, the BBC seems content to propose a limited relationship with citizens, in which the latter are the passive recipients of services determined elsewhere.

This position above is explicated by the Peacock Committee’s questioning on audience research. The BBC was, ostensibly, at pains to emphasise a reflexive, pro-active approach to public opinion, stating that it could ‘tell the market’s response to each specific programme far better than can any newspaper’ (Supplementary Responses, p. 7). The Committee, however, identified two serious flaws in this claim. In the first instance, the advisory bodies that provided much of the BBC’s ‘audience’ input were chosen by the BBC, as opposed to an external body (or indeed, by democratic process). In addition, there seems to have been little guarantee that the wishes of the audience would translate into programming policy. Indeed, the BBC admitted that its programme-makers ultimately worked to ‘their own enthusiasms’ (8).

Again, this is a continuation of a historical trend. As Silvey points out, systematic audience research did not commence until 1936, almost a decade after the BBC came into being (Silvey, 1974: 28). Indeed, while early pressure groups such as the Wireless League campaigned for more formal audience representation vis-à-vis content, Reith remained cautious about ceding such control, contending in oral evidence to Crawford that such representation was best confined to technical matters (1926: 1). While audience research subsequently became embedded in BBC practice, both its impact, and the usefulness of the data it produced have been called into question. Ang demonstrates that the BBC Audience Research Unit tended to mimic commercial operators in focussing on ratings and other easily quantifiable data (Ang, 1991: 142). Ang argues that this tendency meant that research was limited in scope, particularly as measurement technology began to dominate: “more philosophical, normative knowledge about how the audience should be conceived tends to be replaced by a reliance on aggregated empirical information about existing audience formations” (143). Without the corollary of audience representation within decision-making structures, the BBC’s claim to be genuinely in touch with those it served appears open to significant qualification.

In summation, the BBC occupied a peculiar position in the political landscape of the 20th century. It ostensibly acted in the interest of the public (defined at least implicitly as citizens possessing rights on a universal basis), and was structurally distinct from the state. Yet in practice, this model was complicated, with a tendency for the BBC's actions, ethos and structure to echo the political conditions in the UK during the period, based around dominant, central state institutions and responding to a restrictive relationship with government. This pattern supports Turner's argument regarding the specificity of Marshallian citizenship, that 'we also have to take particular notice of the contingent and variable circumstances under which these general social conditions or processes evolve' (Turner, 1993: 3). The development of the BBC's relation to citizenship was not inevitable, but a result of specific historical circumstances including the political and social context of the period. It should be noted at this point that the centralised development of PSB in the United Kingdom resulted from a combination of factors. The potential for economies of scale (both in terms of equipment and of technical expertise) played a part, as did the UK's recent history of effective central planning, juxtaposed against the relative chaos of the American broadcasting experience (Curran and Seaton, 1997: 113-114; Briggs, 1985: Chapter 1). Nonetheless, the evidence of these documents suggests that there is also a force of political ideas here, one in which citizenship is focussed around a relationship with a dominant state.

ii) Identity and 'The Nation'

The major difficulty in maintaining this relationship is a question of allegiance: precisely, what is the bond of trust that allows the modern nation-state to develop and be sustained? For Marshall, it is at this point that the concept of nation is called into play; citizenship is rooted in 'loyalty to a civilization which is a common possession' (Marshall, 1950: 41). For this dynamic to function, there must be a high degree of homogeneity amongst the citizenry. As was argued in Chapter 2, the liberal settlement Marshall outlines is ultimately dependent on the absence (or denial) of cultural difference.

The BBC, both in its relations with the state, and in its construction of 'nation', adopts an analogous approach in these documents. Citizenship is constructed around a commitment to universality (both in rights, and perceived identity) and centralised

planning; it speaks to an idealised centred public sphere. Working from the presumption that the UK's population could (or perhaps should) be treated as essentially homogeneous equals, the BBC adopts what is akin to an early Habermasian approach to public communication, with the BBC as a central forum for exchange between state and citizens. Alternative policies such as the transfer of power to regional networks, a coherent recognition of group rights, or the replacement of the BBC by a commercially driven alternative would therefore represent a *de-centring* of the public sphere: a concept which from a Marshallian perspective, puts at risk the universality of provision at the heart of citizenship.

Following the argument thus far, we would expect the BBC to support a unified 'British' identity, one which enables citizens to take part in a collective national exchange at the expense of alternatives. In his evidence to the Crawford Committee, Reith explicitly endorses this position; he perceives an objectively definable British character, and posits broadcasting as a means by which it can be strengthened. Making the case for the BBC's live broadcast of state events, he draws on the idea of 'making the nation as one man'¹⁸, class and geography overcome by mutual appreciation of national heritage. The idea of establishing communal empathy via cultural product might be deployed in a variety of approaches to citizenship. Deep cultural citizenship for example is heavily reliant on such opportunities, focussing – as detailed in Chapter 2 – on the ways that cultural interaction between citizens (often realised through the mass media) can lead to mutual recognition and empathy. Yet Reith's own conservatism, and apparent animosity towards the 'popular', suggests that the desired result of such communication was the consolidation of existing hegemonic values.

In the later documents, the link between the BBC and the nation-state (the two elements of which are consistently conflated) remains prominent. In evidence to Pilkington, a unified BBC is deemed crucial for 'useful service to the nation' (BBC/1, 1960: 22). Again, part of this service is the consolidation of social cohesion, 'closing the gap between experts and plain man and creating a general common culture' (*Education in Broadcasting: a statement of policy by the BBC*, 1961, p. 3). This goal extends throughout the BBC's work: even popular shows like *The Archers* are praised not for their success with audiences *per se*, but a 'kernel of solid content... interpreting their

¹⁸ The reiteration of the nation and its citizens as essentially masculine here is duly noted.

world to the town-dweller' (p. 11). By the time of Peacock, the connection is still made between a centralised BBC and social improvement, for example via the enabling of national educational projects (2nd submission, 1986: 3)

Given this inclination towards the national, it is unsurprising that the status of regional broadcasting appears significantly compromised, despite the BBC's protests to the contrary. For example, Reith states in oral evidence to Crawford that 'the cultivation of local interests is, we believe, essential' (1925b: 7). Simultaneously however, the BBC was seeking to establish itself as a national, Establishment institution, and the 1920's in fact saw a contraction of local broadcasting in favour of simultaneous relaying from London, often causing consternation in regional communities (Briggs, 1985: 75-82). Despite moves in the 1930's to bulwark the position of the regions, Briggs describes the culture of the Reithian BBC as 'nationalized' in its emphasis (138), implying a limited scope for subsidiarity.

In evidence to Pilkington, this is self-replicated by the regions themselves. Far from embracing a localist agenda (which, in shifting power from the nation-state, would imply a move towards a decentred public sphere), the statements from regional Committees consistently support the maintenance of the existing structure. The November 1960 memo from the BBC West Regional Committee is typical; it supports a second BBC television channel, and sees 'great virtue' in the BBC's existing structure as a bulwark against commercialism (BBC West, 1960). While regional programming had become an established feature of the BBC's output, the institutional power of the regions was strictly limited.

A similarly qualified stance exists towards the trans-national. At the BBC's inception, we find statements which seem to allude to a Kantian cosmopolitanism. Reith talks of the promotion of 'a spirit of world citizenship... Broadcasting will play its part in the establishment of world unity' (1925, p.6). While there is little detail as to how this might be achieved, this is to be expected given the nascent nature of the BBC, and of the technological logics which prevented widescale international broadcast. Later in the period, the language has undergone a significant shift. References to reflecting and

understanding other cultures remain: however, specific references to Britain's (and by clear association, the BBC's) position in the world have taken on a distinctly nationalist flavour. What is emphasised here is a long distance from liberal cosmopolitanism or multi-culturalism, both of which require a shift in favour of the development of multiple nodes of power (whether legal, or discursive). Instead, the BBC's relationship with the world is one of flag-bearer; a unified organization whose strength embodies that of a similarly unified nation (or more accurately, nation-state, given the BBC's entrenchment within existing power structures):

'The Home Services...are part of an organization of worldwide scope and reputation' (BBC/1, 1960: 5)

'The BBC's share in the growth of Eurovision is great, because of its position as the senior television service, its substantial resources, and its pioneering work in international television' (BBC/5, 1960: 5)

'At home and beyond these shores the reputation of British broadcasting stands high' (1986 (second submission): 29)

A similar emphasis on unity is present in the early treatment of religion:

'It is submitted that there should be a definite association with religion in general and with the Christian religion in particular. Christianity is the official religion of the country and this can be given as justification, if such is required' (BBC, 1925, p.8).

The pithy addition of 'if such is required' here is telling, giving light to Reith's assumption of Christianity's pre-eminence (and the source of this pre-eminence in the traditions of the nation-state). Demographically, this may have been justified (Reith was, after all, writing decades before the mass immigration and secularisation of the late 20th century). Nonetheless it comes at the cost of creating institutional discourses amenable to cultural representation for minorities, an issue to which Reith does not refer.

This attitude persisted in evidence to Pilkington, almost 40 years later: The maintenance of a Christian discourse is bluntly expressed: ‘The BBC is not required to be impartial on the subject of religion... it should reflect the worship, thought and action of those churches which represent the main stream of the Christian tradition in this country’ (BBC/1, p. 23). The BBC goes on to extol its historical record of religious programming (referring explicitly to Reith’s legacy), and is keen to stress its attempts to ‘appeal especially to those who are not members of any church’, an explicit endorsement of the BBC as an agent of proselytism.

By 1986 however, this position had shifted, with references to Christianity supplanted by a commitment to ‘the understanding of faith, and through it to the thorough celebration and reflection... of worship and belief’ (Initial Submission, 1985: 2). From this we can posit a trend towards the recognition of diversity, evidenced by the following extracts:

‘Reflecting at local and regional level the distinctiveness of life as it is experienced throughout the United Kingdom’ (2)

‘A commitment to documenting the variety of human experience worldwide... the social, economic, environmental and cultural factors that bear on individual lives’ (3)

There are distinct changes here from the language of the Reithian BBC. The BBC acknowledges the importance of regional output, and explicitly frames it as a reflection of social reality. This regional/local emphasis is complemented by an awareness of the global described in terms of individual experience (as opposed to international politics, or wider global processes). These shifts suggest at least a minimal accommodation of liberal cosmopolitan ideas, which draw our attention to the importance of multi-layered citizenship (and hence, of the value of public spheres capable of multi-layered communication in a potential ‘de-centring’ of the BBC’s position). We might in fact go further, and postulate that the emphasis on individual, differentiated lives (and particularly the mention of ‘cultural factors’, augmented by the shifting treatment of religion) has something in common with theories of multi-cultural or deep cultural citizenship. In this analysis, the BBC would function as a space for the negotiation and

communication of cultural dynamics, within which existing hegemonic discourses (such as 'nation') might be subject to deconstruction.

While this shift is worthy of recognition, attempts to associate it with more radical models of citizenship are ultimately unconvincing. In the first instance, these extracts must be viewed in the context of the series of documents as a whole; these retain a commitment both to the primacy of national identity, and to the role of a unified, centralised BBC in effecting social change. Indeed, given the degree to which the period from the 1960's onwards saw the 'mainstreaming' of discourses of identity politics and multi-culturalism in society as a whole, we might argue that the lack of references to these ideas (in evidence to Peacock particularly) tells a story of institutional reticence or disconnect. This becomes particularly troublesome when we note that the Annan Committee on Broadcasting (which pre-dated Peacock by almost a decade) stated in its report that 'Our society's culture is now multi-racial and pluralist... The structure of broadcasting should reflect this variety' (1977: 30).

A possible response is that representation of difference was dealt with elsewhere, and in particular by the newly formed Channel 4, launched in 1982 with a remit to provide minority ethnic programming amongst other special interests (Crisell, 1987: 198). This rejoinder is itself problematic however, as it would imply a retreat (within the BBC) from liberal ideas of universal provision and homogeneity, without their replacement by a more heterogeneous model of citizenship. If the BBC sought simply to serve and mimic the tastes of the majority, its traditional remit would be critically undermined.

Complementing this risk are questions regarding the cyclical relationship of lived experience to media output. The BBC in evidence to Peacock recognises cultural diversity, and seeks to 'reflect' or 'document' it. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this process is reflexive. That is to say, the BBC appears to conceive of itself as somehow separate from cultural practices; it makes no mention of how media representations (and exclusions) themselves might help to sustain or alter 'the distinctiveness of life' (Initial submission, 1985: 2).

Notably, such reflexivity is present elsewhere in the evidence: the BBC is aware for example of its development within the institutional landscape of the UK (which

emerged partially as a result of the BBC's evocation of a certain notion of 'Britishness', in turn accepted by its audience as the assumed characteristics of the BBC itself). For example, in evidence to Peacock, the BBC describes itself as a product of historical Parliamentary regulation (2nd submission, p. 4). The relationship of BBC output to issues of cultural diversity, by contrast, is left unproblematised; the simple *reflection* of diversity appears to be deemed sufficient. Minority rights are protected through a commitment to representation, but the question of the role of discourse in constituting these minorities in the first instance (for example through their deviance from a BBC version of 'Britishness') is left unexamined. The BBC's cultural contribution is not perceived as having the constitutive role that would associate it with more radical models of citizenship.

Given the BBC's commitment to ideas of a common good, of the importance of history and tradition, it could be argued that it in fact defined its goals in terms more similar to a communitarian version of the multiculturalist model (such as that proposed by Sandel) than to the liberal citizenship of Marshall. There was clearly a moralising element to the Reithian BBC, described by Curran and Seaton as akin to a 'crusade' (1997: 112). However, even Reith ultimately retains an emphasis on individual agency and rights. Writing on general content, he states 'there are many subjects which the service must exclude, for the liberty of one is the stumbling block of another' (BBC, 1925: 3). In doing so, he seems to echo the 'bracketing' of issues on the basis of their impact on individual rights (opposed by Sandel as a block on substantive debate and self-government).

In addition, the section on 'controversial matters' (which Reith relates specifically to political debate) stresses that the Broadcasting Service itself should remain impartial (1925: 4). At least in terms of explicitly *political* citizenship rights, the BBC is posited as a typical '4th estate' institution, delivering information to the public sphere without reference to an assumed 'good'.

There is an obvious complication here: while the BBC might have developed in a climate which advocated *political* neutrality, it simultaneously adopted policies (for instance with regards to national identity and religion) suggesting that public sphere institutions should respond to the prevailing conditions of their culture, suggesting that,

in Sandel's terms, they are 'themselves embodiments of ideas' (Sandel, 1996: ix). From this, we can infer that cultural differences perhaps did not carry the same status for the BBC as political rights; political neutrality is inviolable, whereas cultural neutrality is not. However, this does not preclude a settlement in which the latter is (without being explicitly recognised) defended via recourse to the former, as argued by Camporesi:

'The Britishness of the BBC came to be identified with a paternalistic and rigidly monopolistic attitude towards broadcasting in general and listeners preferences in particular: In Britain control and order in the supposed defence of minorities was apparently preferred over the free expression of criticism and the majority rule which was seen as the quintessence of the American system' (Camporesi, 2000: 85)

This almost Kymlickan argument, in which intervention is accepted as a means of bulwarking minority rights, provides a closer fit to the BBC's position. The BBC was part of a broader political settlement in which individual rights were paramount. This settlement reflected both a 'traditional' liberal politics, and the assumption (revealed in multiculturalist critiques of Marshall's work) that the UK was culturally homogeneous, and thus that a theory of *group* rights was not required¹⁹. However, the BBC's policies and behaviour did offer *some* recognition to *some* minority groups. There is – as demonstrated in this chapter - evidence of a piecemeal accommodation of diversity (while limited, and lacking reflexivity), and a continual emphasis in BBC scheduling on the provision of minority interest programming. Indeed, support for the latter was amongst the BBC's major justifications for a second BBC channel in the 1960's (BBC/13, 1961). Although (as will be discussed shortly) this policy may have emerged for reasons related to a form of social engineering, it remains the case that the BBC avoided a policy of unfettered cultural majoritarianism.

There is some evidence then of discordance with a Marshallian liberal model. In the documents under discussion, the BBC *does* recognise certain cultural differences amongst the citizens it seeks to serve, and crucially recognises that these differences

¹⁹ This is not to suggest that there was *no* acknowledgement of distinct affiliations; the BBC evidently did recognise the nuances of regions, for example. However, such acknowledgement existed within the confines of an over-arching liberal settlement; The BBC did not accept that the UK population was varied to the degree that it could not be represented by a universal BBC.

warrant specific policy responses. On this basis, one could argue for the presence of a (liberal) multi-culturalist approach to issues of cultural identity. However, such a claim should not be overstated. While there was an increased emphasis on difference by the time of Peacock, the documents as a whole retain a focus on a unitary 'Britishness' as a central organising frame for BBC policy. This centrality is evidenced by discourse around religion, the relation between nation and region, and the role of the BBC as a 'flag-bearer'. In each case, BBC strategy sought to bulwark the idea of a homogeneous nation as the basis for citizenship, in a manner more akin to the Marshallian model. Where difference *is* foregrounded, it exists and is managed within the context of this over-arching liberal settlement. And, as the next section will explore, the BBC remained willing to deploy cultural product as a means of guiding citizens towards a valorised ideal of what 'Britishness' might be.

iii) Cultural Product and participation

Thus far, this study has considered the BBC in relation to abstract concepts which, historically, have predominantly been conceptualised as *political*. The BBC however is at its heart a *cultural* institution in its most concrete sense, concerned with the development of cultural products for a mass audience. The question that follows, therefore, concerns how the purpose of these products is conceived, and what relation notions of culture have to those of politics and power?

As was established in Chapter 2, culture in *CASC* was not integrated into formulations of citizenship. Culture stands apart, amenable to manipulation and deployment as a resource for actors in the political sphere. Evidence of similar processes in the BBC has already been touched upon. For example, the absence of a reflexive approach to diversity in the BBC's regional/minority policy suggests a detached relationship to the cultural, which is seen as stable and easily 'reflected' by a centred public sphere institution. From a citizenship perspective, this represents a devaluation of cultural citizenship. Culture becomes something to be 'dealt with' by political institutions, and any suggestion of a more consistent and reciprocal relationship is largely ignored.

In Marshall's work, the primary illustration of the deployment of culture to political ends is his analysis of the education system, described as intended to fit young citizens

to the variant needs of the nation-state (1960: 62-65) A strong parallel exists with the BBC; both conceive of education as a linear process, defined by societal elites, and with clear goals which relate to the progress of the nation-state. This manifests itself in a Leavisite cultural hierarchy, the argument being that the cultivation of 'good taste' was crucial to the health of the polity. Camporesi contends that this developed partially as a response to the perceived excesses of commercial broadcasting in the United States, leading to a new construction of the UK as a 'non-America' (Camporesi, 2000:197). In practice, this involved a privileging of minority pursuits, in particular those associated with high culture and the Establishment. Such an ethos persisted across the period, beginning with Lord Reith:

'Broadcasting is not an end in itself... As appreciation of real merit is fostered, so will demands of one order increase and of another decrease'
(BBC, 1925: 7-8)

This passage is particularly rich: it declares broadcasting as a means to a social end, reveals an objectifiable hierarchy of culture, and assumes social benefit from the support of 'real merit'. Such declarations persist: even in 1986, the BBC proudly states that it offers 'a more testing array of programming' in comparison to commercial broadcasters (Initial Submission, section 3:6). While the BBC's programming had undoubtedly become more populist by the late 20th century in response to commercial competition, the institutional conceptualisations of these programmes remained enmeshed in discourses of improvement. So it was that while 1985 saw the launch of the hugely popular soap opera *EastEnders* as an attempt to challenge commercial formats, the show was praised within the BBC primarily for its 'social realism', an idea questioned by academic investigations into the show's popularity (Buckingham, 1987; Madill and Goldmeier, 2003).

The fullest evocation of these ideas came in evidence to Pilkington, the first instance in which the BBC was asked to justify its position in a broadcasting climate including a new, overtly populist competitor. In justifying its claim on the planned third television frequency, the BBC lists as potential benefits an increasing in programming of a 'serious, cultural and informational' manner, as well as the extension of educational and experimental broadcasts (BBC/1, p. 17).

The intent of such ideas is clear: such broadcasts would ‘help to create a taste, and to justify the initial outlay’ (BBC/13, p. 4). The BBC proposes to subsidise relatively unpopular programming not as a service to minorities, but as an ‘investment’ in the preferences of citizens. A BBC pamphlet on education policy from this period (included in the Pilkington evidence at the National Archives) echoes this goal; it describes an audience possessing a ‘potential enjoyment of the Arts’ (BBC, 1961: 4). Clearly, there would be little to be gained from attempts to ‘awaken’ this potential, unless it was assumed that an appreciation of high culture was inherently beneficial.

Yet the presence of ITV exposed these arguments to pressure. There was now a case for a populist definition of public service broadcasting, and the BBC’s high-minded mission could thereby be attacked as conservative. Crisell (1997: 109-111) argues that during Pilkington’s proceedings, the BBC fended off this threat by oscillating between different discourses of public service. However, in doing so, it was able to maintain a hierarchical, educative sense of purpose. This is demonstrated by the debate surrounding the third television channel, which eventually became BBC2. The BBC made its case for an additional channel largely in terms of educational and ‘serious’ programming. However, the BBC simultaneously insisted that a second channel would not have a ‘minority character’, instead calling for a spread of programming across both BBC channels. This proposal enabled the BBC to introduce a qualified discourse of choice that acknowledged the agency of citizens whilst re-iterating the benefits of a centralised paternalism.

The second channel was therefore initially presented as an emancipation, it would ‘release him [the viewer] from the effects of the tyranny of timing and planning from which those responsible for the make-up of a single programme cannot escape’ (BBC/13, p. 3- note the gendered ‘viewer’). Yet two pages later, such ‘tyranny’ is mobilised for educational purpose, with a plan to ‘construct the sequence on each [channel] that viewers who did not switch would find themselves exposed at some time of the evening to informational material’ (p. 5). Evidently, the BBC is amenable to certain choices, but not others; the suggestion that the public’s existing preferences might be valuable in their own right is not considered. The BBC’s attitude to unfettered

populism is later made plain (in a passage referring allegorically to the urban slums that emerged as a by-product of the Industrial Revolution):

‘Further opportunities handed to commercial television, especially if combined with a denial of such opportunities to public-service television, could create mental and spiritual poverty, which would be even harder to eradicate’ (BBC/13, 1961: 8)

Precisely how could a dominance of commercial television lead to ‘mental and spiritual poverty’? In answer to this question, the BBC makes a rare (and telling) explicit reference to citizenship. The document on ‘The Effects Of Competition’ follows a well-trodden path, arguing that commercial television’s quest for ratings leads to rival channels scheduling similar programme genres, particularly during prime-time. The effect of this pattern, according to the BBC, is the creation of ‘passive citizens... The BBC, looking at the total situation from the point of view of the public, feels that competition has meant a dilution of the values of broadcasting’ (BBC/14, 1916: 11).

This statement contains several assertions: that public service broadcasting has discernible ‘values’, that these values can be expressed in terms of a dichotomy between active/passive citizenship (within which the former is valorised), and that the BBC accurately reflects the position of the public (or at least, the position of what it conceives as the public). The first of these is clearly open to contestation: whilst the BBC articulated certain values of broadcasting; these had been subject to consistent attack from populist and market-led narratives, amongst others. These critiques also called the BBC’s judgement of public taste into question in an argument supported by the negative press coverage that greeted the eventual publication of the Pilkington Report (*The Daily Mirror*, for example, leading with the headline ‘Pilkington tells the public to go to hell’ (quoted in Briggs, p. 328)).

Finally, the suggestion that the BBC supported ‘active’ citizenship is itself problematic. As explored in earlier chapters by reference to the work of Turner in relation to citizenship theory, and that of Livingstone and Lunt in relation to media practice, active citizenship implies a high level of political participation. In contrast, the BBC’s institutional discourse of centralisation and paternalist education maps the audience as

passive, receiving the ‘products’ of citizenship without substantive involvement in their construction. Whilst the BBC's educative content might have been a catalyst for public *activity* (via the promotion of education or sporting interests, for example), public *agency* remains significantly limited. The BBC appears content to work within a defined cultural hierarchy, in which lived experience is moulded rather than acknowledged.

What is abundantly clear is a conceptualisation of culture as a resource for the nation-state; it is deployed in response to goals established within the political sphere. Just as urban slums could be cleared by the injection of capital, so could Britain's mental and spiritual ‘landscape’ be re-shaped by appropriate programming. While the BBC exhibits a preference for certain strands of cultural product, these are not primarily valued in their own right. Instead, their worth is described in functionalist terms. As a result of this process, agency remains in the political sphere; there is no suggestion for example that response to cultural product (such as popular programming, or lived experience) might be interrogated to redefine political goals. The BBC then exhibits a disengaged approach to culture, again in common with a Marshallian model of liberal citizenship.

This disengagement has two major consequences. Firstly, it projects an *idealised* image of a homogeneous public. Put simply, the altruistic mission of the BBC in this period demands a uniform vision of citizenship, because if the task of public institutions is to promote an agreed concept of the good, then deviance from this concept in the name of difference can only be inegalitarian, effectively denying some citizens (i.e. those in the working classes) the ‘right’ to improvement. Secondly, it bulwarks the notion that the BBC works from a formulation of a passive public sphere: citizens are not trusted to take their own decisions, but instead are to ‘find themselves exposed’ to appropriate content. Passivity is also a truism of Marshallian citizenship as outlined by Turner (1990), it suggests low levels of participation and substantive political agency. At its extreme, passive citizenship casts citizens as ‘consumers’ of citizenship rights; they become recipients of the goods and services of citizenship without having any part in their construction.

Transferring this idea to the language of the public sphere allows for a clear comparison. Prominent paradigms in media theory (such as the 'effects model', and the contribution of the early Frankfurt School to cultural studies) are predicated on the notion of a passive audience; think of Adorno stating that popular music 'hears for the listener' (Adorno, 1941). Through much of the evidence in this section, the BBC adopts a similar position. In particular, the educative and 'improving' thrust of many of the BBC's arguments is dependent on the suggestion that the public are highly receptive to media product, in turn implying a linear relationship of consumption between institutions and citizens.

From a modern perspective, the BBC seems to overstate the point; we are keenly aware of the choices offered to media audiences, and of theories of negotiation and resistance of media texts (see Fiske, 1989, 1991; Bennett, 2000). Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that these documents date from a period before the explosion of multi-channel and digital media, and thus from a period where terrestrial broadcasters were in a stronger position to command an audience. Nonetheless, the level of influence that the BBC attributes to its output is striking, and consistently casts citizens as passive through its dictum of social improvement from a central institution heavily associated with the nation-state.

So, the first element of passivity is located in the BBC's over-arching attitude to texts and their audience. The second is structural, emanating from the role (or absence of such) played by the public in the BBC's organisation. From its inception, the BBC's responsibility was to act in the public interest, ostensibly demonstrated in these documents' consistent emphasis on the BBC's imminence to audience opinion. Yet whilst mechanisms for feedback were undoubtedly in place (and improved significantly after the establishment of the BBC's Audience Research Unit), the relationship with citizens remained of a limited, instrumental nature. Attempts to promote an active orientation towards public institutions (for example, by providing codified opportunities for public involvement in BBC decision-making) are absent, and indeed, were specifically rejected at an early stage of the BBC's development.

The result of the public's conceptual and institutional marginalization is the construction of citizens and their lived culture in a peripheral role. Whether the BBC is 'reflecting'

local diversity, or stirring an allegedly dormant interest in high culture or sport, it is always the initiating partner, leading the public towards a design of BBC internal conception. Alternative visions of citizenship and the public sphere locate institutions and audiences in a dialogical relationship; think of the centrality of dialogue for Stevenson or Delanty, and their evocation of a diverse political system that embodies the experiences of its citizens. The BBC instead maps a Marshallian model of the provision of citizenship onto the public sphere, in which citizens are distant from institutions, and their social practice becomes a resource for the needs of the nation-state.

5.2 Change and Continuity

The analysis in this section undoubtedly raises major concerns with the BBC's relationship with citizenship. At times it presents the BBC as monolithic, sitting in judgement on the cultural life of the United Kingdom. This is at once fair, and yet misleading. It is misleading because the BBC underwent great change during this period. Even the most cursory examination of programming schedules would reveal a gradual move towards entertainment-led formats. While the BBC's evidence to Pilkington for example appears deeply conservative, the 1960's saw innovations in programming techniques and content under the direction of Hugh Greene (see Briggs, 1985: 331-350). These changes at times appeared to indicate an openness to new ideas of citizenship, with the most obvious example being the 1965 series *Apna Hi Ghar Samajhiye (Make Yourself At Home)*, a guide to life in the UK for South Asian immigrants²⁰. In addition, the BBC's structural and informal orientation towards the Establishment did not preclude it from controversial attacks on the Government. Indeed, attempts to weaken the BBC around the time of Peacock were felt to stem in part from Margaret Thatcher's anger at perceived left-wing bias in the BBC, particularly with regards documentary coverage of Northern Ireland (Curran and Seaton, 1997: 212-213; Walters, 1989).

However, whether these processes of change affect the dominant institutional discourse of the BBC is open to interpretation: certainly, the consistency expressed in the documents suggests otherwise. With regards programming in particular, there are two points to be made. Firstly, while the BBC has often produced innovative content, much of the movement towards more populist formats occurred in response to similar shifts by other broadcasters. Clearly the launch of ITV is a crucial milestone in this regard; Scannell offers the commercial reinvention of news formats as an illustration of innovation from outside the BBC (Scannell, 1979), while the launch of Radio 1 is commonly held to represent an admission of the success of pirate radio (Briggs, 1985: 345)

²⁰ Cascani, D 'And this is how you vote...' BBC News website, 13 October 2005. Last accessed 28/09/2009 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4332380.stm>

In addition, it is worth reiterating that the BBC continued to stress the educative content of more popular formats, whether in their own right or as a means of drawing in viewers to what the BBC saw as more worthy programming. Soap operas are an obvious example, while the development of quiz show formats on the BBC was treated with suspicion, predicated on fears that the genre offered ‘bribery rather than adequate reward as a means of stimulating interest’ (Gillard, 1953: 3; cited in Holmes, 2005: 2-3). It is notable for instance that the BBC’s longest running quiz format, *Mastermind*, offers no cash inducement and requires a relatively taxing level of general knowledge. Solely populist content has consistently seemed to sit somewhat uneasily within the BBC’s discourse. As Burns puts it (writing on the 1960’s): ‘entertainment, recognised as the big audience-puller, was undisguisedly regarded and used as groundbait... an unfortunate necessity’ (Burns, 1977: 54).

Even more telling is the substantive finding of this section that, when asked to justify and elucidate the BBC’s relationship to the public, successive generations of governance have called upon ideas of centralised, paternalistic development. These ideas strongly parallel the main features of a Marshallian citizenship discourse. The BBC, across the documents under examination, is:

- Closely linked to existing state institutions and discourses- both through structural links (such as the Charter and licence fee) and via an ‘ethos’ that associated it with pre-established discourses, often in support of Establishment institution.
- Oriented towards the support of a unitary British identity- creating content in the name of social cohesion, maintaining support for Christian traditions, and representing ‘Britain to the world’ on behalf of the state.
- Operating with a disengaged conception of culture- the BBC’s output is valued primarily according to a pre-defined cultural hierarchy, and its ability to impose this order onto a passive public.

To summarise, the BBC that emerges from this evidence is characterised by concordance with a Marshallian model of liberal, nationally dominated citizenship. It tends towards an archetype of the public sphere as both centred and passive (qualities

which were argued in Chapter 3 to have a similar alignment towards liberal citizenship discourse). Evidence of competing ideas is present and has had a limited impact: the gradual development of a discourse of diversity, and the minor ‘de-centring’ of the BBC’s public sphere offering via regional broadcasting. Nonetheless, the BBC remained committed to the realisation of liberal citizenship through its position as a powerful, central public sphere institution. In addition, the BBC’s liberalism seems to have maintained a paternalist edge: as Milland writes on Pilkington, there was a constant vulnerability to charges that the BBC ‘did cater in a strikingly disproportionate way for those who preferred Haydn to pop’ (Milland, 2004: 94).

5.3. The modern BBC and 'Building Public Value'

The second half of this chapter describes more recent citizenship discourse(s) in the BBC as expressed in the 135-page document 'Building Public Value: renewing the BBC for a digital world'²¹. *BPV* was published in June 2004 as the BBC's contribution to a Department of Culture, Media and Sport consultation on the renewal of the BBC Charter, placing it in an equivalent context to the committee submissions examined in the previous section (insofar as it was intended to provide a justification of the BBC's merit and purpose as a response to a request from the Government- and under pressures which will be described as this section progresses).

In this section, I will use the analysis of *BPV* to argue that the BBC exists in a state of flux in its construction of citizenship. On the one hand, there has been a clear swing towards the accommodation of post-Marshallian ideas. The BBC exhibits a greater institutional recognition of diversity, a more engaged approach to popular culture, and a developing willingness to cast audiences as active citizens. At the same time however, elements of a historically powerful position remain intact, or at least 'in play', operating in negotiation and contestation with new models of citizenship. Thus, the BBC can still often be found extolling the virtues of planned educative programming based around cultural hierarchy, or praising 'populist' programming for an implicit educational value. In addition, the BBC maintains an interest in social cohesion (which sometimes appears at odds with its commitment to recognising diversity) and remains concerned with its presentation of the UK to the larger world, implying an internal construction of a coherent 'nation'. And finally, the BBC's underlying connections with the state remain broadly intact, with the licence fee/Charter arrangements unchanged.

In seeking to understand the both the changes and continuities of *BPV*, we must consider the distinct theoretical and political context of the document. The developments in theory with which we are concerned are those covered in Chapter 2: the coming to prominence of alternative models of citizenship, each of which challenged the UK's Marshallian orthodoxy by virtue of their employment of nuanced accounts of culture and difference. By the time of *BPV*, these models had begun to transcend the realms of academia, having a substantive impact on policy and wider

²¹ Hereafter denoted by 'BPV'

national discourse. As Huggan put it in 2001 (commenting on the rise of multiculturalism): ‘scarcely a day goes by without us hearing of the delights of living in a culturally diverse country’ (Huggan, 2001: 67-68).

Changes in other spheres complemented this shift. Media technology had advanced at a rapid pace, and the expansion of multi-channel television platforms eroded the BBC’s ability to command wide audiences. By the time of *BPV*, 59.1% of UK homes had access to a multi-channel platform, with around 50% of these subscribing to digital satellite services (OFCOM, 2004: 4). While the BBC argued that its terrestrial services had attracted ‘remarkable loyalty from audiences’ (9), there is an acknowledgement throughout *BPV* that the BBC’s privileged historical status is under threat. In addition to this greater choice, audiences were gaining increased capacity to engage and interact with media content via digital technologies.

The potential impact of these changes for the BBC should be evident: in tandem, they threaten to severely weaken the BBC’s self-conceived relationship with a stable, passive audience (by problematising the assumption that such an audience genuinely exists in the UK). As the BBC is itself forced to acknowledge in *BPV*: ‘we are now in a multi-track media society, in which no two people’s media behaviour is the same’ (53). As a result, the BBC’s attention has begun to shift away from a singular conceptualisation of the public, instead targeting services to address specific market failures such as the so-called ‘digital divide’ and a decline in television viewing amongst young people (53-54).

The shift towards fragmentation and individualist rhetoric, was a reflection of the broader UK political climate, in which the entrenchment of neo-liberalism created an orientation towards market-driven provision. This position is exemplified by the new regulatory body established by the 2003 Communications Act, Ofcom. Its regulatory principles include an embedded preference for market solutions; it will ‘always seek the least intrusive regulatory mechanisms to achieve its policy objectives’²². In such a political climate, the BBC’s concept of public service broadcasting inevitably came under threat from New Right discourses: a pattern which first became evident in the

²² Ofcom website (author unknown), ‘Statutory Duties and Regulatory Principles’, accessed 16/02/07 at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/about/sdrp/>

Peacock Report, and continued thereafter, leading to a series of cost-cutting and re-organisational measures designed to align the BBC with market practices (see Born, 2004; Curran and Seaton, 2005). For example, the 1990 Broadcasting Act had legislated that the BBC had to purchase 25% of programming from independent producers, while the 'Producer Choice' reforms introduced by John Birt during the 1990's imposed an internal market structure on the BBC, ultimately culminating in an organisational split between production and management unprecedented in the BBC's history (Born, 2004: 100). Born is clear that the impetus for these changes came from outside the BBC itself, viewing the organisation from the 1990's onwards as a 'social microcosm' of the 'introduction of markets and business practices into the public sector' (68).

In the light of these developments, the BBC's capacity to maintain its 'traditional' realisation of citizenship would appear diminished. We might expect a 'decentring' of the BBC's conception of its relationship with citizens, allowing for a multiplicity of discourses focussed away from notions of a homogeneous national audience. Policy might be oriented instead towards the requirements of individuals (following the perceived fragmentation of the audience and the de-regulation of markets) or on those of cultural groups (following the maturation of multiculturalist discourses). The encroachment of digital technology provides a further axis for development, with enhanced interactive possibilities creating the potential for a more dynamic relationship between the BBC and its audience. Yet as the analysis which follows will show, the situation is more complex.

i) Citizenship and the State

That the BBC has not abandoned its historical orthodoxies is apparent at the heart of its mission statement in *BPV*; its definition of public service broadcasting:

'It is a system, rather than a particular genre of programmes. It can perhaps best be defined as a range of high-quality programmes and services whose only aim is to serve the public interest, be universally available, and treat people equitably and fairly' (BBC, 2004: 26)

This definition has much in common with corresponding ones made throughout the BBC's history. PSB maintains an ideal of quality at its heart, the BBC's task being to

create programmes with a ‘hallmark of quality and ambition’ (26). The BBC’s orientation towards the public is described in terms familiar from a liberal account of citizenship rights, comprising universality and ‘fair’ treatment. Crucially, these characteristics (and their relation here to what seems to be a singular ‘public’) suggest that the BBC may remain resistant to models of citizenship requiring a greater accommodation of cultural difference, as such ideas would conflict with the BBC’s universalist definition of PSB.

Yet almost immediately after this statement, the situation is complicated. A new element in the definition of PSB is introduced which emanates from the audience itself, and which creates a tension between notions of choice and those of universality and improvement. Quoting a research study in 2004, the BBC lists eight programme genres most highly valued by viewers as informing its ‘broad-based’ approach to PSB (26). This list, which includes soap operas and comedy, is significant not only because it suggests a more substantial role for audience preferences in the BBC’s thinking, but also because it contradicts previous notions linking PSB to an objective cultural ‘good’. As the BBC itself acknowledges, this construction ‘goes well beyond any ‘high ground’ definition of public service broadcasting’ (26). This shift begs the question: if the ‘value’ of the BBC’s citizenship provision can be determined by audience choice, what happens to its established mission of centralised altruism, social cohesion, and notions of quality?

In *BPV*, the BBC attempts to circumvent this contradiction through the use of notions of ‘public value’. The concept originally emanates from the American management scholar Moore, for whom it forms the basis of a re-orientation of public sector management towards the needs of citizens (Moore, 1995). In the BBC, Collins argues that it is used in a ‘loose, less specific but literal sense as a matter of what the public values’ (Collins, 2006: 41). The importance of this idea is that public value as described in *BPV* can take several forms: ranging from individual enjoyment of a broadcast to its wider social benefit, or ‘citizen value’ (BBC, 2004: 28-29). The latter can be used to justify the less populist aspects of the BBC’s output, on the grounds that recent research by both Ofcom and the BBC shows that audiences ‘value’ the existence of such programmes for their contribution to public life even if they themselves do not actually watch them (Collins, 2006: 41).

The BBC's use of the public value concept can also be seen as further evidence of the impact of market-led policy and ideology. In the first instance, the idea of individual 'value' addresses the BBC's audience as consumers rather than citizens. Secondly, the BBC deploys a third dimension of public value- that of 'economic value, for example through its stimulation of the UK's creative economy' (BBC, 2004: 29). While this does not necessarily conflict with other forms of public value, it raises some interesting hypotheticals (for example, concerning the relative weighting given to economic value in the commissioning process in relation to citizen/individual value). Finally, and perhaps crucially, the very concept of 'public value' can itself be seen as an import from external discourses, the most notable example being its appearance earlier in 2004 in Ofcom's first phase consultation document of its PSB review (Ofcom, 2004a: 4). Given Ofcom's orientation to market-driven solutions, 'public value' might be read as an attempt to define the BBC's output in pseudo-economic terms, raising the sceptre of critique of its more costly public service interventions.

Through its use of the public value concept, the BBC sought to justify a variety of output with conflicting implications for citizenship and its relationship with the audience. Working through the axes of the Marshallian model defined in Chapter 2, such contradictions are recurrent. While the BBC's rhetoric has indisputably expanded, the new elements exist alongside an enduring attachment to the Marshallian settlement, resulting in oppositions that *BPV* fails to draw out. For example, we might take the question of the scope of activity described in terms of citizenship. Citizenship is dealt with more explicitly in *BPV* than in earlier evidence, initially in the general terms of 'citizen value' mentioned previously:

'For people in their role as citizens, the BBC seeks to offer additional benefits over and above individual value. It aims to contribute to the wider well-being of society, through its contribution to the UK's democracy, culture and quality of life' (28).

This is a relatively non-prescriptive relation to citizenship, and could be used to describe policies based on any of the models developed in Chapter 2. Yet in actuality, much of the substantive discussion of citizenship in *BPV* moves closer to a narrow definition of

political rights, reducing citizenship to a relationship between the individual and the state. Thus, the document's section 'The BBC's democratic value: supporting informed citizenship (30-32) is focussed on the benefits of news and investigative journalism for political debate, to 'allow citizens to formulate their own opinions and exercise their votes' (30). This basic argument for the media as '4th estate' is essentially unchanged from the BBC's inception; Reith spoke in evidence to Crawford of a 'new and mighty weight of public opinion' (1926: 4). While *BPV* considers a variety of forms of 'public value', it only deploys the term 'citizenship' when in specific reference to an explicitly political public sphere role. This suggests a lack of engagement with discourses of *cultural* citizenship, or at least seems to devalue these discourses by comparison.

In addition, the BBC retains a strong relationship with the institutions and concepts of the nation-state. The BBC remains guaranteed by Royal Charter, a system it claims to have 'stood the test of time remarkably well... underpinning the BBC's independence and public role' (134). The relationship with government is also presented positively; any new system must allow for 'regular parliamentary scrutiny of the BBC's role' (134). And finally, the licence fee continues to be supported as the best available means of funding the BBC (116). Through this series of structural links, the BBC remains committed to a system whereby it provides the entitlements of citizenship via a relationship with the state.

The maintenance of this relationship is notable both because of the centralised public sphere it symbolises, and because, as argued earlier in this chapter, it provides opportunity for the government to intervene in BBC policy and practice. Born argues that the 1990's and 2000's were marked by 'intrusive interventions' such as repeated reviews, critique of quality, and the attack on the BBC following the death of Dr David Kelly, surmising that the period saw a 'reduction in the BBC's independence from government' (500). While this does not preclude any particular policy evolution, it requires an acknowledgement that any major change would likely be dependent on government support; a factor which should qualify any association of the BBC with a radical reimagining of citizenship. It also serves to counteract the BBC's more limited claim to a 4th estate role, given the history 'a long catalogue of examples' of government interference in political coverage (Fountain, 2003).

Historically, the structural association between the BBC and state was augmented by a less formal bond with prevailing elites, hegemonic practices and standards, described loosely as the 'Establishment' in this chapter. The BBC maintains these links in its content, for example via the broadcasting of Parliament, or of Royal events. It is also true that *BPV* reveals an organisation with a keen sense of – and attachment to – its own place in national life: 'The public look to the BBC to provide some of the essentials of their daily lives... it must remain a great national institution' (6). This statement has echoes of much of the rhetoric of early documents; it casts the public as recipients, and ties the BBC's success to a national socio-political settlement. To some extent then, the BBC retains a self-perception as an established British institution, which, given the centralised, state-led nature of UK citizenship, would seem to associate the BBC with similar ideas and practices.

However, the primacy of the citizen-state link is qualified by the emergence of alternate axes of citizenship. The first of these relates to an ongoing theme within *BPV*, the embedding of the recognition of diversity into BBC practices. . As with multicultural models of citizenship, this creates the potential for conflicts between group and individual rights, and raises the question of whether a model of citizenship should continue to be based around a goal of social cohesion (and if so, what form this cohesion should take). These questions will be considered in more detail later in this section, due to their origin in issues of *identity*.

The centrality of the individual-state relationship is also challenged by some movement away from a passive public sphere. Throughout *BPV*, emphasis is placed on the encouragement and facilitation of participation in public life. Crucially, participation is often delivered via forms where citizens themselves set the boundaries and content of activity. Obviously this is somewhat conceptually limited: such participation is after all in the first instance organised within and through the BBC itself, and in this sense the state retains a key position within the dynamic. Nonetheless, the acknowledgement that valuable public activity can be generated by citizens themselves is important, implying the development of a more engaged interaction with culture and everyday life through an active public sphere (and, therefore, perhaps implying a partial shift towards ideas of deep cultural citizenship).

Often, *BPV's* emphasis on participation is manifested through slightly vague claims, such as the development of interactive programme formats to 'offer everyone a democratic voice' (66) and opportunities to 'stimulate the creativity of our audiences' (72) via low-cost media spaces enabled by technology. An interesting (and highly citizenship-focussed) example is *BPV's* discussion of *BBC iCan*, which was later re-branded as *BBC Action Network*. As discussed in Chapter 3, the project was an open-ended webspace, which allowed individuals to form and organise informal pressure groups, often centred on local political issues²³. Its importance for this project is that it provided a space for bottom-up political activity; the contribution these groups make to the public sphere is not defined by the BBC, but by the groups themselves (or at least, this was the claim of the BBC: see Pawley, 2007). *BPV* describes *iCan* as a 'resource for people who want to make a difference in civic life but who are put off by traditional politics' (67).

What is going on here, in effect, is an explicit acknowledgement that the 'doing' of citizenship can take place in new spaces through informal, transient links between individuals. While it is important not to over-generalise from a single example, there is an strong correlation between the stated goals of *iCan* and Stevenson's (2003: 110) citizenship agenda for new media; its value is in the potential to create affective communities based on fluid attachments, without requiring the more permanent link of a perceived shared identity (beyond, perhaps, that of citizen).

The BBC's role in such a scenario becomes facilitative, supporting the creation of the 'intellectual and emotional capacities to engage in dialogue confidently with others in new public spaces' (Stevenson, 2003: 42). *BPV* concludes by stating that in the digital era, the BBC will 'open up not just individual consumer pathways, but new civic avenues and town squares, public places where we can come together to share our experiences and learn from each other' (135). While the BBC retains its links with the state and its attachment to a national heritage based around a relatively linear notion of citizenship, it is at least beginning the process of imagining possibilities for dialogical communication, within which citizens themselves are empowered to contribute their own understandings of rights and identities. In contrast to previous stable models, these

²³ See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork/>

ideas are orientated towards the use of multiple identity positions, and fluid social attachments.

One area where this empowerment is substantially limited, however, concerns the political practices of the BBC itself. That is to say, given the BBC's developing commitment to active participation and a shift in the focus of political life away from state institutions, should the public not have a greater role in the running of the BBC? The BBC's rhetoric would suggest so, and in *BPV*, the ultimate 'ownership' of the BBC by citizens (and the consequent need for public accountability) is repeatedly stressed. However, the mechanisms for delivering this accountability are little changed since the BBC's inception, and are still largely reliant on a range of appointed committees and councils (124-126).

While *BPV* highlights the role of these bodies in several policy developments, the fact remains that the BBC has not developed mechanisms for direct accountability (for example by the use of citizens juries, or elected public representatives). Born is scathing about the nature of much BBC consultation, which she describes as consisting of 'rituals of inclusion' focussed on Establishment colleagues and functioning as an explicit affirmation of the BBC's status (2004: 87-88). If the BBC continues to cast the audience in a position of institutional passivity, then rhetoric and limited initiative regarding participation are of inevitably limited effect, echoing Couldry, Livingstone and Markham's (2007) concern about the disconnect between media engagement and opportunities for effective interaction.,

ii) The pluralisation of identity

Central to comprehending the BBC's prevailing model of citizenship is the task of unravelling precisely who is described by terms like 'audience' and 'public'. In early documents, such terms had a limited breadth; the BBC made the presumption that it served a homogeneous population, and organised its thought accordingly. As suggested in the introduction to this section, such a position was less defensible by 2004 (given the wide-scale impact of ideas of multi-culturalism in particular, and identity politics more generally).

As such, the treatment of identity in *BPV* has undergone a significant shift. Amongst the BBC's chief concerns is to ensure that cultural groups have their concerns and traditions reflected and respected in the BBC's output. This change constitutes a definite shift towards a multi-culturalist version of citizenship. The BBC's language is often redolent of Charles Taylor's concern with 'cultural recognition', in which cultural engagement builds the conditions for understanding and equitable treatment:

'By enabling the UK's many communities to see what they hold in common and how they differ, the BBC seeks to build social cohesion and tolerance through greater understanding' (8)

'Broadcasting in the UK may be a powerful contributor to social capital. It can attract diverse audiences by age, sex, race of class to powerful shared experiences that can help to forge connections and build trust' (36)

The acknowledgement of heterogeneity, once absent, now forms a key part of the BBC's understanding of its role. This much is made clear by the new approach to religious programming, which in direct contrast to the previous adherence to a Christian 'mainstream', is now centred on a reflection of diversity:

'As the country changes, the BBC will seek to build a deeper understanding of multi-faith Britain. Christian celebration will continue to represent a significant part of the BBC's commitment. At the same time, the BBC will reflect the growth of other faiths, including Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism' (71)

Again, however, the move towards multi-cultural perspectives is not complete or uncontested. The first factor here is a continuing emphasis on social cohesion, which often appears to be the (problematic) motivating factor for cultural recognition. Thus, amongst the BBC's key purposes is the intent to 'foster a sense of belonging... The BBC also has a particular responsibility to the UK as a whole – for bringing people together to share events of national importance' (36).

Very quickly then, *BPV* shifts between the celebration of difference and a position close to Reith's goal of 'making the nation as one man'. The question is whether these two ideas are necessarily contradictory. The argument of Taylor's multi-cultural citizenship, for example, is that cohesion *is* feasible within a heterogeneous community, provided it emerges out of equitable dialogue and representation. The question then perhaps becomes one of method, and is somewhat complicated by a sense in *BPV* that 'Britishness' is associated with a reified past. Take for example the intent to 'secure the BBC's commitment to our collective cultural heritage... showcase the glories of our national culture in mainstream settings' (13). Is it possible to strongly promote a historically specific sense of Britishness (we might think here specifically of 'flag-waving' programming such as *The Last Night of The Proms*, or coverage of Royal events) whilst at the same time providing appropriate spaces for the representation of alternative cultural orientations?

There does appear to be a tension here. For example, we might note that the BBC's strongest commitments towards culturally diverse programming to date take the form of the digital radio stations *Asian Network* and *1Xtra*. Some multi-culturalist perspectives might suggest that these initiatives are counter-productive, insofar as they deal with the 'issue' of minority representation in the margins, rather than as part of a broader dialogue. A 2004 campaign by the pressure group Ligali raised precisely these concerns, highlighting the replacement of activist programming on a mainstream BBC station with less political content on *1xtra*²⁴. Certainly, a key task for the BBC will be to manage this dynamic between the 'national interest' (the very notion on which it has based much of its development) and the interests of heterogeneous cultural groups, some of which will have trans-national affiliations.

This tension is paralleled in *BPV*'s treatment of trans-national concerns. The historical tendency was for the BBC to adopt a stance of institutional patriotism, investing in order to present Britain to the world in an impressive fashion. This tendency has proved resilient, with *BPV* readily aligning the BBC with the global position of the nation: 'The BBC's contribution can be to support the UK in its global role over the coming years' (79). If anything, the BBC's contribution has extended to establish the BBC as a key

²⁴ Ligali Organisation website (author unknown), last accessed 28/04/2007 at <http://www.ligali.org/nomoretalk/bbbc.htm>

player in a global cultural economy, as a 'showcase for British culture and talent' (81). The discordance inherent in such statements is that they seem to presume an objectivity, that the UK's role or its culture can be simply known and defined (which, of course the shift towards multi-cultural and dialogical discourses would suggest it cannot).

Again, the BBC's response is to adopt conceptually incongruous positions. In this instance, the slightly simplistic promotion of 'Britain to the world' is counter-balanced by shifts elsewhere. Thus, in language similar to that of liberal cosmopolitanism, the BBC speaks of broadcasting's potential to 'link people across borders', referring specifically to services aimed at diasporic communities within the UK (81). Earlier, the BBC upholds a more dialogical approach to international engagement; the establishment of 'global conversations... which can help to build understanding in an unstable world' (39).

At the other end of the scale, we see an increasing willingness to embrace localness within the BBC's *structure*, in a sharp deviation from the previous dominance of centralised power. Towards the end of *Building Public Value*, the BBC proudly proclaims as much: 'These are the voices of the devolved and decentralised BBC, produced by and speaking to over 80% of the UK who live outside metropolitan London' (BBC, 2004: 94). In terms of the vocabulary of this project, the BBC's reference to the de-centralisation of its output is of course particularly notable. In practice, this intent is demonstrated by the development of local television and online services, and perhaps most graphically by the decision to move some major BBC services to Manchester/Salford (which was specifically presented as a means of redressing a relative under-spend by the BBC in Northern England²⁵).

While the BBC (and its decision-making bodies in particular) remains centred around London, there is at least some evidence that regional and local broadcasting is to increase in profile, both in terms of content and in terms of the evolution of institutional structures. However, we must again be at least conscious of the role that external pressures played in such shifts, particularly noting that, when announcing the last

²⁵ see Breen, R (2004) 'BBC plans for Manchester move' accessed 11/03/07 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/Manchester/4072649.stm>

licence fee settlement in 2007, the Secretary of State confirmed government's expectation that the Manchester/Salford move would go ahead, linking it to ' huge benefits for the regional economy – estimated at £1.5 billion and 15,500 jobs' (Jowell, 2007). Given that the BBC had itself put the move in doubt the previous year (citing funding pressures)²⁶, it is clear that we should view such moves in the light of wider debates about the BBC's role and purpose.

The BBC's evocation of its trans-national role is subject to similar concerns. Murdock and other have argued that the BBC's global development in the past 20 years in particular is underpinned by a commercial imperative:

“Governments may seek to exploit the positive brand identity of major public institutions by nominating them as ‘national champions’ that can compete effectively in the international marketplace. This policy has been vigorously pursued by the British Government in relation to the BBC. As a consequence the Corporation’s commercial arm, BBC World, has entered into a series of co-production agreements with major American programme makers, aggressively marketed the formats to a range of its high rating shows, and devised an expanding range of merchandise.” (Murdock, 2005: 20-21)

This analysis has two main implications. It serves as a further illustration of government interference, particularly given the suggestion that these trans-national revenue streams were promoted by successive governments as a replacement for shortfalls in licence fee revenue (Murdock, 2000; 2005). Furthermore, it contradicts the BBC's suggestion that its trans-national activity is predicated on the creation of citizen value, supplanting an economic motive in which the priority would presumably be saleability rather than the bulwarking of global dialogue (with the consequent risk that this could impact on domestic programming; that the 'commercial tail would soon start wagging the (primarily domestic) public service dog (Goodwin, 1998: 138)). Again, the tension between the BBC's explicit rhetoric and the realities of its political economy promote a cautious reading of *BPV's* more progressive claims.

²⁶ See Gibson, O (2006) 'BBC says lower licence fee would threaten switch to digital', *Media Guardian*, 12 October 2006, last accessed 03/04/2010 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/oct/12/broadcasting.bbc2>

iii) Cultural product and participation

The final aspect of the analysis involves the BBC's cultural practice, and the relationship of this practice to the lived experience of citizens. As will be recalled, the BBC had previously approached this relationship through a functionalist lens, one in which culture was treated as a resource. In particular, this manifested itself in the BBC's emphasis on the educative capacity of its programming. Within this dynamic, entertainment was often only justified as a means of 'guiding' audiences towards content that was deemed more worthy. In *BPV*, the educative element of the BBC's mission remains a central focus in ideas of public service broadcasting. Early in the document, it is listed as one of five 'generators' of public value:

'by offering audiences of every age a world of formal and informal educational opportunity in every medium, the BBC helps build a society strong in knowledge and skills' (8)

On the evidence of this statement and the focus on education throughout *BPV*, one might conclude that little has changed. Certainly, there is a continuity of *purpose*; the provision of programming designed to expand knowledge, based on the presumption that this expansion will have wider beneficial effects. Furthermore, there is evidence that the BBC maintains both a notion of cultural hierarchy, and the willingness to use 'populist' programming as a social tool, moving away from notions of active citizenship in doing so. The first of these is evidenced by a desire to make 'the good popular' (71), with its clear implication that what is 'good' in culture is something which can be objectively known, and something which should be disseminated to citizens by right. The BBC adopts a paternalist tone here; it suggests that it both can and should attempt to influence the tastes of its audience: 'Even some of the more challenging parts of the world's heritage can be brought to life with the right kind of imagination and creativity' (71). While these goals may have social benefits, they seem to jar with the broad, audience-led definition of public service broadcasting deployed earlier in *BPV*, and point towards a more centralised, passive public sphere.

This line of thought is complemented by statements on what the BBC terms ‘impact beyond the broadcast’. This concept is linked to ideas of education, referring to the ongoing effects of programming. On occasion, popular programming is (at least partially) justified in this way. Thus, a show like *EastEnders* is not valued merely because it is ‘well-loved’, but because it is ‘relevant to the lives of a wide range of diverse audiences’, and deals with ‘important social issues’ (33). The BBC makes great play of its increasing use of what we might call ‘event television’ including programmes like the *Big Read* series, which used partnerships with external agencies to deliver an ongoing educational dividend (73). What these examples share is their use of populist programming formats to deliver a distinct social goal, an idea which, arguably, denies agency to citizens (who are, in the words of the BBC’s evidence to the Pilkington Committee, ‘exposed’ to the BBC’s social agenda without their consent). This agenda pushes the focus of citizenship away from citizens themselves, and towards the state and state-wide institutions; citizens’ agency is limited to response to stimuli provided from the top of society downwards.

As is the case across *BPV* however, elements of an alternative model are simultaneously in evidence. In this case, it stems from an additional element in the definition of public service broadcasting, that successful public service broadcasting is that which is valued *by the public*. This stance inherently requires a more engaged approach to culture, finding value in the existing preferences and lived realities of the audience. In doing so, it supports ideas of active citizenship, bringing the audience into play as participating agents in the construction of content (albeit that there is a distinction, sometimes lacking in *BPV*, about whether this engagement with ‘what the public values’ addresses the audience as active *citizens* whose choices are to be respected to enable them to participate in the public sphere, or as *consumers* whose preferences must be attended to justify the BBC’s role under pressure from commercial competitors and budgetary tightening).

BPV seeks to realise extended public participation in two ways. The first involves the re-shaping of existing forms of content to target specific groups, recognising and supporting multiple ‘paths’ to participation in public life. For example, *BPV* highlights the provision of multiple strands of news content across different media, designed to ‘reach all kinds of people in the UK with news and analysis that speaks their language’

(31). This idea could also effect an inverse reading of ‘making the good popular’, creating a discourse in which valorised material must be made relevant to the lives of citizens, rather than the latter being educated to ‘properly’ appreciate the former. While cultural product is still employed as a resource for social change, the important distinction is a re-orientation of this process around the needs and desires of audiences.

The second element goes further, positioning citizens as creative partners of the BBC- ‘a powerful source of creative inspiration, able to shape and contribute to output’ (111). In a corollary to the BBC’s discussion of *iCan/Action Network*, the opportunities of digital technology are advanced as a means of enabling bottom-up production. The BBC casts this move explicitly in the language of the public sphere and citizenship, arguing that through ‘telling a story’, their viewers are demonstrating a wish to ‘cast off their role as a passive audience and broadcast for themselves’ (72).

In considering the ramifications of these initiatives, it is useful to make a distinction between ends and means. The *purpose* of the BBC remains constant, the delivery of social rights to information, education and entertainment. The manner in which this is achieved, however, undergoes a significant shift. What emerges, at least in this examples, is a recognition that these ‘benefits’ cannot be imposed, but rather must be developed in tandem with people’s existing culture and preferences. This recognition carries two major implications. It dispels notions of cultural hierarchy and objectivity (by valuing multiple cultures, and forcing previously venerated content to respond to them). In addition, it suggests a move towards an active, de-centred public sphere, in which citizens contribute to content based on their lived experience. While we might argue that the BBC’s largely centralised structure limits the efficacy of this shift (as the majority of decision-making and production still takes place within the institution), there, in stark contrast to earlier documents, remains an emphasis on the importance of lived cultures, and of their developing inclusion within the policy of a communicative institution. If this were to ultimately be reflected across the BBC's output and decision-making structures, it would indeed represent a major reorientation of the BBC's relationship with citizens.

5.4 Conclusion

By the time of *BPV*, the BBC's stance had clearly undergone modification. In the first instance, there was now much more explicit (if limited) discussion of citizenship, demonstrating the increasing pressure on the BBC to define a distinct role for public service broadcasting in the digital era. Furthermore, this section has identified several indicators of conceptual change in the BBC, each of which challenges the Marshallian liberal model that dominated the BBC's earlier history.

The first of these is a greater emphasis on diversity and difference. The BBC now recognises the need to tailor its output to a heterogeneous audience, in order to provide them with equitable representation. In doing so, it has to some degree abandoned the idea of the BBC 'making the nation as one man' through a singular, nationally-led discourse. Secondly, audiences are increasingly constructed as participants in the delivery of citizenship: not merely receiving 'rights', but contributing to discussion and content through their expressed preferences (although this is yet to be matched by equivalent opportunities to contribute to BBC policy-making). These changes are complemented by a more substantial engagement with everyday culture, with new initiatives shifting the focus of discussions of identity and social improvement away from state institutions, and towards lived experience. In totality, these changes constitute a modified relationship with the BBC's audience (or, as it now recognises, audiences). In place of the relatively linear model that seemed to characterise earlier documents, *BPV* puts more emphasis on interrogation of precisely who the audience *is*, and on a communicative relationship within which both institution and citizens play a productive role.

In terms of the models described in Chapter 2, the increased focus on both the nature and activities of citizens themselves pushes the BBC's position away from a purely Marshallian liberal model. We can argue that the BBC adopts elements of several competing positions; there is certainly evidence for example of the influence of multiculturalism on the BBC's approach to minorities. Perhaps most striking is the growing emphasis on active participation and the production of 'bottom-up' content, reversing the traditional relationship between producers and consumers of public service media. To the degree that the BBC is committed to such an approach, it can be said to be

beginning to integrate ideas similar to those of thick cultural citizenship, in which the BBC's contribution to public discourse is radically de-centred, a product of the lived experiences of its audience.

Caution is required at this point. While the shift in rhetoric cannot be denied, the situation throughout *BPV* is a complicated one. This is not a simple case of one set of theories and assumptions being supplanted by another, but is instead often a set of contradictions and tensions. While the BBC shows evidence of seeking to engage with new ways of thinking about citizenship, it remains attached to the ideas of the nation, of education, and of social cohesion on which its position has been historically based and which still seem to form an important part of its self-understanding. While this tension is evident throughout *BPV*, the BBC often appears either not to recognise it, or to ignore it, with the result that theoretically conflicting statements often sit side by side. And in addition, the BBC remains structurally bound by its continued legal and economic dependence on the state. If we accept Garnham's assertion that the progressive value of a public sphere is in its status as 'distinct from the economy and state' (2004: 361) then the BBC's inability to separate itself from pressure from an increasingly neo-liberal political climate must inhibit its ability to widely shift policy in to support a more radical citizenship (given that Young and Stevenson for example identify their proposals as requiring a re-balancing of power away from Establishment interests and the market).

What is ultimately revealed is an institution in which the concept of citizenship is subject to contestation and negotiation. Given the lack of clarity at the level of institutional policy, we might expect a repetition of this confusion at the micro-level, i.e. that of specific programming policy and of programmes themselves. Indeed, the situation at this point may be further complicated by the intrusion of additional 'logics', including economics, politics at the production level, and the limitations and conventions of genre. The next chapter of the thesis will take the form of a case study of a recent 'flagship' BBC broadcast, examining precisely how notions of citizenship translate (or fail to translate) into cultural product within the BBC. In doing so, it will provide an opportunity to isolate problems in the lived realisation of the theories outlined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6. *Manchester Passion*: Competing contexts, competing publics.

Introduction

The following two chapters of the thesis contain the specific case study through which the thesis considers the relationship between models of citizenship and institutional practice. The case study will develop chronologically, in order to draw out the ways in which the BBC's policy and practice developed over the 'life' of the broadcast. Accordingly, the focus of this chapter will be on the evolution and production of *Manchester Passion*, before Chapter 7 conducts an analysis of the text itself.

Manchester Passion was first broadcast live on April 14 2006 (Good Friday), on the BBC's digital channel BBC3 and BBC Radio Manchester, and has subsequently been repeated twice: on BBC2 (14 April 2006) and on BBC3 (6 April 2007). The programme was an attempt to re-tell the Biblical Passion, contextualised in the sights and sounds of contemporary Manchester. It was performed live in the city centre, culminating in the arrival of an eight metre illuminated cross in Albert Square, at a gathering attended by an estimated 6,000 people²⁷. Key moments in the Passion were represented by a selection of songs from Manchester rock bands including *Oasis*, *The Smiths* and *Joy Division*, which were sung live by the actors involved.

Reaction to the broadcast was overwhelmingly positive, with one newspaper critic describing it as having 'something truly transcendent about it' (Hattenstone, 2006). The broadcast was also recognised as a technical achievement: BBC Outside Broadcasts were nominated for two Royal Television Society Awards, ultimately winning the 2006 award for Sound in Entertainment and Non-Drama²⁸. The perceived success of *Manchester Passion* is perhaps ultimately illustrated by the BBC's plans to repeat the format in 2007, re-enacting the Christian Nativity on the streets of Liverpool²⁹.

²⁷ BBC Manchester, 'Manchester re-enacts Crucifixion' April 15 2006, accessed 22/05/2007 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/Manchester/4908894.stm>

²⁸ BBC Resources, 'BBC Outside Broadcasts' passion brings RTS Sound Award win', 21 November 2006, accessed 22/05/2007 at http://www.bbcresources.com/about/archive/061117_rts_manc_passion.html

²⁹ BBC Press Office, 'Liverpool Nativity, BBC Three to stage Nativity play on the streets of the city', 6 November 2006, accessed 23/05/2007 at http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/11_november/06/nativity.shtml

As detailed in Chapter 1, the purpose of this case study is to explicate the relationship between the BBC's practices around a specific broadcast, and particular models of citizenship and the public sphere. For example, a particular focus of this chapter will be the ways in which the perceived demands of different audiences forced the BBC to make explicit choices regarding representation, participation and cultural products (in doing so, providing a manifestation of precisely those issues highlighted as central to citizenship debates in Chapter 2). By analysing the motivations, complications and effects that surround and emerge from these choices, it will prove possible to use this narrative of *Manchester Passion* as a means to critique and develop the theoretical models outlined earlier in the thesis, focussing particularly on the role of culture. The case study, effectively, will serve as a 'testing ground' for new interventions in citizenship.

This chapter comprises two major sections. The first is concerned primarily with the institutional provenance of *Manchester Passion*; it examines two specific contexts within which it emerged within the BBC. Contextual work is important to the thesis, insofar as it acknowledges that citizenship is only ever realised in specific social settings, and seeks to consider how theory might respond (or fail to respond) to the particular challenges such settings represent .

A specific challenge for *Manchester Passion* was the recent treatment of religious programming in the BBC. Changes in the structures and content of religious output led to accusations that the BBC was failing to adequately represent faith communities, mobilised in language familiar to theoretical debates on multi-culturalism. The analysis of *Manchester Passion* will demonstrate that the BBC's attempts to address concerns over its attitude to religion led to a sophisticated engagement with ideas of cultural sensitivity and representation.

The alternate institutional history of *Manchester Passion* has a similar relation to citizenship; it relates to ideas of an active public, and the disruption of 'traditional' high cultural forms. *Manchester Passion* was initially developed as a follow-up to *Flashmob: the Opera*, a series of live music events in public spaces. These events were explicitly designed to a) encourage public participation using innovative methods such

as text messaging; and b) to produce a series of juxtapositions that would create encounters between different cultural forms, and between different citizens/groups of citizens. These proposals were held to fulfil BBC policy goals around education and creativity.

Manchester Passion was developed in a similar vein, and was built around opportunities for engagement. These focussed both upon the live event itself, and on a highly specific deployment of cultural products (a melding of classical and popular music). Therefore, an underlying discourse for *Manchester Passion* was the relationship between the BBC and its audience, between public institution and citizen. This raises questions regarding the relative agency or ‘activeness’ of citizens, and the motivations behind the BBC’s public sphere contribution (i.e. to what degree it seeks to take a centred, disseminatory role, or to facilitate a plurality of citizen ‘voices’.)

The second part of this chapter will focus on the commissioning and production of *Manchester Passion*, examining the way that concepts of citizenship were reflected through practice, such as the scripting and route of the broadcast. This analysis will relate directly to the primary research questions of the thesis. As stated, it will explicate the ways in which ideas of citizenship emerge in BBC practice. Furthermore, it will examine the relationship between these practices and the ‘ideal-type’ citizenship models outlined in earlier chapters, exploring how these models might operate or alter in practice. This discussion (which will continue into the following chapter) will be focussed around various fields of inquiry relating to citizenship, the first two of which emanate directly from the two ‘institutional histories’ developed in the preceding section:

Participation. A central element of *Manchester Passion*’s appeal for the BBC (following the perceived success of *Flashmob*) was the claim that it offered a high degree of audience participation. In analysing this claim in relation to models of citizenship, we must ask questions as to the quality of this participation, for example asking whether it represents a genuine ‘de-centring’ of the public sphere via a transfer of agency to citizens. In addition, it is crucial to interrogate the intentionality of actors within the BBC. Is audience participation simply an assumed good, or is it tied to a specific socio-political purpose?

Representation: religion. The broadcast's Christian content raises obvious concerns regarding the representation of a specific cultural group. Particularly given the context of the criticism the BBC had received for its treatment of religion, *Manchester Passion* could only be seen as successful if it was produced with a commitment to cultural sensitivity. The challenge for the BBC would be how to weigh the needs of the Christian community against those of other potential audiences, and how (particularly assuming that it was working to the nascent multiculturalist agenda present in *Building Public Value*) to promote understanding of different cultural affiliations. Thus, the question of the treatment of religion in *Manchester Passion* would prove strongly redolent of debates on the functioning of citizenship in heterogeneous societies.

Further strands of inquiry, while not explicitly foregrounded by the contextual work in the first section, emerged strongly in the interview evidence for this project:

Representation: Manchester. *Manchester Passion* is an explicitly localised broadcast, making great play of the geography and culture of the city. Therefore, a task for this project is to analyse the manner in which it represents Manchester and the citizens within it, and how this relates to the BBC's perceived responsibilities to local communities in the UK. Such issues inevitably enter the terrain of multiculturalism and difference, as well as the balance of power between national and regional/local institutions (thus bringing in notions of liberal cosmopolitanism). In addition, there is a socio-economic aspect to these decisions, relating to discourses of regeneration and cultural capital. For both the BBC and Manchester City Council, *Manchester Passion* was an opportunity to produce economic value in the region, i.e. by promoting the creative industries. What requires attention is to what extent (if any) this economic agenda may conflict with other citizen interests.

Cultural product and hierarchy. One of the innovations of *Manchester Passion* is its re-imagining of the Passion play genre (traditionally associated with high cultural forms) through popular music. Therefore, it must inevitably engage with the question of the respective value attributed to different cultural products. In turn, this speaks to long-standing debates (realised both inside and outside the BBC) concerning the inculcation of citizens into a pre-determined canon of the cultural 'good'.

At the time of the initial discussions that led to *Manchester Passion*, the complexities in these themes were yet to be drawn out within the BBC. What we can confidently say existed (as will be detailed in the sections on institutional context which follow) was an idea for a Passion play set in a public space, allowing for a high degree of audience participation. As a more coherent proposal developed, decisions were taken that demonstrated an alignment with many of the ideas expressed in *BPV*, ostensibly intent on contributing to an active, de-centred public sphere. As such, there is a positive relationship (albeit, often a complex one) between these decisions and some of the post-Marshallian models of citizenship developed in Chapter 2. The rest of this chapter explores these choices in greater detail, responding to the four themes outlined above. As a prelude to this process, it is first necessary to detail the institutional contexts of *Manchester Passion*.

6.1. The BBC, religious sensitivity, and *Jerry Springer*

Chapter 5's study of BBC policy saw a gradual evolution surrounding attitudes to religion. The BBC initially operated with a strong commitment to the Christian faith, and to the Church of England in particular. This position was defended in brusque, majoritarian terms, as Reith wrote in evidence to the Peacock Committee: 'Christianity is the official religion of the country and this can be given as justification, if such is required' (BBC, 1926, p. 8). As was the case with much of the early BBC's thinking, this position echoed notions of a centralised, 'top-down' notion of citizenship, one which valorised a particular national identity.

Whilst valorisation did not preclude coverage of or imply hostility towards other religions (the BBC, after all, remained rooted in the principles of liberal democracy), the unabashed prerogative of the BBC was to bulwark Christian tradition. In an edition of Radio Four's *Archive Hour*, Seaton argues that representations of other faiths were often either tinged with exoticism, or suffered from a lack of commitment to those being represented (Seaton, 2007). There remains, for example, a contention that the BBC failed to adequately report the Holocaust in the years prior to World War II for fear of compromising the UK government's position on Palestine, although this is subject to debate (Seaton, 1987, 2007).

This situation persisted through the post-war period, and it was not until the 1980's that a more multi-cultural approach became prominent; the BBC's rhetoric shifting away from specific references to Christianity and towards the 'understanding of faith'. This reflected a broader movement in BBC policy towards a pluralised model of British identity, involving a limited de-centralisation of its conceptualisation of the public sphere (detailed in Chapter 5). The 1990's and 2000's saw a continuation of this process, with BBC documents such as *BPV* focussing heavily on the need for the BBC to recognise and reflect the UK's increasing cultural diversity in its output. The key problematic for the BBC would therefore be its management of the competing sensitivities of different religious audiences, in a microcosm of its movement towards a multicultural agenda.

These shifts in rhetoric and emphasis were reflected in the BBC's staffing, organisation, and content. In terms of staffing, it was traditionally the case that the BBC religion department was a breeding ground for senior positions in the Church of England (and to a lesser extent, other Christian denominations), demonstrating the close links between the BBC and other pillars of the British 'Establishment'. Indeed, it was not until the 1950's that programmes critical of Christian positions were allowed to be broadcast, and even then, these programmes were dealt with by the Talks Department rather than Religion (House, 2001).

By the beginning of the 21st Century, significant changes had taken place. The Religion department underwent a reorganisation, re-defined as 'Religion and Ethics' with a broader remit to explore issues of spirituality and morality. The shift was made stark in 2001, when Alan Bookbinder was appointed as Head of Department. While he had been at the BBC throughout his career and had developed a strong reputation, his status as the first non-Christian to fill the position was unsurprisingly controversial. At the time of Bookbinder's appointment, Joel Edwards of the Evangelical Alliance asked "Would the BBC appoint a head of sport who knows nothing about football?" (BBC, 2001³⁰).

The changes that culminated in the appointment of Bookbinder should be contextualised by broader shifts in the BBC's position. The changing rhetoric of policy documents examined in Chapter 5 reveals a BBC gradually 'opening up' to alternate national discourses and ideas of multi-culturalism. This would seem to require a certain disassociation from the mainstream Christian tradition; a BBC so closely tied with the Church of England would lack credibility as a representative of other faiths. In this context, the staffing changes and departmental 're-branding' can be read as an attempt to 'de-centre' religious output, supplanting the previous dominance of a Christian discourse with non-prescriptive, diverse coverage for a plurality of audiences.

A complementary theme (insofar as it involves a 'pluralisation' of institutional practice) is the suggestion that recent 'flagship' BBC content has been marked by formats and offerings which cross genres. In *BPV*, much is made of programmes such as *The Big*

³⁰ BBC News, 'BBC appoints 'agnostic' head of religion', 11 July 2001, accessed 23/05/2007 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/tv_and_radio/1433695.stm

Read and Great Britons, which combined a traditional educational purpose with extensive audience participation, and techniques borrowed from entertainment genres (the use of celebrities, the live event format, and competition). Such programmes often emerge from a climate of cross-fertilisation, involving teams from several departments. And increasingly, the BBC is concerned with cross-media output- under its new ‘360 degree’ commissioning strategy (launched as part of the *Creative Future* content strategy in 2006), new propositions must contain a substantial online component³¹.

The BBC’s religious output has begun to adopt similar practices. Examples include *The Miracles of Jesus* (in which the Somali Muslim and former BBC Iraq Correspondent Rageh Omaar questions the veracity of the Miracles), and *The Monastery*, a reality show focussed on the attempts of five laymen to live under Benedictine rules . At the same time, the previous televised bastions of religious output have come under pressure, often moved away from prime-time, or axed altogether (Rea, 2001).

What seems to be taking place is a realignment of the BBC’s religious output in favour of programming that fits cross-genre, cross-departmental paradigms. Thinking through this shift, it is notable that these changes feature a consistent dialogical element. In mixing elements from different genres, or producing programmes in concert between different departments, there is an inherent ‘conversation’ taking place between sets of ideas and expectations. This represents an institutional echo of the commitments to sustained communication and the encouragement of reflexivity that are central to the deep cultural citizenship model, (and to some multicultural models).

These shifts have attracted controversy, and this has emerged from a variety of sources. In 2001, the outgoing Head of Religion and Ethics, Earnest Rea, accused the BBC of ‘dancing to a secular agenda’. Specifically, Rea located the BBC within a wider secular tendency:

³¹ See http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/07_july/19/future.shtml

‘The people who control the television industry in this country are, for the most part, children of the sixties and seventies, secular people who accept as a given that the notion of God is a nonsense, and who regard religion as little more than an amusing but outdated phenomenon’ (Rea, 2001)

In Rea’s analysis, a previous Christian hegemony has been supplanted with a secular equivalent. The ramifications of this shift in terms of an underlying citizenship discourse are therefore limited- although the BBC, if Rea is correct, may have moved away from its original ‘establishment’ position, it is still working in reference to a valorised cultural affiliation with secular liberalism. Whilst proponents of this position would claim to be non-discriminatory, Rea’s description of the BBC is one where people of faith would be isolated- constituting a failure of the BBC’s commitments to cultural sensitivity. If Rea was correct, the BBC retained a ‘top-down’ approach to citizenship, one in which an elite (the ‘people in control’ in Rea’s words) attempted to impose ways of thinking onto the public. While the rhetoric may have been ‘de-centred’, the power structures behind it remain intact.

Similar complaints have come from external groups- in 2005, a House of Lords Select Committee heard a range of attacks from faith representatives and academics. These critiques focussed on the perceived failure of the BBC to provide reasonable cultural representation of religious groups- as Dr Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad argued, entertainment programmes had a tendency ‘to use stereotypes - the Christians are mad fundamentalists, the Hindus are in arranged marriages’ (quoted in Day, 2005). The British Humanist Association went further, contending that the BBC was breaching their human rights by failing to cover Humanism as a belief system³².

These arguments came to a head in January 2005, when the BBC screened a production of *Jerry Springer: The Opera* on BBC2. As well as general accusations of bad taste, the broadcast was subject to unprecedented levels of attack for its portrayal of Christianity (which included, for example, a Jesus figure who dressed as a baby and repeatedly soiled himself). After a concerted campaign by various Christian groups, the BBC received over 45,000 complaints by the time of broadcast, coupled with protests outside

³² J. Day, ‘BBC accused of anti-religious bias’ *Media Guardian*, November 2 2005, accessed 12/06/2007 at <http://media.guardian.co.uk/site/story/0,14173,1607029,00.html>

its offices in London³³. John Beyer, director of the campaign group Mediawatch-UK claimed the BBC had demonstrated ‘stupefying arrogance in its dealings with the public’ by going ahead with the broadcast, and had breached its own guidelines on decency and religious offence³⁴. Reactions on the BBC website³⁵ often reveal attitudes focussed around concepts of identity and rights, echoing the complaints made to the House of Lords Select Committee:

The BBC probably would not have broadcast the show if it were Mohammed being portrayed in a nappy. Why offend Christians by disrespecting their beliefs?

Jonathan, Derby

We go from serving the client to spitting on the client. This show is a hate crime against the majority of the people in this country. It really shows how intolerant the BBC is. I am disgusted. Joe , Sheffield

I am extremely offended by the portrayal of Jesus Christ. A person's religious belief is a fundamental human right and others should have the courtesy to respect their belief.

Jane Phillips, Marske by sea, Tees Valley

These comments illustrate a number of positions- that the BBC is elitist and/or is biased against certain identities, that it should reflect the preferences of the ‘majority’ group within the UK, and that negative portrayal of a religious belief contravenes the rights of individuals who hold that belief. What links these positions is a concern with *representation*. In this particular case, representation encompasses two distinct ideas. Firstly, we have what we might call *political*, or *democratic* representation. This is the simple contention that there is a group of citizens within the UK who self-identify as

³³ BBC News ‘Protests as BBC screens *Springer*’, 10 January 2005, accessed 12/06/2007 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/tv_and_radio/4154071.stm

³⁴ J. Meyer, ‘Mediawatch-UK: *Jerry Springer: the opera*’, 30 March 2005, accessed 12/06/2007 at <http://www.mediawatchuk.org/news%20and%20views/Jerry%20Springer%20The%20Opera.htm>

³⁵ BBC News website, ‘Should BBC have shown Jerry Springer opera?’, 17 January 2005, accessed 06/02/2008 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/4154385.stm

Christian, and that the BBC (as an institution responsible to citizens) therefore has an obligation to take their concerns into account.

Why this matters is because of the BBC's primary role in the second form of representation, which can be termed *cultural*. In Chapter 3, it was argued that in modern societies, citizenship is realised to a significant degree through the mass media; that it is through these institutions that we come to understand our relationships with the state, and with our fellow citizens. One element of this involves the manner in which mass media products portray particular cultural groups or identities. If we think about the modelling of citizenship theories in Chapter 2, appropriate cultural representation (i.e. that which is accurate and not unnecessarily negative) was central both to some multiculturalist models (for example that of Charles Taylor) and to deep cultural citizenship. For both these models, it creates the conditions for understanding between diverse 'Others', and thus is a prerequisite for equitable communication.

The accusation being made then is that by failing in its perceived duty to adequately and accurately portray certain groups, the BBC has hindered the ability of these groups to take part in society. Comments such as the reference to 'hate crime' illustrate the intensity of these concerns for citizens; there is a clear sense articulated that a prime responsibility of the BBC is to respect the sensitivities of its audiences, and to appropriately represent them in public discourse. In such comments, we could argue that Marshall's definition of citizenship as 'full membership of a community' is extended to include cultural representation.

The level and vehemence of criticism that followed *Jerry Springer: the Opera* was unprecedented in the BBC's history. In part, this can be attributed to the way in which some newspapers and campaign groups highlighted the programme even prior to its broadcast. For example, tabloid media coverage claimed that the programme included 3,168 utterances of the word 'fuck', a figure arrived at by multiplying the word's appearances in the script by the number of cast members involved³⁶. In addition, it is argued that the volume of protest was orchestrated by a small number of pressure groups, including Mediawatch-UK (mentioned earlier) and Christian Voice (who

³⁶ J. Deans, 'Springer claims exaggerated, says comedian', *Media Guardian*, 7 January, 2005, accessed 14/06/2007 at http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,1385313,00.html

maintain a dedicated site opposing performance of the piece at <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk/springer.html>). Nonetheless, it is clear that there was genuine concern about the programme, and that this came as a surprise to the BBC, for whom Director of Television Jana Bennett said: ‘We were certainly struck by the scale of the protest, but obviously they have an absolute right to make their voices heard... No one is in hiding but there was a lot of pressure in terms of direct action’³⁷.

Why though was the BBC caught off-guard by this reaction? The answer, I would argue, is a disconnection between the BBC’s stated policy, and its institutional practice. The BBC was embarked on a path which (as expressed within *BPV*) claimed to embrace multi-culturalism, gave centrality to notions of respect and tolerance, and which sought to entrench a substantive engagement with the public. However, the evidence surrounding *Jerry Springer: the Opera* suggests that this was not occurring in practice.

This failure can be attributed to embedded practices and cultures. This much is supported by the statements earlier in this chapter from former employees and religious groups, contending that the BBC was pre-disposed against engagement with religious identities and communities. Peter Blackman, who at the time of *Jerry Springer* was head of the Churches Media Council, painted a similar picture when interviewed for this project. In his analysis, the Religion and Ethics department was increasingly ‘not rated’³⁸ within a BBC anxious to expand into new technologies and programming genres. This, coupled with what Blackman describes as a general trend towards secularism in media communities, led to a department where ‘religious content was made by non-religious people’.

In addition, and perhaps more importantly, he argued that previous strong patterns of communication with faith organisations were allowed to waver, exacerbated by a lack of resources in these organisations themselves. The result was that, by the time the decision to broadcast *Jerry Springer* was taken, the BBC was not in the habit of pre-consultation with faith organisations, and was therefore less attuned to the controversy

³⁷ J. Bennett, *Today*, BBC Radio 4, 11 January 2005, quoted in D. Timms, ‘Springer protest took BBC by surprise’, *Media Guardian*, 11 January 2005, accessed 15/06/2007 at <http://media.guardian.co.uk/bbc/story/0,,1387705,00.html>

³⁸ N.B. All comments in this thesis from Peter Blackman, Adam Kemp, Sue Judd, Andy King-Dabbs, Ged Gray, Mike Parrott and Gillian Oliver are extracted from interviews conducted for this project during 2007. Details of these interviews are given in Appendix B.

the broadcast would cause (or at least, less attuned to how it should react to it). As Peter Blackman puts it, the BBC ‘sleepwalked into the problem’.

So, as *Manchester Passion* was in planning, religious programming in the BBC was under a high level of scrutiny. Despite the engaged rhetoric evident in documents like *BPV*, the BBC was charged with a lack of sensitivity toward its audience, and there were question marks as to whether the Religion and Ethics department was sufficiently equipped to discharge its duties in a multi-faith Britain. The more plural, open citizenship which the BBC purported to support appeared distant, with some commentators instead perceiving a centralised imposition of secularism in its place. While this summation represents a conflict with the ideological position of the earlier BBC (which consistently supported the Church of England), it parallels its historical orientation towards a centralised public sphere, within which the BBC sets the agenda for a relatively passive citizenry.

And yet by April 2006, the BBC was, in *Manchester Passion*, capable of producing a broadcast which received huge praise from faith audiences. What had changed, and how does this reflect on the BBC’s orientation towards the public, and thereby towards citizenship? The answer according to Peter Blackman is that the BBC had ‘got the message’ on engagement with the Christian community, enabling it to develop a more sophisticated approach to cultural representation (one more in keeping with its stated policy goals). As the rest of this chapter will demonstrate, the production of *Manchester Passion* was characterised by stronger engagements with notions of co-operation, dialogue (both internal and external), and the representation (both political and cultural) of diverse audiences. At least in the case of *Manchester Passion*, the BBC demonstrated a capacity to engage with audiences in a more substantive manner than the somewhat dismissive, limited approach which was critiqued in Chapter 5.

6.2 From *Flashmob* to *Passion*: participation.

That *Manchester Passion* appears designed to speak to different audiences is unsurprising. From its inception, it was the product of collaboration within the BBC. The origins of the programme are to be found outside the Religion Department. *Manchester Passion* can be seen to emerge directly from the critical success of *Flashmob: The Opera*: an innovative project from the BBC's Classical Music department, broadcast in October 2004. The programme developed from the phenomenon of 'flashmobs': ostensibly spontaneous recreational gatherings in public spaces, organised at very short notice via Internet or mobile phone services (see www.flashmob.co.uk for contemporary examples). The BBC's version comprised a series of operatic performances in the midst of commuters at Paddington Station, London, with the finale including members of the public invited by text message.

While *Flashmob: The Opera* attracted a small audience (94,000 at its peak³⁹), it nonetheless became a benchmark for the BBC, which will be demonstrated later in this section. In addition, it connects directly to the BBC's more innovative policies in terms of the relationship between institution and audience. The programme was lauded for its attempts to rework opera to appeal to a younger, technologically aware demographic⁴⁰, and to cast the audience as active participants in a manner that blurred the traditional boundaries of performance. Peter Swain, one of the 'flashmobbers', explains as such in the *Scotland on Sunday*:

"It wasn't immediately clear who were the performers and who were the audience, as they were all dressed the same. You didn't know if people were there because they'd had an e-mail or whether they just had half an hour to kill waiting for the 8.50 to Basingstoke. There was an extraordinary sense of energy" (Swain, quoted in Jones, 2004⁴¹)

The connection between this event and ideas espoused in *BPV* is strong. As detailed in Chapter 5.3, one of the key emphases in *BPV* was the cultural validity of the audience, and their role in an active public sphere. The BBC stated its intent to make programmes

³⁹ Deans, J 'Flashmob opera hits right note for BBC3', *Media Guardian*, October 7 2004

⁴⁰ Plunkett, J (2004) 'And now *Question Time: The Opera*.' *Media Guardian*, November 18 2004, accessed 07/02/2008 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2004/nov/18/broadcasting.bbc1>

⁴¹ Jones, B 'A New Platform for Opera'. *Scotland On Sunday*, October 2004. Last accessed 07/02/2008 at <http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/ViewArticle.aspx?articleid=2587521>

grounded in the lives of its viewers, and to promote creative participation, enabling individuals to ‘cast off their role as a passive audience’ (BBC, 2004: 72). *Flashmob: the Opera* addressed both of these aims, via its participatory element and through its choice of content: focussing on the most well-known arias, and making use of a narrative which revolved around football, transposing a ‘high’ culture genre into a more populist framework. The BBC created a discursive encounter (in this case, between commonly opposed forms of cultural product) that did not exist previously. The production of such spaces is a common strategy for citizenship models that focus heavily on difference; it functions as a means for different groups to encounter and understand each other. For example, Stevenson (working from the writing of Williams and Parekh) calls for a disruptive cultural policy, one in which ‘new voices and experiences are brought into the centre of society’s dominant self-understandings’ (2003: 149).

That the BBC viewed *Flashmob* as a success appears clear, a sequel (filmed in Sheffield’s Meadowhall shopping centre) was broadcast in April 2005. The sequel adds a further, geographic dimension. Stuart Murphy (then Director of BBC3) described the decision to film in Sheffield in explicitly cultural/political terms; a response to the cultural hegemony of London:

I was quite keen to do something outside London, because whenever there's massive cultural events it really annoys me when it's just in London... I think there's a certain cultural snobbery in Britain that people often assume London's the kind of pulsing heart of culture. And actually that's just rubbish (Murphy, quoted in Jaquest, 2005⁴²)

Given the BBC’s geographical base in London, and its association with long-standing ‘massive cultural events’ in the capital – the obvious example being the annual Proms series of concerts – Murphy might be accused of disloyalty. His comments however mesh with an alternate BBC politics that develops in *BPV*, involving a stronger commitment to the regions predicated (at least explicitly) on a need to engage with audiences outside London (BBC, 2004: 94).

⁴² Jaquest, O (2005). ‘Stuart Murphy Interview’. BBC South Yorkshire website, 12 April 2005. accessed 07/02/2008 at http://www.bbc.co.uk/southyorkshire/content/articles/2005/04/08/stuartmurphy_flashmob_culture_feature.shtml

In this analysis (and while not suggesting it was explicitly meant as such), Murphy's statement could be read as a manifestation of deep cultural citizenship (and of more radical multicultural models, such as that espoused by Young): it undermines a hegemonic cultural ideal by promoting the cultural potential of other areas of the UK. We could read this in a similar way as strategies that grant language rights to cultural minorities, using cultural policy to bulwark the 'membership' in society of a disadvantaged group. This is subject to qualification: for example, Murphy uses the first person above, attributing policy to himself rather than to the BBC in general. Nonetheless, that a senior BBC figure spoke in these terms remains a point of interest, and as will be seen, the idea of pushing production 'not in London' would remain a driver behind *Manchester Passion*.

Perhaps a larger problem when assessing the value of *Flashmob* as it might relate to citizenship is that of impact. This is, at its heart, a simple issue of scale: the initial broadcast was seen (at its peak) by under 100,000 people, and only 62 actually directly took part in the event. We can of course suggest that these figures do not tell the whole story; we would wish to factor in the impact of repeat broadcasts, recordings, and word-of-mouth (not to mention less tangible impacts, such as audience satisfaction). A brief study of available online data demonstrates that these programmes carried great importance for certain groups (consider the overwhelmingly positive comments at flashmob.co.uk⁴³, to give one example). Yet in strictly numerical terms, *Flashmob: The Opera* remains a relatively small-scale broadcast, and its impact must be contextualised in these terms.

How this relates to *Manchester Passion* is via the commissioning process. This begins in 2005, when BBC3 management approached the production team behind the *Flashmob* broadcasts with the suggestion that they might produce a similar (but larger-scale) programme. In order to achieve this, a nascent idea was in development that sought to reconfigure the live, participative elements of *Flashmob* around a well-known religious narrative, engaging both the Classical Music and Religion Departments at the BBC. Sue Judd, executive producer of both *Flashmob* and *Manchester Passion*, described its initial development in these terms when interviewed for this project, stating that 'the channel [BBC3] were very keen for us to come up with another idea for

⁴³ See [Flashmob.co.uk](http://flashmob.co.uk) website 'BBC declare its Flashmob Opera a failure', December 27 2004. Last accessed 27/07/2009 at http://www.flashmob.co.uk/mt/2004/12/bbc_declare_its.php

another big live event, that would really hit through and attract the public. And our boss...suggested the idea of doing a Passion play'. Adam Kemp, BBC Commissioning Editor for Arts, Performance and Religion echoes the relationship to *Flashmob*, recalling that 'I said 'I'm not doing any more *Flashmobs*, but I want something like a *Flashmob*', and the conversation had already started about why don't we look at religion and the Passion'.

For Kemp (who, due to his departmental responsibilities, was the sole Commissioner responsible for *Manchester Passion*), the appeal of *Flashmob* and similar projects appears to have consisted of three major elements. Firstly, they fit with a dialogue of risk and innovation (Kemp describes the Classical Music department in the BBC as having 'a very specific brief to innovate... to do something new and do something more'). Secondly, inherent in the genre of the live public broadcast is a high level of interaction with audiences, Kemp stressing throughout the interview that the impetus behind *Manchester Passion* was 'absolutely' about interaction. These ideas feature heavily in recent BBC policy (as detailed in Chapter 5), and will be discussed in more detail as this chapter develops.

Finally, the combination of these two elements within a one-off event serves a specific purpose for the BBC, and BBC3 in particular. At the time of broadcast (and indeed, at the time of writing), BBC3 was commonly perceived as a controversial addition to the BBC's portfolio. Aimed primarily at a young audience and with a remit to innovate in entertainment, the channel has often been accused of failing to convince as an adequate use of licence-payers money (a view most recently expressed by BBC stalwarts including John Humphrys and John Sweeney, who called for the channel to be closed in order to divert funds to what they saw as the BBC's 'core' output⁴⁴). Where *Flashmob* and *Manchester Passion* intervene in this debate, for Kemp, is as powerful illustrations of the potential of this niche channel:

'These are very rare stand out events and quite emblematic for the channel. The Channel, BBC3...won a lot of plaudits for Flashmob... In that stage of BBC3's life, it was trying to do all sorts of things, it was trying to make

⁴⁴ See Holmwood, L 'BBC execs criticise call for channel closures'. *Media Guardian*, 5 September 2007. Last accessed 27/09/2009 at <http://media.guardian.co.uk/bbc/story/0,,2162865,00.html>

noise. For digital channels, it's important that people know you're there and know what you do'

This last statement is particularly rich in meaning. Obviously, it establishes a motivation for the commissioning of *Manchester Passion* which places it in the context of debates regarding the shape of the BBC. Such institutional politics might be said to represent a problem for the proposed analysis of this paper, because they allow for the suggestion that the BBC's contributions to the public sphere might be valued in part for what they represent for the BBC itself, as opposed to its relationship and interaction with audiences (and arguably, this position is supported by Kemp's emphasis on the 'plaudits' which *Flashmob* attracted, which constitute an institutional/professional validation as opposed to a public one). However, this argument can also be viewed from an opposite perspective: if a programme can be 'emblematic' and 'make noise' for the BBC, this inherently implies a belief that it can have a tangible impact on its audiences. Indeed, if an innovative, participative format is able to grab attention from society, this itself self-evidently raises awareness of the (new) models of communication and interaction that are present in the broadcast.

This final point suggests that *Manchester Passion* is a highly appropriate case study for the purposes of this project. As an emblematic broadcast for the BBC (and in particular, for the beleaguered BBC3 service), it is one in which we would expect the BBC to demonstrate its public service credentials, its attempts to renew its relationship with its audience. Therefore, it is an excellent point of entry from which to consider the relationship (if indeed, any such relationship exists) between BBC policy and practice as each relate to models of citizenship. The remainder of this chapter begins this process via an analysis of the broadcast's development, focussing in particular on the means through which BBC staff sought to embed notions of representation within *Manchester Passion*.

6.3 Commissioning and Development: Manchester as a site of citizenship

Clearly, a key driver of *Manchester Passion* (given its use of public space and a live audience) would be its location. Initial drafts in fact worked from a London location, until it was made clear that this was not what BBC management had in mind. As Sue Judd recalls: ‘The channel the BBC are very keen to do things outside London. I think we were under a slight miscomprehension that they wanted it to be in London...they then said ‘no actually we’d much rather it be out and about’.

This orientation towards the production of large-scale, totemic events away from the capital city parallels Stuart Murphy’s comments regarding *Flashmob*, and appears to seek to re-position the BBC with regards the cultural identity of the UK. Murphy certainly described it in these terms (as an attack on the cultural hegemony of London), and this seems to fit with the narrative described in Chapter 5 of a gradual (and limited) de-centring of the BBC’s public sphere offering.

This decision has two effects in relation to culture and citizenship, which echo those observed for *Flashmob*. Firstly, it provides an opportunity for cultural recognition and expression for the chosen area. Simultaneously, it serves to contest the dominance of London. If repeated over the long-term, this policy would operate in favour of a pluralised, liberal cosmopolitan vision of British citizenship, emphasising nodes of identity beyond the capital and its institutions. In terms of *Manchester Passion*, such nodes conceivably include Manchester itself, or a wider regional identity (i.e. North-West or Northern England).

What is particularly striking in the interview data, however, is the way in which this shift is framed. Consistently, BBC staff rhetorically valorised London. Sue Judd’s use of ‘out and about’ relies on an assumption of London as the norm for BBC productions, conjuring up ideas of rare excursions to regions clearly marked as Other. A similar (albeit more politically charged) reasoning is at work in Stuart Murphy’s objections to the capital, and is voiced again by Adam Kemp:

‘The first big decision is do religion, explore religion. The second one was take it to Manchester, which is very much also driven in truth by a general passion we have for getting out of London as well- connecting to audiences outside of London’

Kemp argues that the move to Manchester was almost natural for the BBC; he states later that to commission outside the capital is ‘in our DNA’. Yet the description of other areas of the UK as ‘out of London’ remains telling, as if these areas can only be defined in terms of their relationship to the capital. In a similar vein, it is striking that Kemp should describe the task of connecting to non-London audiences as a ‘passion’. Given that the vast majority of BBC licence-fee payers live outside of the capital, one would not expect that communicating effectively with them would need to be more than part of the BBC’s job.

In the BBC’s defence, these statements can in part be attributed to personal geography. The staff members quoted are based in London, and so it is in this sense only to be expected that they conceive of other areas as external. Nonetheless, it remains notable that they retain this construction when talking in terms of institutional practice and policy, a practice which ‘normalises’ London, perhaps at the expense of representation of citizens elsewhere. As Adam Kemp admits: ‘you know, if it can be out of London, better to do it outside of London because we do so much there’.

Stepping back to examine the policy goals behind such statements, we find that within *BPV*, the phrase ‘outside London’ appears 13 times, often linked to ongoing projects to move production, staffing and decision-making to other regions of the UK. The BBC explicitly couches these proposals within a framework of cultural representation, as revealed in the opening paragraph of a section entitled: ‘From London to the whole UK’:

The BBC is paid for by licence payers across the UK. Its programmes should reflect the life and experience of the whole UK. In its investment, employment and the geographical spread of its broadcasting, production and other operations, it should be more fully representative of the people it serves. Over the past decade the BBC has made substantial moves to shift

investment and jobs from the south-east of England to the rest of the UK.

We now want to go further. (BBC, 2004: 18)

Crucial for our purposes here is the suggestion that representation is so clearly tied to geography. The BBC's position is that it cannot effectively serve the UK without a literal 'de-centring' of its own operations. In terms of citizenship, this raises an issue of how some of the more radical models might begin to enact their goals, and to evaluate their impact. In terms of evaluation, the concern would be that the measurement of cultural representation would be reduced to a system of quantification, implying that (using the example of the BBC) a headcount of staff or production is sufficient-evidence of a representative policy (indeed, during the 1990's the BBC had adopted a 33% quota of network programming produced outside of London (Born, 2004: 101)) . For many multi-cultural or deep cultural models this would be insufficient; these models are additionally concerned with the quality and types of representation that are enabled by policy. For example, Taylor's notion of 'cultural recognition' requires interaction between cultural groups who recognise each other as equals.

In terms of broadcasting, this would at a minimum point to a need for programmes that provide positive *cultural* representations of diverse groups, developing a 'thicker' engagement with different identities than that based simply on a redistribution of institutional resources. We might extend these conditions further; deep cultural citizenship's call to integrate the political and cultural suggests that positive cultural representation must emerge alongside the substantive agency of citizens; it should be a corollary of *political* representation within communicative institutions. Political representation could take a number of forms, ranging from consultation to formalised involvement in decision-making. The importance of these processes is however twofold: not only that they 'de-centre' the power to produce cultural representation, but that they involve citizens in a *reflexive* engagement with their own cultural affiliations. It is this deep engagement that appears crucial in producing the de-stabilising, Other-regarding dialogue that is central to the deep cultural model.

Furthermore, there is a contradiction in the BBC's position that strikes at the heart of any attempt to 'de-centre' citizenship. Assume for a moment that the BBC's intentions

surrounding *Manchester Passion* can be attributed to an affiliation with notions of deep cultural citizenship, and thus were concerned to promote the reimagination of citizenship through new dialogical practices. *Manchester Passion* potentially offered an opportunity to provide a participative experience that engaged with different audiences, and furthermore encouraged them to engage with one another. The aim would have been provision of a nuanced representation of Manchester's culture that promoted new understandings in the nation at large.

However, this is immediately qualified by the extent to which the emphasis on its regional policy reinscribes traditional notions of citizenship as centred on geography, and particularly a political geography (i.e. the nation-state). Furthermore, the place of this particular broadcast is defined as 'outside', as Other to the normalised space of London; the site of power within the nation-state. Can this process then truly function as positive cultural representation of Manchester's 'citizens', or does it instead represent a flattening in which the cultural (in terms of identity) is equated solely with a very limited vision of the geographic?

The answer to these questions can, I would suggest, only be found in the content of the text itself. Central here is how 'Manchester' (both as a space and as a population) is revealed or is enabled to reveal itself: whether regional identity emerges as a result of dialogue and engagement between producers and public (the active multi-culturalism proposed within *BPV*), or is called into discourse by a limited portrayal of geographic and anthropological distinction. Whatever the ultimate outcome, the BBC's relationship to issues of place in this instance remains of inherent concern. Indeed, it parallels an argument made in Chapter 5 that the BBC's embedded relationship to dominant discourses of citizenship might problematise its attempts to support alternatives.

The above quotation from *BPV* also raises the possibility of an *economics* of citizenship, and particularly of an *economic geography* of citizenship. As will be recalled, one of the BBC's definitions of public value relates to its contribution to the creative economy of the UK. The suggestion in the above quotation is that this too must be subject to a regional spread; the BBC pledges to invest in areas outside of the prosperous South-East. At the time of writing, this aim has been legally enshrined, after the Department of Culture, Media and Sport stated its expectation that a portion of BBC licence fee

income would be used to support a move of several departments to Salford⁴⁵. The BBC, effectively, has become engaged in a quantifiable process of economic regeneration, and has adopted this as part of its own self-definition.

This definition positions the BBC as an agent of a particularly Keynesian brand of social citizenship: in common with other state (or quasi-state) agencies, the BBC is engaged in economic activity for the wider benefit of the nation. However, this position involves working around several contradictions, not least of which concerns the dynamic between citizenship and capitalist economics. In Chapter 2, it was argued that the latter can have significant implications for the former, due to its inherent focus on individualism and orientation against collective solutions to social problems. This much is acknowledged by Marshall, who states that their coexistence involves ‘a compromise which is not dictated by logic’ (1950: 84).

Concern with the effects of capitalism is a major focus for many theorists: see Miller (2007) on the contraction of political discourse in the era of neo-liberalism, an analysis in which the capacities of citizens are explicitly hindered. In terms of the BBC, the question might be phrased thus: should an organisation responsible to - and directly funded by - citizens be prioritising the support of the creative industries (and if so, what are the effects of this decision for citizens?)

The answer, perhaps predictably, depends on one’s own assessment of the worth of private enterprise. If supporting the creative sector creates wealth and opportunities, this could be positive for citizens, particularly if investment is focussed on areas of relative deprivation. Hence, the decision regarding the location of *Manchester Passion*, if linked to discourses of economics (which *BPV* suggests it is) could be defended in terms of social citizenship. Mike Parrot, who as Event Manager for Manchester City Council led the city’s involvement in *Manchester Passion*, made this argument when referring to the ‘drive to have business... within the city to drive social change’ during an interview for this project.

⁴⁵ See Tyrhorn, C (2006) ‘Jowell: BBC Salford move ‘expected’.’ *Media Guardian*, 18 December 2006, accessed 28/10/2007 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/dec/18/broadcasting.bbc2>

Yet it is an argument that rests on the assumption that nothing is lost in the reconciliation between citizenship and capitalism (or at least that this loss is outweighed by the accruing benefits). For the BBC, this requires a balancing act between different notions of public value. If, in seeking to satisfy an agenda of economic public value, the BBC is forced to compromise on the inherent citizen value of its programming, its position is clearly problematised. For example, the costs of moving production around the country could reduce programme budgets. In this hypothesis, licence-fee payers would be subsidising the creative industries in a particular region (and potentially producing profit for private companies from public investment), while the quality of output they watched was impaired. A loss of citizen value (defined by the BBC (2004: 29) as the wider societal benefits of its output) would result.

In terms of the *initial* decision regarding the location of *Manchester Passion*, it must be said that there is little evidence of compromise based on economic intervention. Obviously, this is a difficult judgement: we do not have the benefit, for example, of knowing how the production might have taken place in another city. The production team were clearly excited by the prospect of a Manchester-based production for creative and aesthetic reasons. Andy King-Dabbs (who grew up in the Manchester area) states that ‘it just struck me that all the places that I knew in Manchester I associated with the Manchester popular music of the last 30 years... once one or two of the songs and correspondences... suggested themselves, it just sort of developed from there’. In addition, the logistics of the city centre made sense in terms of the likely demands of the production. Manchester has a relatively compact central area with several well-defined ‘districts’ (such as Chinatown and the public spaces around Cathedral Gardens and Exchange Square) and these were felt to form obvious settings for the broadcast’s set-pieces.

So, it may be that the intentionality behind the *Manchester* decision (as opposed to the ‘not London’ decision) can be ascribed to the creative impulses of the producers. Bringing the broadcast to fruition required an engagement with the city itself, and therefore with the city’s own priorities (or more precisely, those of its authorities). Here, the ‘public value’ which Manchester policy-makers seek to create from the area’s creative heritage that is central. Undoubtedly, a key driver for the BBC was the rich history of popular music in Manchester. Many of the major pop music movements in

the past 25 years have had leading bands in Manchester: New Order, The Smiths, Happy Mondays, Oasis. These artists and the scenes they represented have a continual cultural resonance, demonstrated in recent years by the success of films including *24 Hour Party People* (2002), and *Control* (2007).

Given that the BBC – and the wider world – are aware of Manchester’s standing in this regard, it is inevitable that policy-makers in the city were too. On entering the city centre in July 2007, I was immediately struck by the centrality of popular culture to the ‘official’ construction of the city. These links were made stark by three prominent items in the Tourist Information Office. The first, a pocket map of the city, featured a logo designed by Peter Saville, best known for his work with Factory Records in the 1980’s but now working under the title of ‘Creative Director’ for Manchester City Council. The second was a flyer for an exhibition at the Urbis building, (an iconic new cultural centre to the north of the City Hall) which celebrated the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Hacienda nightclub, the epicentre of Manchester music in the late 1980’s. Finally, there was the ‘Manchester Music Map’: a cartoonish guide to the city which allowed visitors to navigate their way through a musical history of venues, video backdrops and former rehearsal studios, literally mapping the cultural city.

That these items had such prominence related directly to attempts to renew Manchester for a post-industrial economy. In common with many major cities, it is in the midst of a process of regeneration, with formerly industrial areas re-configuring around the service and creative industries. Manchester has been described as a particularly aggressively-minded exemplar of this phenomenon, feverishly embracing the 'entrepreneurial turn' in urban economics (see Peck and Ward, 2002). Pop musicians (and particularly the innovative examples with which Manchester is associated) are obvious standard-bearers for this reinvention: creative, brash, successful, unique. Peter Saville’s new branding for Manchester as ‘Original-Modern’ (the graphics for which were revealed in 2006⁴⁶) aims to capture similarly innovative terrain; it refuses a singular logo, and develops around a juxtaposition of Manchester’s historical and contemporary ‘modernness’ (the former emerging from Manchester’s status as birthplace of the Industrial Revolution

⁴⁶ See Cerysmatic Factory 'Peter Saville > Manchester: original modern', last accessed 27/09/2009 at http://www.cerysmaticfactory.info/saville_manchester_original_modern.html

(Ottewell, 2004)). Mike Parrott emphasised the importance of this branding work for the City Council, linking it directly to future prosperity:

“We’ve been developing with all the other stakeholders in the city, this concept of Manchester, and ‘what does it really mean?’ ... it’s the core essence of what Manchester is... what are the elements that differentiate it from other cities, not only in the UK but obviously across Europe, we see ourselves as a competitor on an... increasingly global stage. Obviously, one of the key elements is what do we utilise in terms of ‘Brand Manchester’ to drive new business in, to drive the identity of the city”

The City Council were necessarily one of the key drivers of the broadcast. The BBC required their permission for the project, and the Council would also be heavily involved with the live, participative element of the broadcast. For Parrott and his colleagues (who took the initial decision to support the project and ‘sell’ it to the Council’s executive), the value of *Manchester Passion* was explicitly related to the ‘original-modern’ branding:

“So what we look at doing, it’s something that might have... a base as an event in some historical perspective, but has a modern twist to it- hence Manchester Passion was one of the easy sellings, that it fits so well with the brand that we were developing.”

Manchester Passion became inserted into a discourse of civic renewal and self-promotion. It became, in effect, a practical application of the BBC’s third, economic notion of ‘public value’, in which the value is the potential of the *Passion* to exemplify Manchester’s brand and thus drive investment to the city. The issue is to clarify the status and role of *citizens* in this process. There are two broad possibilities here. The first is that the branding of Manchester emerged from a process in which its ‘citizens’⁴⁷

⁴⁷ This choice of wording is deliberate. Obviously, Manchester is not a nation-state, and hence is not comprised of its own citizens as such- rather, its population are (predominantly) citizens of the UK. However, the city does function as a site of political power (both at local government level and as a driver of the regional economy), and as a site of cultural identity- as indicated by the quote from Peter Saville which follows on this page. Therefore, Manchester ‘contains’ both institutions and ideas that form part of an individual’s experience as a citizen.

have voice and agency. This is certainly how Peter Saville presents the ‘original-modern’ project:

Manchester is a place and a way of living that people choose to identify with...Those people showing those values are the brand. Their values are the essence of the brand. The people are the shareholders in the brand. The quality of their life is the profit from the project (Saville, quoted in Ottewell, 2004)

If we were to translate this into citizenship theory, it appears a very ‘deep cultural’ way of thinking about space; a city as a ‘way of living’ that emerges from the practices and values of its citizens. To be a ‘citizen’ of Manchester is therefore not to be defined by a geographic/political boundary, but to engage in the construction of a fluid cultural community. The difficulty here is how this dialogical conception of regional/local ‘citizenship’ interacts with more prosaic logics; the ‘original-modern’ branding, after all, did emerge from policy-making institutions as a vehicle to attract capital (in this regard, Saville’s use of economic terminology is notable: ‘stakeholders’, ‘profit’). This returns us to the territory of citizenship vs. capitalism: is ‘original-modern’ a conceptual space amenable to the open dialogue required by deep cultural citizenship, or are its boundaries defined by a pre-determined economic agenda? If Manchester’s citizens have the option to ‘choose to identify’ with the city’s branding, what are the consequences of choosing otherwise, or indeed of being excluded from this choice in the first place?

To develop this idea, we might begin to think about the geography of *Manchester Passion*. As much due to the programme’s logistics (which involved the actor portraying Jesus, and the group carrying the cross taking different routes through the city, but arriving in Albert Square simultaneously) as anything, the locations that the production team utilised were inevitably those of central Manchester. Sue Judd mentions that there was an original plan to begin the broadcast from outside Strangeways Prison (to the north of the city centre), but this was ultimately shelved. The result was the development of a script built around the new public spaces of the city, which have been central to its cultural reimagination.

While this may have been a practical decision, there is a cultural politics here which cannot be avoided. A common critique of urban regeneration is the difficulty inherent in striking a balance between centre and periphery, between city centre and suburbs. Manchester has encountered this itself; in the 1990's, a series of marketing and development initiatives attempted to invoke a Greater Manchester 'metropolitanism', blurring the distinction between the city and its satellite towns. Deas and Ward describe these processes, dominated by the city's existing elites, as creating 'palpable tension' in the outer regions (2002: 132). Mellor posits Manchester as a 'hypocritical city' (2002) in which the showcase of the regenerated centre marginalises poorer residents, reconfiguring public space around an exclusionary 'cosmopolitan circuit of work and play' (2002: 230).

Representatives of the city offer an inevitably different perspective on this process. For Parrott (like Peter Saville), the issue of regeneration is a unifying rather than a divisive process, and one of which central spaces are symbolic: 'the regeneration takes place on the outskirts, but it's embodied by what takes place in the city centre'. The dynamic between inclusion and exclusion is crucial for the BBC, because the Manchester on screen was to be that of the renewed city, not the marginalised suburbs and estates. Andy King-Dabbs seemed conscious of this in interview, defending the location: 'it's close to the heart of Manchester, it's close to the river and it's as close to Salford as you can get'. It is clear though that if *Manchester.Passion* was to represent a substantive engagement with notions of cultural recognition, those involved would have to take great care with regards precisely *who* they were representing. If the BBC was 'buying into' a top-down, investment-driven concept of what the city should be, it leaves little space for other visions of Manchester, other identities and ways of living that might form part of an individual's cultural citizenship. What would be happening is a regional re-creation of London's pre-eminence- where once we have 'not London', do we also now require 'not Manchester?'. Again, this is something that would only become clear at a later stage, but the last word of warning here goes to Dave Haslam, a Mancunian journalist writing on the Bridgewater Hall development in the city:

Such prestigious developments in Manchester deny the bad news: they're so high profile they cut out a view of the streets... It's a passive experience, as well, it doesn't draw us in, define and enlarge our dreams. It's a shrine to

worship at. It shines out a message that culture is something polished and expert, something good for us, merely a soothing massage (Haslam, 2000: xxx)

Haslam echoes the argument of this section by suggesting that emblematic cultural projects have a capacity to exclude, that positive representation (whether cultural or political) is not simply a given, but is reliant on the specific ideas, practices and relations of power. The following section will examine the BBC's innovative attempts to embed such characteristics in its approach to the religious thematic of *Manchester Passion*.

6.4 Commissioning and development: *Manchester Passion* and religion

The first point to make here is that despite a seemingly dominant narrative, there (perhaps due largely to the concept's provenance within the Classical Music Department) was initial confusion as to the importance of religion for *Manchester Passion*. Certainly, it was something that came *after* the original pitch for a post-*Flashmob* public event; Andy Kemp talks of the 'turn to religion', while Ged Gray (Assistant Producer at BBC Religion) contends that it was initially a secondary priority:

“It was never designed as an act of worship... But they realised that, because it was dealing with the central story of Christianity, and because it was going out on Good Friday ... they brought in people like Hugh and me, and because of that they began to understand that people would see it in that way... I think it was right that they were making it as a piece of entertainment, but that they were sensitive to people's Christian beliefs”

Gray's words draw our attention to the fact that *Manchester Passion* was intended for multiple audiences (the above quotation distinguishes between the Christian and 'entertainment' audiences for example, and we might also add the 'live' Manchester crowd), and thus had to appeal to different sensibilities whilst creating a cohesive broadcast. This in turn raises the issue of balance between cultural sensitivity to Christian citizens and the desires of others in a microcosm of debates between minority and majoritarian positions in heterogeneous societies. Although *Manchester Passion* may not have been designed as an act of worship, its producers were quick to engage with issues of religious sensitivity. This engagement was realised through three distinct techniques of political representation: internal consultation, external consultation, and communication. These practices are describing in terms of political representation insofar as each attempted (whether indirectly or directly) to incorporate the voices of citizens themselves into the broadcast's development.

a) Internal consultation

The first of these involved joint working with the Religion Department, turning *Manchester Passion* into a co-production between Religion and Classical Music. This process undoubtedly had an impact on the development of the broadcast, bringing the

perceiving perspective of religious audiences to the fore. Ged Gray recalls: '[there were] a couple of instances I can remember where specifically where... either Hugh Perfel or me said to them 'look, you know what, you might want to reconsider this bit because religiously, you're probably not right or you're potentially playing with fire you don't need to play with''.

A specific instance recalled by Gray speaks explicitly to the problems of attempting to represent audiences with different cultural affiliations. A proposed scene for *Manchester Passion* comprised of the Judas character singing the line 'two lovers entwined/pass me by', from the song 'Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now' by The Smiths. The visuals for this shot involved a couple walking past the actor, leading to a question on precisely who this couple should be (given that the shot was to be filmed in Canal Street, the historic centre of Manchester's gay community):

"The production team had decided that the two lovers would be gay men. And I said 'look, whatever I don't give a monkey's, but some of the people watching this won't like that and ask yourself is it necessary to make them gay men? I mean yes Manchester's a city with a gay culture'... I said 'you might want to consider for the sake of two seconds of screen time, do you want to give people who want to slap the BBC for being anti-Christian, do you want to give them ammunition?'"

There are a variety of forces at play here. Firstly, an obvious conflict between the perceived values of the Christian community and a 'progressive' politics which seeks to advance positive representations of homosexual men. The point of interest revolves around how current theories of citizenship might respond to this debate.

Given the generally 'progressive' thrust of models like deep cultural citizenship, we would expect them to support the portrayal of the couple as homosexual, both aiding the cultural recognition of the gay community (and Manchester's gay community in particular), and simultaneously destabilising a 'privileged' cultural voice in the guise of a dominant Christian construction of values. Yet as Gray implies, doing so potentially *devalues* the broadcast as an act of representation for Christian communities, imposing a separate political agenda into the central narrative of their religion.

Is Gray's a reactionary position? Certainly, it denied a moment of cultural representation to a minority group. Yet – as this moment never actually existed – is anything lost here? Gray makes this point when expressing his own ambiguity about the debate:

“Part of me thought, am I not being supportive enough of the homosexual community as I ought to be as a public service broadcaster... but, it was unnecessary to the plot, I wouldn't have imagined that Morrissey envisaged them to necessarily be... why couldn't they have been gay, straight, mixed-race, whatever?”

As Gray states, the sexuality of the couple is not intrinsic to the plot. In addition, there was no evidence to suggest that the use of a heterosexual couple would cause any offence or harm to the homosexual community. What remains therefore is a judgement regarding the orientation of different citizens towards the text. As the broadcast was based around explicitly Christian themes, it seems logical that sensitivity towards Christian viewpoints became a priority; it is their representation which is more prominently at stake. The BBC took the view that, as a public service broadcaster, it therefore had an according responsibility to aid this process of definition. This has interesting implications for citizenship models pre-disposed towards cultural legitimisation of under-privileged minorities; it suggests that such policies, if applied with a lack of sensitivity, might in some instances *hinder* equitable communication.

Of course, this does not rule out the notion that existing cultural definitions can (and indeed should) be challenged. In terms of Christianity, *Jerry Springer: The Opera* is an obvious example of a text which provoked debate on its status and content. However, the counter-intuitive impact described in the preceding paragraph implies a need for a complex sense of cultural neutrality - or perhaps more accurately, cultural *balance* - in which the relative status of various cultural groups must be continually weighed and re-weighed in order that members of each are equitably valued and enabled as citizens.

The use of 'balance' here is deliberate; 'cultural balance' is a term which I feel speaks to notions of complexity and competition, of the delicate choices inherent in practices which, like the production of *Manchester Passion*, aim to serve a heterogeneous

citizenry. 'Balance' is also used in preference to alternate terms such as 'fairness' or 'equitability' because at the level of specific policy decisions, choices may be made which evidently favour one group over another (as is the case in the example under discussion). What is important is that this does not reflect an acceptance of inequality, but rather a contingent approach, recognising that a single policy might not be appropriate for all situations. The notion of contingency, and in particular Gray's ambivalence, also fits strongly with Born's evocation of a 'continually evolving Reithanism' within the BBC, with notions of public service being constantly challenged and re-worked through 'individual and collective reflection' (2004: 84-85).

When we speak of cultural balance, we refer not only to balance between competing cultural groups, but between general and specific policy goals. The example above evidences competing 'general' positions on cultural representation (illustrated by Ged Gray's statement), and suggests that the ultimate decision was taken based on specifics (the importance of *Manchester Passion* for the Christian community). One can easily envisage a situation where a different outcome would have resulted: if for example the over-arching narrative of the broadcast was not Christian, or if the BBC were not under external and internal pressure in regards to religious output. In such instances, the potential 'cost' of including the homosexual couple would have been lower, and arguments for diversity may have carried the day.

Cultural balance is not, it should be stressed, equivalent to a liberal disengagement with culture of the kind attacked by communitarian theorists. Rather than relying on a rights-based position of simple *tolerance* of difference, cultural balance demands an active, flexible engagement with different cultural orientations and identities. In terms of the theories considered in Chapter 2, this position is perhaps most redolent of Taylor's notion of 'cultural recognition'; it requires an assumption of the equal worth of different groups, and a consequent commitment to their appropriate representation (both political and cultural). However, what is drawn out in this discussion of the BBC's approach is the role that *contingency* might play in these decisions. This recognition that different (and in terms of citizenship models, somewhat contrary) solutions might be appropriate in different situations is, I would contend, central to the specificity of what I mean here by 'cultural balance'. It is not, therefore, a term that should be associated with any citizenship model in particular.

Also worthy of note here is Gray's argument regarding the fallout of this decision for the BBC, that it might have given 'ammunition' to critiques of the BBC as being anti-Christian. As described earlier in the chapter, such complaints emanated from a sense that the BBC marginalised Christian viewpoints in favour of a new, secular orthodoxy. It appears from Gray's evidence that the BBC was at least aware of this line of critique. We might be concerned by this narrative. If the BBC acted not from altruistic motives but from a self-protective urge to avoid political controversy, then its capacity to represent different cultures, to promote new understandings and dialogue, would be qualified.

The concern over the longer term could be that the BBC could be pressurised by already powerful groups, or that an entrenchment of consultation could favour consensus-led, uncontroversial programming. If the BBC's capacity or inclination to problematise dominant positions is restricted, then so is its capacity to work support of models of citizenship that require this problematisation. Cultural balance, with its complex weighing of investments and affiliations, could become an unwitting agent for cultural conservatism (particularly if practised in an institution with long-standing links to the state and Establishment).

However in the BBC's defence, interview evidence suggests that the team behind *Manchester Passion* viewed the intrinsic concept of the broadcast as controversial in its own right; Sue Judd describes it as 'such a dangerous thing to do'. If anything, there appears to have been a move to court a perception of transgression, linked to BBC3's mandate for innovation. As Sue Judd recalls (talking about the original proposal):

"It wasn't edgy enough, it wasn't dangerous enough, and the idea of using this music of.. what you would call ne'r-do-wells and blasphemers I think one of the papers said- seemed the right idea for BBC3... the danger and the risk factor of it all was so immense that they had to say yes."

In this context, the use of a heterosexual couple is once more defensible in terms of cultural balance. If the BBC believed that the broadcast was challenging to Christian orthodoxy *in its own right*, then the avoidance of a peripheral and politically charged

setpiece might be beneficial. In part this relates to the offence it could cause (a basic argument regarding cultural sensitivity). There is also the possibility that this represents a more nuanced form of communication. By removing elements which could be presented as an attack on Christian orthodoxy, the inherent challenge the programme represents may be more readily accepted.

If the BBC is attempting to promote dialogue between citizens, and if this requires that individuals and communities feel empowered in their sense of self and their place in society (as was argued in Chapter 2 by reference to Stevenson (2003) and Delanty (2003)), then it follows that the BBC should be minded to avoid overtly oppositional representations of cultural positions, except where this is required in order to advance a particular point (as was the case for *Jerry Springer: the Opera*, for example). A starting point for communication between culturally distinct groups of citizens is to facilitate cultural representations that different groups feel comfortable engaging with.

b) External consultation and communication

The preceding paragraphs have illustrated how this engagement might be promoted internally: how the quick integration into the production process of the Religion department ensured that the broadcast's Christian elements would be treated with sensitivity (despite the suggestion that, for the programme-makers, these elements were initially a secondary consideration). Here we see the benefit that accrued from *Manchester Passion's* status as a co-production between various departments and stakeholders, a working practice that inherently involves communication and the representation of different perspectives.

This practice was not limited to internal consultation within the BBC, but also involved third party representatives of religious groups. These dialogues took two forms: external consultation, and communication. The first, as would be expected, entailed bringing Christian representatives directly into the production process, giving them access to the script and production team. According to Adam Kemp, this is standard practice for the BBC: 'we're very lucky to have wise calm friends out there who gave their advice and it was received... it's a sort of 'rule one', very obvious thing to do which would always happen, or you'd hope would always happen'. However, there were suggestions (as stated by Peter Blackman earlier in this chapter) that this pattern

had weakened in recent years, leading to complaints of disenfranchisement from the Christian community.

Perhaps anticipating this line of critique, those involved in *Manchester Passion* moved quickly towards external consultation, bringing in Blackman in his role as Director of the Churches Media Council. Blackman describes the BBC's approach as 'pro-active' in that after being introduced to the production team via Adam Kemp, he was invited to comment on script meetings/drafts, casting, and was present at dress rehearsals. This policy can be associated with notions of active citizenship; the BBC sought to directly engage the Christian public (as represented by the CMC) in its programming (which forms the BBC's explicit contribution to the public sphere). Such engagement a clearly stated desire within *BPV*, and moves the BBC away from notions of citizens as *recipients* of citizenship rights (in this case, a right to a cultural representation they deem acceptable), to the status of *participants* who negotiate and contribute to these representations.

The limitation here is one of logistics. For obvious reasons, it is not feasible for the BBC to conduct this kind of consultation on an individual basis. Furthermore, for programme genres with short lead-in times (news broadcasts being the obvious example), there is simply no time for any such consultation to take place prior to broadcast. These questions lead to broad concerns for proponents of active public spheres: what level and frequency of participation is required from citizens, and what structures can be put into place to ensure that this is achieved?

The thesis will return to these wider issues in Chapters 7 and 8; but suffice to say even in the case of *Manchester Passion* (a programme which was in development for much of 2005), this direct consultation was limited to a small number of representatives, amongst which Peter Blackman seems to have had the greatest involvement. The issue here becomes one of legitimacy: to what degree can such representatives be said to speak for their cultural constituencies, and what is the BBC's process for evaluating this? And whether these representatives (when engaged over the long-term) might be drawn into the institutional culture of the BBC's 'rituals of inclusion' (Born, 2004: 87),

and therefore develop an orientation to its practices/policies which differs from that of their constituents⁴⁸.

In this instance at least, the consultation process appears to have worked well. Peter Blackman was positive about his relationship with the production team, placing the experience as part of a shift in which he believes the BBC is returning to ‘specialist input’ on religious matters. From the BBC’s perspective, comments from Andy King-Dabbs and Sue Judd suggest the process of refining the script benefited from dialogue:

“It was quite an open process with the script, we had quite large script meetings where a number of us discussed it” (Andy King-Dabbs)

“Peter made some very very relevant comments, some of which we took on board, some of which we argued the toss about” (Sue Judd)

This process – leaving aside any questions about Blackman’s legitimacy as a representative of the Christian community – seems to satisfy some of the requirements of an active public sphere, drawing communities themselves into the creative process and the construction of their representations. These kinds of dialogues, (if successful) may help to embed practices of negotiation and flexibility, both for the BBC and the citizens with which it engages. This has important effects if we seek to analyse the BBC in relation to citizenship; it counteracts critique of the BBC that (as in the case of its recent religious content) accuses it of working from the basis of centrally defined cultural and political hierarchies.

Furthermore, a BBC that instinctively engages in inclusive dialogue could function to promote an attitude of reflexivity amongst citizens. Stevenson states that ‘the struggle for a communications-based society or cultural citizenship is dependent on... the

⁴⁸An interesting example (and one raised in interview by Adam Kemp) is that of CRAC, the Central Religious Advisory Committee. CRAC has been in existence throughout much of the BBC’s history, and advises the BBC on religious policy. However, it can only view programming *after* transmission, and its members are appointed by the BBC itself (after consultation with Ofcom). The House of Lords Select Committee on Charter Review was recently highly critical of the Committee’s efficacy, stating that ‘it is not at all clear what the role of CRAC is or whether it adds value to the broadcasting of religion’ (2006: 46). Through the lens of active and passive citizenship with which this project works, there are obvious questions with regards the ability of CRAC to serve as a conduit for public opinion.

emotional and cognitive capacity to engage within intercultural conversation' (2003: 66). By opening up the creative process to inputs from the citizens who form its subject, the BBC creates a new space in which these capacities might develop. By asking citizens to examine a third party representation of an aspect of their identity, the BBC effectively asks them to consider their Self as Other. Yet by inviting them to do so as active participants in the creative process, it creates an environment which gives value to this emotional work; a crucial element in fostering the reflexive mindset which is Stevenson's goal.

As has already been mentioned however, this kind of intense consultation is severely limited by questions of logistics; it would simply have been impossible for the production team to meet with more than a few individuals. However, the consultation was complemented by a more limited form of inclusion: that of early and conciliatory communication with other affected parties. Doubtless wary of *Manchester Passion's* potential for controversy, the production team led a pro-active PR campaign to outline the project to different church groups, both nationally and in Manchester. Consistently, BBC staff described the purpose of this move in terms of inclusion:

“We knew it was very important that everyone involved, all the separate religious groups both inside the BBC and outside it were involved in the whole process, because it was such a dangerous thing to do. We really had to have buy-in from the start from all those different groups to go ahead”
(Sue Judd)

“From a commissioning point of view, we didn't want to be a bolt out of the blue arriving on a doorstep” (Adam Kemp)

The concept of 'buy-in' suggested by Sue Judd is a particularly interesting one. With its echoes of contracts and financial transactions, it carries both a sense of ownership and (crucially) one of agency, implying that these organisations effectively took a stake in the project by giving it their support. This is an important use of language insofar as it suggests an active, rather than passive relation to the project. While these organisations could not become direct participants to the same extent as Blackman, they were given a degree of access and thus became participants in the *concept* of the broadcast. It seems

the BBC shared this perspective, working with the assumption that this act of inclusion would pre-empt negative publicity. As Sue Judd puts it: ‘I think we all learnt a lot of lessons from *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, that it was tremendously important that all the interested parties do have buy-in to make it work’.

A sense of co-production is echoed by the subjects of the BBC’s efforts. Gillian Oliver, former Director of Communications for the Diocese of Manchester, sums its effects up as follows:

“It was a good process, and it really helped when the story leaked. The press came to the Church in Manchester expecting us to be grumpy about the programme. Possibly because we were so much in the loop, we were happy to endorse it.”

Such statements are a long way from descriptions of the BBC as a distant and unresponsive organisation. Whereas the first section of this chapter reveals a narrative in which religious groups felt disenfranchised, in this instance there is a strong sense of empowerment: ‘because we were so much in the loop’. Of course, it could be argued that this still represents a one way relationship between institution and citizens; these groups had no power to veto or alter the broadcast. However, the addition of a process of explanation and engagement is, I would argue, a pertinent example of how communicative institutions might support active citizenship and an active public sphere.

The idea of ‘buy-in’ in this arrangement echoes the role of the social contract in political theory; it represents an agreement of trust and shared purpose between state (in the form of the BBC) and citizen.

This agreement does have tangible outcomes if the BBC produced a broadcast whose tone or content differed from its pre-representations to Christian groups, it would undoubtedly face heavy criticism for doing so. Thus, the act of communication ties participants (on both sides) into a set of obligations and expectations, such as that to expect a representation similar to that which one has previously agreed to support. Note that these emerge not from the power of statute, but through informal dialogue leading

to an agreement of trust and shared purpose, perhaps demonstrating (in a link to deep cultural citizenship) the potential of constructive communication to empower citizens.

Certainly for Sue Judd, a burden of responsibility to citizens was a constant throughout the process of bringing *Manchester Passion* to fruition: ‘ I think we felt that after *Jerry Springer: The Opera* there was a certain uneasiness about what the BBC could do or was going to do, and I think that with *Manchester* we reassured communities’. Through such statements, the centrality of communication and a sense of engagement with citizens to the BBC’s mission is made clear. Rather than producing content *for* citizens, the BBC included citizens within the production process, supporting cultural representation with its political counterpart. In this sense, staff’s actions in the production of *Manchester Passion* echo deep cultural ideas of citizenship as a process, as something that is realised through a commitment to sustained and meaningful communication (and via a recognition of the intertwined nature of politics and culture). The eventual broadcast (the ‘product’ of the BBC’s policy decisions) cannot be conceived of without the process; the latter is constitutive of the former.

6.5 Commissioning and development: citizen participation and representation

For some religious groups in Manchester, engagement in the *Passion* was more physical. A key concept for *Manchester Passion* was the procession of a large illuminated cross through the city, arriving in Albert Square simultaneously with the Jesus character. The cross concept served various purposes for the broadcast: from the symbolic (as the quintessential marker for the Easter story) to the logistic (providing a second point of interest for periods where actors were moving between scenes). Ged Gray suggests that for BBC3, the visual power of the cross was an inspiration:

“Well I think they were very much drawn to the iconic power of the Cross... you can't see the crescent moon without thinking of Islam, you can't see the Star of David without thinking of Judaism, its just part of our culture... and I was told by Andy [King-Dabbs] and Sue [Judd] that when they got this commission off the back of the two Flashmob Operas, Stuart Murphy said ‘I see a big cross’, his vision of how it all started was just a big cross.”

The cross procession also afforded an opportunity to involve citizens of Manchester. The intention was that around 100 people from a variety of faiths should walk with the cross, and that some would be interviewed during the broadcast. Ged Gray was given the task of organising this, and again pushed for a more explicitly Christian focus. This was partially for reasons of expediency; he reasoned that Christians would be more likely to take part, as it gave them ‘a chance to bear witness’. In conversation with the production team however, this idea developed additional dimensions related to engagement and cultural representation:

“And when I explained it to the Classical Music Department, I said ‘look, why people are going to do it is that they see it as an act of witness’ and they liked that because then they could buy into the idea that these people were actually active in it, they weren't just extras, they were there for a real purpose, a real reason, an expression of their faith and culture” (Ged Gray)

Again, the act of communication between departments led to changes in orientation towards ideas of culture. The initial plan (for a heavily ‘multi-faith’ procession)

presumably developed from a position of support for diversity. Gray argued that there was greater public value in orienting the broadcast towards groups who were likely to have a deeper engagement with it, those who could claim a 'real purpose'. This engagement could be said to be multi-dimensional, as many of the participants were recruited through local churches, and hence represented not only their faith, but also their city. This argument in turn suggests a more nuanced engagement with the role of citizens; BBC staff were concerned not only with creating the appearance of 'public value' (represented by participation) but with the quality of said participation.

The multicultural/diversity agenda was not entirely abandoned. The procession was augmented by people of varied religious dispositions, some of whom were chosen specifically because their presence was, in Gray's words, 'inclusive'. There is tension here between competing markers of 'public value': that of diversity, and that of engagement/participation. This is revealed most explicitly in the practices used to attract those members of the procession who were not from a 'traditional' Christian background, who were precisely those members who would be given greater exposure in short interviews planned for the broadcast (which focussed on personal perspectives on the Cross as a cultural symbol). Gray admits that 'obviously those people were kind of hand-picked, they weren't volunteers, they were people I'd sought out', then gives the example of one interview subject 'from a culture of young Muslims who are very into their faith but are very modern, very contemporary' with whom he had a friendship pre-dating *Manchester Passion*.

It is not the intention here to argue that these practices necessarily inhibit the value of this element of the broadcast. There are obvious arguments with regards its benefit to cultural recognition and education; positioning a mainstream Christian symbol as a subject for debate in the context of a multicultural British society. Young's work on the reimagining of universality appears relevant here, with the BBC giving a privileged public space to 'distinct voices and perspectives of those of its constituent groups that are oppressed or disadvantaged' (Young, 1990: 184).

At the same time though, these (laudable) efforts have an impact on the relationship between BBC and public. One of the particular qualities of the plan for *Manchester Passion* – and one which is pertinent to its analysis in the context of new models of

citizenship – was a sense of ‘openness’ in the forms of engagement it engenders. Whether we consider the central audience in Albert Square, or those who volunteered to walk with the cross, citizens who opted to take part in the event were doing so of their own volition and with their own agenda, in keeping with the spontaneous publicness that was the stated hallmark of shows like *Flashmob*. By contrast, the organisation of interviews involved the BBC defining the nature and scope of public engagement in a far more explicit manner. While the individuals in this segment were undoubtedly active participants, they took part within parameters and for purposes explicitly defined by BBC staff, and were selected/approached accordingly.

As stated, this does not deny the potential of these interviews as a space for cultural representation, education and a starting point for debate. What is tangibly different is the BBC’s position as a contributor to the public sphere. It moves from a facilitative, de-centred role to a prescriptive one, within which the BBC aims to disseminate a particular multicultural agenda (and deploys the culture of individual citizens as a resource for this). Its position here therefore seems to favour a centralised, passive public sphere, wherein the BBC makes choice about the types of ideas and engagements that members of the public will contribute to the broadcast (and indeed, the types of ‘public’ that will contribute).

This obviously complicates the BBC’s position in relation to citizenship theory. As was argued in Chapter 3, a centralised-passive public sphere orientation tends to be indicative of a unitary model of liberal citizenship, and would therefore qualify any suggestion that *Manchester Passion* is indicative of the influence of more recent theory. However, the BBC’s stance can again be defended in terms of ‘cultural balance’, countering the project’s thematic orientation towards the Christian community with the addition of diverse, contrary responses to the symbolism of the Cross.

To the extent that there is a contradiction here, it seems to reflect the findings of the previous work of this thesis. As will be recalled, the analysis of Chapter 5:2 contended that recent BBC policy goals (as expressed in *BPV*) exhibited a tension between competing versions of citizenship: a socially cohesive agenda focussed on a centralised ‘Britishness’, and limited moves towards a more plural, de-centralised model. What is notable about *Manchester Passion* is not only that these competing agendas are present

in the same broadcast, but that the strategies mobilised to promote them are at points inverted from what we might think of as the expected model; the project's recognition of difference is achieved only via a departure from policies typical to the promotion of active citizenship. This can most likely be accounted for by the thematic orientation of the broadcast towards a Christian cultural position; it is at its core a Christian narrative. Therefore, to insert other perspectives within the broadcast was likely to require a particular effort of cultural balance, one which perhaps works against the ideals of an active agenda in which individuals 'come to' the project of their own volition (because logically, non-Christians were less likely to feel engaged with a strongly Christian narrative).

The above argument returns us to a proposition that was made at the close of Chapter 3: that, while we might associate certain models of citizenship theory with certain orientations towards the public sphere, this association is not – or should not be – absolute. To illustrate: because it emphasises the agency of citizens and the importance of 'everyday', extra-institutional politics, deep cultural citizenship would seem to point towards a de-centred and active public sphere. In this model, institutions such as the BBC would play a more facilitative role.

However, facilitation may not always be appropriate or sufficient: under-privileged or under-represented groups may require extra support in order to take part in communication between distinct groups of citizens. In the case of *Manchester Passion*, the BBC's decision to intervene created explicit spaces for non-Christian citizens within the broadcast. Without this intervention, the potential of *Manchester Passion* to elicit new understandings and dialogue, and to encourage reflexivity amongst its core Christian audience would be limited; what would be left would be a relatively linear re-telling of the Passion story.

6.6 Commissioning and development: cultural product, hierarchy, and education.

The central focus of this chapter has been the BBC's attempts to engage with groups of citizens with a particular cultural interest or stake in *Manchester Passion* based on their self-identification, including those based on region and faith. This next section shifts our perspective slightly to focus on culture as 'the arts', the texts and artefacts of a particular society. The role of cultural texts is central to the over-riding premise of this thesis: that communicative institutions (and particularly *public* institutions such as the BBC) are intrinsically connected to debates on citizenship: an idea that was developed in Chapter 3 through its discussion of mediation and the public sphere. Subsequently, Chapter 5 suggested how we might begin to unpack these connections in relation to the cultural product the BBC produces. One notion that was prominent in this discussion was that of *cultural hierarchy*, suggesting that the BBC operated with an embedded notion of what constituted 'good' and 'bad' cultural product. This was related to a belief that exposure to cultural texts had tangible effects on audiences, mobilised at various points in the name of education, cultural 'improvement' via the foregrounding of 'high' culture, and the promotion of an approved version of Britishness.

Manchester Passion at face value seemed designed to contradict this position. It works through a juxtaposition of a high cultural genre (the Passion play, most commonly associated with classic musicians and composers) and Mancunian pop songs from the late 1970's onwards. This blending of high and low culture could be read as a direct challenge to a historical cultural order, and this appears to have been a motivating factor for BBC3 (witness Sue Judd's comments, quoted earlier, regarding the 'edgy' nature of the concept).

This analysis, in very simple terms, locates the BBC in a position of greater engagement with the cultures of its audiences. Rather than presenting a traditional Passion play that might expose viewers to the 'good' culture of classical music, the BBC acknowledges and reiterates the preferences of what (we assume) are the majority of its viewers, particularly for a youth-oriented channel such as BBC3. Of course, the BBC has broadcast populist content throughout its history; it is not the intention here to claim that *Manchester Passion* represents any form of breakthrough. Nonetheless, there is something in the insertion of these songs into the sacrosanct context of a Passion play

which speaks to an acknowledgement of their value; their ‘seriousness’ as pieces of culture.

There is a recent precedent for this stance in policy: found in the BBC’s additional definition of ‘public value’ as simply ‘what the public values’ (Collins, 2006: 41). As will be recalled from Chapter 5:2, the BBC makes this argument in specific opposition to narrow, reified definitions of public service broadcasting, thereby implying that public communicative institutions should be explicitly reflective of – and responsive to – the everyday culture of those who they are charged to serve. This parallels ideas of a de-centred, active public sphere, in which institutions develop notions of identity and culture *in accordance* with those developed by citizens themselves, rather than deploying these notions as a resource to promote a ‘top-down’, valorised public culture.

This analysis of *Manchester Passion* however requires qualification. Whilst it obviously represents an interesting contribution towards (continuing) patterns of engagement with popular culture, this must be placed in context. Firstly, it should again be emphasised that this is not a new development. Additionally, the attitudes and cultural value-systems of the production team were, in fact, more nuanced. The production emanated from the Classical Music department, and staff there were keen that its performances should remain distinct from a simple repetition of popular texts. To this end, Phillip Shepperd (a musical director from the Classical Music department) was called in to produce new arrangements of the chosen songs; a move which Adam Kemp describes very much in terms of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ culture:

“The next big decision was as I say that it was never going to be karaoke- what they were going to do was to orchestrate popular music... the question I posed to them was ‘the concept is fantastic, what you’re going to have to show me, prove to me, is that it’s not going to sound like muzak’. You know what I mean, because muzak is your dread thing”

Evidently, the BBC can also distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ popular music; the latter represented here by the fear Kemp associates with ‘karaoke’ and ‘muzak’. The description of the latter as a ‘dread thing’ is especially revealing, conjuring up ideas of

embarrassment (whether amongst viewers, or within the BBC itself). Kemp's choice of 'muzak' as something to be avoided is also interesting given its association with commercial purposes, the background music of shopping centres and airport terminals. That Kemp defines the BBC in opposition to this is notable, carrying the implication that it remains the task of public service broadcasting to provide something distinct from the everyday practices of a marketised life. Elsewhere in interview evidence, Kemp states that a key remit of his department is to 'stimulate creativity', and there seems to be an implication in his opprobrium towards 'muzak' that some cultural products are considered more helpful than others in this task.

Despite the BBC's shift away from a strongly paternalist relationship with mass culture, *BPV* retains some precedents for this kind of position. To illustrate, we might point to the assertion that "Even some of the more challenging parts of the world's heritage can be brought to life with the right kind of imagination and creativity" (BBC, 2004: 71). On the one hand, *Manchester Passion* represents an attempt to reconcile 'high' and 'low' culture, recognising that the former cannot simply be imposed upon the public. . Yet at the same time the rationale for this process reproduces a notion of cultural hierarchy that the BBC elsewhere rejects; it presupposes that the high cultural element is of particular value, and that citizens should be exposed to it. In this sense, the popular songs in *Manchester Passion* could be conceptualised as a resource, valued not in their own right so much as a 'gateway' into the broadcast's public purposes.

Obviously we need to consider the provenance of *Manchester Passion* here: as the production was initially based in Classical Music, it would be counter-intuitive to expect a 'purely' populist event. Kemp's language is however notable both for the explicit value-judgements it contains, and for the links that can be made with discourses of cultural education. While this is not intended to imply that the programme-makers had no appreciation of *Manchester Passion's* more populist cultural elements, it is intended to show that this relationship is a not a simplistic one. This complexity persists when we consider judgements that were made *within* the genre of popular music.

In terms of their treatment of popular music, the production team held two specific positions. Firstly, there was an orientation towards the 'credible', evidenced by the dominance of guitar-based, critically acclaimed Manchester music of the last twenty-

five years (such as The Smiths, Joy Division, and Oasis). Several of the interview respondents within the BBC claimed a personal affiliation with this choice, describing themselves as fans of these bands. This stance serves in the first instance to problematise the earlier suggestion that *Manchester Passion* uses popular culture as a sub-ordinate resource, it suggests instead that these texts were valued at a tangible level (although at the same time, it maintains the role of the BBC in constructing a cultural hierarchy of its own accord).

For members of the project who came from Manchester, debates over the programme's music were an opportunity to express a sense of local cultural 'citizenship' and belonging, which they attributed to the city's population as a whole. As Ged Gray stated: 'we have an emotional investment and pride in our musical heritage'. Were the BBC to ignore such affiliations in its choices, this would seem to constitute a devaluation of the culture of Manchester. By association then, it would also represent a devaluation of the *cultural citizenship* of Manchester's population, denying their contribution to the cultural life of the UK.

In addition, there was a sense (following from Adam Kemp's critique of 'muzak') that the BBC had a responsibility to use Mancunian music in an innovative and credible way. This manifested itself particularly in Philip Shepherd's arrangements, which were deliberately designed to go beyond what was necessary in terms of the programme's content. Notably, Sue Judd exhibited a slightly contrary sense of achievement regarding the fact that some of his work would go unnoticed: 'in fact there are some very clever things in the music, that no one would probably know apart from Philip, but he's actually woven in other bits of Manchester's music into that.'

The commonality in these ideas is their attempt to expose audiences to something which they might otherwise not encounter: a mixture of popular and classical techniques, or critically valued pop music, or complex musical arrangements. There is an obvious sense in which this might create public value for citizens, encouraging them to experience and think about cultural texts in new ways. . In doing this sort of work however, the BBC must inevitably make judgements about the quality of cultural products that might contradict the preferences of the public. If we think about the role that cultural products are held to play in citizenship, the logical implication is that the

BBC therefore adopts an active, ‘trustee’ role in this instance by defining the attributes of a British culture, and putting practices in place to raise citizens to this level.

However, such aims formed only part of the story. As this chapter has already revealed, other strategies in the production process – exemplified by practices of consultation – were focussed on a deeper engagement with public affiliations⁴⁹. In addition, there is an obvious sense in which the BBC must respond to popular opinion; it is required to attract audiences for its programmes (and could be seen as failing in its duty to citizens if it does not do so). The tension between this need and other cultural hierarchies revealed itself in a debate over the inclusion of a particular piece of music: ‘Angels’ by Robbie Williams. This was initially intended to be the opening song for *Manchester Passion*, a suggestion which caused consternation in some BBC quarters. Ged Gray explains:

“When I first read the script and I was dismayed to see that ‘Angels’ was in there... I’m trying not to swear but I’m going to swear... ‘what the fuck has that got to do with Manchester?’ was my reaction, and that was the reaction of my contemporaries as well.”

The concept of location is clearly important here (Williams comes from Stoke, and so in an obvious sense does not represent Manchester) and is coupled with a discourse on quality (in discussing his enmity towards ‘Angels’, Gray describes himself as a ‘music snob’). The song was, according to Gray, a specific choice of BBC3 controller Stuart Murphy and selected for its popular appeal, the song ‘most played at funerals, christenings, weddings’ (Ged Gray). Ultimately, ‘Angels’ survived in the script, but was moved from the opening section after discussions between Gray and Andy King-Dabbs. It was replaced by Morrissey’s ‘You’re Going To Need Someone On Your Side’, a relatively obscure choice which was in fact suggested by Gray’s wife. Describing this process, he again stresses ideas of appropriateness and makes a rare direct reference to citizenship:

⁴⁹ A potential explanation for this is that preferences which related directly to cultural *identity* were valued more than those related to cultural *products*. However, this is not always correlated by evidence in this section- see for example Ged Gray’s obvious affiliation with Manchester’s music.

“She’s a citizen of Manchester, and she loves its music- she was engaged with the idea of coming up with the right song... they want that treated with respect as well, and we all felt that ‘Angels’ didn’t treat it with respect.”

There is a parallel here with the earlier debate on homosexual representation: a tension in balancing the perceived preferences of the majority audience with the particular interests of certain groups of citizens. Again, notions of cultural sensitivity (indicated here by the reference to ‘respect’) play an important role. Gray’s suggestion is that Manchester residents⁵⁰ would have a stronger engagement with the city’s music and that this was directly opposed to – and outweighed – the popular appeal of ‘Angels’. In a further parallel, we could again emphasise that this shift in policy occurred after a process of communication between stakeholders both within and outside of the BBC, albeit that this was far less formal in comparison to that which took place with regards religion.

That ‘Angels’ ultimately remained in the script however indicates a need to compromise in the name of populism (and by association, attracting viewers). While such compromise might be conceived of as a negative (insofar as it interferes with the intentions of the producers), a more positive reading is possible. In this narrative, the need to satisfy a variety of audiences functions as a check on the preferences of BBC staff, forcing self-confessed ‘music snobs’ to respond to the desires of a group of citizens who might otherwise have been neglected. Hence, the drive for audience figures might actually operate as a conduit of popular agency.

As they relate to citizenship, these debates draw out an interesting interaction between different positions in the BBC. Firstly, we have a cultural-political position (which calls for an authentic representation of Manchester culture), which meshes with arguments made elsewhere around notions of cultural sensitivity. In opposition to this is a pseudo-commercial stance, which demands the inclusion of populist features as a device to secure audience share. This second position would seem to counteract the BBC’s more ‘progressive’ work detailed in this chapter; it supplants the needs of citizens with the

⁵⁰ It is also notable that Gray in fact uses the term ‘citizens’ above residents or another equivalent. As stated earlier, Manchester does not have its own citizens in a institutional sense; it is not a nation-state. What Gray seems to be implying however is that self-identification as part of Manchester has some parallels with citizenship of a state, that it has a comparable value in terms of identity. In effect, Manchester is being situated as a site of *cultural citizenship*.

preferences of consumers, and replaces consultation with aggregation. In the instance described above however, it is precisely this aggregation which can be read as producing a positive outcome for citizens. Again (as was in the case in the discussions of religion) we are left with the suggestion that a dogmatic attachment to a particular model of citizenship risks losing as much as it gains.

Such judgements are however always complex. In this instance, the key question is perhaps to ask what kind of ‘public value’ is created by the BBC’s acquiescence in popular preferences. Is this value merely individual (in the obvious sense that more people might enjoy a Robbie Williams song), or does the communal nature of the broadcast engender some kind of citizen value (in terms perhaps of social cohesion, an opportunity for shared experience)? If the former is correct, then the inclusion of ‘Angels’ could be reasonably criticised as an affront to Mancunian identity, one which jarred with the rest of the broadcast and diluted its value as a cultural representation of a region. However if the latter were the case, then to exclude the song loses a positive experience that might, albeit in a transitory manner, bring together a diverse range of citizens.

Here then, we have a further example of how ‘cultural balance’ might point to a more pragmatic approach to citizenship, one in which various models co-exist within the policy process, to be ‘cherry-picked’ according to an analysis of likely benefits and costs. This approach offers a neat resolution to several of the policy contradictions revealed in this chapter; it gives a ‘practical’ logic to choices that are theoretically irreconcilable. However, the above example speaks to some of the difficulties that remain. Firstly (as alluded to earlier in the chapter) there is the problem that cultural balance, particularly if sought through consultation or other attempts to collate citizen preferences, might orient the BBC and other institutions toward majoritarian or conservative positions. Perhaps then some autonomy must remain with policy-makers, and indeed, this may be logistically necessary if nothing else. Yet this solution in turn seems to qualify the suggestion that ‘cultural balance’ can truly operate in the service of, for example, deep cultural citizenship (a model which is strongly oriented towards a redistribution of agency from institutions to active citizens).

6.7 Conclusion: The complication of ideals

To begin with a simple assertion, it would appear reasonable to contend that the development of *Manchester Passion* exhibited features which reflect some of the more progressive elements of *BPV*. The attitudes and decisions of staff appeared at points to be shifting from a *liberal-centred-passive* model, towards something closer to a *multicultural-decentred-active* position- embracing ideas of multi-culturalism, an active and plural audience, and a stronger engagement with everyday culture:

Multiculturalism- Throughout the production process, BBC staff were engaged with ideas of cultural difference; they worked from the assumption of a heterogeneous audience with conflicting preferences and affiliations, and engaged with these complexities in a sophisticated and flexible manner (described in terms of 'cultural balance') that included a variety of dialogical practices.

Decentred- The BBC's reflections on its own contribution to the public sphere exhibited a similar concern with difference. This was realised in a highly tangible manner, via the decision to locate the production in Manchester. Evidence reveals that the decision was motivated by a preference for productions outside of London, with the intent of improving the BBC's representation of under-served regional audiences.

Active- As with *Flashmob*, *Manchester Passion* was developed as an opportunity for cultural participation. This was to be realised through several means, encompassing interviews with the cross procession (which were to have a strong cultural-political element), and participation as a member of the central live audience. Indeed, the fact that the majority of the broadcast took place in a relatively uncontrolled public space immediately enabled possibilities for organic, random acts of participation, stepping outside the linear model of communication that traditionally characterises television.

Representation is a key term in this reading of *Manchester Passion*. In the commissioning and planning process, the BBC was concerned to provide a platform (whether through direct representation, behind-the-scenes consultation, or the initiative of staff) for specific cultural groups, predicated on the recognition that such groups have

specific rights that the BBC has a duty to address. This emphasis on representation, both *political* and *cultural*, obviously parallels models of multicultural citizenship.

It could also be argued that *Manchester Passion's* production moved into the terrain of deep cultural citizenship. Although this model shares elements with multiculturalism (insofar as both are centred around the problem of *difference*), deep cultural citizenship entails a reconceptualisation of the practices and spaces of citizenship; a turn which includes a sustained interest in the politics of everyday cultural processes and texts that enable individuals as citizens. Given that deep cultural citizenship is intrinsically concerned with communicative practices, we might argue that its connection to media institutions like the BBC is clear (the broadcasts the BBC produces inevitably impact on the worldview of their audience). Thus initiatives regarding the representation of minority cultural groups could be conceived of as a strategy of deep cultural citizenship, utilising culture to promote the tolerance and recognition required for political equality. However, Chapter 2 argued that deep cultural citizenship has a more engaged relationship with the cultural; that it views culture as a political field in its own right (rather than simply as a means to a political end). In addition, it emphasises deliberative communication over disseminatory communication.

Manchester Passion began to embody some of these ideas. For example, the debates over music choices demonstrated some recognition of the political value these texts held for their audience, i.e. in relation to notions of identity. Rather than itself *creating* meaning within popular culture, the BBC instead sought to work with embedded meanings. Elsewhere, the BBC's practice moved towards a more communicative model, illustrated by the emphasis throughout the commissioning/production process on communication and consultation, both internal and external. For the production team, the term 'buy-in' represented its attempts to seek consensus with invested groups through proactive communication.

These suggestions require unpacking and questioning. Throughout this chapter's analysis, a theme has been the problematisation of 'progressive' initiatives by other logics. Thus the emphasis on Mancunian culture must be qualified both by the way in which BBC staff, in keeping with the organisation's history, continued to valorise London as a dominant cultural force, and by the concern that the notion of 'Manchester'

developed by the BBC and City Council focussed on the re-generated centre at the expense of other areas. Similarly, questions were raised about the degree to which the consultative model of communication was truly representative of the audience, and its feasibility for general institutional practice.

The implications of these tensions will be developed in the next chapter, a large proportion of which will be devoted to an explication of the concordances (and discordances) between the aims of the production team and the actual text. However, at this stage it is certainly possible to state that during the development of *Manchester Passion*, BBC policy appeared to reflect a plurality of citizenship models which often sat uncomfortably together in a complication of the ideal-types developed in Chapter 2. Although the production's most notable initiatives suggest a move towards multiculturalism (and to a limited degree, to deep cultural models), there were always other elements at play, requiring choice and compromise. These choices often involved inclusions and exclusions: whether selecting a route through the city or choosing participants for consultation and interview, or rejecting 'muzak', the production team inevitably had to privilege certain voices and values above others.

By consequence, these decisions also reiterated the BBC's agency in relation to the citizens it serves; it was ultimately (despite a substantial element of consultation) down to BBC staff to determine the content and format of *Manchester Passion*. This state of affairs was clearly a logistical necessity: however, it nonetheless implies a relationship between institution and citizen in which the former plays a larger, 'top-down' role (contrary to the active citizenship implied by more radical models). Judging by the evidence of Chapter 5, this agenda-setting status has been a major historical characteristic of the BBC, and remained a feature during the planning of *Manchester Passion*.

In terms of thinking through how the BBC arrived at many of these decisions (and how this reflected on the BBC's relation to ideas of citizenship) this chapter has begun to work with the term 'cultural balance'. In its attempts to satisfy the competing 'claims' of different cultural audiences, the BBC adjusted its policy in accordance with the likely intensity of engagement of these audiences. Cultural balance is a potentially interesting development for citizenship theory; it offers a reconciliation between abstract ideals and

social actualities. However it brings its own issues, including the risk that it pulls agency towards institutions and established interests. Accordingly, a key focus of the next chapter will be to interrogate how the BBC's attempts at 'balance' worked in practice.

Chapter 7. *Manchester Passion*: text and reception.

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is relatively simple; it continues the analysis of *Manchester Passion* that was begun in the previous chapter, progressing to examine the broadcast itself, and the reaction to it from press and public. In doing so, the chapter will complete the case study, concluding the ‘tracing’ of ideas regarding citizenship through the socially situated practice of a communicative institution (the BBC).

The chapter works from the conclusions of Chapter 6: that the BBC has instigated policies in relation to *Manchester Passion* that had some common elements with a multicultural-decentred-active model of citizenship, occasionally moving closer to a deep cultural position. This chapter analyses the effects and impacts of such policies in the broadcast itself, and their ‘fit’ (or lack of fit) with the models with which they are identified.

There will however be distinctions from Chapter 6 both in terms of the evidence base, and of the chapter’s emphasis. Chapter 7 will work with a greater variety of sources. While it will continue to make use of interview evidence where appropriate, this will be complemented by analysis of the broadcast itself, and of discourse which emerged in its aftermath: including press reviews and letters received, blogs, and posts on Internet forums. These sources constitute an analysis (albeit an inevitably partial one, from which it is not sought to generalise) of the reactions and which *Manchester Passion* engendered for its various audiences. By comparing accounts of *experienced* effects with those *intended* by BBC staff, it becomes possible to reflect upon the impact of BBC practices. For example, one focus of this chapter will be the way in which the cultural representations contained within *Manchester Passion* were evaluated by citizens.

Furthermore, this chapter will also exhibit an increased focus on areas of discordance and conflict: whether between differing conceptions of citizenship, between policy and practice, or between intention and effect. This is not intended to imply a negative assessment of the BBC’s practice, but to provide an evidence and analysis base

appropriate to the research goals of this thesis: to produce a grounded critique of interventions in citizenship theory. In order to facilitate this work, it is inevitably necessary to interrogate the more problematic outcomes of the BBC's policy choices.

7.1. Representation: practice and evaluation.

In the previous Chapter, a key factor in the development of *Manchester Passion* related to a perceived obligation of representation on the part of the BBC, based on association of the proposed broadcast with certain cultural identities and affiliations. In my analysis, representation was identified both in a *political* sense (relating to the rights of citizens to have a voice in practices of public institutions) and in a *cultural* sense (referring to the duty of the BBC to produce output that fairly and accurately represents groups and individuals within society).

In the case of *Manchester Passion*, the BBC's obligations were complicated by the fact that the broadcast engendered strong engagements from a variety of cultural positions: members of the Christian faith, 'citizens' or residents of Manchester, and those who claim an affiliation with the city's popular music. As the broadcast developed, the BBC faced difficult choices in balancing these strong engagements against each other, against its broader social goals, and against the needs/desires of the general public.

Consequently, a key task for this chapter is to establish how these decisions played out in the broadcast itself, and specifically how the pressure on the BBC to engage with distinct audiences impacted on some of its innovative policies. To do so, the following section will examine the representation of the three strongly engaged audiences named above, and their evaluation of the BBC's efforts.

a) *Manchester Passion* and Christianity

I think that with Manchester we reassured communities that we can do things that are risky, but actually they're absolutely on-button with the message- Sue Judd (interview evidence)

Following a pattern of criticism of the BBC's religious output, the programme-makers involved in *Manchester Passion* were undoubtedly conscious of the potential reaction of the Christian audience. In an attempt to pre-empt any negative response, the BBC embarked on an unusually extensive program of consultation. More than any other group, citizens who identified as Christian could claim to have achieved a degree of *political* representation within the development of *Manchester Passion*. Inclusion in

processes of consultation, however, would be of limited value if the eventual broadcast failed to reflect their preferences. Given that the BBC is primarily a cultural institution, the achievement of *political* representation would logically be aimed at having a tangible impact on *cultural representation*, i.e. on the programmes the BBC produces. In this instance, politics and culture appear to overlap; citizens (as indicated by the comments made regarding *Jerry Springer* in the previous chapter) connected their cultural representation with their capacity to take part in society.

The overwhelming response of Christians to *Manchester Passion* was positive; a view shared between representatives of faith-based institutions, and individuals who watched or attended the broadcast. Christians clearly felt that the BBC had portrayed their faith in a sympathetic, modern light, as evidenced by the quotations which follow:

‘Manchester Passion has a sincerity and an ability to shock and connect that is not far removed from how it must have been on the first Good Friday’ - Nigel McCulloch, Bishop of Manchester (quoted in Hattenstone, 2006)

‘I watched it and thought it was very cool. It was relevant, I think that was the most encouraging thing, and it shared the Easter story in an inclusive way... Overall I’ll give it a big THUMBS UP!’ - Fie, Youthwork community forum⁵¹

‘The memory of this amazing event is still strong after several weeks have passed. An uplifting and inspirational experience for everyone, believer or not. The Resurrection from the clock tower - Wow!!! God really spoke to all of us so clearly!’ - Marion Lawrence, Manchester Evening News Forum⁵²

‘The BBC and the City of Manchester are to be congratulated on staging the Manchester Passion... For us Christians it enabled us to celebrate the real meaning of the Good Friday Bank Holiday and provided a Christian witness to those who looked on. Proud to be a Mancunian!’ - Ron Hyde, Manchester Evening News Forum (*ibid*).

⁵¹ Last accessed 28/03/2008 at <http://www.youthwork.co.uk/community/Forum/posts.asp?subject=1911&catid=7>

⁵² Last accessed 28/03/2008 at http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/c/210768_easter_marked_with_a_passion.html?page_size=50

‘Tonight's events on the streets of Manchester and on the TV sets of the nation have expressed exactly what an Urban Faithscape is all about. Living, vibrant, creative faith not just 'connecting with culture' but exploding through its tired veins like an intravenous amphetamine hit. I stood on the cobbles of Albert Square, my little boy strapped to my chest, watching and listening to the Easter story told in a way that the people of the city could really understand. Their people, their music, their Jesus... when Keith Allen described the crucifixion, using a real 9 inch Roman nail to ram the point home it was as powerful as any evangelist I've ever heard’- Matt Wilson, Urban Faithscape blog⁵³

While such a small number of examples can clearly only ever be illustrative rather than demonstrative, the research work of this project suggests that they do represent the vast majority of Christian opinion. Online forums at the BBC, Manchester Evening News, and independent sites such as www.digitalspy.co.uk revealed significant levels of praise for the programme, with criticism from Christian audiences largely limited to non-religious issues such as sound quality or music selection. These findings were echoed by BBC staff: Ged Gray reported receiving an ‘unprecedented’ number of unsolicited feedback email regarding the programme, which again was overwhelmingly positive.

However, that the programme was *enjoyed* by Christian audiences does not mean that they viewed it as a success in terms of cultural representation, or any other aspect of their relationship to society as citizens. This is a distinction (between *individual* and *citizen* value) which forms part of the BBC’s criteria for evaluating its work: in *BPV*, it regards citizen value as something which ‘aims to contribute to the wider well-being of society, through its contribution to the UK’s democracy, culture and quality of life’ (BBC, 2004: 28). For example, news programmes carry citizen value insofar as they help ‘to create a more informed society based on shared understanding’ (28). According to *Building Public Value*, the BBC has a responsibility to maximise citizen value in its entire output (a logical response to its non-market institutional position). Much of the evidence from staff in Chapter 6 showed a specific commitment in the case of

⁵³ Last accessed 28/03/2008 at <http://urbanfaithscape.blogspot.com/2006/04/manchester-passion.html>

Manchester Passion, evidenced for example by the deep engagement with issues of appropriate representation of religious narratives.

At issue then is the type of value that citizens attribute to *Manchester Passion*. The quotations above demonstrate positive individual reactions, yet more interestingly, they go beyond that to attribute *citizen* value via an associated impact on social relations and culture (even if they do not directly express these ideas in terms of citizenship). For the Bishop of Manchester, this came from the broadcast's ability to 'shock and connect', implying a capacity to promote new ways of thinking by pulling individuals out of established understandings. The next two examples focussed on transcendence of cultural boundaries, describing the treatment as 'inclusive' or calling it an 'inspirational experience for everyone, believer or not'. These reactions suggest some form of benefit in terms of social cohesion, enabling a moment of shared experience between citizens. Finally, both Ron Hyde and Matt Wilson express ideas regarding the cultural representation of Christianity, particularly as it exists in Manchester. For Hyde, the broadcast provided a positive 'Christian witness' for its non-religious audience, and made him 'proud to be a Mancunian'. Wilson (who is involved in several faith-based projects in the city) goes further; he describes the broadcast as an embodiment of his evangelicalism, an 'Urban Faithscape' which narrated the Easter story 'in a way that the people of the city could really understand. Their people, their music, their Jesus.'

These quotes form a patchwork of ideas relating to the citizenship models developed in Chapter 2, and noted in the BBC's policy work in Chapter 5: encompassing ideas about intercultural communication, representation, and the possibility for new ways of thinking about aspects of the social world. A particular point of interest is the emphasis of these responses on communication, illustrated by the linguistic choices they make: connect, witness, shared, inclusive, spoke, understand. These ideas have much in common with the rhetoric of multicultural and deep cultural models in particular; they push us towards the suggestion that *Manchester Passion* might open up communication between the Christian community and others by representing Christianity in an innovative, inclusive way. In addition, they demonstrate the success of the BBC's practices towards consultation and engagement: evidently, *Manchester Passion* was a text that this group was happy to be associated with, and to be represented through. Hence, we might think of the consultation process as an effective technique of cultural

citizenship; the BBC made policy choices which engaged a group of citizens, and which (according to said citizen's own judgement) has enhanced their social life through cultural practice.

The effusive praise from Christian audiences suggests a strong orientation towards their beliefs and attitudes. From the previous chapter, we are aware that changes were made to the script and planning of the broadcast in order to accommodate or appease Christian sensibilities: the avoidance of the reference to homosexuality and the addition of a larger Christian component to the Cross procession being strong examples. What remained was a re-working of the Easter story which, while undoubtedly modernised and distinct in its use of pop culture, broadly adhered to the Biblical narrative (and certainly avoided any obvious critique of Christian orthodoxy). Where embellishments were made, these were pre-dominantly aesthetic (e.g. the modernisation of language), or else made no attack on Christian orthodoxy.

The most obviously 'controversial' addition to the script (although it in actuality passed with little comment) was a range of allusions to the War on Terror. These culminated in Jesus (having been accused of 'inciting religious hatred and conspiracy to encourage acts of terrorism') dragged onto stage dressed in the orange prison garments of Guantanamo Bay. This fits a thematic in which Jesus was portrayed as an anti-establishment figure; tellingly, expressed in 'political' or ethical (rather than religious) terms⁵⁴. Early in the broadcast, we are informed that Jesus is sought by both the 'religious and secular authorities'. Yet as Page (2006) points out, it is only the latter who are portrayed. Page reads this as a deliberate attempt by the BBC to avoid controversy by omitting the Biblical role of the Jewish leaders. Instead, the writers opt for a more universalist message regarding power in society: we are told that Jesus is 'revolutionary', and that he is fighting against un-named 'vested interests' on behalf of the 'fringes of society'. This narrative (as well as being less likely to anger a particular cultural group)—arguably has some resonance with radical models of citizenship in its support of anti-establishment politics; we might think here of Stevenson's assertion that cultural citizenship is about 'conversation where previously there was... the voices of the powerful' (2003: 152). In this analysis, the emphasis shifts slightly to the socio-

⁵⁴ The distinction here is not intended to suggest that religion and politics can be separated—rather, that the BBC opted to downplay specifically religious controversies.

political symbolism of the story: Jesus spreading a message regarding recognition of (in particular) under-privileged Others. This strategy may have contributed to the positive response from Christian audiences around intercultural connection: insofar as it emphasises ethics above faith, it makes links between Christian narratives and wider political questions.

An element of the broadcast which might have highlighted religious difference was the 'vox-pop' interview sections. As stated in Chapter 6, these sections exemplify *Manchester Passion* as explicitly plural and multicultural; they specifically included representatives of various faiths and spiritual affiliations. However, what is ultimately notable is not the extent to which they articulated difference, but that to which they articulated *sameness*. In turn, each interviewee (four Christians of different denominations, one Muslim, and one of no religious affiliation) proclaims a relationship with the cross and their support for the broadcast. There is very little explicit debate, and no negativity.

Of course, the interviewees agreed to take part, and we have no reason to doubt their sincerity. Thus, there is a clear sense in which these interviews constitute communication between cultures, and carry the according benefits. For example, to see a Muslim man explain that to him, Jesus was a prophet and 'one of the greatest men who ever lived' has an obvious capacity to enhance knowledge and promote understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. Nonetheless, the incessantly inoffensive tone of the interviews - coupled with our knowledge (detailed in Chapter 6) of their contrived provenance - leads to a qualifying concern: that they perhaps represent only a limited intercultural dialogue. Not only were the interviewees hand-picked by the BBC, but they were done so according to a specific agenda (relating to diversity and broadening the programmes appeal), and the rough content of their answers was known and approved in advance of the broadcast. Hence, responsibility for this content lies not simply with the interviewees themselves, but also the BBC. As Ged Gray stated, he was minded to select people who would be 'inclusive' in their responses. Under this analysis, we might not consider it reasonable to view the vox-pops as an example of genuine cultural representation by citizens; they are filtered through a major institution which, as should be clear from Chapters 5 and 6 and from Gray's admission above, brings its own agendas to the process.

In addition, we might consider the contextualisation of the interview participants. Particularly insofar as they deviate from an orthodox Christian perspective) they are explicitly marked as distinct. They are precisely described in terms of their demographic background, and effectively speak on behalf of it. The interviews are thus constructed as a space in which the viewer ‘encounters’ the interviewees, who explain their motivation for taking part in relation to their cultural affiliations: in the first tranche, we have Tim (‘you’re a Catholic’), Nabeen (‘people will be quite surprised to see a Muslim in a cross procession, what does Jesus mean for Muslims’), and Kate (‘you’re a young woman’). Nabeen’s description is particularly interesting given the rhetorical device it deploys. The interviewer (and by association, the BBC) speaks for an undefined mass of ‘people’, while Nabeen is explicitly marked as Muslim. This opposition produces a construction in which the status of ‘Muslim’ is distinguished from the rest of the population.

Through the combination of such techniques of ‘othering’ with the BBC’s control over content, the status of the interviewees is clear: they are subordinate to the main narrative of the broadcast. Consequently, their contributions might also be conceived as subordinate: not as an organic opening of dialogue between groups of citizens, but as part of a limited accommodation of diversity *within* an agenda and structure which is pre-imposed from above. In this context, the interviewees endorse the dominance of the mainstream Christian message, accepting and validating its status from the perspective of other cultural affiliations (e.g. Nabeen’s explanation of Jesus’ status as a prophet within Islam). This relationship between dominant and subordinate positions might also serve to explain a curious omission in the vox-pop segments; the voice of a ‘traditional’ Church of England Christian. Such people made up the majority of the cross procession and hence it would seem logical that at least one would be interviewed. However given the degree to which *Manchester Passion* was already geared to represent the interests of this group (e.g. through pre-consultation, communication and content), we could argue that the ‘traditional’ identity does not need to be explicitly articulated. Instead, it exists throughout the broadcast as an unmarked norm, one against which other groups of citizens are compared in the vox-pop segments. This analysis would mesh with an analysis of the BBC as an institution connected to Establishment positions, as argued in Chapter 5.

One critique which might be made of this argument is that it places an unreasonable burden on the BBC, particularly when one considers the entertainment purposes of the broadcast. *Manchester Passion* was, after all, conceived primarily as a participatory musical event. This interpretation allows for a much more positive reading of the vox-pop segments. There is evidence that for some audience members, the vox-pops were a positive illustration of social cohesion:

“It was really nice the way they showed a whole community coming together for it, regardless of creed.”- soifeellis, DigitalSpy forums⁵⁵

“I'm not Christian (Jewish actually) but found the whole event absolutely moving. I loved the brave and so successful attempt by the BBC to connect people to the traditional story, and through it, to their wider community.” - benioooo, BBC forums⁵⁶

“the street interviews accompanying the cross, with people of different faiths and no faith, a great example of people respecting each others' culture and coming together in a celebration of a message of peace.”- mancbaldy, BBC forums (ibid)

While the interviews provide only a selective set of responses to the Cross, there is at least an attempt to add multiple cultural perspectives into what was otherwise a strongly Christian-oriented broadcast. The interviews present diverse cultural positions legitimated by their appearance on the BBC, and therefore carry the potential (as alluded to in the responses above) to promote dialogue and transformative reflection. This contribution, while limited, was not logistically or generically essential for the programme. On this basis, should it be praised for what it achieves, rather than critiqued for what it omits?

⁵⁵ Last accessed 28/08/09 at <http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/forums/showthread.php?t=365356&pp=25&page=4>

⁵⁶ Last accessed 28/08/09 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/england/F2770282?thread=2090395&skip=0&show=20>