How distant Others are mediated by UK television

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Abstract

The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate how UK television shapes spectators' experiences of distant Others. Specifically, I aim to build on and extend existing work in this field, and particularly the work of Lilie Chouliaraki in *Spectatorship of Suffering*, in three directions. Firstly, I argue that we can learn more about how spectators of UK television respond to distant Others if we expand our focus beyond 'peak moments' of news coverage of suffering to include a focus on routine coverage of all distant Others, suffering or otherwise, across a range of television genres. Secondly, I contend that it is important to preface investigations into *how* distant Others are mediated by television with a study of the extent to which people from Other countries even appear on UK television. Thirdly, I argue that in order to take seriously an understanding of mediation as a dialectical process, any analysis of media texts should be complemented by audience research that takes time to listen to the accounts of spectators.

The results of a series of content analyses reveal that distant Others seldom appear on UK television, particularly those from certain parts of the world. My application of a modified version of Chouliraki's analytics of mediation and the results of a series of focus groups and a diary study reveal that television news texts routinely offer spectators a position of indifference with respect to distant and dehumanised distant Others. My results also show that non-news factual television programming has greater capacity than news items for appealing to a more intense mediated experience of distant Others, even if this capacity is often not fully realised. I conclude by arguing that these findings have important implications for broadcasters, producers, policy makers, regulators and academics.

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Introduction: Television, Mediation and Distant Others

UNMOVED AND UNCARING?

In this thesis I am concerned with the role of UK television in regulating spectators'[1] experiences of faraway Others. My reason for focussing on, what is later defined as the 'mediation of distant Others', stems from an interest in the way that, despite the daily reporting of many events around the world, whether terrible, mundane or amusing, 'most people seem to remain unmoved and uncaring' (Tester 1994:1) about people from Other[2] countries. As Tester asked in his book on *Media, Culture and Morality,*

> How is it that in the situation where technology promises the making of the greatest possible solidarity between humans, all that actually results is a kind of moral boredom and dullness (1994:105)?

The capacity of the media to overcome the distance between 'us', the spectators of UK television, and the many millions of distant Others who are the subjects of UK television but who we will never otherwise meet, appears to be greater than ever before. Yet it also appears that, in general, we spectators remain indifferent towards distant Others we encounter through the media.

While it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish a precise measure of the nature of public experience of distant Others in order to support this suggestion, there is some evidence of this apparent indifference. In a national survey of public opinion regarding overseas

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[1] The term *spectators*, is preferred to alternatives, such as *audiences,* because of its association, begun by Adam Smith (1759), with persons witnessing events experienced by distant Others and the moral tensions which arise when we are unable to act directly and immediately on what we see.

[2] Other is capitalised throughout this thesis both to signal difference and to distinguish distant Others, who are neither part of the spectator's imagined national community nor 'beyond the nation' community, from those 'others' who *are* part of the spectator's 'beyond the nation' community (Chouliaraki 2006:10).

development assistance, for example, only 24% of the UK public say they are 'very concerned' about levels of poverty in poor countries (TNS 2010:4). Furthermore, support for increased government action regarding global poverty is in decline, from 49% of the UK public supporting this in September 2008 to 35% in February 2010 (TNS 2010:5). As Van Rooy has stated (though with little empirical support), 'Northern domestic audiences remain, in most countries, passive about global social justice issues' (2000:311).

The relationship between spectators of UK television and the distant Others they encounter in the media can be understood to matter for a number of reasons. Firstly, as globalization and migration continue to encourage the interaction of different peoples and cultures, it is claimed that the media portrayal of different parts of the world plays an increasingly important role in either discouraging or promoting respect for other cultures (Maeda 2000). Secondly, whether by influencing policy decisions through what is described as the 'CNN effect' (Robinson 1999:301) or through public opinion (Stern 1998; Otter 2003), or by encouraging (Brown and Minty 2006) or discouraging (Moeller 1999) charitable donations, media is important if it is understood to have tangible effects for the world it portrays. Finally, such questions are at the heart of the moral and ethical[3] role of the media. As Silverstone argued, how we recognise and understand our responsibility for the other person in a world of great conflict, tragedy, intolerance and indifference is fundamental to our own humanity, or indeed, inhumanity (2004:442). Or as John Durham Peters recently put it, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, 'to lack compassion [for distant Others] is to fail as a human being' (2011:441). For numerous reasons, then, the ways in which spectators' experiences of distant Others are regulated by the media can be considered an important issue.

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[3] Chouliaraki understands the *moral* role of the media, as do I, as 'the capacity of the media to involve us emotionally and culturally with distant 'others'' (2006:19). This understanding of morality derives largely from Silverstone whose definition of the term is discussed later in the Introduction. See Ong (2009) for a useful summary of what he refers to as a 'seismic shift' in the conceptualisation and application of the concept of morality within the field of media studies, from concerns for 'moral panics' and the 'moral economy' to a concern for our relationship with the Other.

In drawing attention, albeit briefly, to what I consider to be the significance of the ways in which spectators encounter distant Others I necessarily reveal my own normative position regarding the role the media *should* play in regulating the nature of such encounters. I regard, what I later define as, an 'intense' mediated experience of distant Others to be preferable to one lacking in immediacy, or a sense of direct and instant involvement. This is not a peculiar or unusual position to hold. Indeed, most studies in this field adopt a similar normative position. What is significant about holding such a position, or indeed, were I to hold an alternative view (see Narveson 2003 for an articulate, alternative position) is that it necessarily affects the questions I ask, the approach I adopt and the conclusions I draw about this issue. As I shall argue in greater detail later, adopting this position has played an important role in leading many previous studies to ask questions about the role media *should* be playing in regulating spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others (see, for example, Chouliaraki 2006). As a result, they have failed to devote enough attention to establishing *how* media *does* regulate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. In other words, there is insufficient investigation into both what *is* happening and *how* it is happening. Such questions about the ways in which media regulates spectators' experiences of distant Others and what is routine about such processes of mediation are important because they provide a useful basis for understanding the extent to which what *should* be happening, *is* actually happening but also why it is, or is not, happening.

Having acknowledged my reasons for pursuing this research agenda I therefore attempt to suspend a more detailed discussion of why mediated encounters with distant Others matter. Instead, it is the question of precisely how distant Others are mediated by television which is the focus of this thesis. Before doing this, it is necessary to define a number of key terms used in this thesis, principally the notions of 'mediation' and 'distant Others', and to justify its parameters, including my concern with television and with particular forms of 'mediated experience'.

0.1 MEDIATION

The complex ways in which media are implicated in the relationship between spectators and distant Others cannot be encapsulated in a concern simply for media 'representations'.

Claims about 'negative and misguided images' (Ebo 1992:15), 'demonization' (Li and Kang 1998) and 'stereotypes [and] distortions' (VSO 2001:3), for example, do not have the analytical edge to allow us to get at the power of the media to enact spectators' encounters with distant Others (Cottle 2006:9). Taking account of the *constitutive* role of the media in establishing spectators' experiences of distant Others requires a much broader analytical and theoretical approach such as that provided by the concept of mediation. Since my understanding of this concept forms the basis of all of the theoretical and empirical work in this thesis, it is necessary to provide a detailed definition of this concept here.

In media studies the term, *mediation* is generally used to refer to 'the act of transmitting something through the media' (Couldry 2008:379), or, more substantively, 'the overall effect of media institutions existing in contemporary societies, the overall difference that media make by being there in our social world' (Couldry 2008:379). This concept is also used more specifically as a means of conceiving of the capacity of the media to 'mediate' the relationship between spectators in front of television screens and distant Others behind them. In this tradition, Tomlinson's (1999:154) two-fold definition of mediation, Thompson's (1995) wider discussion of mediation and social life and Silverstone's (2006) more recent definitions are perhaps the most frequently cited and represent a useful axis around which to organise my definition of the concept.

0.1.1 Overcoming distance

In his first definition of mediation, Tomlinson understands the concept in terms of the facilitation or delivery of distant events or Others into people's localities. Tomlinson defines mediation thus as 'overcoming distance in communication' (1999:154). In the discussion of the origin of this understanding, Tomlinson shows through a review of the work of 'medium theorists', such as McLuhan (1996), Meyrowitz (1994) and Innis (1949), how the concept of 'mediation' and 'mediated experience' has traditionally been closely tied to the idea of the transformation of time and space (Giddens 1991). The most famous example of this being McLuhan's pronouncement of the 'global village' in which he argued that 'electric circuitry has overthrown the regime of 'time' and 'space' and pours upon us instantly and continuously the concerns of all other men' (1967:16). Similarly, Tomlinson draws on Innis's

(1949) arguments about the spatial or temporal 'bias' of different mediums of communication to further illustrate his argument that mediation is, 'fundamentally, a matter of bridging time and space in communication' (1999:152). Finally, Tomlinson draws on the etymologies of many electronic media forms to discuss this idea of mediation as the transformation of time and space. Words such as 'television', 'telephone' and 'telegraph', for example, derive from the Greek, *tele*, meaning 'far off' or 'distant' (1999:154).

The thought that communication media have affected the ways in which individuals experience the spatial and temporal characteristics of life is also considered by Thompson (1995) in his broader discussion of the characteristics of mediated communication. Thompson (1995:34) uses the term 'mediated worldliness', or our sense of the world which lies beyond the sphere of our personal experience, to discuss how media have re-shaped our sense of distant places and of the spatially delimited communities to which we belong. He argues that media have altered our sense of *space* by allowing us to experience events and observe Others who lie beyond our sphere of day-to-day encounters. Similarly, he uses the term 'mediated historicity', or our sense of the past and of the ways in which the past impinges upon us today, to discuss how media shape our experience of *time*. He argues that media have altered our sense of time by 'expanding the reservoir of mediated symbolic forms' (1995:34) available to us and because most individuals derive their sense of major events of the past primarily from this library of symbolic forms provided by the media (1995:34). He goes on to argue that these changes in our experience of both space and time have changed our experience of distance 'by decoupling its exclusive dependence on travel time' (Thompson 1995:36). In other words, changes in telecommunications mean that our sense of distance is no longer dependent upon the time taken to travel between two locations.

This sense of distance, which is central to understandings of the process of mediation (Tomlinson 1999:152), refers not only to the geographical distance which separates 'us' from 'them', nor even to the social or cultural distance that it is often assumed is simultaneously bridged in the overcoming of geographical distance. It refers also to the *moral* distance, which Silverstone described as a product of the interrelation of the geographical and social categories of distance (2006:172). Silverstone drew on the work of Berlin (1990) to define morality as,

The judgement and elucidation of thought and action that is oriented towards the other, that defines our relationship to her or him in sameness and in otherness, and through which relationship our own claims to be a moral human being are defined (2006:7).

In other words, mediation as 'overcoming distance in communication' refers not only to the overcoming of geographical and social/cultural distance between spectators and distant Others, but also to the management of moral distance. Importantly, these different forms of distance are not commensurable. As Silverstone argued, physical or material connection does not necessarily provide at the same time a social, cultural or psychological connection (2006:171). Put simply, physical proximity should not be confused with connectedness or commitment (Silverstone 2006:173). As we shall see in the following chapters, the overcoming of distance is a highly contingent, paradoxical dimension of the process of mediation in which distance and presence coincide and in which technology has the capacity to simultaneously connect and disconnect (Silverstone 2006:11).

0.1.2 Passing through the medium

Though Tomlinson's first definition of mediation refers to the 'delivery' of distant experiences into the life-worlds of audiences, he is keen to avoid a naive celebration of the capacity of the media to simply bring the world together. He therefore combines this with a second definition of mediation, which refers to the act of 'passing through the medium', (1999:154) in which the medium itself intervenes in the process and interferes with the experience of the thing that is being communicated. This second thought is that the medium is never transparent but always affects the manner in which the distance between the spectator and the spectacle is regulated, whether through camera positioning, voiceover, editing, the characteristics of the medium etc.. Chouliaraki describes this as 'the fact that everything we watch on screen is subject to the interventions of technology and the semiotic modes that the technology of the medium puts to use' (2006:20). Tomlinson argues that mediated communication always involves a combination of both understandings of mediation. The overcoming of distance cannot be understood without understanding the influence of the medium upon the regulation of this distance and vice-versa (1999:155).

The theories Tomlinson cites in support, particularly of his first definition of mediation, have all themselves been widely criticised for providing a highly 'technological determinist' account of social-historical change (Ferguson 1990). Indeed, Cottle describes the concept of mediation as 'tend[ing] to suggest a view of the media as a neutral 'middle-ground', equidistant perhaps between events that the media report on and the audiences that view/read/hear about them' (2006:9). Despite this, or, as Silverstone argued, precisely 'because they insist on isolating and privileging media technologies' (1994:92) the accounts of 'medium theorists' and Tomlinson's media-centric definitions of mediation do help to highlight the particular way in which the media of communication have affected the ways in which individuals experience the spatial and temporal characteristics of life. It is in this light in which Chouliaraki argues that Tomlinson's two fold account of mediation is useful because it highlights the moral underpinnings of the concept (2006:19). In other words, it helps to draw attention to two particularly important dimensions of the capacity of the media to connect spectators with distant Others.

0.1.3 Mediation as mediations

Whilst still acknowledging the value of Tomlinson's first two definitions of mediation it is useful to complement them with a third definition which reminds us that 'mediated communication... is always embedded in social contexts which are structured in various ways and which, in turn, have a structuring impact on the communication that occurs' (Thompson 1995:11). In other words, the medium itself must be understood, not as some independent force acting upon those experiences which pass through it, but as 'a contextualised social phenomenon' (Thompson 1995:11), which is itself subject to political, economic and socio-cultural forces. To achieve this it is useful to also adopt Silverstone's definition of mediation as, 'a fundamentally dialectical notion, which requires us to address the processes of communication as both institutionally and technologically driven and embedded' (2005:189).

This definition invites us to consider media as more than just technologies or media discourses, but as entailing practices involving the production and reception of media content, which are themselves embedded in specific social, cultural, historical and political

contexts (Kyriakidou 2009). Silverstone's characterisation of mediation as a 'fundamentally dialectical notion' draws on the distinction John Durham Peters (1999) has made between dialogue and dissemination modes of communication. The dissemination mode of communication refers to the broadcasting of messages without feedback from the audience and is analogous to the traditional 'sender-receiver' model of communication. This is the mode of communication implied by Tomlinson's definitions since he is concerned only with the role of the medium and the effect is has on audiences. The dialectical understanding of mediation, which Silverstone makes use of, draws attention to the idea that mediation involves some form of dialogue or interaction between the audience and the text in which the thing that is being communicated is further 'mediated' (Tester 1994:82). Put another way, mediation is not only mediated by the political, economic and socio-cultural context in which production takes place, but also by audiences who further mediate mediated experiences (Silverstone 2005:203). Combining Tomlinson's two definitions of mediation with Silverstone's definition of mediation as a dialectical phenomenon that is institutionally and technologically driven provides an account of mediation which highlights both its moral dimensions and its dependence on processes of reception and production.

0.2 MEDIATED EXPERIENCE

While these three definitions of mediation may help to define the processes through which spectators come to experience distant Others, they do not provide us with sufficient understanding of the *nature* of such mediated experiences. In other words, they do not help us to understand what impact the mediation of distant Others has on spectators. Since a regard for the nature of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others is what gives this thesis its principal purpose, this is a point worth discussing in more detail here.

In *The Media and Modernity* Thompson (1995) considers the ways in which the development of what he terms, 'communication media' has played a central role in the development of 'modern' societies. Thompson's central argument is that,

> The use of communication media involves the creation of new forms of action and interaction in the social world, new kinds of social relationships and new ways of

relating to others and to ones self. When individuals use communication media they enter into forms of interaction which differ in certain respects from the type of face-to-face interaction which characterises most encounters of daily life. They are able to act for others who are absent from daily life, or act in response to others who are situated in distant locale (1995:4)

While there are several fundamental ways in which the use of communication media has impacted upon individuals mediated experience of distant Others, such as on the process of self formation (Thompson 1995-234) or upon various dimensions of everyday life (Thompson 1995-206), it is the impact on spectator's action and interaction in relation to distant Others with which I am mostly concerned. Put in Weber's terms (1968), my focus is largely on 'social action', or action meaningfully oriented towards Others, rather than 'non-social action', or action that is entirely self-oriented and which does not 'take others into account'.

Thompson distinguishes between three forms of social interaction: *face-to-face interaction* which occurs in the context of co-presence and is dialogical in character, *mediated interaction*, such as telephone conversations and letter writing, which takes place in contexts that are spatially and/or temporally distinct and which is also dialogical, and *mediated quasi-interaction* which is also stretched across time and space but which is monological in character. It is the character of this mediated quasi-interaction with which I am concerned here because this is the form of interaction established by mass media (television, newspapers, radio, books, etc.) and in which spectators encounter distant Others (Thompson 1995:84).

Mediated quasi-interaction is distinct from face-to-face interaction and mediated interaction in two important ways. Firstly, whereas the participants in face-to-face interaction and mediated interaction are oriented towards specific Others, the participants in mediated quasi-interaction are generally oriented towards a much larger and more disparate range of Others. In other words, our interaction with distant Others through mass media lacks the interpersonal specificity of a telephone or face-to-face conversation because we are introduced to a wide range of often aggregated Others. Secondly, mediated quasi-interaction is monological in character, rather than dialogical, which means that the

flow of communication is predominately one way. We cannot talk with 'them' or provide them with accounts of our own experiences and existences.

Thompson argues that the use of communication media has created, not just new forms of interaction, but also new forms of action, characterised by the way in which they orient users towards Others who are situated in contexts that are spatially and perhaps also temporally remote (1995:100). In other words, the development of communication media has resulted in the possibility of, and problems associated with, 'action at a distance' (Boltanski 1999:15). In the context of reception, there are two important dimensions of 'action at a distance'. Firstly, the reception of media messages which might prompt action occurs in multiple reception contexts which do not overlap with one another (1995:109). Since mass media makes messages are available to an indefinite range of recipients, there will be a much greater diversity of social attributes brought to bear on the reception process than for face-to-face interaction. In other words, media messages are open to far greater range of interpretation and contestation. Secondly, the spatial-temporal context of reception does not overlap with that of the context of distant Others. Spectators can not respond directly to those distant Others who they observe on the television screen. Any response spectators make must therefore be made by way of contribution to other actions of which they are part, such as public debate or charitable donations to overseas charities. This concept of 'action at a distance' is useful because it helps to define the form of action with respect to distant Others with which this thesis is concerned. As will become evident, my concern is largely with 'action at a distance' as public talk, even if only a whisper in the mind (Boltanski 1999:20; Chouliaraki 2006:30).

0.3 MEDIUM

0.3.1 Centrality of television

It should be clear from this discussion that the nature of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others and the nature of the process of mediation itself are highly contingent upon the form of medium under consideration. In this thesis the concern is solely for the mediation of distant Others by the medium of television.

Despite the growth of internet usage in the UK and an apparent resurgence of radio, television still remains by far the most frequently consumed form of media in the lives of most audiences in the UK. In the most recent survey of the UK communications market by the Office of Communications (Ofcom 2010a), levels of television viewing were found to be unchanged from the previous year with the average adult in the UK spending around 3 hours and 45 minutes per day watching television. As Figure 0.1 shows, despite the popularity of the internet, television accounts for half of all media use during the evening. Furthermore, on-demand television and digital recorders continue to help television viewing remain popular. The proportion of time-shifted television viewing in 2010 has more than tripled since 2006, from 1.7 per cent to 5.9 per cent, and 31 per cent of households with internet access used it to watch online catch-up TV in 2010, an 8% increase from 2009 (Ofcom 2010a).

Figure 0.1: How the UK public uses media throughout the day (Ofcom 2010a)
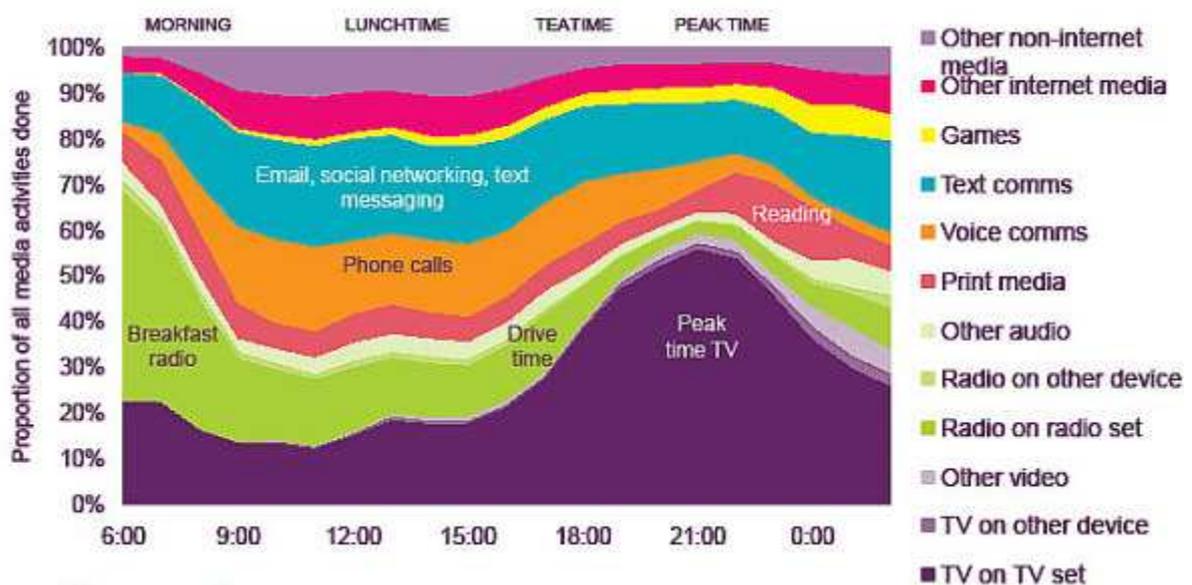
Television viewing not only takes up a significant proportion of the lives of audiences in the UK but there is substantial evidence to suggest that it is the principal means through which such audiences encounter distant Others. The UK public themselves report television in general, and television news in particular, as being the most influential source of

information in informing their 'attitudes' towards 'developing countries'. The annual DFID funded study of UK citizens' attitudes towards development issues consistently finds television news (76%) and television documentaries (55%) to be the two sources of information used by most people to find out about 'developing' countries (TNS 2010). Similarly, in one of the most extensive empirical study to date of the mediation of developing countries, the authors of *Viewing the World* (2000), conclude that the media in general are the most influential source of information about the 'developing world' for the UK public and that television in particular is the most important.

> Television was a strong source of beliefs and impressions about the developing world. Viewers generally perceived the developing world in a negative way, blaming this on television images (DFID 2000:3).

This conclusion was based on the Glasgow University Media Group's (GUMG) approach of tracing patterns in public talk about 'developing countries' back to different sources. In summary, if the choice of medium to be investigated is based on a consideration of the one through which spectators encounter distant Others most often, then television appears to be the most appropriate choice.

The focus of this thesis is specifically on television coverage of various broadcasters in the UK, including the BBC, ITV and Channel 4. While opening myself up to criticisms of 'methodological nationalism', or of a 'nation-state definition of society and politics' (Beck and Sznaider 2006:2) this focus on one country is chosen both to provide some de-limitation to the area of study and because it is towards the regulation and policies within the nation-state, which arguably still have the greatest power over media content (see Silverstone 2004), which the work in this thesis seeks to have relevance.

0.3.2 More news is bad news

As will become evident in the next chapter, most previous studies of the mediation of distant Others have focussed exclusively on television news, with a small number of studies focussing on non-news factual programming (see Dover and Barnett 2004). I am aware of only a very small number of articles or studies in this field which directly address non-factual

television genres, such as drama (Wright 2004; Yanacopulos and Mohan 2006; Padania 2007). One of the principal reasons for this focus on factual television coverage appears to be an adoption of a political science approach to the study of the media which understands the media largely as an informational resource with the potential, or not, for producing 'well informed citizens' (Robertson 2010:106). Such research investigates the quantity and accuracy of media coverage and asks questions of how this relates to the rational thoughts and behaviours of audiences. Philo, for example, argues that audiences of television news 'are misinformed [about developing countries] because of the low level of explanation and context that is given and because some explanations that are present in television reporting are partial' (2002:173). He goes on to argue that 'a change in the quality of the explanations that are given can radically alter both attitudes and the level of audience interest' (2002:173). The implication within such arguments is that as 'informational' programmes, news and documentaries serve as a real basis upon which people make rational judgements regarding their dispositions towards distant Others. If representations of developing countries were more accurate or detailed then audience dispositions would subsequently 'improve'.

While television may indeed play an informational role, my concern is with a broader range of dimensions of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others, rather than just the analytic dimensions. If we are to gain a more complete understanding of the role of the media in regulating spectators' experiences of distant Others then we should expand our concern to include non-news genres, even those associated with the affective dimension of mediated experience, such as drama and 'entertainment'. As Inthorn and Reder argue, 'the role of the media lies not only at the cognitive level of proposals and arguments but also at the hermeneutic level of meaning and self-understanding' (2011:39). Indeed, Kyriakidou finds in her empirical research into public talk about mediated overseas disasters that, 'discourses relating to distant humanitarian disasters are bound to popular fiction rather than recourse to rational argument and deliberation' (2008:288). While Szerszynski and Toogood (2003) take this argument one stage further and argue that *all* television content should be analysed, including content such as advertisements and trailers, this would make the scope of this thesis unmanageable for one researcher.

Indeed, this is one reason for not choosing to focus on the mediation of distant Others in humanitarian communications; a subject for which there is a growing literature (see Cameron and Haanstra 2008; Chouliaraki 2010). I also choose not to focus on humanitarian communications because of their concern only for distant suffering rather than distant Others in general. Furthermore, the results of the audience research presented in this thesis and the annual DFID funded survey of UK citizens' attitudes towards development (TNS 2010) both suggest that audiences of UK television generally encounter distant Other far more frequently in news and factual television genres than in humanitarian communications.

0.4 DISTANT OTHERS

A definition of 'distant Others' has been left until now because it necessarily requires an understanding of several of the concepts previously defined. In this thesis the term 'distant Others' is used to refer, not simply to all those who are constructed in the conventional sense as Other, or as different from oneself (principally as citizens of the UK). Rather, the term is used to refer, more specifically, to those 'Others who would be otherwise out of reach' (Silverstone 2006:11) if it were not for the process of mediation (via the media). In other words, distant Others are those 'who only appear to us within the media' (Silverstone 2006:109), or who inhabit 'a world to which we would otherwise have no access' (Silverstone 2002:3). In Thompson's terms, distant Others are those who spectators can interact with only through mediated quasi-interaction (1995:84).

As indicated earlier, the 'distant' component of the concept refers to the geographical, the social/cultural and the moral dimensions of distance as they relate to 'Otherness'. This multi-dimensional understanding of distant Others is made explicit in Chouliaraki's definition of ethics.

> Ethics has to do with the norms according to which television represents the spectators' relationship to the distant 'other', to somebody the spectator does not experientially or culturally identify with and cannot, in principle, share the misfortune of (2006:22).

Within this definition, Chouliaraki defines distant Others as 'only appearing to us within the media' when she describes spectators as not 'sharing their misfortune'. She defines them in terms of geographical and social / cultural distance when she describes spectators as not 'experientially or culturally identifying with' 'them'. And she reveals her concern for the moral dimension of distance through the way in which she defines distant Others within the concept of ethics.

It is worth emphasising that this thesis is concerned with the mediation of *all* distant Others and not only those who are suffering, which is the focus of almost all other work in this field). Indeed, if our understanding of the moral role of the media is defined as 'the capacity of the media to involve us emotionally and culturally with distant 'others'' (Chouliaraki 2006:19), as is most often the case (see Silverstone 2006), then it is our mediated experiences of all distant Others we should be concerned with. How our experience of distant Others contributes to our own sense of humanity (Silverstone 2006), support for Overseas Development Assistance (Britain 2009) and our capacity for cosmopolitanism (Beck 2002), for example, are all linked, not just to our experiences of distant suffering, but to our experiences of distant Others in general. Indeed, if academic concern for distant Others extends only to instances in which 'they' are suffering, we leave ourselves open to the very same criticisms of misrepresentation and distortion which are often levelled at media coverage.

0.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have defined mediation as a process of 'overcoming distance', of 'passing through the medium' and as a dialectical phenomenon that is institutionally and technologically driven. The term 'distant Others' is used to refer to Others who would be otherwise out of reach were it not for the process of mediation.

My interest in the mediation of distant Others stems from a view that spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others is not as proximate or intense as it has the potential to be and, furthermore, that this is significant for a number of different reasons. Despite holding this position, I do not wish my normative view of the role that the media might play in regulating

spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others to determine my entire research agenda, as it has done for many previous studies. Rather, I wish to attempt to address a more fundamental question upon which arguments about the role the media should play, can be based. Specifically, I want to ask, how are distant Others mediated by television?

I begin to develop my answer to this question in the following chapter in which I follow Chouliaraki (2006) in arguing that much previous research into how distant Others are mediated by television conforms to one of two competing narratives. Seen together, these two narratives provide an unresolved, either/or account of the role of television in mediating experiences of distant Others. In the subsequent chapter I argue that Chouliaraki's *analytics of mediation* (2006) provides a useful approach to resolving these either/or arguments by inviting us to examine three particular dimensions of mediation as they relate to individual television texts. After critically reviewing her approach, I suggest a number of ways in which the analytics of mediation might be developed so that it might help us to learn more about the mediation of distant Others than it was originally designed for. Specifically, I argue that the analytics of mediation should be used to investigate the routine ways in which distant Others in general are mediated, across news and non-news television genres. I also argue that it should be complimented with a study of the process of reception and of the extent to which distant Others even appear on television.

In Chapter 3 I describe and explain the methodology of three inter-related studies designed to pursue this research agenda. These include a series of content analyses of international coverage on UK television, a textual analysis of a sample of news and non-news texts using the analytics of mediation and a study of reception which combines two phases of focus groups and a diary study. The results of these three studies are presented and discussed in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. These results enable me to make claims about the routine way in which distant Others are mediated by television news and the capacity of different television genres to produce different mediated experiences of distant Others. This thesis concludes by discussing the implications of these findings for broadcasters, producers, policy makers, regulators and academics.

Chapter 1: The Mediation of Distant Others

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter existing accounts of how distant Others are mediated by television are reviewed. I argue, though not originally (Chouliaraki 2006), that almost all of these accounts adhere to one of two narratives about how the process of mediation shapes spectators' experiences of distant Others: what I refer to as the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives. As Chouliaraki has argued in a similar review of literature, both narratives stress the process of 'passing through the medium' in regulating the distance between spectators and distant Others (2006:24). Both narratives also maintain that the process of mediation can overcome distance between spectators and distant Others. However, they both reach very different conclusions as to the sense of proximity produced and the quality of experience thus generated (Chouliaraki 2006:24). I conclude that, seen together, these two narratives present an either/or understanding of how the process of mediation shapes spectators' experiences of distant Others and that if we are to advance our understanding of the mediation of distant Others then a way of attempting to resolve these either/or arguments needs to be found.

I choose to use the rather simple terms 'positive' and 'negative' to describe these narratives, not because I wish to reveal a personal judgement upon the value of either narrative, but as a reflection of the way in which debates over the mediation of distant Others are often framed in the media, policy documents and research. It is frequently argued, for example, that media coverage of developing countries is 'negative' but that it should be more 'positive' (Ebo 1992; DFID 2000), or that Western publics have 'negative' perceptions of developing countries and ways need to be found of using the media to encourage them to be more 'positive' (Mengara 2001; VSO 2001:3). Such generalising and normative terms, in my view, mask the complexities and many contingencies of the process of mediation and of mediated experience. As will become clear, my intention is to provide a way of moving beyond such debates.

Few of the accounts I review here define their concern as being with 'distant Others' and not all with 'mediation', choosing instead to variously define their concern in terms of

'cosmopolitanism', 'medium theory', or 'the production, content and reception of media coverage of developing countries'. Despite this, they all fall within the concern of this thesis. Firstly, because these accounts are all concerned with the role of the media in 'overcoming distance' and 'passing through the medium' (Tomlinson 1999), although as we shall see, they vary in the extent to which they focus on one or another of these dimensions of mediation. Secondly, because they are all concerned in some way with those whom spectators will only ever come to know through the media (Silverstone 2006:109).

Within this particular focus, the literature reviewed in this chapter refers both to those distant Others who are suffering, as is the main concern of most accounts of the literature in this field, including Chouliaraki's review of 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' accounts of mediation, but also to distant Others who are not suffering. It is this focus which distinguishes this review of the literature from previous accounts. Furthermore, my review is distinct in choosing to focus, not entirely on the underlying assumptions about how the process of mediation impacts upon spectators' mediated experience of distant Others, but on how these assumptions appear in the context of particular issues and debates in this area. By focussing on how these two contradictory narratives are played out specifically in debates over charitable donations and mediated cosmopolitanism, I hope to emphasise both their relevance and persistence.

1.1 THE 'POSITIVE' NARRATIVE

Those accounts which fall into the 'positive' narrative emphasise Tomlinson's (1999) first definition of mediation in which television is seen as 'overcoming distance' between spectators and distant Others, leading to a sense of proximity and a more intense mediated experience of distant Others. While also recognising the role that 'passing through the medium' has on spectators' mediated experiences of distance Others, such accounts conceive of this process, not as undermining our experience of distant Others, but as enhancing it (Chouliaraki 2006:24). Examples of such 'positive' accounts of mediation can be found in claims that the mediation of distant Others leads to increases in charitable donations to NGOs working overseas (or 'overseas giving') and that it promotes cosmopolitan dispositions.

1.1.1. The 'positive' effect of mediation on overseas giving

This 'positive' account of the mediation of distant Others is evident (though often only by implication) in claims regarding the relationship between levels of media coverage of overseas disasters and levels of overseas giving.

There is a wealth of anecdotal evidence which suggests a strong positive correlation between levels of media coverage of overseas disasters and levels of overseas giving. For example, drawing on evidence of the impact of Band Aid on levels of overseas giving, Philo argues that, 'in the year from May 1984 to April 1985 total charitable donations almost doubled for some international charities' (1993:123). Similarly, Olsen and Carstensen (2003) find that the total amounts of humanitarian assistance allocated to flood victims in Mozambique in 2000 and victims of a cyclone in eastern India in 1999 are positively correlated with the total number of relevant articles in the Western media. Cooper makes a similar claim when she argues that,

> The South Asia quake attracted 86 minutes of TV coverage on US networks in 2005 and raised over US$300 for every person helped. Meanwhile Somalia and Cote d'Ivoire – which were both also the subject of UN appeals in 2005 – attracted no TV coverage at all. They raised respectively just US$53 and US$27 per person helped (2006:14).

When an account of how the process of mediation operates is given, the two principal characteristics of the 'positive' narrative are drawn upon: that television helps to 'overcome the distance' between spectators and distant Others and that certain conventions of the medium actively enhance spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. For example, these two thoughts are both evident in Moeller's article entitled Regarding the Pain of Others (2006) in which she argues that there is 'a direct connection between media attention and donations' (2006:182). She illustrates this connection with the following quotation from Jan Egeland, former Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs at the United Nations.

We asked for $1 billion in the tsunami. We got 90 percent in no time....In northern Pakistan, we asked for only half of that, $550 million, and we have less than half of that three months into the effort.... If the media had followed it as much, if we had had... as many video clips to run on CNN and BBC and so on around the clock, as we did at that time, we might have had the same kind of a response (quoted in Moeller 2006:182).

By way of explanation of this apparent 'effect' she simply refers to a statement from a former Oxfam funding manager, Orla Quinlan, who said that 'if [audiences] are visually engaged, that brings it home and makes it real to them' (quoted in Moeller 2006:182). The thought that images of suffering 'bring it home' and 'make it real' for spectators draws very much on Tomlinson's first definition of mediation as 'overcoming distance'. Later Moeller combines this with the thought that certain conventions of reporting, or consequences of 'passing through the medium', can enhance this sense of immediacy. Orla Quinlan claims, for example, that 'pictures make all the difference. And running 1-800 numbers for relief organizations on the crawl across the bottom of the TV screen prompts people to give, too' (quoted in Moeller 2006:182).

Such accounts of the apparent direct, positive, correlation between overseas giving and media coverage are, on face value, rather persuasive and the 'positive' effect of mediation on overseas giving has, to some degree, come to constitute a form of commonsense about the importance of media coverage for the efforts of international NGOs to raise funds (Minear, Scott et al. 1996). There are, however, a number of significant weaknesses in such accounts.

Firstly, Brown and Minty (2006:3) argue that studies which make claims about the relationship between media coverage and overseas giving often make little or no attempt to quantify the magnitude of the causal relationship and are based largely on simple correlations between the two variables. For example, although peaks in overseas giving in the US in response to the Asian tsunami in 2005 may have occurred at the same time as peaks in US media coverage of the Asian tsunami, this correlation does not necessarily indicate causality. Both variables may simple be related to another variable. Indeed, both

increases in overseas giving and coverage occurred at the same time as the visit of US politicians to the region (Brown and Minty 2006:6).

Secondly, while Moeller's account of mediation may combine an understanding of 'overcoming distance' and 'passing through the medium', it does not, nor do almost any other accounts, consider the role of the audience in the process of mediation. In most cases these accounts appear to drawn on what Tester refers to as an implicit 'direct flow' model of the connection between television and the audience in which the audience are simply assumed to be subject to the flow of information from television, which subsequently compels them to donate (2001:113). In other words, there is an assumption that the mediation of distant Others simply compels an unquestioning audience to give money. Consequently, these studies are not well placed to answer the questions of why some members of the audience feel compelled to donate and others do not (Tester 2001:110).

Furthermore, these studies offer a media-centric account of the process of mediation which fails to appreciate the social, political and economic context in which mediation occurs. In other words, they ignore the thought that the apparent 'influence' of media coverage can only ever be part of the story. As Brown and Minty (2006:5-6) argue, additional reasons for the remarkably high levels of overseas giving in relation to the 2005 Asian tsunami include the timing of the disaster (on Boxing Day), Western familiarity with the beaches of Southeast Asia, the extension of the tax relief deadline in the US and the ease of giving online.

Finally, these accounts frequently fail to make sufficient distinction between the influence of the media on public dispositions and the subsequent actions audiences take. In other words, whatever the 'effect' of media content, whether awareness, empathy, care, pity or compassion, the necessary consequence is always donations. Such claims about media influence on overseas giving do not identify which aspect(s) of public disposition are apparently being influenced by the media, which then subsequently leads to changes in overseas giving. In some cases, levels of overseas giving are simply assumed to be synonymous with 'public concern' (Britain 2009:43), itself a term lacking any analytical precision (see also Philo 1993:123).

In summary, the oft cited claim that the mediation of distant Others necessarily leads to increases in overseas giving falls into the 'positive' narrative because, when an account of the operation of mediation is given, it emphasizes the possibility of 'overcoming distance' and the way in which the process of 'passing through the medium' can enhance the experience of immediacy. However, there are a number of weaknesses of such accounts which stem from the absence of sufficient regard for what I defined in the previous chapter as the third definition of mediation. In other words, while these accounts focus on the capacity of mediation to deliver immediacy, they overlook the political, economic and social context in which mediation takes place and the role of reception.

1.1.2. Mediated cosmopolitanism

Discussions of the role of the media in fostering cosmopolitan dispositions also frequently adhere to this 'positive' narrative. A cosmopolitan disposition can be broadly defined as a mode of orientation to the world... associated with a conscious 'openness' to cultural differences which entails, first of all a willingness to engage with the Other (Hannerz 1990:239; Tomlinson 1999; Vertovec and Cohen 2002). As Tomlinson argues, being cosmopolitan, or a 'citizen of the world', means having 'a disposition which is not limited to the concerns of the immediate locality, but which recognises global belonging, involvement and responsibility' (1999:185). There are a number of ways in which the apparent effect of the mediation of distant Others on cosmopolitan dispositions, or 'mediated cosmopolitanism', has been theorised, which adhere to the 'positive' narrative. Szerszynski and Toogood's (2003) discussion of three reasons why television is the form of media which lends itself most effectively to fostering a global sensibility serves as a useful basis for a review of some of these theoretical positions.

1.1.2.1. 'Extending the experiential reach of individuals'

Firstly, and most importantly for Szerszynski and Toogood (2003) and their colleagues, television is argued to be the form of mass media with the greatest potential for fostering cosmopolitanism because of 'how it produces and circulates images of places, brands,

peoples and the globe itself, and narratives of various figures, heroes and organisations' (Urry 2002:4). Szerszynski and Toogood argue that, in doing this, television provides a pervasive and continuous visible access to other peoples' experiences and existences, which would otherwise be unavailable. The way in which this 'access to the world' is understood to impact upon the audience's cosmopolitan dispositions is conceived of in three different ways.

Firstly, Szerszynski and Toogood argue that having visible access to other people's experiences and existences has the potential to 'dissolve the distinction between 'our' experiences and 'theirs' (2003:225) and make us reflect upon and perhaps do something about the conditions of distant Others. While Szerszynski and Toogood may provide an appealing view of mediation, they unfortunately do not also provide an account of *how* the increasing diffusion of information and images might help to stimulate and deepen a sense of global responsibility (Thompson 1995:264). In her discussion of this argument, Chouliaraki (2006) accuses those who make such claims of turning to 'wishful thinking' to explain this apparent 'effect' of mediation.

> Audiences, we are told, must turn their sense of responsibility 'into a form of moral-practical reflection' because this is 'the best – the only option we have'... The dream... is asserted, but the questing of how we get there is essentially ignored (2006:28-29).

Put another way, no account is given as to why having visible access to other people's experiences and existences should dissolve the distinction between 'our' experiences and 'theirs' and not reinforce them.

Secondly, Szerszynski and Toogood argue that visible access to other people's experiences and existences not only makes us think about and potentially take action in relation to distant Others, but also offers a space in which individuals can understand themselves in relation to the world by reflecting on their own social roles and identities (2003:225). As Barker argues in his theoretical and empirical work concerning the impact of television on our sense of self, television is a 'major and proliferating resource for the construction of cultural identity' (1999:7). He uses the term 'resource' to illustrate his argument that television, 'is actively appropriated and deployed by audiences in making sense of their

lives' (1999:7) and that it 'provides materials to be worked on' (ibid). This understanding of the media as providing discursive resources is also adopted by the small number of empirical studies into 'ordinary cosmopolitanism' (see Werbner 1999; Lamont and Aksartova 2000; Skrbis and Woodward 2007; Kyriakidou 2009)

This view of mediated cosmopolitanism is based less on 'wishful thinking' and, in Barker's account at least, draws on a well grounded 'active audience' approach to mediation (Morley 1993). However, Szerszynski and Toogood's argument that visible access to other people's experiences and existences will necessarily lead to a cosmopolitan identity is still highly problematic. Principally, they do not attend to the idea that spectators may not make use of the 'resources' television provides to produce a cosmopolitan identity, but instead, may use them to inform equally valid, though morally opposite, 'closed cosmopolitan' identities. In their empirical study of public talk about globalisation, for example, Skrbis and Woodward find that accompanying discourses relating to a positive orientation to distant Others 'was a counter discourse of fear, exclusion, global homogeneity, and suspicion of global others' (2007:734). In summary, while the proliferation of global images may indeed be used as part of an 'identity project', Szerszynski and Toogood provide no account of why this should necessarily lead to a cosmopolitan, rather than a 'closed cosmopolitan', disposition.

Finally, Szerszynski and Toogood argue that the proliferation of global images can lead to at least a 'banal' sense of cosmopolitanism, or a 'banal globalism', in the same way that a proliferation of national symbols, such as flying flags on public buildings, identifying with one's own sports-heroes and being addressed in the media as a member of a given society, constitutes a sense of 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995). Just as symbols of the nation provide the foundation for a national identity, so the proliferation of global images allows for the development of a 'banal globalism' or general feeling of being part of a global community (Hebdige 1990:20). As evidence to support this claim, Szerszynski, Toogood and Urry draw on the results of a 24-hour survey of all the visual images available on a variety of British TV channels. They find thousands of examples of various forms of 'global' images including images of the earth, aerial images of generic 'global' environments and wildlife that index the overall state of the environment. Szerszynski, Toogood and Urry also conducted a series of focus groups with members of the public from which they conclude that 'this array of

global imagery is familiar to viewers who are well able to discuss its main characteristics' (Urry 2002:6).

In a useful critique of the work of Szerszynski, Toogood and their colleagues, Halsall (2006) argues that they assume that the proliferation of global images, or global content in general, will necessarily have a 'positive' impact on audience's outlook towards distant Others. This assumption is revealed in their interpretation of the word 'banal' as something affirmative, in which images, despite their superficiality, might nevertheless form part of an understanding on the part of the spectator (Halsall 2006:3). As Urry argues, 'images can paradoxically provide stable forms of meaning and interpretation in a globalizing culture in which 'seeing is believing' (2002:6).

An equally valid interpretation of Szerszynski and Urry's concept of 'banal globalism', however, would be in a pejorative or critical sense, as a staged, superficial reality (Halsall 2006:3). Baudrillard (1994), for example, would clearly regard the 'staged' nature of the reality presented by global images as something shallow and artificial rather than something affirmative. Furthermore, their empirical evidence is not sufficient to support their assumption about the 'positive' effects of the proliferation of global images. The existence of thousands of global images and the familiarity of audiences with these images tells us little, if anything, about what the consequences of such images are for cosmopolitan dispositions. In short, Urry et al, do not give sufficient explanation as to why the proliferation of global images should lead to cosmopolitanism, rather than any other feeling of being in the world.

1.1.2.2. Channel-hopping

Secondly, Szerszynski and Toogood argue that the practice, or even mere possibility, of channel-hopping which the medium of television allows for, 'creates an awareness of the sheer variety of places, ways of life and points of view that are available to us' (2003:226). In other words, through channel-hopping, or the ability to 'move' quickly at will between different places, television makes possible the cosmopolitan sentiment of 'mobility', or 'the capacity to undertake imaginative travel to other parts of the world' (Skrbis and Woodward

2007:742). Such imaginative travel, Szerszynski and Toogood argue, might have the effect of 'disembedding us from local cultures, traditions and identities' (2003:226) because it tends to erode any unexamined attachments to any particular form of life and instead, promotes an attitude of detachment towards specific, local styles. By way of support of this argument, Szerszynski and Toogood draw on the work of Newcomb and Hirsch (1984) who found that, when confronted with the constant juxtaposition of viewpoints on television, audience responses to questions about what they watched were characterised less by the giving of definite answers and more by the raising of questions.

While the idea that channel hopping creates an awareness of cosmopolitanism might be an appealing one, Szerszynski and Toogood fail to explain precisely *how* this awareness is created (other than by definition). As a result, they are not able to explain, nor do they even acknowledge, the equally valid alternative that the ability to change channel is also the ability to turn away from, and sever any proximity with, the Other. As Baudrillard argues, 'the mediated face makes no demand on us, because we have the power to switch it off, and to withdraw' (1995:5). Similarly, Bauman argues that through television the Other can be 'zapped out of the screen – and so out of the world – when they cease to amuse' (1993:178).

1.1.2.3. Simultaneous participation

Finally, Szerszynski and Toogood argue that television is unique in being able to offer spectators an experience of simultaneous participation in global events through the act of watching something at the same time as millions of dispersed Others (2003:226). Just as Anderson (1983) argued that television helps to create the nation as an 'imagined community' by addressing many people simultaneously, so television can help to create an imagined *global* community in the same way. The thought that the medium of television has a unique capacity to have us all watching the same images at the same time is also evident in McLuhan's (1968) idea of the 'global village'. McLuhan uses the notion of the 'global village', partly, as a metaphor for the world as a single community connected by the act of viewing. This argument is also present in Maffesoli's (1996:66) account of the 'symbolic universe' of post-modernity, in which he argues that it is principally through the activity of

viewing, rather than the content of television which establishes a 'feeling in common' between the viewer and 'other' fellow spectators.

In all these accounts the process of mediation is understood to 'overcome distance' between spectators and Others, but it is not distant Others towards which television orients spectators, but fellow spectators. As Chouliaraki argues in a review of such claims (in relation to distant suffering), 'in this argument, technological immediacy – the images that bring the sufferer close to our home – does not act as testimony of the sufferer's pain, but as a guarantee of the co-presence of spectators' (2006:27). Consequently, this should not be considered an account of how mediation produces a cosmopolitan disposition in relation to distant Others but an account of how television connects 'us' to people who are already like 'us' because they share our privileged position in front of, rather than behind, the screen.

Each of these accounts of mediated cosmopolitanism fall within the 'positive' narrative because they emphasise the capacity of television to overcome distance between spectators and distant Others and to produce a more intense mediated experience of distant Others, or, in this case, a sense of cosmopolitanism. Importantly, they also privilege the thought that the process of passing through the medium enhances spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others, either through channel hopping, allowing for simultaneous participation or by 'extending the experiential reach of individuals'.

In each case, however, insufficient attention is given to how, or in what ways, television provides a connectivity[4] between the UK public and distant Others. They subsequently fail to explain why mediation should lead to a cosmopolitan disposition rather than any other form of disposition. As Halsall argues, 'we must recognize the existence of an opposing force to that of cosmopolitanism: an immunizing and interiorizing force which might cancel out and indeed reverse any such trend' (2006:1). In the words of Beck, such studies frequently commit the 'cosmopolitan fallacy' (2002:29) of assuming that media coverage of distant Others necessarily leads to an expansion of horizons. While not all accounts of mediated

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[4] Tomlinson defines connectivity as the multiplicity of linkages, inter-connections and inter-dependencies that characterise modern social life (1999:2).

cosmopolitan adopt the same assumptions as those discussed above, I hope to have illustrated that there are many accounts of mediation cosmopolitanism which do conform to the 'positive' narrative. As we shall see in the next section of this chapter, the claims which fall into the opposing, 'negative', narrative offer a very different interpretation of the two definitions of mediation to those discussed here, although they too suffer from the same tendency to overlook a definition of mediation as a dialectical and institutionally and technologically driven phenomenon.

1.2 THE 'NEGATIVE' NARRATIVE

Those accounts which fall into the 'negative' narrative emphasise Tomlinson's (1999) second definition of mediation in which television is seen as interfering with the events that pass through it, which, unlike in the 'positive' narrative, *disrupts* the quality of the mediated experience of distant Others (Chouliaraki 2006:24). As Tomlinson puts it, the intervention of the medium is 'distancing' or even 'alienating': far from connecting us: it 'cuts us off' from distant events' (1999:173). In relation to Tomlinson's first definition of mediation, accounts which fall into the 'negative' narrative maintain that television does have the capacity to bring spectators and distant Others closer together but argue that the conventions of the medium interrupt the immediacy which such proximity might be presumed to engender. In the other words, the *capacity* of television to deliver immediacy, is simultaneously the *failure* of television to establish connectivity (Chouliaraki 2006:26). In Bauman's terms, which I discuss later, 'strangers' in the 'telecity' are

> gazed at without fear – much as lions in a zoo…[they are] indefinably close as object but doomed to remain, happily, infinitely remote as subjects of action – sanitized and safe (1993:178)

This 'negative' account of mediation can be found in claims that the mediation of distant Others decreases charitable donations and that it promotes non-cosmopolitan dispositions.

1.2.1 The 'negative' effect of mediation on overseas giving (Compassion fatigue thesis)

Perhaps the most famous study to adopt this 'pessimistic' narrative is Moeller's (1999) research into, and conceptualisation of, the concept of 'compassion fatigue'. She argues that while television allows American audiences greater capacity to witness distant events than ever before, the use of formulaic chronologies, sensationalised language and Americanised metaphors in the coverage of overseas disasters, inevitably results in 'compassion fatigue'. Moeller describes 'compassion fatigue' as a form of audience apathy towards the wider world in which the public are subsequently less inclined to engage in overseas giving (1999:3).

Further studies which have attempted to explain how the mediation of distant Others might be responsible for a sense of public indifference towards distant suffering, and a resulting lack of overseas giving, include the work of Kinnick et al (1996) and Campbell (2004). In his analysis of images of suffering, Campbell (2004) argues that the contemporary practices of 'censoring' and 'cleansing' images of death means that spectators are never confronted with the immediate reality of suffering, and therefore, are not invited to take action (2006:113). In perhaps the most thorough empirical research into the 'compassion fatigue thesis' (Tester 2001:47), Kinnick et al find evidence that this apparent 'compassion fatigue' is the result of the tendency of the media to present problems but not their solutions, an emphasis on the sensational and a lack of context (1996).

While all of these arguments maintain that television does indeed bring distant Others closer to 'us', they all insist that it does not provide us with a sense of immediacy. Whether because of formulaic chronologies and Americanised metaphors, contemporary practices of 'cleansing' images of death or by emphasising the sensational, they all share in common the thought that spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others is disrupted by the effect that the process of passing through the medium has on the 'reality' of what is being mediated. These accounts thus illustrate well the key dimensions of the 'negative' narrative and also contrast directly with the claims, discussed previously, regarding the 'positive' effect of mediation on overseas giving.

These accounts of the 'negative' effect of mediation on overseas giving also share in common with their counterparts a tendency to overlook the third definition of mediation.

For example, although Moeller's lucid account of an apparently pervasive feature of our mediated experience of distant Others has gained widespread usage in the media, public relations and politics (Cohen 2001:192), her account of what 'compassion fatigue' actually constitutes and of how it comes to impact upon public dispositions are both problematic. In her explanation of the operation of compassion fatigue, Moeller simply asserts that certain forms of news coverage will inevitably have the consequence of producing compassion fatigue.

> The public's response [to images of death] is to just turn the page. Voila. Compassion fatigue (Moeller 1999:14)

> What is the inevitable result much of the time? Compassion fatigue (Moeller 1999:32)

> So, of course, we fall victim to compassion fatigue (Moeller 1999:16)

Moeller offers little critical discussion of the precise details of the process by which the media fosters such a disposition, except to repeat that it is 'inevitable'. She also takes little account of the role of the audience in negotiating their own understandings from media texts. In his critique of this concept, Cohen (2001) argues that there can be no standard response to images of suffering in the way that Moeller describes since our individual reactions to suffering are predicated on our own readings of the images and our own personal attitudes and experiences. Similarly, Tester concludes from his discussion of the different ways in which audiences might feel 'compassion', that 'the complexity within the audience means it is more or less completely meaningless to make all-inclusive comments of the order that there is a general condition of compassion fatigue' (2001:76). Cohen's (2001) and Tester's (2001) arguments are supported by the empirical findings of Kinnick et al (1996) which reveal that individuals respond to pervasive coverage of an issue in a variety of ways, depending upon, amongst other things, their existing dispositions towards distant Others.

The 'compassion fatigue' thesis, has also been widely criticised for lacking clarity as a way of describing public dispositions towards distant Others. Cohen (2001) argues that compassion fatigue is used to mean different things in different situations (and operates via different

causal chains accordingly). Whether the 'fatigue' or the 'compassion' is emotional, intellectual or moral is not stated. Cohen uses the more precise concepts of 'information overload', 'normalisation' and 'desensitization' to attempt to disaggregate some of the different public dispositions that compassion fatigue is variously used to refer to. He finds no consistent response to suffering to be possible (2001:187-195). For example, in some cases, compassion fatigue refers to getting used to bad news and other times a reluctance to respond to demands for help. In sum, Cohen concludes that the notion of compassion fatigue is 'over-used, vague as a description and even vaguer as an explanation' (2001:191). We can conclude from this that just as the claims about the 'positive' effect of mediation on overseas giving were undermined by a lack of attention to processes of reception and to the wider social, economic or political context in which mediation takes place, so the same can be said of the compassion fatigue thesis (or Moeller's articulation of it at least).

1.2.2. Non-cosmopolitan dispositions

For many accounts of the way in which the mediation of distant Others encourages a cosmopolitan disposition, there is an opposing, but equally plausible, explanation of the way in which mediation encourages alternative dispositions. Since several of these were discussed earlier, here I will discuss just three further explanations, all of which fall into the 'negative' narrative. It is useful to introduce the first two of these accounts by reference to Tomlinson's (1999) discussion of Thompson's (1995) work on mediated experience.

In discussing the notion of 'mediated quasi-interaction', Thompson argues that despite the capacity of television to bring distant events into our most intimate material spaces, and thus, *close* to us, they nonetheless remain, 'for the most part... *distant* from the practical contexts of daily life' (1995:228). Thompson goes on to argue that this distance between the events we see on the screen and their relevance to our lives, derives, in part, from the fact that these events do not directly impinge on our lives but also from our perceived inability to intervene in them. This perceived inability to act, Tomlinson (1999:175) argues, is not entirely a consequence of the relative powerlessness of ordinary people in relation to the world but is also a consequence of the way in which our agency is circumscribed by television as a medium. In his words,

being routinely presented with images and information about events which are remote from our local lifeworld and over which we have no control or possibility of intervention, means that we inevitably experience ourselves as, in a certain sense, outside them. For, in the first sense, how could we practically be involved in all the vast number of events that are available to us via television? And second, these events obviously come to us in the highly mediated and physically contained form of miniaturised pictures on the screen (Tomlinson 1999:175-176).

It is in these two 'senses' in which two further accounts of the way in which mediation encourages alternative, non-cosmopolitan, dispositions can be found.

This first 'sense' is well illustrated by Tester's (2001) understanding of the notion of incommensurability. Tester defines incommensurability as the existence of a plurality of moral arguments, 'each of which is rational in terms of its initial premise but which is incompatible with the initial premise of an alternative argument' (2001:137), the consequence of which is an absence of any possible consensus over what ought to be done. Television, Tester argues, creates the conditions of incommensurability by continually presenting spectators with a number of circumstances, all of which invite spectators to take action, but which together, make it impossible to rationally arbitrate between them. Thus, spectators are left 'unable to make any decisive and consensually valid ethical judgements' (Tester 2001:54). In sum, while television may have the capacity to bring distant Others closer to spectators, or to 'overcome distance', in the process of 'passing through the medium' it renders each instance incommensurable, thus disrupting the quality of the mediated experience of distant Others.

Tomlinson's second 'sense' in which we experience ourselves as 'outside of' and distant from mediated distant Others, is best illustrated by reference to the work of Miller (1971) and Bauman (1993). In his discussion of the concept of the *telecity* in *Postmodern Ethics* (1993), Bauman argues that when 'strangers' are represented on television they lose their 'embodied presence' in that representation and thus lose their moral integrity. When the spectator is confronted with the stranger on television, 'there is, comfortingly, a glass screen to which their lives are confined' (1993:177). In being a representation on television the stranger becomes flattened out, a property only of the screen, a 'surface' (1993:177). The

stranger is denied any moral compulsion because they are, 'disembodied and disindividulated' (1993:177), something other than human, to the extent to which Bauman even questions whether it remains valid to talk of morality in this context (1993:177).

In a similar account of the capacity of the peculiar characteristics of the medium of television to involve us with distant Others, Miller (1971) discusses the way in which the sensory appeal of television is limited to the visual.

> TV is strikingly visual and the images which it presents are curiously disassociated from all the other senses. The viewer sits watching them in all the drab comfort of his own home, cut off from the pain, heat and smell of what is actually going on…The alienating effects is magnified by the fact that the TV screen reduced all images to the same visual quality. Atrocity and entertainment alternate with one another on the same rectangle of bulging glass (1971:126)

The argument of Bauman (1993) and Miller (1971) is that it is the medium itself which 'anesthetises' (Chouliaraki 2006:25) spectators from the effects of immediacy. Since the technology of television cannot mediate all the senses in which experiences are created, it can never truly connect us with distant Others in the way that face-to-face interaction may.

This particular account of mediation rests upon the assumption that distant Others can only be morally compelling if they possess 'material solidarity' (Tester 2001:6). This assumption is not always valid since there are circumstances, Tomlinson insists (1999:176), in which people do achieve some form of moral involvement with issues brought to them only via television. Otherwise we would not be able to account for public responses to the Asian Tsunami in 2005, for example. Furthermore, Bauman and Miller's account of the capacity of television is based on an assumption that mediation should be judged according to how closely it resembles face-to-face interaction. They regard face-to-face interaction as the ideal form of experience which mediated experience fails to live up to. In making this assumption, however, they overlook the thought that,

> the distance that separates one being from another in the face-to-face encounter is arguably just as significant, profound and ultimately unbridgeable as that which separates two cultures across differences of global space (Silverstone 2006:118-9).

Indeed, as Tomlinson argues (1999), we should regard face-to-face experience not as being somehow 'better', or indeed 'worse', than mediated experience but simply as an experience of a different existential order. Thus, not only does this second account fit well into the negative narrative because of its emphasis on the 'disrupting' effect of the medium, but, like many other claims which fit into the 'negative' (and 'positive') narrative, it offers an overly media-centric view of the process of mediation.

The third and final account given here of the way in which mediation encourages non-cosmopolitan dispositions does not offer such a media-centric view. In an attempt to move away from an entirely pessimistic account of mediation, Tomlinson invites us to consider the way in which mediated experiences of distant Others are incorporated into the everyday life-worlds of spectators. Rather than focussing on how the process of 'passing through the medium' transforms our mediated experience, Tomlinson asks us to consider how the process of mediation is mediated by audiences. Perhaps the most well cited account of this argument is given by Thompson (1995) who draws on the work of phenomenologists such as Shutz (1970) to argue that people relate *selectively* to the vast number of experiences available to them, based on their perceived relevance to the ongoing constitution of the self. Thompson argues that in constructing our self-identity (Giddens 1991) individuals draw on both direct and mediated experiences but that direct experiences have an existential priority over mediated experiences (1995:230). This point is well illustrated when Thompson argues that,

> For many individuals whose life projects are rooted in the practical contexts of their day to day lives, many forms of mediated experience may bear a tenuous connection to their lives: they may be intermittently interesting, occasionally entertaining but they are not the issues that concern them most (1995:230).

Because our direct experiences of the people we interact with face-to-face have an existential priority over our mediated experiences of distant Others that we gain from watching television, the spectator's concern for those who live nearer will always be greater than their concern for distant Others (Chouliaraki 2006:25). No matter how great the capacity of television to overcome the distance between spectators and distant Others, the very fact that the spectators' experiences of such Others is mediated will always render such

experiences less 'intense' than for those 'closer to home' (Tomlinson 1999:178). This is the only account of mediation I have discussed which draws on what I have identified as a third definition of mediation which takes account of its dialectical and 'institutionally and technologically driven and embedded' (Silverstone 2005:189) nature.

In summary, these three accounts of the way in which mediation encourages non-cosmopolitan dispositions have been used to further illustrate the different contexts in which the 'negative' narrative appears, but also, when compared with the accounts of mediated cosmopolitanism, to illustrate the contrast between the two narratives. Either the process of mediation produces, through various means, cosmopolitan dispositions, or it produces alternative, communitarian or 'closed cosmopolitan' (Ong 2009:454) dispositions. Similarly, I have shown that there are contradictory arguments that claim that the mediation of distant Others leads to increases in charitable donation or that it leads to decreases. It is this contradiction between the two narratives which I suggest in the conclusion to this chapter currently limits our understanding of how distant Others are mediated by television.

1.3 CONCLUSION

Between them, the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives take account of much of the literature which addresses how the process of mediation shapes spectators' experiences of distant Others. Other contexts in which these narratives occur include claims relating to mediation and civic engagement (see Shaw 1996; Darnton 2005 for relevant examples of the 'negative' and 'positive' narratives respectively) and mediation and support for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) (see Martin 2005).

The 'positive' and 'negative' narratives are also particularly apparent in competing accounts regarding the role of media in shaping public 'concern' and 'interest' towards developing countries. Claims which suggest that greater amounts of television coverage of developing countries will necessarily lead to greater public 'interest' in and 'concern' towards developing countries fall into the 'positive' narrative because they assume that any instance of mediation inevitably provides spectators with a more proximate experience of distant

Others. Such claims are often made or implied in policy documents and research by the UK Department for International Development (see DFID 2008).

Opposing claims, which fall into the 'negative' narrative, argue that greater coverage of distant Others in the media necessarily reduces public 'concern' or interest in developing countries because the process of 'passing through the medium' (of television) disrupts any sense of immediacy or proximity. Hudson and van Heerde, for example, use the results of a binary logistic regression of DFID's 2005 Omnibus survey of public attitudes towards development, to support their hypothesis that 'awareness of events in developing countries from TV news or newspaper readership is *negatively* related to concern' (Van Heerde and Hudson 2010:342). Specifically, it is television's apparent tendency for 'sensationalism' which Hudson and van Heerde hold as being principally responsible for this apparent 'negative' effect of mediation on public 'concern'.

In whatever context the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives appear, we can conclude that, seen separately, they each offer their own reasonably coherent, if at times underdeveloped, understanding of how the process of mediation shapes spectators' experiences of distant Others. The 'positive' narrative, emphasises television's capacity to 'overcome distance' between spectators and distant Others, leading to a sense of proximity and regards the process of 'passing through the medium' as enhancing this experience. By contrast, the 'negative' narrative emphasises the process of 'passing through the medium', which renders the *capacity* of television to deliver immediacy, simultaneously its *failure* to establish connectivity (Chouliaraki 2006:24).

Importantly, there are few claims in either narrative which understand the process of mediation as 'a contextualised social phenomena' (Thompson 1995:11). This leads them, in general, to offer an overly media-centric account of mediation which fails to take account of the political, economic and socio-cultural context in which production takes place or the role of the audience in further mediating mediated experiences. I have also critiqued various claims in each narrative for failing to provide sufficient account of how, or in what ways, television provides a connectivity between spectators and distant Others.

My central argument, however, is that, seen together, these two narratives present an either/or understanding of how the process of mediation shapes spectators' experiences of

distant Others. The mediation of distant Others either encourages overseas giving and cosmopolitan dispositions by creating a sense of immediacy, as in the 'positive' narrative. Or it discourages overseas giving and cosmopolitanism by disrupting a sense of immediacy, as in the 'negative' narrative. In other words, seen together, these two narratives provide us with two contradictory answers to the central question of this thesis - how are distant Others mediated by television?

If I am to help to move our understanding of how distant Others are mediated by television beyond these entrenched and incompatible narratives and attempt to answer the central question of this thesis then I must find a way of attempting to resolve these either/or arguments. This is the aim of the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Expanding the analytics of mediation

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one of this thesis I argued that previous studies of the mediation of distant Others are characterised by an adherence to one of two contrasting narratives. Those accounts which conform to the 'positive' narrative necessarily assume that the process of 'passing through the medium' of television enhances the capacity of the medium to 'overcome distance' between spectators and distant Others, thus leading to a sense of proximity and a more intense mediated experience. By contrast, those accounts which conform to the 'negative' narrative assume that the process of passing through the medium will necessarily disrupt the quality of the mediated experience of distant Others. I concluded that, seen together, these two narratives provide us with an either/or way of understanding the role of television, which does not adequately address the question of how television provides a connectivity between UK audiences and distant Others.

I am certainly not the first to identify two conflicting narratives in existing accounts of the mediation of distant Others. Indeed, Chouliaraki (2006) and Cottle and Rai (2008) have each recently identified similar conflicting narratives in different aspects of the literature I have reviewed. Controversy over what Chouliaraki describes as the 'ethical role of the media' (2006:24) can be traced back as far as Adorno's (1978) claims about the effects of the culture industry and Merton's (1946) counter claims about the way in which mass media can form social cohesion by creating new rituals. Peters argues that such controversies in media theory themselves derive from a deeper clash between Durkheim's functionalist, consensual view of society and Marx's conflictual view (1999:223 cited in Chouliaraki 2006:35).

In order to attempt to go some way towards resolving, rather than reinforcing, these two persistent, conflicting narratives, I begin this chapter by reviewing the recent work of Chouliaraki (2006), who, in the development of her 'analytics of mediation', I argue, provides us with the most suitable framework for doing so. Specifically, I discuss the value of three key moves which Chouliaraki makes in developing her analytics of mediation in *Spectatorship of Suffering* (2006); adopting a particular empirical approach, identifying and providing a means of resolving several paradoxes which exist between the two narratives

and making use of Bolter and Grusin's (2000) notions of hypermediacy and immediacy. In the remainder of the chapter I critically review Chouliaraki's work in order to identify how it might usefully be expanded. Specifically, I argue that we might learn more about the ethical role of the media if we concern ourselves with the mediation of distant Others in general across a number of television genres, and not just those suffering on television news and if we also include an analysis of the process of reception. I conclude this chapter by making clear the value of the analytics of mediation for addressing my overall research question but also how Chouliaraki's application of it differs from my own.

2.1 TOWARDS AN ANALYTICS OF MEDIATION

2.1.1 An empirical approach

In Chouliaraki's review of previous accounts of 'how the process of mediation may shape the cosmopolitan spectator' (2006:23) she identifies a literature polarised between 'utopian' accounts, which celebrate the capacity of the media to generate concern for distant suffering, and 'dystopian' accounts which regard the potential of the media to generate genuine concern for distant suffering as impossible. Chouliaraki argues that these two narratives leave us with a seemingly paradoxical either/or understanding of the role of the media, just as was argued in the previous chapter. The potential of the media to connect the spectator to the sufferer is either *de facto* possible, as in the optimist narrative, or it is *a priori* impossible, as in the pessimistic narrative. As Robertson puts it, it is 'at once inevitable and impossible' (2010:149).

In order to provide an account of the mediation of distant suffering that moves beyond these abstract either/or understandings, Chouliaraki argues that we should move away from attempting to address these grand questions through theoretical argument and should instead approach them through the analysis of particular examples of television content (in her case, television news coverage of distant suffering). In other words, she argues that we should examine how these competing arguments are seemingly resolved in specific examples of the mediation of distant suffering. This approach to analysing the role of the media is inspired by Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*, or 'practice that approaches ethics as

the situated enactment of values, rather than abstract principles of conduct' (Chouliaraki 2006:19). In this approach, the potential of mediation to connect the spectator to the sufferer should be considered neither *de facto* possible, nor *a priori* impossible. Instead, it should be understood as having its own historical and social conditions of possibility in which the stories television tells us about human suffering place spectators 'in particular ethical relationships to the sufferer, thereby, inviting or blocking the spectator's feelings for the sufferer' (Chouliaraki 2006:18-19).

To be clear, Chouliaraki (2006) is not arguing that existing accounts of the mediation of distant suffering lack empirical support. Indeed, many are replete with empirical evidence (see Moeller 1999; Urry 2002). Rather, she would argue that such empirical data is discussed only in the context of any one particular account of mediation which falls into either of the contradictory narratives. They do not deploy empirical analysis to examine how the different theoretical possibilities of mediation are played out in reality.

In order to examine empirically *how* the either/or understandings of mediation are seemingly resolved within individual television news texts Chouliaraki develops an elaborate theoretical and methodological framework which she describes as an *analytics* of mediation. She uses the term 'analytics' because it refers to a research strategy which derives its results by means of the study of examples (2006:37). In her review of existing accounts of mediated cosmopolitanism, Chouliaraki identifies what she describes as three paradoxes which exist between the contradictory positions offered by the 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' narratives. The 'paradox of technology' draws attention to the claims that the media simultaneously establishes and undermines the immediacy of the sufferer, the 'paradox of distance' relates to the role of mediation as establishing both proximity and distance and the 'paradox of in/action' draws attention to the claims that mediation renders the spectator as both actor and as onlooker (Chouliaraki 2006:37). She suggests that in order to study empirically the manner in which television attempts to resolve the competing 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' narratives we should examine empirically how these three paradoxes are temporarily resolved in specific news texts. In other words, in order to examine whether or not media texts do or do not connect spectators with distant Others, we should examine how the central contradictions between the competing 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' narratives are played out in individual texts. Put in her terms, investigating empirically these three

dimensions of mediation 'allows us to examine how television actually produces its own ethical norms and standards for public conduct' (Chouliaraki 2006:71).

2.1.2 Resolving the paradoxes of mediation

2.1.2.1 Paradox of technology

The 'paradox of technology', is described by Chouliaraki as the competing thoughts that technology both distorts the authenticity of suffering, which leads to indifference, and that it connects the sufferer with the spectator and therefore leads to a sense of immediacy. In what Chouliaraki describes as the 'pessimistic' narrative of mediated cosmopolitanism, the technological form of the medium 'sanitises' reality, that is, it 'deprives on-screen suffering of its compelling physicality and shifts the fact of suffering into pixel fiction' (2006:25), rendering suffering simply as a thing to watch (2006:24-25). By contrast, in the 'optimistic' narrative, the constant flow of images and information provided by television is understood to, 'inevitably open up the local world of the spectator to the sight of the 'other' and, broadly, to non-local experiences' (2006:28).

The same paradox of technology can be identified in the literature reviewed in the previous chapter. In the 'positive' narrative, authors such as Szerszynski and Toogood (2003) argue that television connects us to distant Others by providing a proliferation of global images which lead us either to reflect on the condition of the Other, reflect on our own self or at least form a sense of banal cosmopolitanism. By contrast, in the 'negative' narrative, authors such as Bauman (1993) argue that television disembodies distant Others by confining their lives to a glass screen, thus rendering them beyond our immediate concern. The paradox of technology is perhaps most obvious in the thought that television allows us both to literally switch on and switch off from distant Others.

Chouliaraki argues that in order to examine how these competing thoughts are seemingly resolved in specific examples of mediation we should examine the 'politics of pity' (Boltanski 1999) produced by mediation, or 'the ways in which television uses image and language so as to render the spectacle of suffering not only comprehendible but also ethically acceptable for the spectator' (Chouliaraki 2006:3). The politics of pity is a particular way of

understanding responses to the spectacle of distant suffering, which Boltanski describes as, 'a politics which takes hold of suffering in order to make it a political argument par excellence' (1999:33-34). What defines a politics of pity from other responses to suffering, such as compassion or a politics of justice, is that it involves a clear distinction between those who suffer and those who do not that is based on luck rather than merit. In a politics of pity, suffering is experienced by numerous individuals and there is a focus on suffering as a spectacle (Boltanski 1999:1-5).

In the context of resolving the paradox of technology, Chouliaraki refers to the politics of pity as the way in which television news draws upon various other media and their genres to construe the spectator-sufferer relationship via different emotions, whilst also seeking to present this relationship as transparent and objective (2006:38-39). In other words, in order to analyse how television, as a technology, may (or may not) connect the spectator with the sufferer within the framework of the politics of pity, Chouliaraki asks us to examine how television 'remediates' (Bolter and Grusin 2000) old genres of suffering (such as radio or photography). Bolter and Grusin draw on McLuhan's remark that, 'the content of any medium is always another medium' (1967:8) to define 'remediation' as 'the representation of one medium in another' (2000:45). Chouliaraki uses this theoretical notion to argue that television (indeed, all media), far from offering a unique account of our relationship with distant suffering, 'rearticulates and reforms... old genres' and in-so-doing, 'operates discursively within their premises' (2006:38). Her argument is not that television does not have the capacity to reformulate our relationship with distant Others in new ways, but that it does so by appropriating and reforming old media and that any relationship which television does offer us can be understood by analysing the nature of such appropriation. For example, Chouliaraki argues that the empathy apparently produced in one news item she analyses, 'relies on the telephone and the visual shots' (2006:175), whereas the reflective contemplation produced in another, relies partly on the *professional gaze* of the camera' (2006:176). This is an important move because rather than asking us to judge between competing claims about how television works as a technology to mediate distant Others, Chouliaraki effectively sidesteps these debates by asking us to consider mediation through television as the re-mediation of other media.

In order to guide her examination of the politics of pity, or the 'remediation' of suffering, Chouliaraki draws on a typology of media genres of suffering produced by Boltanski in *Distant Suffering* (1999). Boltanski distinguishes between three different media genres which television news might draw upon, which correspond to different potentials for emotion and options for action on suffering that different medium give rise to. The *novel* organises the spectator's affective potential around empathy with the sufferer, or 'sentiment' and was initially carried by the medium of the book. The *manifesto* organises the spectator's affective potential around denunciation of the evil-doer, and was initially carried by the medium of the political pamphlet. The *tableau vivant* organises the spectator's affective potential, not around emotional states, but around distant contemplation of the aesthetics of suffering, and was initially carried by the medium of the painting. By understanding television as a technology that variously re-articulates and reforms these three media genres and their different potentials for emotion and options for action on suffering, Chouliaraki argues that we can examine how the paradox of technology is temporarily resolved in the mediation of suffering on television.

Boltanski derives his three 'topics' of suffering by drawing on rhetorical theory, a close reading of Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and by incorporating a review of historical material, such as detailed case studies of the use of different 'topics' of suffering in France since the 19th century. He argues that, when confronted with suffering, the only morally acceptable response is to take some form of action and that since the spectator of distant suffering is far removed from the suffering itself, the only feasible form of action available to the spectator at that time is speech.

> One can commit oneself through speech; by adopting the stance, even when alone in front of the television, of someone who speaks to somebody else about what they have seen (Boltanski 1999:xv).

This speech does not have to be audible; indeed, it can be simply a 'whisper in the mind' (Boltanski 1999:20). Even such a whisper, 'evokes a scene... where the spectator's action is assumed to be visible, audible and subject to criticism by all' (1999:20) and involves a certain reflexive ability in which the spectator is able to consider himself as taking action as speaker (1999:40).

Boltanski argues that in order for speech to be considered a morally *acceptable* response to the shocking spectacle of distant suffering, it must both report what was seen and, at the same time, how this personally affected and involved the spectator. The three possible ways in which this can be done are in the form of *empathy, denunciation* and *contemplation* which, Boltanski argues, were established through the formation of different literary genres (pamphlets, novels, art criticism) from the middle of the eighteenth century. For example, a spectator who sympathises with suffering through a painting is far more free to contemplate upon events 'at a distance' than the reader of a political pamphlet because 'it is not claimed that the positions occupied by the painter and his object are reversible' (Boltanski 1999:126) in the way they are for a political pamphlet.

There are certainly claims in Boltanski thesis that one might take issue with on rhetorical or empirical grounds, such as his argument that a 'whisper in the mind' constitutes a form of public action, whether *public* action is indeed the only morally acceptable response to distant suffering (see Wright 2011:8) or the extent to which different literary genres played a role in establishing these 'topics' of suffering. However, these do not undermine, to a terminal degree, Boltanski's central claim (and the claim that is most important for Chouliaraki and for this thesis), that there are three (morally acceptable) forms of response to distant suffering and that these correspond, to a greater or lesser extent, to different media genres which television variously re-mediates. This is significant because by investigating how these different media genres are re-mediated by television, we can establish what potential for emotion and options for action is evident in any particular text, and thus, investigate how the paradox of technology is played out within a given text.

2.1.2.2 Paradox of distance

The 'paradox of distance', can be found in the competing ideas that mediation situates spectators 'too far' from suffering, leading to depersonalisation and indifference, and at the same time, that it brings spectators close to suffering, leading to intimacy and connection. In the 'pessimistic' thesis, the failure of mediation to provide connectivity between the spectator and the sufferer is the result of its failure to close the distance between them. In the 'optimistic' narrative, the capacity of mediation to provide connectivity between the

spectator and the sufferer is the result of its ability to bring the scene of suffering closer to the spectator.

This same 'paradox of distance' can be identified in the more contextualised discussion of the literature given in the previous chapter. The claims which fall within the 'positive' narrative rest upon the thought that television brings distant Others close enough so that spectators might be compelled to foster a cosmopolitan position, for example. By contrast, those arguments relating to the 'negative' role of television claim that while television does have the capacity to bring the spectator and distant Others closer together, the conventions of the medium also keep the spectator distant from the Other.

In order to examine how this contradiction is temporarily resolved in specific examples of the mediation of distant Others, we can analyse the way in which the dimensions of proximity–distance between the spectator and distant Others are managed by television. Or more accurately, Chouliaraki suggests that an analysis of the construction of distance is most easily achieved by analysis of the construction of space-time, since distance is a function of both space and of time (Bakhtin 1937).

Importantly, Chouliaraki warns that the capacity of mediation to connect the spectator to the sufferer through the regulation of space-time is not entirely related to the degree of proximity. In other words, spatiotemporal closeness is not always directly related to emotional closeness. She draws on Silverstone's now well used concept of 'proper distance' to argue that connectivity between the spectator and the sufferer requires that audiences 'acknowledge the Other as the same and at the same time as different from the self' (Silverstone 2006:47). To bring the Other too close to the spectator may lead to the 'cultural neo-imperialist' assumption that Others are just 'like us' and any connectivity that was felt would not be based on a cosmopolitan sentiment. If the media are to invite connectivity, they must have 'the capacity to bring people together whilst simultaneously keeping them apart' (Silverstone 2003:259). This is achieved by positioning spectators at a 'proper distance' from the Other; neither too close, nor too far. Silverstone draws on Levinas and Arendt to define proper distance as:

> … [the] understanding [of] the more or less precise degree of proximity required in
> our mediated interrelationships if we are to create and sustain a sense of the other

sufficient not just for reciprocity but for a duty of care, obligation and responsibility, as well as understanding. Proper distance preserves the other through difference as well as through shared identity (2006:47).

The purpose of introducing the notion of 'proper distance' here is not to necessarily advocate for it, not least since it may be regarded as an overly 'demanding' (Ong 2009:463) requirement and one that does not translate to easily into empirical analysis (see Wright 2011). Instead, it is introduced here to illustrate the thought that the most compelling space-times are those which hover between closeness and distance rather than those which offer absolute proximity. Chouliaraki further argues that by reminding us that spatio-temporal immediacy is a fragile construction, the concept of proper distance 'brings into focus the fact that the ethical positions implicated by… the spatial dimension of mediation are context specific and shifting. So they have to be determined case by case rather than once and for all' (2006:86).

2.1.2.3 Paradox of in/action

The 'paradox of in/action' and can be found in the competing ideas that mediation situates spectators both as inactive onlookers to the scene of suffering and as active, involved actors. In what Chouliaraki describes as the 'pessimistic' narrative of mediated cosmopolitanism, suffering is understood simply as a spectacle and the spectator is reduced to adopting the role of passive voyeur of the pain of Others (2006:43). By contrast, in the 'optimistic' narrative, the constant flow of images and information about distant Others makes it possible for spectators to imagine themselves as public actors responding to the demands of Others (2006:43).

This same paradox of in/action can be found in (some of) the literature reviewed in the previous chapter. Those arguments relating to the 'positive' narrative claim the mediation of distant Others compels spectators to take action, in the form of charitable donations, for example, or to feel that they are at least able to take action. By contrast, those arguments relating to the 'negative' narrative claim it disposes spectators towards inaction or a lack of agency.

In order to examine how this paradox of in/action is temporarily resolved in specific examples of the mediation of distant Others, we can analyse the way in which spectator's perceived ability to act on distant suffering, or agency, is managed by television. Chouliaraki suggests the degree of agency spectators are invited to feel in relation to distant suffering is principally managed in one of two ways, based on two distinct practices of public life: the agora and the theatre. Firstly, Chouliaraki (2006:44) argues that, based on the metaphor of the theatre, the agency of the spectator depends on the extent to which the Other is construed as being like 'us' (referring to 'us' as fellow human beings). She refers to this as 'humanisation' and defines it as 'a process of identity construction that endows sufferers with the power to say or do something about their condition' (2006:88). Her argument is that the more action Others are shown to take in relation to their own condition, whether through speech, movement or 'gaze' (2006:124), the greater the extent to which they are humanised and the spectator is likely to feel agency towards them. Equally, the extent to which Others are 'dehumanised', perhaps through numerical aggregation or even complete 'annihilation' from the scene, has the opposite impact upon the agency of the spectator in relation to the Other. Chouliaraki draws on Silverstone (2002:5) to define 'annihilation' as being deprived of ones corporeal and psychological qualities and being removed from the existential order to which the spectator belongs (2006:89).

The second key dimension of mediation in which the agency of spectators is managed, according to the metaphor of the agora, is through the orchestration of the 'benefactor' and 'persecutor' figures (see Smith 1759; Boltanski 1999), 'who connect the reality of distant suffering to the spectator's private feelings vis-à-vis the spectacle they are watching' (Chouliaraki 2006:90). The benefactor and persecutor figures are not necessarily 'real' people on the screen: they are defined by Chouliaraki as 'symbolic figures organising and focalising the affective potential of the spectators towards a particular emotion' (2006:90). In other words, they articulate for the spectator a universal feeling of how to act towards the Other. The 'benefactor' figure guides the potential of the spectator to respond with care towards the Other, through perhaps the impulse to protect or comfort, whereas the 'persecutor' figure guides the impulse to respond with demands for justice, by perhaps denouncing the evil-doer (2006:91). The task in relation to the analytics of mediation is to study how the persecutor and benefactor figures 'literally incorporate the universal moral

value associated with suffering in each particular news item and how they make it part of a persuasive theatre of action' (Chouliaraki 2006:91).

In summary, we can investigate how the 'paradox of in/action' is played out within individual texts by examining the orchestration of the persecutor and benefactor figures and the degree of humanisation of distant Others.

2.1.2.4 Introducing the paradox of humanity

I mentioned earlier that the paradox of in/action is only apparent in *some* of the literature reviewed in the previous chapter. Specifically, it is relevant to considerations of the mediation of distant *suffering* where questions of action and the agency of spectators are raised. If our concern is with distant Others in general, who are, in many instances, not suffering, then the same paradox of in/action is not relevant, since, if distant Others are not suffering, no action is required on behalf of the spectator. In other words, while Boltanski argues that, 'when confronted with suffering all moral demands converge on the single imperative of action' (1999: xv), I suggest that when confronted with distant Others who are not suffering, action is not inevitably demanded.

We might argue that when distant Others are not suffering, it is not a paradox of in/action which is set up between the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives, but what might be termed a 'paradox of humanity'. When distant Others are not suffering, the contradiction between these narratives relates, not to whether spectators feel they are able to take action or not, but to whether distant Others are construed as being like 'us'. Do they share a common humanity, or are they, in Chouliaraki's terms, dehumanised? To illustrate: arguments relating to the 'negative' narrative rest upon the claim that the process of passing through the medium renders distant Others something other than human because they are 'disembodied and disindividulated' (Tester 2001:6) or simply 'a property only of the screen' (Bauman 1993:177). By contrast, the 'positive' narrative rests upon the thought that television overcomes the distance between spectators and distant Others as fully humanised individuals. This is the same distinction that Chouliaraki and Orgad have recently made between the discourse of 'common humanity', which construes the other as 'an other

with humanity... [sharing] the all-inclusive space of the human species' (2011:342) and the discourse of 'strangeness', which 'emphasize[s] the irreducible 'otherness' of the other' (2011:343).

The difference between the paradox of in/action and the paradox of humanity is an important conceptual distinction because it leads us to examine different dimensions of mediated experience (agency or appreciation of common humanity). Analytically, however, I argue that both involve analysing the same aspects of a text. In the first instance, the degree of humanisation of distant Others remains important for establishing the extent to which the Other is construed as being like 'us'. The only difference is that while, in the paradox of in/action, the extent to which distant Others are humanised is assumed to correspond with the spectator's perceived sense of agency vis-à-vis distant Others, in the paradox of humanity, the degree of humanisation of distant Others is an important dimension of mediated experience in and of itself. Secondly, an analysis of the orchestration of the 'benefactor' and 'persecutor' figures remains important for addressing the paradox of humanity because when distant Others are not suffering they may adopt a role other than that of 'victim' and the figures of benefactor and persecutor provide a useful starting point for considering what that role might be. Furthermore, if distant Others adopt such roles, this can help to construct them as possessing greater agency. If distant Others are shown to occupy the role of benefactor, rather than victim, for example, then they may be shown to have the power to do something about the condition of others and hence be shown to be more humanised.

In summary, my concern for the character of the mediation of distant Others who are *not* suffering, as well as those who are, leads me to identify a fourth contradiction between the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives which Chouliaraki is not concerned with: a 'paradox of humanity'. However, I have argued that the means of investigating this contradiction remain fundamentally the same as for investigating the 'paradox of in/action'.

2.1.3 Hypermediacy and immediacy

In order to provide us with clear guidance as to precisely what questions we should be asking of media texts so as to examine how they seemingly resolve these paradoxes of mediation, Chouliaraki draws on a distinction between mediation as *immediacy* and mediation as *hypermediacy*. These two concepts are drawn from the work of Bolter and Grusin (2000) who argue that there are two styles, or strategies, of 're-mediation' which they label *hypermediacy* and *immediacy*. Hypermediacy is defined as 'a style of visual representation whose goal is to remind the viewer of the medium' (Bolter & Grusin 2000:272). It is understood by Bolter and Grusin as the dimension of mediation which allows the spectator to recognise that the experiences we have when consuming media are brought about through the presence of a medium. Immediacy is defined by Bolter and Grusin as 'a style of visual representation whose goal is to make the viewer forget the presence of the medium and believe that he [or she] is in the presence of the objects of representation' (2000:272). This is understood by Bolter and Grusin to be the dimension of mediation which allows for the images and scenes spectators witness to act upon their emotions as if what they were watching were 'real'.

Bolter and Grusin describe hypermediacy and immediacy as coexisting, mutually dependent dimensions of mediation. For example, 24 hour news channels make use of hypermediacy by assembling on screen ribbons of text, photographs and graphics, in an effort to provide immediacy, or up-to-the-minute and complete news coverage (2000:9). Similarly, even the most hypermediated texts, such as music videos, use multiple media and elaborate editing in an attempt to create a sense of immediacy, or the 'liveness' of live performances (ibid). Thus, both dimensions of mediation are seen as inseparable because they depend upon each other to provide a compelling mediated experience.

In developing her analytics of mediation, Chouliaraki argues that understanding mediation as immediacy and hypermediacy 'makes it possible to consider the... paradoxes of mediation... in a new light' (2006:40). The term hypermediacy is used by Chouliaraki as a category to identify meanings inherent in the medium: 'in the technologies of verbal and visual recording that turn the screen into a material reality of images and narratives' (2006:71). In other words, a concern for hypermediacy is a concern for those meanings produced by the medium itself, whether by visual editing, camera angle, linguistic narrative, etc.. In approaching mediation as hypermediacy we ask questions of how technology shapes

the encounter between spectators and sufferers (2006:29). The notion of hypermediacy also relates to Tomlinson's second definition of mediation (1999), in which the concern is for the way in which the medium itself interferes with the experience of the thing that is being communicated. In this context, Chouliaraki describes hypermediacy as being concerned with 'suffering passing through the media' (2006:39).

In Chouliaraki's words, a focus on immediacy invites us to analyse, 'how the news brings forth emotions and wishes for engagement with suffering as an immediate reality for the spectator' (2006:71). This approach invites us to ask questions about what the content is about and how it makes us feel. The notion of immediacy relates to Tomlinson's first definition of mediation (1999), in which mediation is understood in terms of the facilitation or delivery of distant events into people's localities. In this context, Chouliaraki suggest that an approach to mediation as immediacy understands the mediation of suffering 'as if it were happening in front of our eyes' (2006:39). Chouliaraki agrees with Bolter and Grusin that these two dimensions of mediation cannot be separated because an understanding of one presupposes an adequate understanding of the other (2006:40).

These two theoretical categories play an important analytical role for Chouliaraki because they prompt us to ask two different sorts of questions about how each of the apparent paradoxes of mediation are seemingly resolved in media texts. In doing so, they also enable Chouliaraki to maintain a concern for mediation as both, 'overcoming distance' and as, 'passing through the medium' (Tomlinson 1999) within the framework of her empirical approach. This is something that no other empirical approach has currently achieved.

In relation to the 'paradox of technology', the approach to studying mediation as hypermediacy invites us to ask questions about how the processes of passing through the medium, such as techniques of visual editing or camera angle, bring together different genres of suffering. The approach to studying mediation as immediacy invites us to ask how these historical genres of suffering may give rise to different emotions or options for action for the spectator (2006:39). The concern here is for which topic(s) of suffering (if any) the text appeals to most strongly. In relation to the 'paradox of distance', the approach to studying mediation as hypermediacy invites us to ask questions about how the process of passing through the medium, such as camera work or voiceovers, regulates space-time

relationships between spectators and sufferers. Applying the concept of immediacy invites us to ask questions about what emotional and practical reality the text is presenting the spectator with, and thus, whether the text is appealing to feelings which establish greater proximity, such as empathy, or greater distance, such as denunciation (2006:42). Finally, in attempting to resolve the 'paradox of in/action' and the 'paradox of humanity', the approach to analysing how television texts manage the degree of humanisation of distant Others is associated with hypermediacy because it is largely through choices over camera angle, framing, linguistic narrative, verbal and visual editing, etc. through which the agency of distant Others is constructed. A concern for the role of the 'benefactor' and 'persecutor' figures is associated with immediacy because 'it focuses on suffering as a scene of emotion, where dispassionate observers are invited to feel for and identify with characters already active in the scene of suffering' (Chouliaraki 2006:43).

2.1.4 Summary of the analytics of mediation

In the first half of this chapter I have discussed three key moves which Chouliaraki makes in developing her analytics of mediation, each of which contributes to providing this thesis with a useful basis for its investigation into the way in which distant Others are mediated by television. Firstly, Chouliaraki argues that we should move beyond the either/or arguments produced by opposing narratives of mediation by analysing particular examples of television content.

Secondly, in order to examine empirically *how* the either/or understandings of mediation are temporarily resolved within individual texts Chouliaraki not only identifies three contradictions which exist between the competing 'positive' and 'negative' narratives (in addition to a further 'paradox of humanity' which I have identified) but she also develops ways of resolving these apparent paradoxes. We can explore how the paradox of technology is apparently resolved within individual texts by investigating how different media genres and their associated potentials for emotion and options for action are re-mediated by television. We can address the paradox of distance by analysing the ways in which dimensions of proximity and distance between spectators and distant Others are managed by television texts. Finally, we can investigate how the paradoxes of in/action and humanity

are supposedly resolved within individual texts by examining the orchestration of the persecutor and benefactor figures and the degree of humanisation of distant Others.

Thirdly, Chouliaraki argues that in applying the analytics of mediation, mediation should be understood as a process involving both immediacy and hypermediacy. Making use of these analytically useful, if rather abstract, concepts helps to preserve a concern for mediation as 'passing through the medium' and as 'overcoming distance' when investigating each of these three dimensions. It also provides us with clear guidance as to the precise questions we should be asking of media texts in order to investigate how they direct spectators in relation to distant Others.

Chouliaraki's analytics of mediation is often regarded as a 'groundbreaking' (Ong 2009:450) approach to understanding and investigating empirically the mediation of distant suffering. Although seldom used as a tool for empirical analysis or directly challenged (Ong 2009), her approach has helped to, amongst other things, demonstrate the way in which we might engage in a 'systematic examination of... [the] cultural resources through which television news stories contribute to the sort of collective dispositions that matter to cosmopolitanism' (Robertson 2010:11). However, despite its uses, and as I have already begun to argue, there are a number of dimensions of Chouliaraki's approach which require further critical discussion and, I will argue, adapting, if we are to use it more effectively to learn more about the mediation of distant Others. In the second half of this chapter I will discuss how the analytics of mediation might usefully be developed to include a wider range of subjects and television genres and to also include an analysis of the process of reception.

2.2 EXPANDING THE ANALYTICS OF MEDIATION

My principal critique of Chouliaraki's work in *Spectatorship of Suffering* (2006) and the modifications I propose stem largely, not from the development of the analytics of mediation itself, but from her application of it. Having developed her methodological and theoretical framework in the form of the analytics of mediation, Chouliaraki uses it to investigate the conditions under which mediated cosmopolitanism might be possible in television news. By applying the analytics of mediation to a range of nine television news

items, ranging from brief live-voiceovers of news agency video footage, to coverage of the 9/11 attacks across a range of television news genres, Chouliaraki identifies a typology of news involving three 'ideal types' of news. Firstly, 'adventure' news, which is described by Chouliaraki as news of suffering 'without pity' because it is void of agency and because it places the spectator at an extreme distance from the sufferer (2006:10). Secondly, 'emergency' news, which is described as news of suffering 'with pity' because it offers the spectator a number of options for action and places the spectator closer to suffering. Finally, 'ecstatic' news, such as the September 11th attacks, which places spectators as close to the suffering as possible and offers the spectator a distinct position of agency.

Chouliaraki concludes that within this typology of news, only 'emergency' news has the potential to foster a cosmopolitan disposition because it contains the possibility of both action at a distance and action on behalf of distant Others. By contrast, 'adventure' and 'ecstatic' news enact a communitarian logic, either by presenting distant Others as too distant and too Other to require action, or by rendering them like 'us' and no thus longer Other (Chouliaraki 2006:187).

While Chouliaraki uses the analytics of mediation to investigate the capacity of television news to foster a cosmopolitan disposition towards distant suffering, I argue below that it can be made to be relevant to a much broader range of issues and television genres. I argue that it is useful to apply the analytics of mediation to the mediation of distant Others in general, across all television genres, and not just to those suffering in television news. Furthermore, I argue that this should be complemented with a concern for the process of reception. I begin, however, by arguing that the analytics of mediation should be used to make claims about what is routine about the ways in which distant Others are mediated by television, rather than just claims about what is extreme.

2.2.1 An empirical approach

2.2.1.1 Routine rather than extreme coverage

Chouliaraki is not the only academic in this field to argue that competing narratives are best resolved by treating the mediation of distant Others as an empirical question to be resolved

through the analysis of individual texts. Indeed, Robertson (2010) and Cottle and Rai (2008) have recently argued that we should place even greater emphasis on the need for empirical analysis than Chouliaraki suggests.

Robertson (2010) agrees with Chouliaraki that abstract, theoretical arguments about the consequences of international content for spectators should be resolved through empirical analysis. Specifically, she argues that claims about the influence of specific texts on spectator's 'cosmopolitan dispositions... [need to be treated as] at least partly, an empirical question' (2010:145). In other words, whether or not, and how, mediated cosmopolitanism is produced is best investigated by means of the examination of specific examples. 'Some narratives may invite us to engage in an (imagined) dialogue with distant Others, even if many may not' (Robertson 2010:145), and it is the role of the analyst to investigate empirically which do, which do not, and why. As Silverstone argued, 'it is the quality of the contact – the quality of the touch that is surely the issue' (1994:30).

By making this argument, Robertson adopts a similar assumption to Chouliaraki: that the mediation of distant Others will neither always lead to a cosmopolitan disposition nor will it never lead to a cosmopolitan disposition, but that it is contingent upon the peculiarities of the text. Thus, Robertson would treat the 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' claims which Chouliaraki identifies as claims of theoretical possibility, rather than empirical certainty (Tester 2001:50). Though unstated, the point underlying this assumption is that no over-arching thesis can ever be 'true' in all cases because all communication is context dependent. Adopting such a post-structuralist approach is the only means of resolving these either/or understandings because it challenges the view that these competing narratives are mutually exclusive.

In order to begin to address mediated cosmopolitanism as an 'empirical question', Robertson produces a quantitative analysis of the 'superficial features' of over 2000 news items, on eight different channels, 'combined with a closer analysis of the narrative traits of representative stories' (2010:xii). Her 'radically expanded' empirical focus, 'relative to most other empirical studies of cosmopolitanism' (Robertson 2010:xii), including Chouliaraki's, stems from her critique of existing accounts of mediation cosmopolitanism. Robertson argues they either lack *any* empirical support, or, in the case of the research by Chouliaraki

(2006) and Szerszynski and Urry (2002), they fail to provide *sufficient* empirical evidence which would allows us to make generalisable claims.

> Although [Szerszynski and Urry] have combined focus groups and interviews with journalists with textual analysis, the media texts they have examined comprise a small amount of material. One of their studies, for example, surveyed all the visual images available on several television channels – but in one country (the UK) and over one 24 hour period. It was a good start but the insights yielded by the study are difficult to generalise (Robertson 2010:10).

In such accounts of the scope of her sample size and the limitations of others, Robertson reveals her second account of the value of her empirical approach - it allows her to make generalisable claims about what 'cosmopolitan things' (2010:11) *are* happening, rather than about what *can* happen. Chouliaraki's focus on just nine television news items stems from a desire to provide an account of three 'ideal types' (Robertson 2010:11) of news in order to investigate under what conditions mediated cosmopolitanism *might* be possible. By contrast, Robertson's 'radically expanded' empirical focus enables her to make generalisable claims about how mediated cosmopolitanism operates in reality. In short, Robertson's empirical analysis allows her to make claims about what is routine, or commonplace, rather than claims about what is only possible or extreme.

The value of being able to make such claims is that it opens up a different range of questions which can be addressed. Rather than focussing entirely upon whether mediated cosmopolitanism is possible and under which conditions, an expanded empirical concern enables Robertson to concern herself with, and make attempts to answer, questions about such things as the differences between the ways various news channels mediate distant Others, or how distant Others may be mediated differently when they are reported in various contexts. Robertson herself illustrates this point when she argues that one of the key questions Chouliaraki's limited empirical focus prevents her from answering is, 'who do different media say are like us?' (2010:11).

Robertson makes a further distinction between her work and Chouliaraki's when she draws attention to the explicit 'normative interest' of Chouliaraki's work. Robertson's empirical approach, she claims, is designed to investigate, 'whether or not cosmopolitan things *are*

happening, not whether or not they *should* be happening' (2010:11). By treating the role of the media as a purely empirical question and by investigating content that is routine rather than extreme, Robertson avoids adopting an overly normative approach because her concern is simply with establishing what is there, rather than what should be there. As Tomlinson argues, we should concern ourselves with phenomenology rather than making moral-existential judgements (1999:174). This argument resonates more widely with the literature on mediated cosmopolitanism, which is increasingly characterised by calls for a greater empirical grounding to help inform the normative claims by authors such as Beck and Chouliaraki (see Robertson 2008; Kyriakidou 2009:484; Ong 2009).

In their recent framing analysis of international news, Cottle and Rai (2008) also place great emphasis on the need for empirical investigation to help evaluate the claims made by 'optimists' and 'pessimists' regarding the effects of international television content. In their review of debates over the implications of international and global news flows for 'communications democracy', Cottle and Rai identify celebratory 'global public sphere' accounts and opposing critical 'global dominance' accounts. Both of these positions, they argue, fail to attend to exactly *how* 'leading world news channels... communicatively present the voices, views and values of contending interests and identities from around the world' (2008:157). For example, debates in UNESCO about media imperialism and the New World Information and Communications Order (NWICO) were based on a consideration of information flows from a macro-level of abstraction and said little about how voices from around the world actually featured *within* these news flows. Similarly, Cottle and Rai accuse those concerned with the effects of the liveness of news of basing their claims on 'limited empirical engagement' (2008:159) since they fail to attend sufficiently to details such as the differences between outlets.

Robertson summarises Cottle and Rai's conclusion as being that there is a 'communicative complexity in the different structures that routinely deliver television news' that is not being captured by such studies and that such complexities can only really be gasped 'through empirical analysis rather than subsumed in theoretical generalisation' (Robertson 2010:11). In their own words, Cottle and Rai argue that,

it is time to engage much more closely and empirically with exactly how disparate conflicts and cultural differences around the world are publicly enacted and elaborated in and through the communicative structure of global news channels. Only then will we be able to arrive at a more considered and evidence-based evaluation of global news output and performance and its potential contribution to communicative democracy (2008:177).

Significantly, Cottle and Rai respond to their own challenge by analysing the 'communicative frames' used by different broadcasters to report on global events. Because of their empirical concern with the nature of the occurrence of different 'communicative frames' across almost 10,000 news items from six countries, Cottle and Rai are able to make claims about what role the media *is* playing and not just claims about what role the media *can* play, just as Robertson is.

In summary, Robertson (2010) and Cottle and Rai (2008) agree with Chouliaraki (2006) that polarised, abstract, theoretical arguments about the mediation of distant Others are best resolved through empirical analysis. However, the work of Robertson and Cottle and Rai shows how an empirical approach can also help to extend our concern beyond a consideration of whether the mediation of distant Others *can* happen, to discuss the complexities of whether and how it *is* happening. They also suggest that an empirical approach can help us to avoid adopting an overly normative approach to the study of mediation. Thus, in attempting to resolve the competing 'positive' and 'negative' narratives identified in the previous chapter, it seems appropriate not just to adopt an empirical approach, as Chouliaraki suggests, but to extend it beyond claims of what is extreme to claims about what is routine.

2.2.1.2 Hierarchy of human life

Attempting to make more generalisable claims about how distant Others are mediated by television affords the opportunity of expanding upon another dimension of Chouliaraki's work. In developing her analytics of mediation, Chouliaraki adopts an approach to the study of the role of the media in public life which preferences questions over the ways of

understanding our relationship with distant Others that are made available by television news. There are, however, another set of concerns upon which these 'cultural' questions rest. Questions over *how* the media orients us towards distant Others are only relevant *if* such Others are indeed brought to our attention at all. Or put another way, Chouliaraki's concerns for the conditions of possibility which mediation allows for building a relationship between spectators and sufferers are predicated on an awareness or an encountering of distant Others. At one point in *Spectatorship of Suffering* Chouliaraki herself expresses an interest in concerns over the appearance of distant Others when she argues that 'if... suffering is not made visible, then the question of 'who deserves what' becomes irrelevant to the Western spectators before it is even articulated' (2006:216).

In one of the very few other attempts to modify the analytics of mediation, Joye (2009) suggests that we take into account, not only what is present in the media, but also what is absent or neglected. He suggests that we introduce a fourth category of news alongside 'adventure', 'ecstatic' and 'emergency' news, that is, 'neglected news'. Joye describes this, from the perspective of pity at least, as 'a subdivision of Chouliaraki's regime of adventure news given the shared status of the distant Other as no cause for concern or action. As news coverage is absent here, involvement of the public is logically non-existing' (2009:593). Considering the extent of the appearance of distant Others, and such 'media silences' in particular, is meaningful because it helps us to 'recognise that textual or journalistic meaning is communicated as much by absence as by presence; as much by what is "missing" or excluded as by what is remembered and present' (Richardson 2007:93)

The appearance, or lack of appearance, of distant Others on television can be understood to be important, not just for the way in which it regulates spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. It also can also be understood as contributing to the reproduction of global power relations through the reproduction of hierarchies of place and of human life and the normalisation of inequalities (Pieterse 1995:234). Indeed, one of the stated purposes of Chouliaraki's research is to explore further the ways in which hierarchies of place and of human life are reproduced in the news narratives of television ('or how a more egalitarian representation of the other can take place in these narratives' (2006:7)). In other words, how certain scenes of suffering are construed as being of no concern to spectators while others bring a tear to the eye. While Chouliaraki goes some way towards establishing this

through her analytics of mediation, we might also argue that such hierarchies are not only a product of the properties of texts but of the extent of the very appearance of distant Others. In other words, choices over whose suffering is reported also inform the hierarchy of place and of human life we are invited to engage emotionally and practically with (Chouliaraki 2006:8). Those who are left outside the scope of such engagement are necessarily lower down this hierarchy. Thus, alongside concerns for what is routine about the mediation of distant Others I also choose to focus on the *appearance* of distant Others and how this contributes both to indifference and to a hierarchy of place and human life.

2.2.2 Process of reception

An important assumption made by Chouliaraki (2006) and Cottle and Rai (2008) is that it is solely media texts, and not the system of their production or the role of audiences, that should be subject to analysis in an empirical investigation into the mediation of distant Others. This is certainly the view taken by Chouliaraki in *Spectatorship of Suffering* whose approach is designed entirely for the analysis of television news texts and who readily accepts that her approach is 'neither about news production... nor news interpretation... [it] is [solely] about the news text that reaches our living room' (2006:3). This focus in Chouliaraki's work can be attributed to her understandings media effects and the process of mediation. By critically reviewing these two dimensions of Chouliaraki's approach I will discuss the value of complementing any textual analysis with a parallel study of the process of reception.

Chouliaraki's focus entirely on textual analysis might lead one to assume that she conforms to a 'strong effects' theory of communication in which media texts are understood to have a direct, immediate and powerful effect on their audiences. Indeed, this is a criticism of her work made by Ong (2009) who takes exception to Chouliaraki's reliance solely on textual analysis to investigate the process of mediation. Ong accuses Chouliaraki of committing a 'fallacy of internalism' by 'deducing the effects of A to B from a close reading of A rather than a dialogue with B' (2009:451). A 'fallacy of internalism' refers to an overemphasis on the internal characteristics of texts in which assumptions or claims about the likely effects of texts are made without undertaking any formal analysis of their production or reception

(Ferguson 2007). For example, Robertson argues that Chouliaraki lacks empirical evidence drawn from the study of the reception of media texts to support her conclusion that neither 'emergency' nor 'ordinary' news 'provides us with a quality of connectivity that brings with it a responsibility towards suffering outside Western communities of belonging' (2010:11).

Given her focus solely on analysing media texts it is perhaps surprising that Chouliaraki claims to sympathise with concerns for the active role of the audience. She devotes a significant amount of attention in *The Spectatorship of Suffering* to explaining her understanding of media effects in terms of 'governmentality' in which the agency of the spectator is seen as one of *conditional freedom* (Foucault 1991)*.* In this understanding, spectators have the freedom to negotiate the meaning of texts but this freedom is conditioned by the constraints of the text. While the moral horizons of the spectator are constrained by media discourse, spectators are understood neither as dupes of technology nor subjects of media discourse. Based on this understanding, Chouliaraki defines mediation as:

> A technology of discourse that construes spectators as free agents, people who may act on the spectacle of suffering of their own free will – but always within the premises of the ethical action already defined within the contexts of historical and political power relationships and viewing (2006:50).

While her analytics of mediation may provide us with a useful means of investigating how media texts appear to regulate spectators' responses to distant Others, Chouliaraki does not provide any means of also taking account of the different ways in which audiences might respond to these texts. It seems reasonable to conclude that if we wish to take seriously Chouliaraki's claim that audiences have conditional freedom and pay attention to the wider hermeneutic tradition of media studies then it is useful to complement any textual analysis with a parallel investigation into the process of reception.

Chouliaraki's focus solely on media texts also appears to derive from her principal understanding of mediation as both a process of 'overcoming distance in communication' (Tomlinson 1999:154) and of 'passing through the medium' (ibid). Mediation is not defined as a dialectical notion or as institutionally and technologically embedded (Silverstone 2005:189). As was argued in the introduction to this thesis, defining mediation only in these

two ways produces a view of mediation which focuses entirely on the role of the medium and which fails to account for the processes of production and reception in further mediating experiences. In particular, if I am to take seriously Silverstone's understanding of mediation as a dialectical process then it is necessary to complement any textual analysis with a parallel study or studies which take into account the process of reception.

Given the above discussions, it seems appropriate to conclude that including a concern for the process of reception is a valuable way of complementing Chouliaraki's analytics of mediation. Not only will this help to provide a more contextualised account of the process of mediation but it will allow us to move away from a 'strong effects' theory of communication, which Chouliaraki herself rejects. Furthermore, since Chouliaraki's work has, as yet, not been directly challenged (despite other authors offering seemingly contradictory readings of the same texts (see Ong 2009:461)), the conduct of audience research provides the rare opportunity to, in effect, 'test' whether the claims produced as a result of the application of the analytics of mediation are borne out in the responses of audiences. In this respect, I take my lead from Wright (2011), who uses audience research to 'test' and ultimately critique Silverstone's notion of 'proper distance', questioning its 'workability', cross-cultural applicability and sensitivity to empirical evidence (see also Kyriakidou (2008) and her 'testing' of Beck's notion of empathy through audience research).

2.2.3 A broader empirical concern

In the final section of this chapter I will discuss the value of expanding upon Chouliaraki's relatively narrow empirical application of the analytics of mediation to include a concern for the mediation of distant Others in general across a number of television genres, and not just those suffering on television news.

Chouliaraki's concern for the spectatorship of distant suffering typifies a number of studies of the mediation of distant Others which focus on 'peak moments' (Robertson 2008:23) of news coverage of trauma, including suffering, disasters, conflict and tragedy (see Kyriakidou 2008; Robertson 2008; Cottle 2009). Chouliaraki's principal justification of her choice of subject is that 'no other spectacle can raise the ethical question of what to do... when

confronted with realities that occur too far away from everyday life for us to feel that we can make a difference to them... so compelling as suffering' (2006:3). The logic of this justification itself rests upon Chouliaraki's particularly demanding understanding of cosmopolitanism which she describes as a 'dual position of reflexive identification' (2006:214). For Chouliaraki a cosmopolitan disposition is only possible when a spectator has both feeling for the sufferer and sees themselves as responding to suffering as part of an ongoing public dialogue. In her words, Chouliaraki defines cosmopolitanism as a single position which an individual may hold which combines both a position of acting 'as-if they were in the scene of the suffering, which is a position of immediacy [and] as-if they were speaking about our views on suffering in public, which is a position of hypermediacy' (2006:214). Since, according to Chouliaraki, such a cosmopolitan position is only rarely evoked through the process of mediation, she is required to analyse 'peak' moments of coverage when the affective potential of television is perceived to be at its greatest.

Given that I am concerned in this thesis with the nature of our mediated experience of distant Others in general and not with a particular cosmopolitan disposition such as Chouliaraki's notion of reflexive identification, I am not bound by the same requirement to focus on 'peak' moments. Indeed, since my concern is with mediated experiences in general and with spectators' encounters with *all* distant Others, it is logical to focus my empirical concern upon a range of television texts in which distant Others appear in a variety of circumstances and not just those in which suffering takes place. The value of studying what might be termed more mundane mediated experiences of distant Others is summed up by Robertson who argues in the conclusion to her own study of 'peak' coverage that,

> it is not clear what lessons tsunami coverage teaches us when it comes to a more enduring relation between the media and cosmopolitanism... we need to learn more about the everyday stories we are told about the world around us, and not just the reporting of real time tragedy (2008:24).

In other words, we can only begin to appreciate the full extent of our mediated experience of distant Others if we do not confine our concerns only to our experience of the distant suffering.

If I am to include within my analysis a focus on mediated encounters with distant Others in general then it seems appropriate to also include a concern for more than just the genre of television news because distant Others appear in more than just this one context. Indeed, television news only accounts for around 10% of all television output in the UK (Ofcom 2010aa). Put simply, to focus on news alone is to focus on what television does not do most of the time. Furthermore, as was argued in the introduction to this thesis, if we are to gain a more complete understanding of the role of the media in regulating spectators' experiences of distant Others then our theoretical and empirical research must move beyond a focus on genres associated an informational role to include those associated with the affective dimension of mediated experience.

2.3 CONCLUSION

I began this chapter by arguing that Chouliaraki's analytics of mediation provides a useful means of resolving the contradictory narratives discussed in the previous chapter, which currently dominate debates about the mediation of distant Others. Firstly, by treating the mediation of distant Others as an empirical question we can establish how these either/or arguments are resolved within individual texts. Secondly, by identifying key contradictions which exist between the competing 'positive' and 'negative' narratives and by developing ways of resolving these 'paradoxes of mediation' Chouliaraki provides us with a framework for establishing *how* distant Others are mediated by individual texts. Thirdly, by making use of the concepts of immediacy and hypermediacy Chouliaraki helps to preserve a concern for mediation as 'passing through the medium' and as 'overcoming distance' when investigating each of these dimensions. This also provides us with clear guidance as to the precise questions we should be asking of media texts in order to investigate what responses they offer spectators in relation to encounters with distant Others.

In the second half of this chapter I discussed a number of ways in which Chouliaraki's analytics of mediation could be expanded so that it might be used to learn more about the mediation of distant Others. Specifically, I argued it should be used to make claims about what is routine about how distant Others in general are mediated across a range of television genres and not just for identifying 'ideal types' of news coverage of distant

suffering. I also outlined the value of complimenting any detailed textual analyses with a study of the absolute and relative appearance of distant Others and a study of the processes of reception.

It is important to be clear at this stage that while the analytics of mediation may provide a useful framework for attempting to resolve the contradictory narratives discussed in the previous chapter, this does mean that I adopt, wholesale, all of the same assumptions and aims as Chouliaraki. For example, whereas Chouliaraki has an overtly normative concern for investigating 'the conditions of possibility under which the figure of the cosmopolitan may come into being in the process of mediation' (2006:22), I am concerned simply for establishing the character of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others, whether cosmopolitan, communitarian or otherwise. Moreover, I do not regard proximity-distance and agency as significant only for the ways in which they contribute to managing the options for emotion and action available to the spectator, as Chouliaraki does. Since they constitute two of the contradictions that exist between the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives, I regard proximity-distance and action-inaction (and humanity/inhumanity) as important elements of the character of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others in and of themselves, regardless of whether they support or block options for emotion and action. In short, Chouliaraki uses the analytics of mediation as a means of resolving the paradoxes of mediation in order to establish the conditions under which it is possible for the media to cultivate an ideal identity for the spectator as a... cosmopolitan' (2006:2) within the framework of the politics of pity. By contrast, I intend to make use of a modified version of the analytics of mediation as a means of resolving the paradoxes of mediation in order to establish the character of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others more broadly, whether within the framework of the politics of pity, in response to suffering, or not.

Indeed, one of the main points for discussion in the next chapter is if and how an approach designed specifically for addressing the mediation of distant suffering, within the framework of the politics of pity, can reasonably be modified and applied to instances in which distant Others do not appear within this framework. More broadly, the aim of the next chapter is to consider how the research agenda laid out in this chapter can be realised. I argue that the aims of this thesis can be investigated most effectively through a number of complementary

empirical studies including a diary study and series of focus groups, a series of content analysis and the application of the analytics of mediation to a number of specific texts.

Chapter 3: Capturing mediation

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate how distant Others are mediated by UK television. In the review of existing literature in this field I argued that existing claims are often polarised between two narratives which, seen together, provide an either/or account of how distant Others are mediated by television. In the previous chapter I discussed how Chouliaraki's (2006) analytics of mediation provides a useful theoretical approach for investigating how these polarised narratives are seemingly resolved within individual texts. However, I also argued that it was helpful to expand Chouliaraki's empirical scope to include a concern for those distant Others who are not suffering, as well as those who are, to include a concern for non-news television genres as well as news, and to attempt to make claims about what is routine and not just what is extreme. I also argued that it would be valuable to complement a study of media texts with a study of the process of reception. Finally, I argued that it was important to preface all of these investigations with a study of the extent to which spectators even encountered distant Others through television.

In this chapter I consider the methodological problems posed by attempting to apply Chouliaraki's theory and implement my proposed revisions, before discussing how these problems might be resolved through a number of complementary empirical studies. I begin by arguing that applying the methodology entailed by Chouliaraki's analytics of mediation and making it suitable for the precise concerns of this thesis requires not only a careful consideration of a number of different dimensions of discourse analysis and multi-modal analysis but also a number of important modifications. Subsequently, I argue that combining two-phases of focus groups with a diary study provides a particularly valuable way of complementing Chouliaraki's text-focussed analytics of mediation with a study of the process of reception. Finally, I argue that to attempt to study the extent to which spectators encounter mediated distant Others and to attempt to make claims about what is routine about their mediated experiences requires a number of content analyses to be conducted. After justifying and explaining the methodologies used in each of these studies I conclude this chapter by summarising the specific research questions and associated methodologies that have been discussed and refined during the past two chapters.

3.1 WATCHING DISTANT OTHERS

3.1.1 The analytics of mediation

The principal investigation conducted for this thesis is the application of an adapted version of the methodology entailed by the analytics of mediation to particular television news and non-news texts. It is this which will allow me to address my central concern regarding how distant Others are mediated by television. Although I have previously discussed Chouliaraki's approach to resolving the paradoxes of mediation and her use of the concepts of immediacy and hypermediacy, I have not yet reviewed the precise means by which she proposes that this theoretical approach be realised methodologically. My first objective, therefore, is to critically review the methodology entailed by the analytics of mediation. The second objective is to discuss how this methodology can be adapted in order to make it suitable for studying the mediation of distant Others in general, across non-news television genres. Finally, the choice of the texts to be subject to such analysis in order to produce claims about what is routine about the process of mediation also requires careful consideration.

3.1.2 The methodology of the analytics of mediation

The central concern of Chouliaraki's analytics of mediation is to combine a study of three particular dimensions of mediation (the politics of pity, space-time and agency), with an understanding of mediation in terms of hypermediacy and immediacy. In order to analyse mediation in terms of both immediacy and hypermediacy, Chouliaraki proposes two levels of analysis. The first is a multi-modal analysis which is concerned with how meaning making takes place on the television screen. More specifically, this refers to the re-mediation of various media genres for understanding the spectator-sufferer relationship, in the form of a politics of pity. The second level of analysis is critical discourse analysis (CDA), or the study of technology as being embedded within power relations. Of principal concern here is how the text creates space-time relationships between the sufferer and the spectator and the agency of the spectator. In the analytics of mediation, multi-modal analysis and critical

discourse analysis combine to provide an overall account of how the text seemingly regulates spectators' mediated experiences of distant suffering. In Chouliaraki's terms, the analytics of mediation is an approach which, 'takes into account the embeddedness of media texts both in technological artefacts and in social relationships and, hence, seeks to integrate the multi-modal with the critical analysis of discourse' (2006:153).

3.1.3 Multimodal analysis

3.1.3.1 Mode of presentation

As discussed in the previous chapter, Chouliaraki argues that in order to attempt to resolve the paradox of technology we must examine both how the processes of passing through the medium gives rise to different genres of suffering (according to the approach of mediation as hypermediacy) and how these genres of suffering give rise to different emotions or options for action for the spectator (according to the approach of mediation as immediacy).

One of the ways in which the process of passing through the medium gives rise to different genres of suffering is through the *mode of presentation*. The mode of presentation refers to the choice of media used to tell a story and the locations from which a story is told. Chouliaraki suggests that the choices made over different modes of presentation matters for the ways in which spectators come to evaluate what is being represented (2006:74). Whereas some modes of presentation might offer spectators ample time and a number of positions from which to reflect on distant Others, others may close off such options. Different modes of presentation might include lengthy on-location reports using live footage and oral testimonies or brief studio-based accounts accompanied by graphics. Chouliaraki further argues that using only a minimal number of modes of presentation is likely to construe events and actors within them as 'devoid of proximity, urgency or agency' (2006:77) whereas using many different modes of presentation 'establishes multiple variations on engagement' (ibid).

When examining the politics of pity, mediation as immediacy invites us to ask, how does the news text presents events as 'real' (Chouliaraki 2006:74)? Thus, at the same time as helping to determine how immediate the reality of a particular instance of suffering becomes on the

television screen, each mode of presentation also offers spectators a distinct approach to the reality of events. Chouliaraki identifies three different ways in which the reality of events might be presented to spectators in a news text, based on Chatman's (1991) categories of text type. These three forms of 'narrative realism' (2006:75) are as follows. A narrative realism based on appeals to truthfulness and a 'reality of facts' is referred to as *perceptual realism*, a narrative realism which appeals to a reality of emotions rather than facts is referred to as *categorical realism* and a narrative realism which appeals to a reality of 'doxa', or our deep-seated certainties and beliefs about the way the world is or should be is referred to as *ideological realism* (Chouliaraki 2006:75). The distinction between these three forms of narrative realism is that they appeal variously to a reality of what is believed to be true, what is believed to be emotionally powerful and what is believed to be right (ibid). The distinction between these three forms of narrative realism is important because they help to inform Boltanski's (1999) three topics of suffering, as discussed below. Thus, by examining the mode of presentation, or one of the processes of passing through the medium, we can examine how media texts potentially give rise to different topics of suffering.

3.1.3.2. Verbal-visual correspondence

The ways in which news texts appeal to a sense of reality, or a particular narrative realism, emerge not only from the mode of presentation but also from different combinations of the verbal and the visual within texts. Chouliaraki considers this to be the second key dimension of passing through the medium (2006:76). The claims to factuality in perceptual realism are built on an *indexical* relationship between the verbal and the visual. Here, descriptive language and a reliance on 'facts' are used to make claims of objectivity and are accompanied by images designed to present spectators with an authentic, factual visual account of events, or a 'window on the world' (Chouliaraki 2006:79). The claims to emotion in categorical realism are built on an *iconic* verbal-visual correspondence. Verbally there is a reliance on storytelling or narration while visually, images act as 'icons' by which abstract realities serve to represent generic conditions such as 'famine' or 'starvation'. The claim to justice in ideological realism is built on exposition in the verbal narrative and in the symbolic

meaning of visuals. Exposition refers to the incorporation of a point of view within the news (and hence, contains an ethical judgement on events) while symbolic meaning refers to the discursive associations an image might have to conventional forms of knowledge. Symbolic meaning is the result of images and or language that 'evokes an idea or belief that manages to hide its specificity in culture and time and works as if it were a universal truth the spectator does not need to question' (Chouliaraki 2006:139). In sum, each verbal-visual correspondence gives rise to a different form of realism, or claim to reality, and 'activates a distinct emotional potential for the spectator' (Chouliaraki 2006:79).

3.1.3.3. Aesthetic quality

An approach to mediation as immediacy also invites us to ask questions of the aesthetic quality of the news item, which describes its overall 'semiotic effect', or the different emotions or options for action which the text gives rise to. As discussed in the previous chapter, Chouliaraki (2006:81) draws on Boltanski's (1999) topics of suffering to describe the three different possible overall semiotic effects in relation to suffering. *Pamphleteering* refers to a perspective in which pity appears through a combination of both indignation and anger and is directed towards a persecutor figure in the form of denunciation. Pamphleteering requires that the persecutor has violated a sense of justice. *Philanthropy* occurs when pity is experienced as touching. It is associated with feelings of tender-heartedness towards both the sufferer and the benefactor, who comforts the sufferers' pain. It therefore requires the identification of a benefactor figure and corresponding 'victims'. *Sublimation* refers to a consideration of the unfortunate's suffering as neither unjust nor as touching, but as sublime. Specifically, it refers to a reflexive contemplation on suffering (or distant Others in general) at a distance and combines a position of un-emotional reflection on the distant Other's condition with a similarly un-emotional reflection upon the spectator's own sensibility (Boltanski 1999:116).

Within the framework of the politics of pity, this overall semiotic effect is produced in two ways which correspond with what Chouliaraki (2006:82) (and Boltanski (1999:5)) define as the two elements of pity – pity as emotional engagement and pity as objective deliberation. Firstly, the semiotic effect is related to 'the emotional potential for identification with the

sufferers that the news text may activate for the spectators' (2006:82), which is a consequence of the verbal-visual correspondence (indexical, iconic or symbolic). Secondly, the aesthetic quality of a text is related to 'the ways in which a regime of pity produces the spectacle of suffering as authentic for spectators' (2006:82), which is itself the result of the dominant forms of narrative realism (perceptual, ideological or categorical).

The intensity to which any one (or more) of these emotions or options for action is felt depends not only upon the nature of the appeal to the corresponding form of narrative realism and verbal-visual correspondence, but also upon the construction of space-time and of the agency of distant Others (Chouliaraki 2006:11). Appeals to philanthropy, or tender-heartedness towards a victim (or benefactor) figure, for example, will be stronger in texts in which distant Others are constructed as both humanised and as proximate. Or as Boltanski argues, 'the further the spectator is from the unfortunate the more the disjunction between their situations seems to be insurmountable and in consequence action becomes more problematic' (1999:114). In Chouliaraki's terms we might say that the *character* of pity is determined by the multi-modality of a text while space-time and agency manages the *potential* for pity.

3.1.4 Critical Discourse Analysis

3.1.4.1 Space-time

The aim of analysing the spatiotemporal dimension of mediation is to consider how the paradox of distance is seemingly resolved in a text. It is concerned with the intensity and degree of involvement in the encounter between the spectator and the various actors being represented. The assumption is that whether events are constructed as happening close-by, right now, or far away and in the past, shapes the moral distance and sense of urgency that the spectator feels. Concerning an analysis of the spatial dimensions of mediation, Chouliaraki asks us to consider, amongst other things, the choices over visual editing, camera position and linguistic reference to determine *where* events are taking place. Concerning the temporal dimensions of mediation, Chouliaraki asks us to consider visual

inter-textuality and linguistic references to determine *when* events are taking place. The questions we should ask of media texts include,

- Are events taking place in the past or present? Or both?
- How is the future constructed? As open, with multiple possibilities, or otherwise?
- Is there any form of interaction between spaces of danger and safety?

In addition to such questions, Chouliaraki identifies four specific elements of space-time relations we might identify in order that we might examine, not just how close distant Others are brought to the spectator, but whether they are situated at a 'proper distance' or as somehow connected to the life-world of the spectator. *Concreteness* refers to the representation of the context as a physical, rather than an abstract space. *Multiplicity* refers to the movement of spectators through multiple contexts, from the roadside, to a café, to a home, for example. *Specificity* refers to the capacity to render a scene unique, either through the individualisation of actors as unique people with an array of attributes or by giving specific details of times and locations of events. *Mobility* refers to the capacity of the montage to connect the space-time of suffering with that of safety (Chouliaraki 2006:123). Chouliaraki argues that the more these four elements of space-time relations are made use of in a text, the greater its spatiotemporal complexity and thus the greater the extent to which the spectator is invited to see distant Others as humanised, or like 'us'. In order to establish this, the questions we should ask of texts include,

- Does the text represent specific places that are named and described?
- How many specific spaces do distant Others occupy?
- Are explicit connections made to the space-time of spectators?

Finally, Chouliaraki suggests that an examination of space-time can help to determine whether particular texts appeal to a 'logic of appearances' in which causality is presented as being dictated by the immediate context rather than historical circumstances (2006:99), or whether they appeal to a 'logic of causality' in which the longer-term consequences and more subtle contexts are revealed. As is discussed later, this distinction has parallels with Iyengar's notions of 'episodic' and 'thematic' news frames (1990).

3.1.4.2 Agency

In the analytics of mediation, in order to examine how the paradox of in/action is seemingly resolved within a text the analyst must consider how the spectator's perceived ability to act on distant suffering, or sense of agency, is regulated. In understanding mediation as immediacy, the text is understood to manage the agency of the spectator through the orchestration of the benefactor and persecutor figures 'who connect the reality of distant suffering to the spectator's private feelings vis-à-vis the spectacle they are watching' (Chouliaraki 2006:90). In other words, the 'benefactor' and the 'persecutor' figures articulate for the spectator a universal value of how to act towards the suffering (2006:91). Any discussion of the benefactor and persecutor figure is necessarily tied to a discussion of the 'aesthetic quality' of the text because it is in appeals to philanthropy and pamphleteering in which these figures are identified.

In understanding mediation as hypermediacy, the way in which the text manages the agency of the spectator corresponds to the way in which distant Others themselves appear on screen. If distant Others are *humanised*, or afforded the power to say or do something about their condition (2006:88), then spectators are invited to see them as being like 'us' and feel greater agency themselves. Chouliaraki distinguishes between two forms of agency which distant Others might posses. Firstly, *conditional agency* refers to the affordance of sufficient agency to be qualified as a human being, though not sufficient to make a real difference in their own life (hence the need for external intervention). This can be achieved if distant Others are visually shown to act to a limited extent upon their condition; either through *motion*, whereby the sufferer participates in concrete, purposeful activity, *gaze*, whereby the sufferer enters into an active relationship with the camera or *condition*, in which the sufferer comes to symbolise a particular 'universal' state of existence, such as 'starvation' (2006:124). Humanisation can also be achieved verbally through narrative or lexicalization and visually through camera position and angle.

Secondly, distant Others with *sovereign agency* are constructed as 'thoroughly humanised and historical beings' (2006:159). Chouliaraki identifies three dimensions to sovereign agency (though there are potentially more): the ability to analyse one's own suffering, or more generally, to reflect on one's own condition, the ability to respond to the persecutor's

actions and the ability to simultaneously assume the role of victim and benefactor. The questions the analyst should ask of texts to establish this include,

- Are distant Others given a voice?
- Who acts on the condition of distant Others, how and with what outcome?

3.1.5 Language of the analytics of mediation

It should be clear from this discussion that within the methodology of the analytics of mediation there is a proliferation of terms with which the analyst, and indeed the reader, must become familiar. The introduction of a new vocabulary to discuss a subject does not necessarily provide a more coherent means of understanding the issues at work. However, in most cases, Chouliaraki is not introducing entirely new concepts or language but rather is appropriating terms or concepts from other fields of study. Chouliaraki adapts the three forms of 'narrative realism' from Chatman's (1990) three main categories of text type – *description, argument* and *narrative* - which are a well establish framework for classifying texts. Similarly, Chouliaraki's distinction between *indexical meaning* produced by description, *iconic* meaning produced by narrative and *symbolic* meaning produced by exposition, is adapted from Peirce's three basic semiotic categories - the icon, the index and the symbol (1932). Finally, the questions Chouliaraki invites us to ask of media texts in relation to space-time correspond with previous discussions of Bakhtin's (1937) notion of *chronotopes* (see Morson and Emerson 1990). The point is that Chouliaraki builds her framework based on existing, well established, concepts that have simply not been applied to the study of the mediation of distant Others before. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that what she proposes is always entirely appropriate. Thus, one of the additional aims of this thesis is to critically review whether these concepts are appropriate and useful.

In a discussion of the vocabulary entailed by the analytics of mediation Chouliaraki argues that,

> It is important that news spectators – but also, importantly, news practitioners – have a language with which to describe the production of... hierarchies [of place].

Given the urgent ethical and political dilemmas of our world today, such a language would enable us to reflect on the ways in which the news presents the world to the world and, perhaps, to challenge the unequal distribution of pity amongst the world populations that the news today makes possible (2006:94).

If this 'new' language is to become a useful tool for news spectators and news practitioners, however, then it needs to be made clearer than the often confusing and rather dense use of language by Chouliaraki in her accounts of the analytics of mediation. A further aims of this thesis is to provide this clarity.

3.1.6 Modifying the analytics of mediation

Chouliaraki develops the analytics of mediation as a means of examining how the different dimensions of mediation work together to offer spectators particular positions in relation to distant suffering in specific news texts, within the framework of the politics of pity. Unlike Chouliaraki's work, the focus of this thesis is not restricted to news texts or to considering the politics of pity or even suffering. Instead the focus is on how each of the paradoxes of mediation are seemingly resolved within individual texts and how this may contribute to spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. Because of this shift in focus it is important to consider whether the analytics of mediation is an appropriate method of analysis to use in this instance and if not, how it might be modified in order to be so.

3.1.6.1. Modifying the analytics of mediation for non-news genres

The basis for the overall questions Chouliaraki invites us to ask of media texts remain unaffected by a focus on other (factual) non-news television genres. Bolter and Grusin (2000) argue that *all* television genres, and not just news, can be understood as re-mediating other media genres. Equally, Boltanski (1999:xv) does not claim that the three 'topics' of suffering are peculiar to television news or that they do not apply to other (factual) genres. Furthermore, since news texts share many of the same conventions as other factual programming, much of the vocabulary, technique and analytical focus of the

analytics of mediation as used by Chouliaraki remains entirely relevant when analysing such texts, as is demonstrated in chapter 6.

Where some modification of Chouliaraki's analytical approach appears necessary is in providing evidence to support claims regarding the appearance of different forms of verbal-visual correspondence and narrative realism. Documentaries and reality-television programmes, for example, draw on different verbal-visual conventions to produce meaning compared to news. As a result, different elements of the verbal and visual dimensions of the text have to be drawn on to provide evidence of the form of narrative realism that each text appeals to. For example, in chapter 6 it is suggested that, in some non-news factual programming, indexical meaning is produced, not through a reliance on statistics or facts, or a reliance on graphics, but on a descriptive recounting of events by the main actors in 'diary pieces' to camera.

The second issue is that non-news texts often do not relate exclusively to a single instance of distant suffering in the same way that news texts have a tendency to do. As a result, there is often no single, clearly identifiable, 'victim' or corresponding persecutor or benefactor figures around which options for emotion or action can be organised. Instead, I suggest that we should recognise that there may be multiple benefactor and persecutor figures and corresponding 'victim' figures evoked around several demands for justice or appeals to universal values within any given non-news text. Chouliaraki makes a similar assumption in her analysis of news coverage of the events of September 11th 2001 which she describes as variously inviting spectators to 'denounce the attacks, empathize with the victims and indulge in sublimated contemplation of the place crashes' (2006:82).

Furthermore, I suggest that on occasions where there are multiple persecutor, benefactor and victim figures, the strength of any associated appeals to forms of emotion or action will be limited if there is insufficient consensus over *who* the spectator is invited to feel indignation or tender-heartedness towards. Boltanski makes a similar assumption in his discussion of the 'crisis of pity' whereby an excess of unfortunates and ambiguities over the status of the persecutor, benefactor and unfortunate make it difficult for the spectator to respond to distant suffering with any great intensity (1999:154).

Overall, though, I argue that little modification is required to ensure that the analytics of mediation is applicable to factual non-news genres, though the same would not be true were this method applied to fictional television genres (see Boltanski 1999:21).

3.1.6.2. Modifying the analytics of mediation for use beyond the framework of the politics of pity

Extending my focus beyond distant suffering to include mediated encounters with any and all distant Others, suffering or otherwise, does not affect the rationale for the overall approach entailed by the analytics of mediation. As argued in the previous chapter, focusing the analysis on how the key contradictions between the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives are resolved within individual texts is just as relevant to an analysis of the mediation of distant Others in general as it is to distant suffering. Similarly, approaching mediation in terms of hypermediacy and immediacy and the role they play in inviting us to ask two different sets of questions in attempting to resolve each of these apparent paradoxes is not tied specifically to a concern for distant suffering. Indeed, Bolter and Grusin (2000) go to some lengths to demonstrate that hypermediacy and immediacy are characteristic of all instances of mediation.

Although the over-arching framework of the analytics of mediation may not be challenged by expanding the focus beyond the politics of pity, this broader focus does have important implications for how we attempt to resolve two of the paradoxes of mediation. Firstly, on occasions where there is a shift of concern from the paradox of in/action to the paradox of humanity, questions of who occupies the position of victim, benefactor and persecutor (or even if such figures appear at all), become far more significant. Whereas Chouliraki's concern for distant suffering means that distant Others always occupy the role of victim, my expanded concern for distant Others who are not suffering means that the identity of the victim, persecutor and benefactor figures is not always so apparent. In such circumstances, the first question to be posed is that of who occupies the place of the persecutor, benefactor and victim.

Furthermore, in relation to the paradox of in/action, Chouliaraki argues that the benefactor and persecutor figures guide the spectator's response to suffering in the form of two particular 'universal feelings', care and justice. However, these capture only some of the potential responses spectators might have in relation to distant Others in general. For example, in the analysis of a particular documentary in chapter 6 it is suggested that there are multiple appeals to different universal values throughout the text, each with different associated benefactor, persecutor and victim figures. While some of these appeals to universal values are associated with suffering, some are not, such as the thought that the UK public have been misled by the Western media in their understandings of distant Others. In such cases, it is suggested that benefactor and persecutor figures are still evident and that they continue to be useful in helping us to examine how spectators' sense of agency is regulated – just not necessarily only in relation to care and justice.

The second set of modifications of the analytics of mediation required by an expansion of focus beyond the framework of the politics of pity concerns the paradox of technology and specifically the status of the three options for emotion and action identified by Boltanski (1999:45) as the only morally acceptable ways of responding to distant suffering (sublimation, philanthropy and pamphleteering). It is not the purpose of this thesis to attempt to identify only those occasions in which television 'can make us engage in action at a distance' (Chouliaraki 2006:49), for which the analytics of mediation was developed, but to also examine the character of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others which do not achieve this. Thus, while sublimation, philanthropy and pamphleteering remain useful concepts for identifying potentially 'ideal' responses to distant Others, a means of discussing those occasions in which responses fall short of these ideals is also required.

Boltanski is once again helpful in this regard by identifying two additional classes of possible response to distant Others. The first is indifference in which the suffering of unfortunates, though witnessed, is simply ignored (Boltanski 1999:5). Chouliaraki refers to such a lack of concern as a failure to 'bring forth any emotional response or motivate the spectator into any form of public action' (2006:104) and as a position in which 'all there is to do is accept the fact of this misfortune' (ibid). In one of the few empirical studies focussing, at least partly, on mediation and indifference, Hoijer identifies several strategies of 'turning one's back on... distant Others' (2004:525), including rejecting the truth claims of texts and

dehumanising distant Others in some way. Such responses may be invited by texts that interrupt the connectivity between spectators and distant Others, either through simple multimodality, singular space-times or by being void of agency (Chouliaraki 2006:106).

The second class of response is introduced and described by Boltanski in the following way;

> Someone who observes the suffering of another without indifference but without lifting a finger to relieve it may be accused of being personally motivated or interested in viewing suffering, perhaps because it interests him or even gives him pleasure (1999:21).

While Boltanski defines sublimation, philanthropy and pamphleteering as 'oriented outwards and motivated by the intention to see the suffering ended' (1999:21) this second class of alternative response, which Boltanski terms 'solitary enjoyment' (1999:114), is described as 'a selfish way of looking which is wholly taken up with the internal states aroused by the spectacle of suffering: fascination, horror, interest, excitement, pleasure etc' (1999:21). Solitary enjoyment can also be usefully distinguished from Boltanski's three topics of suffering by considering it as a form of non-social action, or as a self-focussed action not 'meaningfully oriented to that of others' (Weber and Eisenstadt 1968:23), which does not 'take others into account' (Tester 2001:46). On such occasions, a spectator's speech tells us, 'everything about the state into which the spectator is thrown by the spectacle of suffering, but we no longer know anything about the person suffering' (Boltanski 1999:45). Chouliaraki, who refers to solitary enjoyment only briefly, describes it as 'indulgent contemplation... [that is] detached from the subject' (2006:92). Such responses are evident empirically in Hoijer's references to 'shame-filled compassion' and 'powerlessness-filled compassion' (2004:523).

Such self-focussed responses may be invited by texts which fail to strike a balance between what Chouliaraki describes as the two elements of pity – emotional engagement and objective deliberation (2006:82) - and which instead allow the spectator to be 'imaginatively taken over by the [spectacle]' (Boltanski 1999:45), or 'surrendered to an introspective description of his own affliction' (Boltanski 1999:98). It may also be invited by texts which demand no action with regard to distant Others because they are not suffering (as long as

distant Others are not rendered so dehumanised and/or so distant that they are not worth responding to, even to engage in solitary enjoyment).

The second point to be made regarding the use of Boltanski's three original options for emotion and action relates to the suggestion that for those instances of mediation which do not involve suffering, such responses are simply not relevant. Philanthropy, pamphleteering and sublimation (and even solitary enjoyment and indifference) are the forms of action (and inaction) used by the analytics of mediation because they represent the different responses to distant suffering within the framework of the politics of pity – not because they are somehow universal responses to all encounters with distant Others. Furthermore, as has been argued earlier, instances which do not involve suffering do not require action on behalf of the spectator with regards to distant Others.

Despite this, I propose that it remains appropriate to continue to use philanthropy, pamphleteering, sublimation, solitary enjoyment and indifference as categories of response to serve at least as a starting point for interpreting the way in which the paradox of technology is seemingly resolved within individual texts, even if texts do not involve suffering. I suggest this for a number of reasons. Firstly, as the results of the audience research will demonstrate, one can engage in reflective contemplation, personal introspection or a lack of interest with respect to distant suffering *and* distant Others in general. Thus, if sublimation, solitary enjoyment and indifference are understood a little more broadly than Boltanski, they remain useful as categories of response. Secondly, while emotional responses in the order of philanthropy and pamphleteering are more closely tied to pity, I hope to demonstrate that they remain useful as a starting point for discussing the particular kinds of emotional responses produced as a result of appeals to a reality 'of the heart' and to a reality associated with particular ideologies respectively. Thirdly, and more pragmatically, I have not been able to identify a suitable alternative framework with which to interpret the way in which the paradox of technology is seemingly resolved. Indeed, since spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others constitute a mixture of responses in relation to suffering and non-suffering, it is far easier to use the same framework for analysing both situations rather than to adopt two entirely separate frameworks. Indeed, since I am analysing texts which are not chosen to represent 'ideal' types, a distinction between what constitutes suffering and what does not is often unclear.

3.1.6.3. Summary of modifications to the analytics of mediation

One of the principal aims of this thesis is to expand, or at least to explore the value of expanding, the subject of concern of studies of morality and mediation beyond a narrow focus on distant suffering in television news to include a concern for encounters with all distant Others, suffering or otherwise, in other television genres. A number of modifications to the analytics of mediation have been suggested in order that it might help us to achieve this. Yet these modifications necessarily entail a number of assumptions about the process of mediation in addition to the assumptions Chouliaraki makes in developing the analytics of mediation. One of the additional aims of this thesis, therefore, is to critically reflect on the validity of these assumptions, particularly in the discussion of the results of the audience research.

Having discussed the method required by the analytics of mediation and the modifications necessary for its use in this thesis, Table 3.1 summarises the principal questions which the analyst must ask of a text when applying the analytics of mediation to distant Others in news and (factual) non-news texts.

Table 3.1: A summary of the principal questions to be asked of media texts in order to investigate how the three paradoxes of mediation are seemingly resolved in any text

Paradox to be resolved	Level of analysis	Mediation as hypermediacy	Mediation as immediacy
Paradox of technology	Multi-modal analysis	What forms of realism are established by the process of passing through the medium (in particular, through the mode of presentation and verbal-visual correspondence)?	How does the mode of presentation and verbal-visual correspondence contribute to establishing the aesthetic quality of the text?
Paradox of distance	Critical discourse analysis	How does the process of passing through the medium regulate space-time relationships between spectators and distant Others?	What are the spatio-temporal characteristics of the particular emotional and practical realities which the spectator is being presented with by the text?
Paradox of in/action / Paradox of humanity	Critical discourse analysis	To what extent are distant Others humanised through the process of passing through the medium?	What universal value of how to respond towards distant Others, if any, is articulated by the orchestration of the benefactor and persecutor figures. How is the spectator invited to relate to distant Others as benefactor or persecutor?

3.1.7 Identifying texts for analysis

3.1.7.1 News sample

Chouliarki selects the texts to which she applies the analytics of mediation because they represent 'the most illustrative example[s]'' (2006:17) of her three 'ideal types' of news coverage. By contrast, the texts I select are chosen to illustrate what is routine about television coverage of distant Others.

Just over half (55%) of the news items about developing countries[5] in my content analysis[6] of UK television news took the form of VT packages (VTs), or self-contained video reports with a voiceover from a reporter. The following 3 VTs were chosen for analysis because they represent some of the most common topics, countries and news stories in the two week sample period, but primarily because they help to illustrate, to some extent, the routine ways in which distant Others are mediated by VTs.

The country which received the most coverage of any developing country during the two week sample period was Afghanistan, which accounted for 15% of all such coverage. All eighteen news bulletins had at least one news item about Afghanistan during the sample period. The news events in Afghanistan which received the most coverage were the deployment of more US troops and the visit of a US envoy. The news item about Afghanistan chosen for analysis is a three and a half minute news item shown on Channel 4 News on 17th February, 2009, about the Taliban response to US troop deployment. This particular news item was chosen because, as the results of the content analysis help to show, it makes use of some of the most commonly found forms of narrative realism, space-time relations and forms of agency in the news items in this sample and thus serves as a useful illustrative example.

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[5] For reasons discussed in detail below, news items about developing countries are assumed to be about distant Others.

[6] Although neither the results nor even the method of the content analyses have yet been discussed, it is necessary to refer to them here to justify the status of my chosen texts as being, in some way, illustrative of the routine ways in which distant Others are mediated by television.

While Afghanistan might have received more news coverage than any other developing country, the news story which received the most coverage was the swearing in of the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Morgan Tsvangirai, on 11th February 2009. Coverage of this event accounted for 14% of all coverage of developing countries on domestic bulletins and over half of all news items about Africa during the sample period. Two particular news items about the swearing in ceremony on the BBC 6 O'clock News and on the ITV1 Evening News were chosen for analysis. These news items were chosen because they were from the two most popular news bulletins in the UK but also principally because they help to illustrate both routine and exceptional coverage of this event and of distant Others in general.

The second most common format of news item used to cover developing countries was short studio-based, live-voiceovers of video footage (LVOs) of between 10 and 20 seconds in length. A sample of these news LVOs were also analysed because these made up a significant proportion of relevant news items (35%) and for many countries and news stories represented the only form of coverage. Furthermore, as is argued in chapter 5, the three paradoxes of mediation are resolved in a particular way by most news items in this format. The three events covered most commonly by LVOs and those chosen for analysis were; a suicide bomb explosion in Iraq (6 news items), a gas explosion in a mine in China (4 news items) and the results of a referendum on constitutional reform in Venezuela (3 news items).

While the analytics of mediation has only been applied to 3 VTs and 13 LVOs and hence the results of the analysis do not have, in any way, universal applicability, neither should the results be considered entirely random. The results of the content analysis of a much larger number of news items from the same sample period, discussed below, helps to demonstrate the extent to which the characteristics of these 16 texts are common amongst other news texts in the sample.

3.1.7.2 Non-news sample

Attempting to produce readings of individual non-news texts which could be used to make claims about what is routine proved far more problematic than for news texts. This was, in

part, because the space required to present a detailed, transparent and critical application of the analytics of mediation is considerable, particularly for lengthy non-news texts. As a result, there is only space in this thesis to present the analysis of three non-news texts. Furthermore, the sheer volume of texts in the content analysis of non-news genres (over 5000) and the length of each text meant that, unlike in news, it was not possible to watch them all. This inevitably meant that they could not be coded in the same detail as news texts. This difficulty in coding the details of non-news texts is compounded by the fact that such text include a wide variety of genres (factual, drama, light entertainment, etc.) and sub-genres (serious factual, factual entertainment, etc.) and vary enormously in the ways in which they manage spectators' experiences of distant Others - to a much greater degree than news texts (as is argued in chapter 6).

Given these quite considerable constraints, the results of my content analysis and the application of the analytics of mediation to three examples of non-news programming do *not* allow for claims that certain kinds of mediated experience are routine amongst my sample of non-news texts. Instead, what can be achieved by applying the analytics of mediation to three examples of non-news programming is to investigate the *capacity* of the most common forms of non-news programming about distant Others to manage spectators' experiences of distant Others.

Once again, the results of the relevant content analysis can be used to justify my choice of particular texts. All three chosen texts were 'factual' programmes (as defined by Ofcom 2010b) because, as the results discussed in the next chapter show, this genre makes up a significant majority of non-news coverage of distant Others on UK television (79%). Furthermore, since the majority of factual programming about distant Others takes the form of 'serious factual' (Ofcom 2010a) programming (65%), two of the three programmes were chosen from this sub-genre. The following specific texts were chosen because my experience of watching a sample of texts within this sub-genre as part of the content analysis suggests that these are illustrative of the range of ways in which serious factual programming manages spectators' experiences of distant Others. They are also programmes that were frequently discussed in the focus groups – allowing for comparisons between my readings of these texts and participant's talk about them.

Rageh Inside Iran (BBC4, Saturday 8th February 2009, 10.00–11.30pm) is a 90 minute documentary presented by the Somali born British journalist, Rageh Omaar who reports on his experiences of the people and places in the city of Tehran during a one month visit in 2007. This serious factual programme was chosen because it illustrates the capacity of such programming to provide spectators with an intense mediated experience of distant Others. *Who Killed Scarlett?* (Channel 4, Thursday 12th February 2009, 10:00 - 11:10pm) is a 60 minute documentary which follows the life of a British woman, Fiona MacKeown, over the course of the year as she investigates the death of her daughter, Scarlett Keeling, who was found dead whist on a family holiday in India in 2008. This programme was chosen because it illustrates the capacity of serious factual programming to offer spectators a position of indifference in relation to dehumanised and distant, distant Others. Together these two programmes help to illustrate the *range* of ways in which serious factual programming manages spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others.

One programme was also chosen to illustrate the capacity of 'factual entertainment' programming (another sub-genre of 'factual' programming (Ofcom 2010b)) to manage spectators' experiences of distant Others. Factual entertainment was chosen because this is the sub-genre which received the second highest amount of non-news coverage of distant Others in the sample (22% of factual programming). Specifically, an episode of *The World's Strictest Parents* (BBC3, Monday 9th February 2009, 8.00-9.00pm) was chosen. *The World's Strictest Parents* is a reality-TV programme transmitted on BBC3 which follows pairs of 'unruly' teenagers from the UK who are sent abroad to live with 'strict' families in other countries. This series is one of the most frequently broadcast about distant Others in the sub-genre and one that attracts relatively large audiences. More importantly, however, this programme was chosen because my experience of watching a sample of texts within this sub-genre, as part of the content analysis, suggests that it is useful for illustrating how the nature of reality-television formats set in 'other' countries might lend themselves to providing certain kinds of mediated experience. A particular episode in which two British teenagers are sent to live with a family in Jamaica was chosen because it fell within the time period of the diary study and was also frequently discussed in the focus groups and commented upon in diary entries.

In summary, for a number of reasons it is not possible to make claims about the routine ways in which non-news texts manage spectators' experiences of distant Other. However, applying the analytics of mediation to three particular examples does allow me to investigate the *capacity* of the most common forms of non-news programming about distant Others to manage spectators' experiences of faraway Others.

3.2 TALKING OF DISTANT OTHERS

The principal purpose of the textual analyses discussed above is to identify the ways in which television texts seemingly regulate spectators mediated experiences of distant Others. However, as was argued in the previous chapter, textual analysis alone is not sufficiently sensitive to Silverstone's understanding of mediation as a dialectical process (2005), nor to the agency (conditional or otherwise) of the audience. Thus, it was proposed that any textual analyses should be complimented with an analysis of the process of reception in order to investigate the extent to which spectators do indeed adopt the positions in relation to distant Others which an application of the analytics of mediation claims texts invite them to adopt. Put another way, the purpose of the audience research conducted for this thesis is to investigate the character of various individuals' mediated encounters with distant Others through television texts and compare this with my analysis of, and claims about, television texts.

Unfortunately, any attempt to establish the character of individuals' mediated encounters with distant Others, like any investigation seeking to capture audiences' responses to media texts, is beset by substantial problems. Perhaps the greatest difficulty for the analyst is in capturing or generating reliable evidence of mediated experiences of distant Others. This is most commonly attempted by instigating conversations about particular examples of television coverage, either through interviews or focus groups, and relying on what participants say in these contexts as evidence of their mediated experiences (see Hoijer 2004; Smith 2006; Padania 2007; Kyriakidou 2008). While this approach may indeed generate talk about mediated encounters with distant Others, such talk does not necessarily constitute reliable evidence of participants' genuine mediated experiences of distant Others.

Boltanski (1999) and Chouliaraki (2006) both argue that it is not necessary for responses to distant suffering to take the form of verbal talk but responses can simply be a whisper in the mind. Participants might, therefore, conceivably adopt particular responses to distant Others even if this is only partly evident in their verbal speech. Equally, even if participant's talk appears to reflect a particular emotion or response they may be providing 'false evidence' (Boltanski 1999:100) of their authentic response. Indeed, talk generated in focus groups can be 'contrived' because of participants' expectations about the research process or because of the unavoidable imposition of the researcher's own constructed and contingent versions of the world (Potter 1996). Kyriakidou (2008:163) suggests that participants in her focus group discussions about distant suffering generally rehearsed dominant discourses of global compassion (see Hoijer 2004). Buckingham has long argued that focus group talk should be regarded, not as evidence of what people really know or believe, 'but as a form of social action which serves particular social purposes' (1999:175). Finally, focus group data alone cannot situate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others through television within the context of other mediated encounters and in the context of participant's daily lives.

Rather than respond to these problems by abandoning any attempts to investigate the role of spectators, I propose a particular research design, based on the recent work of Couldry, Livingstone and Markham (2007), which seeks to mitigate these problems. Specifically, I argue below that these difficulties can be at least partially addressed by combining two phases of focus groups with a lengthy diary study and by involving the same participants in all three phases of study over an extended period of time.

3.2.1 Research design

In their now seminal work on *Media Consumption and Public Engagement* (2007), Couldry, Livingstone and Markham employ an elaborate and original means of listening closely to individuals' own accounts of the role of the media in connecting them to a public world. They combine the results of weekly personal diaries completed over a sustained period of time (3 months) with interviews and focus groups with the diarists themselves, before and after the diary process. The aim of their mixed methods approach is to pay attention both to

the ways in which 'political engagement is embedded within the organisation and practices of everyday life' (2007:44) and to take seriously respondents status as 'thinking individuals' (Gamson 2002:xii).

There are clear differences between the aims of this thesis and the work of Couldry, Livingstone and Markham. They choose the diary as a tool of research because it allows their participants to 'reflect on their practices of 'public connection'… without us as researchers being there' (2007:47) and because 'diaries allow for the regular tracking of participants' reflections over time' (ibid). These two attributes of the diary, alongside its sensitivities to participant's everyday lives, allow Couldry, Livingstone and Markham to investigate different personal accounts of 'mediated public connection' (2007:3). Their reasoning for conducting interviews and focus groups before and after the diaries is to 'contextualise the diaries' (2007:43). By contrast, in this thesis, it is not necessarily reflexivity, the everyday and changes over time which are the principal concern but rather, establishing evidence of the character of individuals' mediated encounters with distant Others.

Nevertheless, by including two different phases of focus groups, having two methods for capturing participants' mediated experiences of distant Others and by involving participants in the research process over an extended period of time, their research design still provides a useful model for this thesis for a number of reasons. Having two phases of focus groups with a diary activity in-between may allow participants to 'move beyond' initial conversations about television coverage of distant Others, which are often rather inhibited or somewhat contrived. Instead it may provide discussants with a greater amount of time and confidence to articulate their responses to mediated encounters with distant Others. Furthermore, by engaging with the research process over a longer period of time, participants can both feel more comfortable with the conventions of the research and appreciate what is and is not expected of them. As a result, they may feel less inclined to feel that some responses are preferable to others.

The diary also provides participants with the opportunity to express themselves in ways which they might feel uncomfortable doing in focus groups. Indeed, as is discussed in chapter 7, participants' comments about their mediated experience of distant Others in

diaries varied in a number of ways from the nature of their conversations in the focus groups, supporting the claim that 'researcher-absent' data is different from that produced in focus groups (Couldry, Livingstone et al. 2007). Another advantage of asking participants to write about their mediated experiences of distant Others in diaries is that diaries allow participants to record their experience much closer to the time of the event being reported. Diaries also provide participants with the opportunity to produce detailed information that is not limited by the conventions of conversation. As Couldry, Livingstone and Markham argue, asking participants to complete a diary over a sustained period of time may also generate a more complex account of participants' mediated connection to a public world (2007:47). Indeed, several participants regularly wrote in excess of 200 word statements in their diaries about individual references. Finally, diaries can also provided more evidence about other contextual factors which shape the nature of mediated encounters compared to focus groups (Couldry, Livingstone et al. 2007:45).

For these reasons, a three step research process involving focus groups and a diary study was designed and conducted to help address the central aim of this thesis and to complement the textual analysis. This audience research was designed and conducted in collaboration with the market research company, TWResearch. Whilst the focus groups and the diary study were facilitated principally by staff from TWResearch, I attended and helped to facilitate many of the focus groups and I contributed to the design of the research process and the format of the diary and focus groups. The audience research formed the basis of a report for Commonwealth Broadcasting association (CBA) and the International Broadcasting Trust (IBT) entitled *The World in Focus,* which I wrote (see Scott 2009). TWResearch, CBA and IBT have given all necessary permissions for using the material from the research in this thesis.

3.2.2. First phase of focus groups

The first phase of focus group meetings were conducted in Glasgow, Norwich and London in January 2008 and consisted of 36 different focus groups, involving 108 participants in total, each lasting around 30 minutes. In these sessions participants were invited to talk generally about what they thought about distant Others, or 'people who live in countries that are

poorer than ours'. In addition they were asked what they thought about specific examples of media coverage of such people and media coverage in general.

A recruitment agency was used to screen and select participants for this study. The sample included a range of ethnicities (20% ethnic minorities), levels of education, length of residence in UK, viewing habits and experience and interest in distant Others. All of these criteria were identified using a series of discrete questions. There was an even distribution of ages with 25% of participants in each of the four different age ranges (18-25, 26-39, 40-54, 55-65) and an even spread of gender (50% female, 50% male) (see Appendix A for a copy of the questions used to screen participants and the details of how each focus group 'cell' was organized according to participants' demographics).

The research took place between January 2009 and March 2009 and coincided with the sample period of the content analysis of news coverage. This period was chosen because it appeared to avoid any particularly significant news diary events involving distant Others. It should be noted, however, that the first focus groups did come just after Christmas and at the end of the 2008 Israeli invasion of Gaza and the second phase came only weeks before the Comic Relief telethon. The sample period also covered the period of the start of the 2008/09 global recession. All of these events had some impact on the nature of the discussions, as is evident in the analysis in chapter 7.

Participants were offered a small financial incentive to take part in this project because participation required a significant commitment of time and the screening process revealed that very few people were willing to talk about distant Others for up to two and a half hours without some form of incentive. The financial incentives were relatively small and steps were taken to ensure participants did not feel obliged to give any pre-determined answers. Although in hindsight, this financial incentive may have contributed to the sense, in some focus groups, that some forms of response were not acceptable for the research project. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

As well as providing the first of three contexts for generating talk about mediated experiences of distant Others, the first phase of focus groups was also used to familiarize participants with the purpose and conventions of the research and to identify candidates for the subsequent phases of the research.

3.2.3. Diary Study

Forty eight of the initial focus group participants took part in the diary study. In the diary study participants were asked to make a record in an online diary of all media and non-media sources that they encountered on a daily basis that had some connection to distant Others (whether they chose to watch/read/listen them or not). Whilst making a record of such encounters (by recording the time, title and genre of the programme, for example), participants were also given the opportunity to write further about what they 'thought about' each reference and why they decided to watch it, or not (see Appendix B for a full account of the diary format). It is these 'thoughts' that are used as further evidence of participants' mediated experiences of distant Others.

An online diary system was created using 'Google Sites' so that whenever participants needed to log a diary entry they simply filled in a small number of relevant fields, specifying what reference they had seen, where and what they thought about it (see Appendix C). This system was designed to make completing the diary more convenient for most participants and it assisted the collection and analysis of data. However, being online meant the diary design may have preferenced accounts from participants who had greater access to and ease of using the internet. In light of this, all participants were given the option of completing the diary offline – although not one of the participants selected the later option.

In the second month of the two month study, participants were sent a small number of suggestions of programmes they might wish to watch and links to recent news items that they might be interested in watching (see Appendix D). Participants were placed under no formal obligation to watch such suggested content (and in many cases, did not). There were three reasons for making these suggestions. Firstly, this intervention aimed to ensure that some participants had watched and commented upon the programmes chosen for textual analysis. Secondly, some feedback also helps to sustain diarist's commitment and help to mitigate the inevitable boredom of a two month diary study (Havens and Schervish 2001). Finally, as Couldry, Livingstone and Markham argue, from the experience of conducting their diary study, some feedback is useful to help prevent the adoption of a 'stable, abstracted

narrative voice… [in diarist's comments, by providing a] gentle prod away from patterns that are becoming entrenched' (2007:49).

In total, 290 diary entries were made, or an average of 6 per diarist. Just 15 entries, or 5%, related to non-media references (conversations with family members or work colleagues), while 67% were about television. The most common references to television content were documentaries (94 references), news (88 references), reality TV programmes (9 references) and NGO adverts and fundraising appeals (6 references). The remaining 28% of references were spread fairly evenly between newspapers (8%), radio (7%), online (5%), films (3%) books (3%) and magazines (2%).

In order to inform the design and structure of the diary study, a one month pilot study involving ten participants was conducted two months prior to the main study. The experience of this pilot study demonstrated that completing the diary did not place unreasonable demands on participant's time. Indeed, most participants made only a small number of entries each month. The key issue highlighted by the pilot study was the extent to which the explanations of the purpose and instructions for the diary determined how the diary was completed. For example, in the pilot study participants were asked to 'log the times they saw or heard a reference to the developing world in the media and in other contexts'. Participants in the pilot study reported that they took this to refer only to news items and charitable appeals about poverty and suffering in Africa and possibly other parts of the world. Since the aim of this study was to invite comments upon mediated experiences of distant Others in general, across all television genres, the description of the aim of the study was modified so that participants were told that the object of interest was 'people from or living in those countries and cultures that are poorer than ours'. This definition of distant Others proved to invite a far greater range of responses than the term 'developing world', as the following extract from one focus group illustrates.

> **Interviewer: Would 'people who live in countries that are poorer than ours' conjure a different image in your mind [than 'developing countries']?**
>
> Yes. Other countries other than just famine stricken countries. Possibly a country like Romania which is a developing country but I think I tend to think of Africa and malnutrition and pot-bellied young children desperate for help with flies on their

faces. But the phrase you just used made me think of Romania with its chronic orphanage problem.

I agree; I do always tend to think of Africa and the image you get is always the same one: the crying children…

We were brought up with the developing countries being Africa mainly (London 1E).

The term, 'people from or living in those countries and cultures that are poorer than ours' was also used to introduce the subject of concern to the focus groups, although participants frequently reverted to the term 'developing countries' themselves in the subsequent discussions.

This diary study had two purposes. The first was to provide participants with further opportunities, a different context and a longer period of time in which to express their mediated experiences of distant Others. The second was to 'set up' the second phase of focus groups by helping to ensure that participants felt more familiar with what was and was not expected of them and to ensure that they felt comfortable enough to express themselves. It also served to provide participants with more to talk about in the second phase of focus groups.

3.2.4. Second phase of focus groups

The second series of focus groups were also conducted in Glasgow, London and Norwich but on this occasion consisted of six, two hour sessions with 46 of the diarists in total so as to generate longer and more detailed discussions (only 2 participants had dropped out by this stage). In these focus groups participants were invited to talk for longer about what they thought about television coverage of distant Others in specific programmes or in different television genres. In order to generate two-hours of further talk about this subject, participants were shown a compilation of short clips of recent television programmes to prompt recall and discussion. Questions were also asked about their experience of the diary study.

In an attempt to further mitigate the problems caused by the inhibited and somewhat contrived nature of talk often evident in focus groups, participants attended both phases of focus groups with a friend and were grouped with 'similar' peers so they could be made to feel more comfortable. Settings were also made informal, with drinks and breaks made available and interviewee intervention was kept to a minimum. Many of the focus groups were facilitated by a highly experienced member of the market research company in order to attempt to further mitigate the contrived nature of the talk.

During both focus group phases, formally structured and semi-structured protocols were used (Hundley and Shyles 2010:419). The formally structured part involved prepared questions to provide alternative ways of generating talk about a subject which many participants found difficult to talk about and to ensure some degree of consistency across groups. Participants were not asked whether they agreed or disagreed with particular sentiment but were simply invited to express and discuss their views on their mediated experience of distant Others (see Appendix E for a full outline of both focus groups discussion guides). The semi-structured portion of the focus groups allowed participants to speak freely, elaborate, ask questions and join in group discussions. All focus groups were tape-recorded, transcribed and discussions anonymised. The transcription conventions stressed readability at the expense of detailed nuances of pronunciation, pauses and timing (Wetherell, Stiven et al. 1987).

In total, 42 different focus groups were conducted during the two phases, generating around 30 hours of talk. See Figure 3.1 for an illustration of the research process.

Figure 3.1: Timeline and graphic illustration of the research process for the diary study and focus groups
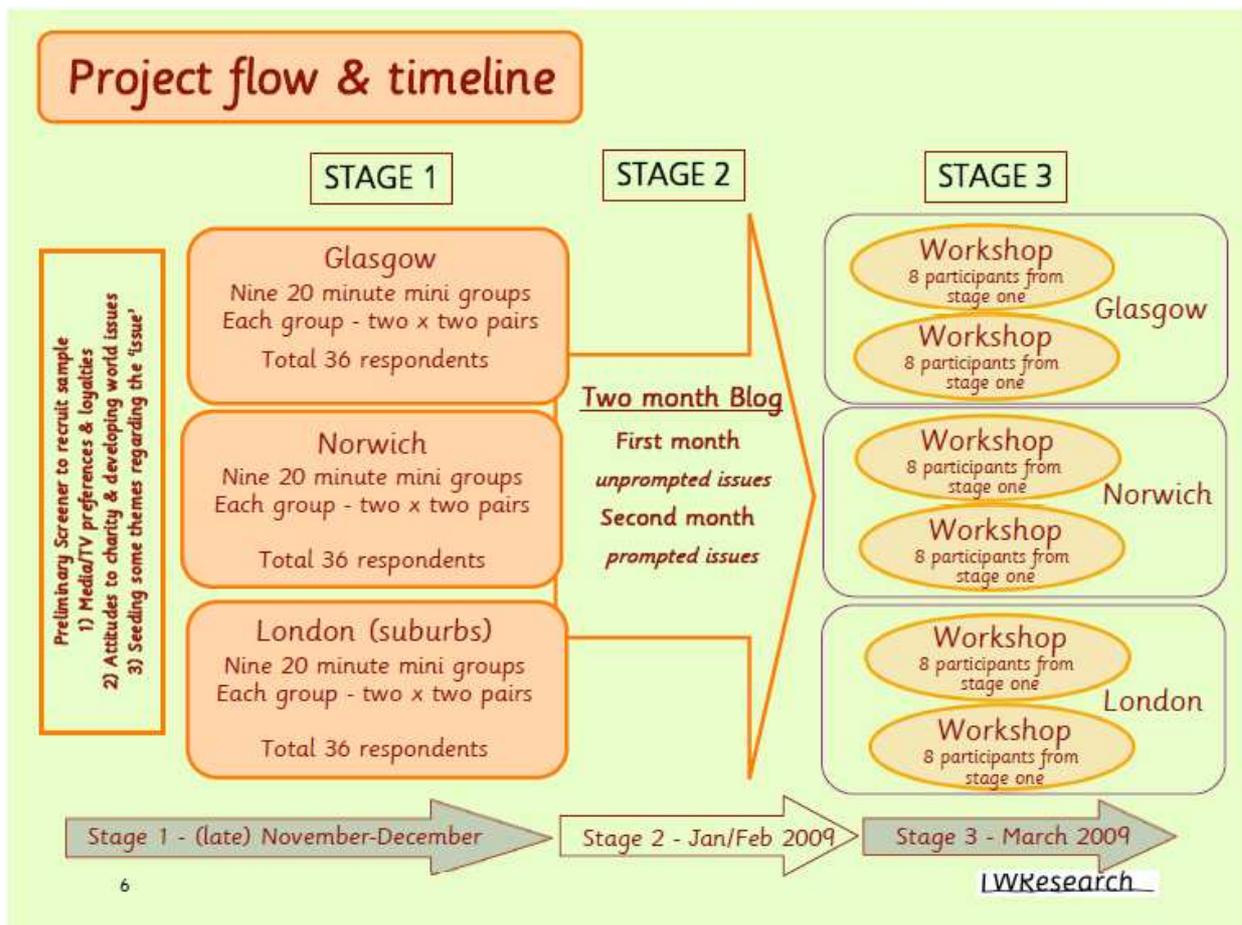
3.3 CAPTURING ENCOUNTERS

3.3.1 Content analysis

In the previous chapter I argued that before investigating *how* distant Others are mediated by television, it is useful to first ask questions regarding the *extent to which* distant Others are mediated by television, if at all. Furthermore, by distinguishing between the relative appearance of distant Others from different parts of the world I can contribute to questions as to how hierarchies of place and human life are reproduced by television. Addressing such questions does not require the application of the analytics of mediation because the concern is only with the occurrence of instances of mediation rather than with the precise nature of their appearance. These questions are better addressed through an approach

more suited to large-scale quantitative analysis which is able to capture the quantities and general characteristics of large amounts of television content, such as content analysis. Berelson famously described content analysis as 'a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication' (1952:147).

I also argued in the previous chapter that rather than focussing, as Chouliaraki does, on the ways in which distant Others *can* be mediated by television, we can learn more about the process of mediation if we focus on the complexities of whether and how it *is* happening. In order to produce evidence to support claims about how distant Others are routinely mediated, I chose to follow Robertson's (2010) lead in using a quantitative analysis of the 'superficial features' of a relatively large number of texts in order to identify a much smaller number of texts that might be considered, in some ways, representative of the wider sample population. Furthermore, this quantitative analysis can be used as evidence to support claims regarding the particular dimensions of the chosen texts that are common amongst the other texts within the sample population. In summary, a large scale quantitative analysis can help to study both the extent to which spectators encounter mediated distant Others and to support claims about the routine ways in which distant Others are mediated by television.

A content analysis of television content is the most suitable approach for this task as it allows the researcher to discern quantities and patterns across a large amount of data. Importantly, it allows for *generalisations* about quantities and patterns of coverage. One of the weaknesses of a content analysis is that it is often not possible to develop a suitable framework for identifying and coding content across a range of genres. Thus, two separate content analyses were conducted; one of news programming and one of non-news programming, each with different sample sizes, coding frameworks and qualifying criteria. The details of each are discussed separately below.

3.3.2 Non-news television programming

3.3.2.1 Sample population

The sample population for my content analysis of non-news television coverage of distant Others consisted of the entire content of the then five UK 'terrestrial' channels and a selection of other digital channels, over the entire calendar years of 2007 and 2010. The 'terrestrial' channels BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five were chosen as, despite the increasing availability of other, digital, channels in the UK, these still accounted for over half (55%) of television viewing in multi-channel homes in 2009 (Ofcom 2010a). The three digital channels, BBC3, BBC4 and More4 were also included in the study as they are amongst the most highest viewed and because they claim to be, and are perceived to offer, the most international television content.

The output of these eight channels was analysed over the length of two entire calendar years in order to compensate for seasonal fluctuations in programming, the occurrence of particular events (such as the football World Cup in South Africa, 2010) or programmes 'seasons' (*such as the Indian Season* on Channel 4 in 2010) and because with a smaller sample size significant but seldom shown programmes may be missed. Using such a large sample period also allows any claims regarding the appearance, and the context of appearance, of distant Others to be more robust, unlike many previous studies which have adopted a sample period of a few months (Brookes 1995; DFID 2000).

3.3.2.2 Sampling units

The sampling units involved all new, complete programmes shown during the sample period. Only whole programmes were included as the timed break-down of magazine programmes, studio shows and other mixed content programmes is not publicly available, making content difficult to disaggregate. Only new programmes were included in order to reflect the amount of original content available on television rather than the total 'gross' amount of content. Since most adults do not tend to watch a programme they have already seen, and since for some digital channels in particular, the same programme can be repeated numerous times in a year, the inclusion of repeats and 'omnibus' collations would have greatly inflated the results. Programmes were identified as being 'new' by reference to

publicly available listing, online programme archives and in consultation with broadcasters. A programme is defined as new, rather than 'first run', when it has not been transmitted previously on any UK terrestrial television channel. It does include cross-channel repeats, such as programmes originally aired on BBC4 and then shown on BBC2. In such cases, the programmes are only recorded once and their location given on the 'terrestrial' channel.

Where a programme met the criteria described in this methodology, the entire time of the programme was recorded in terms of programme hours. For programmes broadcast on commercial channels, 10% of programme time was deducted to allow for commercial breaks and trailers.

3.3.2.3 Data collection

The data for this investigation was collected from publicly available listings sources such as the *Radio Times* from which the title and description of every programme on each of the eight channels in the sample was manually examined. Although this was a time-consuming process and one that was not free from human error, unlike a key-word search from electronic databases the process helped to build an awareness of scheduling and ensured programmes not immediately recognisable as relating to distant Others from their titles alone could be included. The data collected was then cross-checked with all relevant broadcasters who co-operated closely in order to verify the information needed for correct classification of individual programmes. While this was a protracted and often laborious process, it not only produced a greater degree of reliability in the results but also allowed broadcasters a degree of 'buy-in' to the research.

3.3.2.4 Sample criteria: distant Others

The principal concern of this study is not to examine the quantity of television coverage of all people from 'other' countries but to examine coverage of distant Others, or those who only appear to spectators in the media (Silverstone 2005) and who are experientially and culturally different from the spectator (Chouliaraki 2006:22). Unfortunately, the concept of distant Others is used most often as a conceptual tool and is seldom deployed empirically

(except through specific examples in which the status of actors as distant Others is obvious). As a result, little precedent has been established as to how we might easily identify a programme as being *about* distant Others, or not. Since watching every programme in the sample and examining the construction of Otherness in each case is not feasible given the number of programmes, some other means of classifying programmes as concerning distant Others is necessary.

I argue here, as Chouliaraki does (2006:10), that television not only constructs an imagined community of the nation (Anderson 1983) by homogenizing differences internal to the nation-state, but that in the mediation of peoples from Other countries television also establishes a broader sense of 'we'. Here I assume this 'beyond the nation' community to be the imagined community of 'the West', alongside a small number of other so called 'developed' countries. Thus, in order to make a feasible distinction between the appearance of distant Others and those Others within a broader sense of 'we', I distinguish between television programming about developed countries, which I take to refer to Others who the spectator in the UK may identify with, and programming about all other 'transition' and 'developing' countries, which I take to refer to distant Others[7].

This position is undoubtedly problematic because it assumes that all individuals in developing countries are mediated in such a way as to be presented as culturally different from spectators, whereas all individuals in developed countries are mediated in such a way as to be presented as experientially and culturally 'closer' to 'us' and part of 'our' 'beyond the nation' community. It also assumes that there is a clear distinction between countries populated by distant Others and those that are not.

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[7] Following Joye (2010), I elide distant Others with 'developing' countries rather than 'non-Western' countries because in Western media imagery it is people from the 'third world', rather than 'non-Western countries', who are generally portrayed as the most distant and radical Other to the West (Benthall 1993). Furthermore, it is *not* as Chouliaraki claims, 'the West that watches the rest of the world suffer' (2006:83) but develop*ed* countries who watch develop*ing* countries. Indeed, Chouliaraki is tied to a concern for 'the West and the rest' because the forms of pity she draws on are claimed to be peculiar to Western thought (see Boltanski 1999). My focus beyond pity releases me of this commitment. In more practical terms, it is also easier to identify 'developing countries' and 'developed countries' than 'Western' and 'non-Western' countries.

These assumptions are clearly not universally applicable and it therefore compromises the extent to which the results generated by this study do indeed reflect the extent to which and manner in which distant Others are mediated by UK television. However, since the purpose of this study is to provide only an indication of the way in which distant Others are mediated by television, rather than to make precise claims about the exact nature and extent of their appearance, these assumptions must be tolerated. Moreover, without making such an assumption this study would not practically be possible as some means of identifying programmes as being about distant Others, or not, is necessary. While Warner argues that 'when we understand images and texts as public, we do not gesture to a statistically measurable series of others, we make a necessarily imaginary reference to the public as opposed to other individuals' (1993:xviii), in this empirical study I do not have the luxury of referring to 'imaginary references'.

In order to attempt to compensate for this weakness, the results will, where possible, be broken down, not just by the categories of developed and developing countries but by global region and even by individual country. The classifications used by the United Nations Development Programme were used to define whether countries were considered developing or otherwise and which global regions they considered are part of (see Appendix F).

3.3.2.5 Sample criteria: international or domestic

While attempting to quantify coverage of developed and developing countries may give an indication of the occurrence of instances of mediation, such results are more meaningful with additional relative measures to serve as comparisons. Thus, it is useful to establish levels of domestic and international programming where possible. Domestic content is defined as programming in which the principal themes and / or actors within the programme are explicitly and directly related to the UK (whether programme content was shot in the UK or abroad). In the case of factual and current affairs programming, domestic content is not recorded because of the pressures on the researcher's time and because some comparable data already exists (see Dover and Barnett 2004). In the case of television drama, the amount of domestic content was counted.

Defining programmes as being international, rather than domestic, was problematic as frequently content was filmed in a variety of locations or in locations different to those referred to in the plot and the subject of the programming did not always relate to the setting. For the purposes of this research, a programme was defined as international if the principal themes and / or actors within the programme are explicitly and directly related to a country or countries outside of the UK (whether the programme was shot in the UK or abroad). This definition was used so that programmes which were filmed in foreign countries but which were not about that country or people from that country, such as *I'm a Celebrity… Get Me Out Of Here!* did not qualify for inclusion, while programmes such as *Meet the Natives* in which people from outside the UK appeared but which were filmed in the UK, could be included.

Determining whether a programme was domestic or international was achieved by consulting listings or, in a few cases, by watching the programme itself. All programmes that were considered international under this definition were cross-checked by relevant broadcasters. The country or region which an international programme referred to was also determined either by consulting listings or by watching the programme. If a programme related principally to more than one country then only the principal country and the corresponding region was recorded. Where it was difficult to identify the country which received the principal focus of attention in any story, this study adopted a similar principle to that used by Painter.

> If the item concerned the impact of the foreign policy of country X on country Y… [or] if the principal focus of attention was the story or fate of an individual or group of individuals from country X in country Y… then the times allocated were split equally between the two countries (2008:29).

3.3.2.6 Coding

In addition to coding for country, region, channel, programme hours, developed or developing and domestic or international, all non-news programmes were coded according

to topic, length, genre and, in the case of factual programming, sub-genre. The purpose of these codes was to give an indication of the context in which distant Others appeared.

The definitions of genre and sub-genre used by Ofcom (2010b) were adopted in this thesis (see Appendix G). In the absence of any research which might give an indication of a more appropriate way of examining international programming according to genre, this classification appears most suitable.

Factual, drama and light entertainment genres were chosen for inclusion in this study because, aside from news, they are the three most common programme genres on UK television – making up approximately 70% of UK television programming between them (Ofcom 2010a). Current affairs programming, which makes up around 4% of UK programming, was also included in this study because it contains a relatively high proportion of international coverage.

Despite being the fifth most common genre, constituting around 8% of all UK television programming in 2009 (Ofcom 2010a), feature films were not included in this study in order to keep the scope of the study manageable and because the featuring of developing countries in feature films is relatively rare. Sports, educational and regional programming, were not included for the same reasons and because together they only make up only around 5% of UK television programming. The experience of conducting the content analysis demonstrated that the exclusion of these genres did not result in the exclusion of a significant number of programmes.

While programme genre helps to give some information regarding the context in which distant Others appear in UK television, it is also useful to record the topic being addressed in the programme in order to give some indication of the themes being discussed. The codes used to define the topic of each programme were taken from IBT's long running biannual study (Dover and Barnett 2004) which has developed a series of categories and definitions in its studies over the last 20 years (see Appendix H). The application of this coding was relatively straightforward as almost all programmes addressed a particular subject, such as 'trade', 'natural disaster' or 'crime'. These categories and definitions are only relevant to factual and current affairs programming and so the topic of drama and light entertainment programming were not recorded.

In order to give an indication of the prominence given to programming about distant Others through scheduling, and hence, the extent to which spectators are likely to encounter distant Others, programmes were coded as either being shown at peak or non-peak time slots. Peak-time was classified as between 6:30pm and 10:30pm and a programme was counted as peak when the majority of the programme minutes fall into peak time. Programmes which fell exactly either side were counted as 'peak' (Dover and Barnett 2004).

Finally, a selection of factual programmes from 2010 were watched in their entirety and analysed using the analytics of mediation. This was done, not to code them according to various dimensions of agency or space-time, for example, because, as discussed below, this was found to be too problematic. Rather, this was done to give an indication of whether or not the way in which *Rageh Inside Iran, Who Killed Scarlett?* and *The World's Strictest Parents* regulated spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others was unique amongst other factual texts, or not. Although this was a time-consuming process and it does not allow me to make claims about the routine ways in which non-news texts manage spectators' experiences of distant Others, it does at least enable me to establish an indication how frequently such 'extreme' examples of mediation occur. A randomly selected sample of episodes from 50% of all 'factual entertainment' formats broadcast in 2007 and 2010 (14 programmes in total) were watched as well as a randomly chosen sample of 5% of serious factual programmes about distant Others in 2010 (27 programmes in total) (see Appendix O and P for a full list).

3.3.3 Television News

The methodology outlined above cannot reliably be applied to television news bulletins as these cannot be coded as 'whole' programmes referring to developing countries, or not, in the same way as other television genres. Furthermore, coding the output of various news bulletins over the course of an entire year is well beyond the capacity of one researcher. Thus, a content analysis of television news coverage of distant Others necessarily requires the application of a different methodology.

3.3.3.1 Sample population

Identifying an appropriate sample population in an analysis of international news is not as easy as it once was. A new news ecology is emerging in which increasingly fragmented audiences can and do access their news from multiple sources. For the first time, less than 50% of audiences in the UK cite news on terrestrial television channels as their most important source of information about the world (Ofcom 2007). Indeed, 19% of the UK public claim to use news on digital television channels as their primary source (Ofcom 2007). Consequently, rather than focussing solely on a small number of 'terrestrial' bulletins broadcast in the evening, as most previous studies have done (see DFID 2000), the sample population of this study also includes popular breakfast bulletins, ethnic minority television news bulletins and news bulletins on 'digital' channels.

The following 18 television bulletins were chosen as they represent a range of audiences, a range of channels and broadcasters, times of the day (midday, early evening and late evening) and a range of approaches to international news coverage. In most instances, bulletins were chosen in consultation with the relevant broadcaster. Where a choice of bulletins was possible, the decision was guided by the popularity of the bulletin. All corresponding weekend bulletins were also included, even where the times varied. The four particular religious and ethnic minority channels included in this study were chosen because they represent four of the most popular English language bulletins in the UK and represent a range of religious and ethnic minority audiences.

1. BBC1 Ten O'clock News
2. BBC1 Six O'clock News
3. BBC4 World News, 7pm
4. BBC2 Newsnight
5. BBC1 90 second update
6. BBC3 60 seconds, 9pm bulletin
7. ITV1 10pm News
8. ITV1 6.30 News
9. Sky News, 10pm news hour

10. Channel 4 News, 7pm bulletin

11. More 4 News, 8pm bulletin

12. FIVE News, 5pm bulletin

13. GMTV News, 8 am bulletin

14. Al Jazeera English, 8pm bulletin

15. NTA International News, 8pm bulletin

16. NDTV 9 O'clock News

17. CCTV News, 3.30pm bulletin

18. Islam Channel News, 5.30pm bulletin

3.3.3.2 Sample period and sample units

All news items on these 18 television bulletins were examined over a period of two weeks, from Monday, February 9th to Sunday, February 22nd, 2009. This particular two week period was chosen as it avoided any major diary events and extreme seasonal fluctuations in the news cycle. This two week period also corresponded with the middle of the sample period of the audience research, allowing for a closer comparison between the studies.

The sample period of this study was limited to two weeks because of the time-consuming nature of watching and coding well over one hundred hours of television news. This relatively small sample period presents problems regarding how representativeness the results are and since the data was collected over a single, relatively short period of time and not at several intervals over a longer period of time, the results provide only a relatively small snap-shot of coverage, rather than a more detailed picture of coverage in general. The results presented in the next chapter should be read with these qualifications in mind.

It is not possible to examine the content of television news bulletins from any publicly available listings. Keyword searches from electronic databases require particular levels of access, they do not engender an appreciation for the precise nature of the flow of news bulletins and do not allow for more detailed coding. Consequently, this research was conducted by watching the entire content of all news bulletins in the sample. The content of each bulletin was either recorded onto digital hard drive, DVD or VHS or supplied by the

broadcaster. The results of this study were also checked by all broadcasters involved. Only straight news items were included in this study. Headlines, teasers, musical introductions, handovers, end titles, summaries, advertisements, newspaper reviews, sports and weather coverage were not included.

3.3.3.3 Coding

All news texts were coded in the same way as non-news texts - according to duration (recorded in minutes and seconds using a stopwatch), domestic or international, developed or developing country, principal country (or international institution), position in the bulletin and topic. News items which were set in developing countries but included little or no reference to the people of the country, and which instead focussed exclusively on the environment or animals, for example, were coded as international and not 'developing country'. The principal topic of each news item was coded according to the categories developed by Harrison (2000) in his study of the international content of terrestrial TV news in Britain (see Appendix I). Where a news item addressed two or more principal topics, the topic addressed first was coded.

Watching the entire content of all news bulletins in the sample afforded the opportunity to code news items in much greater detail than non-news texts. Thus, in addition to these codes, all news items about distant Others were also coded for various other dimensions of treatment that could give an indication of how routine certain features of texts are – specifically in relation to how each of the paradoxes of mediation are seemingly resolved.

In relation to the paradox of in/action, news texts were coded according to the character of the person speaking on every occasion that an individual spoke, other than the journalist or newscaster. The following categories were adapted from Robertson (2010:97) who codes news items according to whether one or more actors from a given category speaks in their own words. This was done in order to provide an indication of the way in which agency is managed by news items, or more specifically, the degree of humanisation of distant Others through the act of being able to say something about their condition (Chouliaraki 2006:88).

1. Participant: Individual directly involved in the news story or representative of involved organisation or institution.

2. Participating country vox pops

3. Participating country politician / official / civil servant

4. Participating country expert

5. UK vox pops

6. UK politician / official / civil servant

7. UK expert

8. Other country vox pops

9. Other country politician / official / civil servant

10. Other country expert

11. International organization expert / NGO

The category of 'participant' was used refer to all individuals who were directly involved or effected by in the events being reported on. The term 'participating country' was used to refer to any individual who was a citizen of the country which the news story principally referred to. The term 'expert' was used to refer to all those individuals who spoke and who were independent from the state but whose opinion was afforded some special degree of authority. Vox pops refers to actors who spoke but who were neither experts not participants.

In relation to the paradox of distance, news texts were coded in three ways. Firstly, texts were coded according to whether or not an explicit reference was made to the relevance of the story to the life-world of the spectator or fellow spectators (usually in the form of references to the UK or UK citizens). The purpose of this was to give an indication of the degree of *mobility* of a text, or 'the capacity of the montage to connect the space-time of suffering with that of safety' (Chouliaraki 2006:123). This particular code was modified from a similar study by Robertson who coded news items according to whether they 'intersect with the outside world' (2010:38). Secondly, news texts were coded according to whether or not the journalist appeared in vision, on location, or not, to give further indication of whether a text appealed to a sense of mobility in this regard.

Thirdly, texts were coded according to the nature of the news item, defined in one of four ways below. These definitions were developed in consultation with news organisations and are designed to give an indication of whether news items about distant Others appear as part of a 'logic of appearances' in which causality is presented as being dictated by the immediate context rather than historical circumstances (2006:99), or whether they appeal to a 'logic of causality' in which the longer-term consequences and more subtle contexts are revealed.

1. **Hard news / unscheduled event** - An unscheduled event taking place within the last 24 hours that isn't part of an ongoing process.
2. **Continuing Story** - A current twist in an ongoing process or development (or comment on it).
3. **Diary event** - A scheduled event taking place within the last 24 hours.
4. **Feature** - An ongoing process with no current angle (or a comment on it).

In relation to the paradox of technology, news texts were coded according to the format of the news item in order to give an indication of the mode of presentation used, defined earlier as the choice of media used to tell a story and the locations from which it is told. The following definitions of news format were developed in consultation with news organisations in order to understand the most common treatments of news items.

- **Newscaster report** or **live voiceover (LVO)**: brief (10-20 seconds) clips of video footage or graphic illustrations with the presenter/reporter in the studio talking over the visuals (as opposed to reporter voicing over them with a sign off which is usually a VT package).
- **VT package (VT)**: self-contained video report including a voiceover from a producer or reporter, usually on location and usually introduced by a studio anchor.
- **Studio interview/discussion**: hosted by the newscaster or journalist within the studio.
- **Two-way**: conversation between two journalists, either on screen or on phone, usually between a reporter in field and a newscaster. Often live and sometimes overlaid with visuals.

- **Live on-location report**: journalist in the field reporting live on events (but not in two-way conversation with the studio anchor), often including witness interviews.

Finally, all VT news items about distant Others were coded according to the dominant form of narrative realism (perceptual, ideological or categorical). This was established, partly through an examination of the mode of presentation and partly by examining the dominant form of verbal-visual correspondence (indexical, iconic or symbolic).

Table 3.2 summarises the ways in which news texts were coded in relation to different paradoxes of mediation and dimensions of the analytics of mediation.

Table 3.2: Codes used to investigate the different dimensions of the analytics of mediation in VT news items about distant Others.

Code	Paradox of mediation	Analytics of mediation
Format of news item	Paradox of technology	Mode of presentation
Narrative realism	Paradox of technology	Narrative realism
Journalist in vision?	Paradox of distance	Mobility
Relevance to spectator?	Paradox of distance	Mobility
Nature of news item	Paradox of distance	Logic of appearance / causality
Who speaks?	Paradox of in/action	Humanisation

3.4 CONCLUSION

In order to address the research agenda set out in the last chapter, three large-scale studies of television content and reception were conducted, the design and application of each has been discussed in this chapter. Specifically, these include a detailed analysis of 18 news and non-news texts, further analysis of 2800 news items and over 5000 non-news items, 30

hours of focus groups with 108 different participants and an analysis of the media diaries of 49 participants completed over a two month period[8].

During this discussion of methodologies, the research agenda set out in the last chapter has been refined into five specific research questions. Table 3.3 provides a summary of these research questions and corresponding methods used to address them.

Table 3.3 Research questions and corresponding methodologies of this thesis

Overall Research Aim	Research Questions	Method	
How are distant Others mediated by television?	1. To what extent do distant Others appear on UK television, if at all?	Content Analysis	
	2. How is a hierarchy of place and human life reproduced by the appearance of distant Others on UK television?		
	3. What are the routine ways in which television news texts regulate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others?	Analytics of Mediation	Content Analysis
	4. What capacity do the most common forms of non-news programming have to manage spectators' experiences of distant Others?		
	5. To what extent do spectators adopt the positions in relation to distant Others which an application of the analytics of mediation suggests television texts invite them to adopt?	Diary and Focus Groups	

The complexity and scale of the three inter-related studies discussed above is a necessary reflection of attempting to take seriously the theoretical claims made in the previous chapters about the multi-dimensional nature of the process of mediation, whilst at the same time attempting to produce meaningful and valuable results about how mediation routinely takes place in the real world. It is, I would suggest, easier to make theoretical claims about the process of mediation than it is to apply these claims in the form of robust empirical research, as this thesis sets out to do (which may be one reason why existing debates about the mediation of distant Others are polarized between the 'positive' and 'negative'

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[8] I also conducted elite interviews with 42 journalists, editors, producers and NGO workers during the course of this research. Unfortunately, there is not the space in this thesis to discuss the results of these interviews (see Appendix Q for a list of interviewees).

narratives). The following chapters in which I present the results of these three studies, will, I hope, reveal the value of such empirical endeavors as I seek to examine theoretical claims through empirical detail.

Chapter 4: Encountering Distant Others?

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Earlier in this thesis I argued that there are several reasons why it is useful to precede questions over *how* television texts orient spectators towards distant Others by first seeking to answer questions regarding the *extent to which* distant Others even appear on UK television. In the first instance, if spectators do not have the opportunity to encounter distant Others then questions over *how* television texts orient spectators towards them become irrelevant. Indeed, Joye suggests we interpret such a lack of appearance as an example of 'adventure news' since distant Others are constructed as no cause for concern or action (2010). Secondly, establishing some sense of the most common contexts in which distant Others appear can help to guide the choice of texts to analyse in more detail. Furthermore, the details of the content analyses can be used to indicate how common or routine certain kinds of mediated experience are. Finally, by examining *which* distant Others are brought to spectator's attention and which are not, we can begin to provide details of the hierarchy of place and of human life which television reproduces (Chouliaraki 2006:8). For these reasons it is useful to gain an understanding of the extent to which distant Others - en masse, in different regions and in individual countries - are mediated by television, if at all, before applying Chouliaraki's analytics of mediation to a number of media texts in which they do appear.

This is a particularly important research agenda, not just for the reasons mentioned above but because, despite a number of previous studies, we still know very little about the quantity of international television coverage, particularly of developing countries (which for reasons discussed in the previous chapter are equated with distant Others in these studies). Claims are often made about how little coverage there is of developing countries (see various chapters in Hawk 1992 for example) to the extent that such claims are often regarded as commonsensical. However, the evidence upon which such claims are based is either anecdotal or partial. As Ebo argues, without any apparent empirical support, 'the only time Africa gets attention from the American media is when major political events that threaten American political interest are taking place in Africa' (1992:16).

Those studies which have conducted empirical investigations into the international dimension of UK television are based almost entirely on coverage of individual or collections of 'crisis' events rather than 'everyday' coverage. For example, the numerous claims about the nature of television coverage of Africa, as consisting largely of 'coups and earthquakes' (Rosenblum 1979) or 'racist stereotypes' (Ebo 1992:15) are based almost entirely on studies of television news coverage during conflicts or disasters. Such claims assume little or no (influential) coverage of Africa outside of television news or outside of coverage of conflicts or disasters. I have shown elsewhere that such assumptions are inaccurate and concluded from a study of 'everyday' UK press coverage of Africa (including news and non-news) that coverage is 'not as marginalised negative or trivial as it is often accused of being' (Scott 2009:533). Even those few studies which have investigated the quantity of 'everyday' international television content have been limited to news (DFID 2000) or a limited number of factual genres (Dover and Barnett 2004) and have not examined how such programming varies for different regions or countries. In short, we do not know which countries, or even which regions of the world, receive more or less coverage, on what topics, by which genres. This is the first study of international coverage on UK television which seeks to address all of these issues.

In order to structure the discussion of the results presented in this chapter I propose to examine three dimensions of television coverage.

1. Relative and absolute quantities of developing country programming (in total and in relation to specific regions and countries)

2. Prominence of developing country programming (scheduling and average programme length)

3. Context in which distant Others appear (genre and topic)

This chapter presents the results of my investigation as they relate to non-news programming and news programming respectively. I conclude this chapter by discussing the wider trends across all television genres.

4.1 ANALYSIS OF NON-NEWS GENRES

4.1.1 Quantity of non-news coverage of developing countries

4.1.1.1 Overall quantity of non-news coverage

In 2007, 2151 hours of new international television programming were broadcast on the eight UK channels in the sample, in the four non-news genres (factual, current affairs, drama and light entertainment). Table 4.1 shows that just 405 hours, or 19%, of this international programming was about developing countries.

Table 4.1: Programme hours of new international non-news content on UK television in 2007 and 2010

Year	Total programmes hours of new international content	Developing countries	Developed countries	Various countries / other
2007	2151	405 (19%)	1693 (79%)	52 (2%)
2010	1594	343 (22%)	1217 (76%)	34 (2%)

This averages out to less than eight minutes of non-news television programming about developing countries, on each of the channels, each day, over a year, compared to the equivalent of 40 minutes of coverage of developed countries. Put another way, distant Others in developing countries appeared on UK non-news television programming around five times less often than Others in developed countries. In 2010, while the total amount of international programming had declined by 35% to 1594 hours, the relative amount of coverage of developing (22%) and developed (76%) countries remained approximately the same as for 2007.

4.1.1.2 Quantity of non-news coverage for different regions of the world

Broken down by region, the results in Figure 4.1 show that in 2007 half of all international non-news television content was coverage of North America. Oceania received the second largest amount of coverage (14%), followed by Europe (11%). Those regions of the world in

which there are most developing countries received the least amount of coverage with Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean both receiving just 5% and the Middle East receiving just 2% of all international non-news television coverage.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of international non-news television content in 2007 and 2010 for different global regions
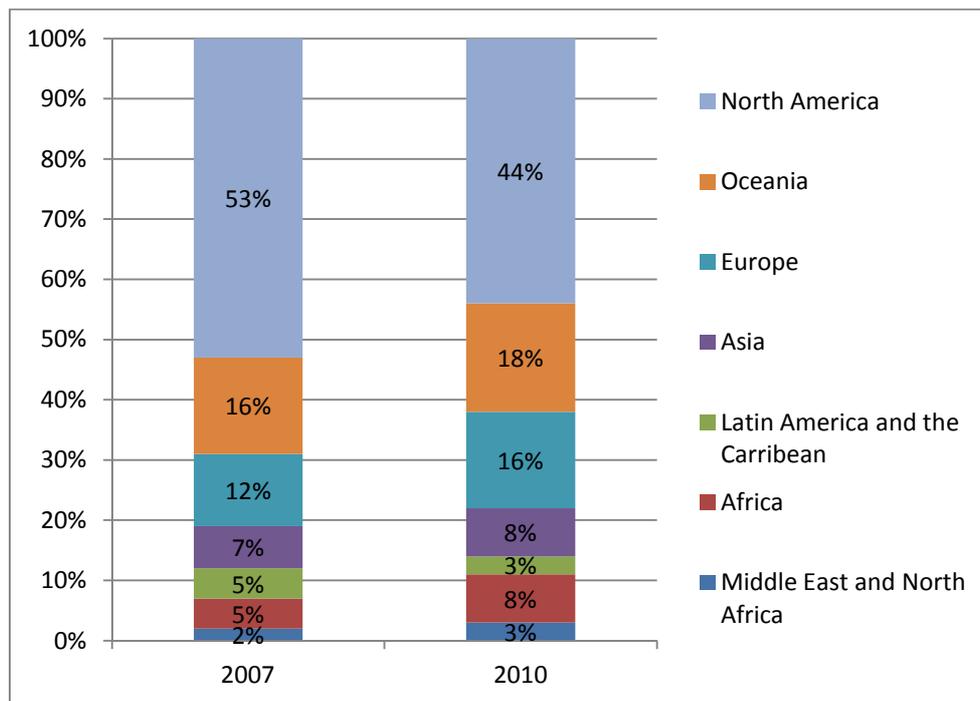
The geographical distribution of international non-news coverage in 2010 was very similar, with North America, Oceania and Europe dominating (78%) and those regions of the world in which there are most developing countries receiving the least amounts of coverage. The only major difference between 2010 and 2007 is the decline in the relative amount of coverage of North America, from 53% to 44% and the increase in the relative amount of coverage of Africa from 5% to 8% (although this is likely to be at least partly due to the football World Cup held in South Africa in 2010).

4.1.1.3 Quantity of non-news coverage for different countries

A closer examination of the data reveals that in 2007, 85 countries, or 44% of all countries in the world, received no non-news coverage at all on any of the eight channels, over the entire year (see Appendix J for a full list). This included countries such as Paraguay, Jordan,

Tunisia, Ukraine, Algeria, Hungary and Rwanda. Large parts of Central Asia, West Africa, Oceania and Central America received no coverage at all. In Central Asia, for example, there was no coverage of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Tajikistan or Moldova. Instead, coverage was highly concentrated in a small number of developed countries. The two countries which received the most coverage were the USA (1081 hours) and Australia (285 hours), which accounted for 64% of all international coverage between them, or more than three times the coverage of all developing countries combined in the four genres in this study.

Similarly, in 2010, 103 countries, or 52% of all countries in the world, were not the main subject of any new non-news programme across any of the channels in the sample. This included countries such as South Korea and Singapore and many in Europe such as Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland and Hungary. Much of Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa and Central Asia also received little or no coverage in 2010. Given the recent dramatic political changes in the region, perhaps the most significant lack of coverage in 2010 was for countries in North Africa and the Middle East. While Egypt was the main focus of seven hours of non-news programming in 2010, Tunisia and Morocco were the principal focus of just one 30 minute programme each. Algeria, Bahrain, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Yemen were not the principal subject of any programme. Figure 4.2 illustrates these results graphically for 2010 by distorting a map of the world according to the amount of non-news coverage each country received.

Figure 4.2: Graphic illustrating total programme hours of non-news coverage for different countries in 2010
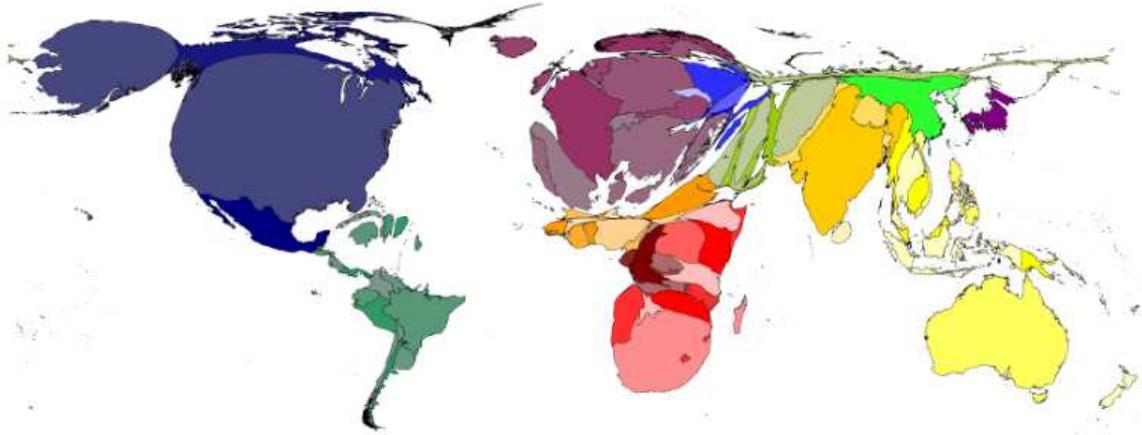
It is interesting to note that English speaking countries, such as India, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa seem to appear more often on UK television than countries such as China, Russia, Brazil and Argentina.

4.1.2 Prominence given to non-news coverage of developing countries

4.1.2.1 Scheduling

In order to get some measure of the prominence of developing country programming in television schedules, the data in Figure 4.3 shows the percentage of factual and current affairs[9] programming about developed and developing countries that was shown at peak (between 6:30pm and 10:30pm) and off-peak times in 2007 and 2010. Surprisingly, perhaps, while 63% of developed country factual programming was shown at peak time, 75% of factual developing country programming was shown at peak time in 2007. Similarly, in 2010 relatively more factual programming about developing countries was shown at peak time (83%) than for developed countries (72%). This suggests that when developing countries do

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[9] This data refers only to factual genres and does not include light entertainment or drama because including these two genres, in which there is vastly more developed country programming than developing, would have made making a relative comparison problematic.

appear in factual programming, they are more likely to be given greater prominence than developed countries.

Figure 4.3: Peak and off-peak factual programming of developed and developing countries in 2007 and 2010.
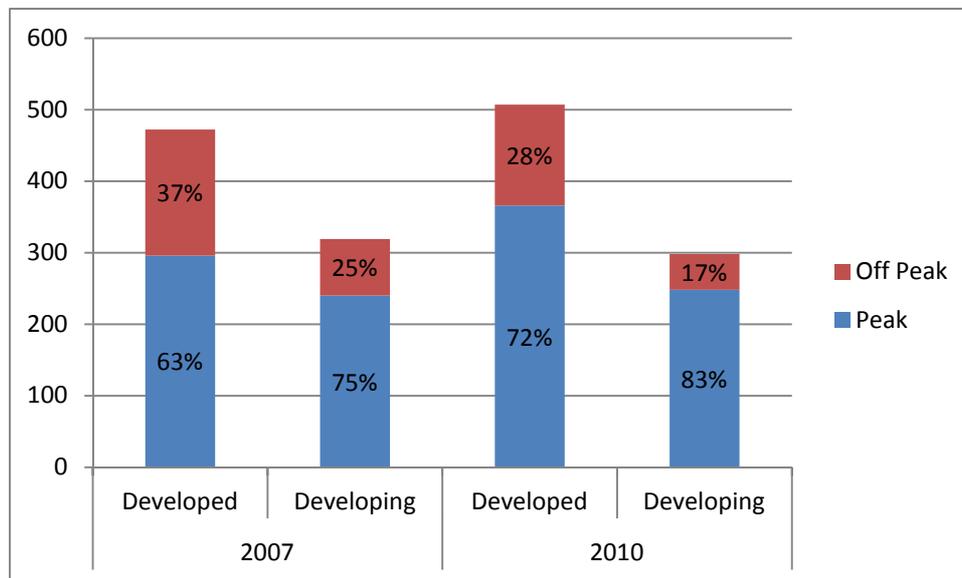
4.1.2.2 Channel

A second indication of the prominence of developing country factual programming on UK television can be found by examining the channels upon which such programming appears. Figure 4.4 shows that the two most popular channels in the UK, ITV1 and BBC1, have the least amount of developing country factual programming of any 'terrestrial' channel in 2007 and 2010 respectively. Indeed, in 2007, ITV1 had just 5 programme hours of developing country factual programming. In relative terms, these two channels had amongst the least relative amounts of developing country programming in 2007, as a proportion of total international programming.

Figure 4.4: Total amounts of developing and developed country factual programming across the eight sample channels.
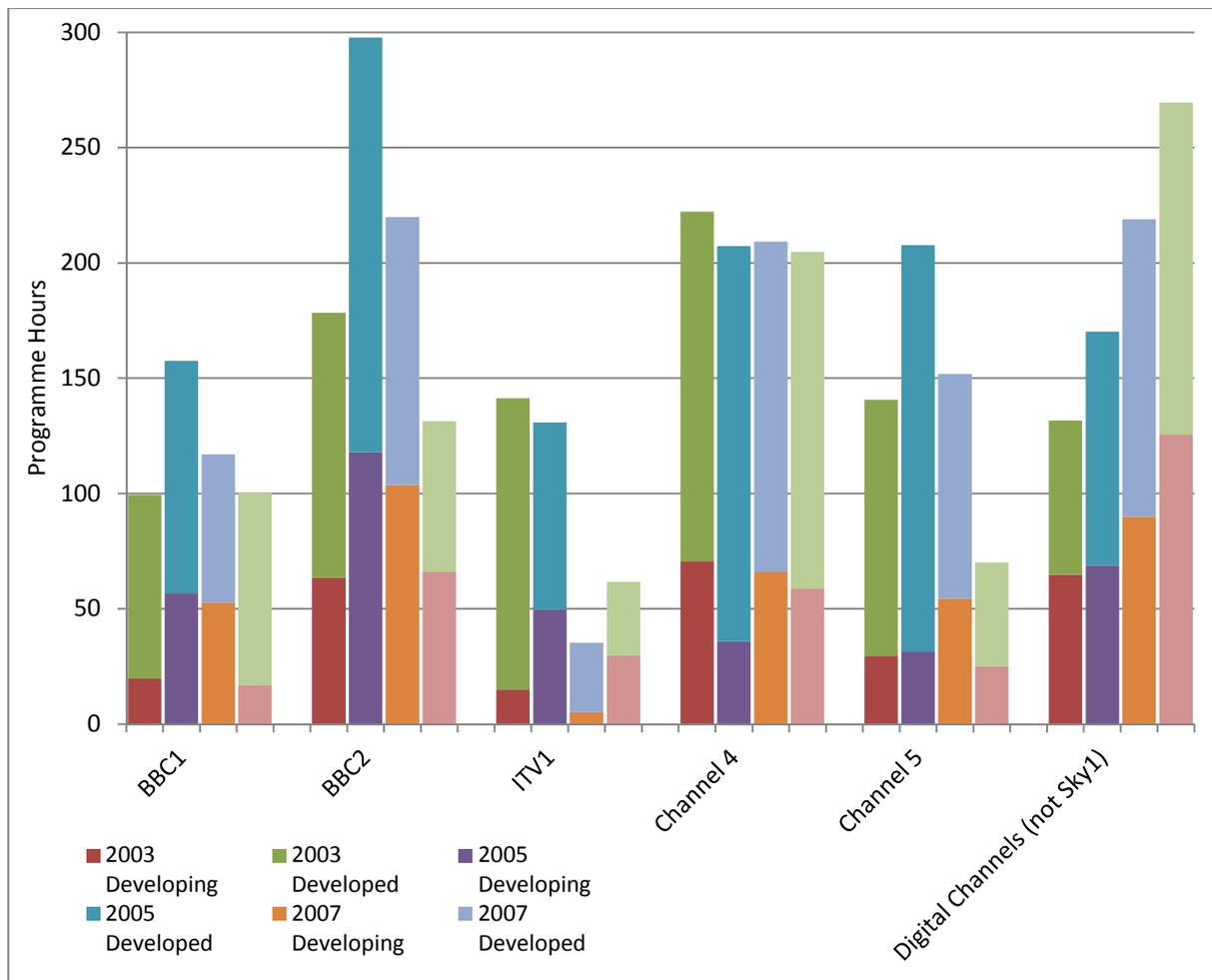
The results in Figure 4.4 also suggest that developing country programming is in decline on 'terrestrial' channels and is 'migrating' to digital channels. Developing country factual coverage on BBC1, for example, has declined by 71% in 5 years, whilst at the same time such programming has increased by 43% on the three digital channels in the sample.

In summary, while developing country factual programming may be slightly more likely to be shown at peak-time than developed country factual programming (when shown at all), developing country programming is increasingly shown on channels with smaller audiences.

4.1.3 Context in which distant Others appear

4.1.3.1 Topic

To provide an indication of the context in which distant Others appear on UK television the programme topic was recorded for all international factual programming (see Appendix H for definitions of topics). The results in Figure 4.5 show that in 2007 and 2010 combined factual programming about developing countries refers to very different topics compared to developed country programming. Apart from receiving similar proportions of coverage of religion (18%:15%) and history (17%:13%) and relatively very low amounts of coverage of politics (3%:2%), there are few similarities between the two.

Figure 4.5: Percentage of coverage of different topics for developed and developing country factual programming in 2007 and 2010
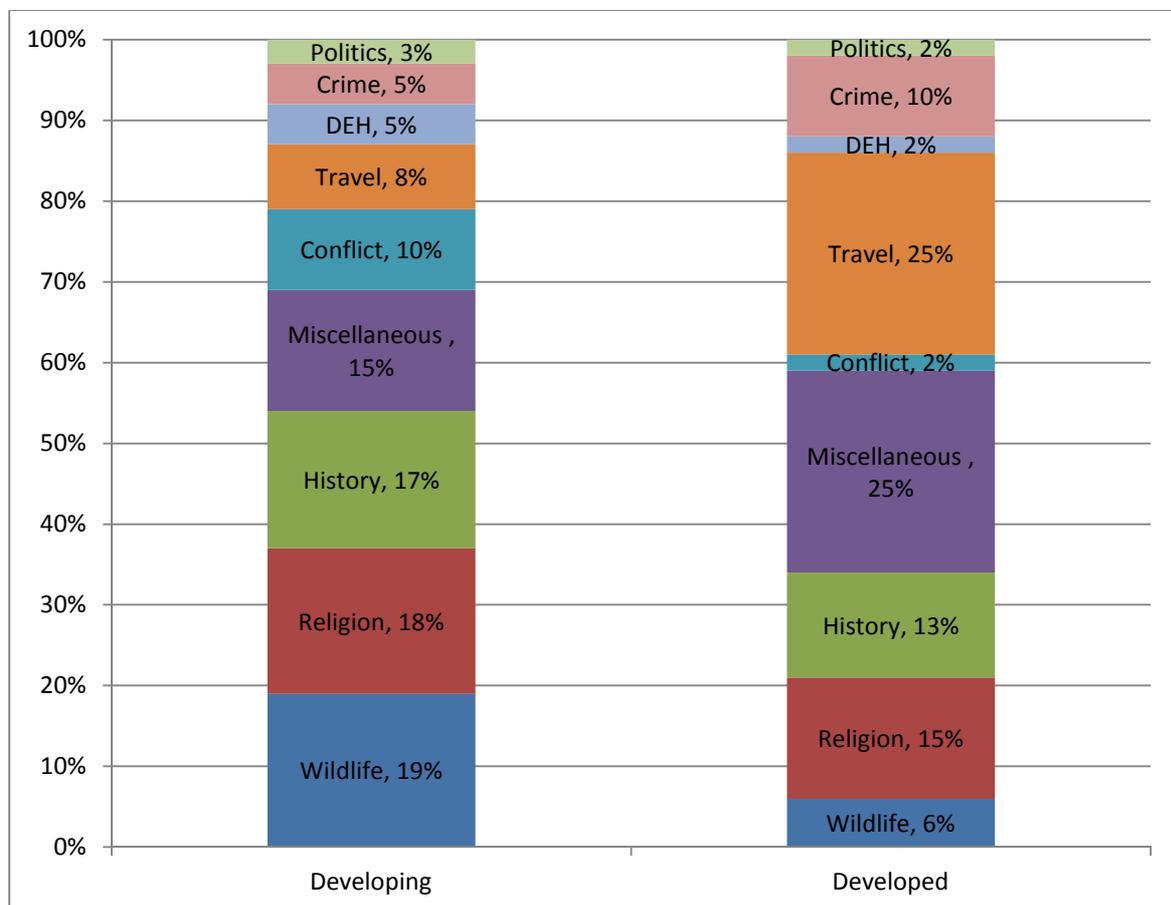
Programming about developed countries is characterised by a relatively large proportion of travel programming (25%) and those programmes classified as 'miscellaneous' (25%) which refers either to human interest topics or to programmes which did not otherwise fit in any of the other topic categories – as well as relatively little coverage of wildlife (6%) and conflict (2%). By contrast, wildlife (19%) and conflict (10%) programming were much more

common in developing country programming and travel (8%) and miscellaneous (15%) relatively much less so. Factual programming about developing countries also has half the proportion of programming about crime compared to developing countries (5%:10%) and more than twice the proportion of coverage of development, environment and human rights (5%:2%).

If the topic of programming is broken down by region, as in Figure 4.6, the extent to which different parts of the world are covered by different topics becomes even more apparent. In 2007, the most common topics for factual programming about North America were miscellaneous (37%), religion, culture and arts (19%) and crime (12%). Between them, North America and Europe had 65% of all international factual programming about crime.

But whereas only 10% of coverage of North America was about travel, almost half of all coverage of Europe (45%) (and 60% of factual coverage of Australia and New Zealand) was about this topic. The other significant topics used to cover Europe were similar to those used to cover North America, including miscellaneous (13%) and religion, culture and arts (11%).

For Asia the most common topics were history (21%) and religion, culture and arts (21%). However, South East Asia was dominated by wildlife programmes such as Orang-utan Diary and Expedition Borneo, both on BBC1. Coverage of Africa was also dominated by wildlife programming as 40% of factual coverage of Africa was about wildlife and 40% of all wildlife programming was set in Africa. East Africa received far more coverage about development, environment and human rights than any other part of the world (45%), largely due to two programmes - *Millionaires' Mission* (Channel 4) and *Mission Africa* (BBC1). Interestingly, only 4.5% of coverage of Africa was about conflict and disaster. By contrast, 37% of output about the Middle East related to conflict and disaster. Indeed, 42% of all conflict and disaster programming was about the Middle East.

Figure 4.6: Topics of international factual programming in different regions of the world in 2007
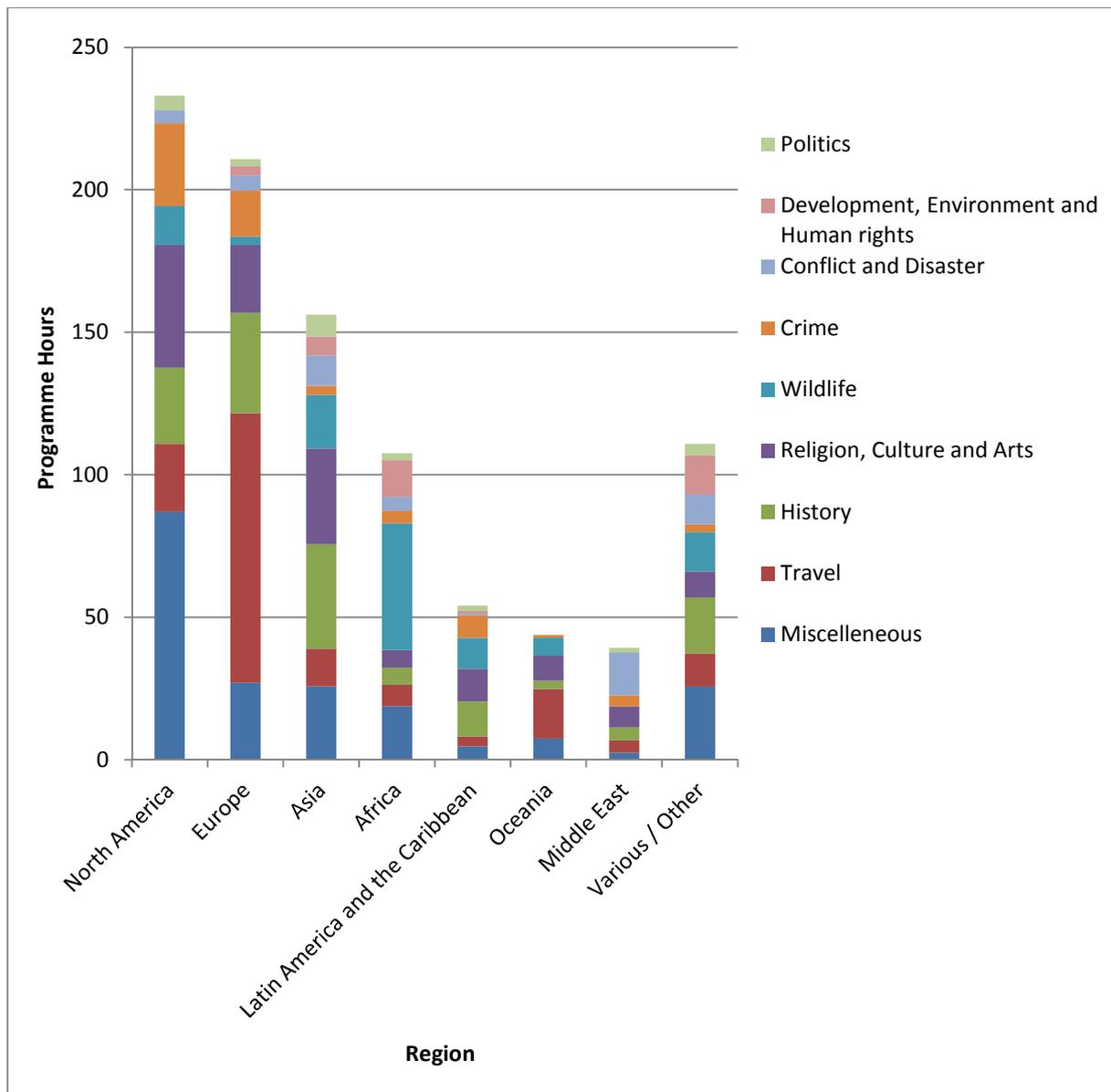
4.1.3.2 Genre

When the results are broken down by genre, the results in Figure 4.7 show that the vast majority of non-news programming about developing countries, in both 2007 (79%) and 2010 (87%), was broadcast under the factual programming genre. Despite this, there are still at least 50% more factual programme hours covering developed countries than covering developing countries in 2007 and 2010. The low levels of programming about developing

countries in the genres of drama and entertainment, in relative and absolute terms, is also striking, especially given the large amounts of coverage in these genres for developed countries. There are also low absolute levels of current affairs programmes for both developed and developing countries, although interestingly, developing countries received more current affairs coverage than developed countries in both 2007 and 2010. We can conclude from these results that developing country programming, though covering a range of different topics, is highly concentrated in just one non-news television genre. Or put another way, distant Others in developing countries hardly ever appear outside factual contexts.

Figure 4.7: Amount of non-news developed and developing country programming by genre in 2007 and 2010

	Factual		Drama		Light entertainment		Current Affairs	
	2007	2010	2007	2010	2007	2010	2007	2010
Developing	359	297	20	17	11	4	39	24
Developed	542	507	819	546	344	155	25	14
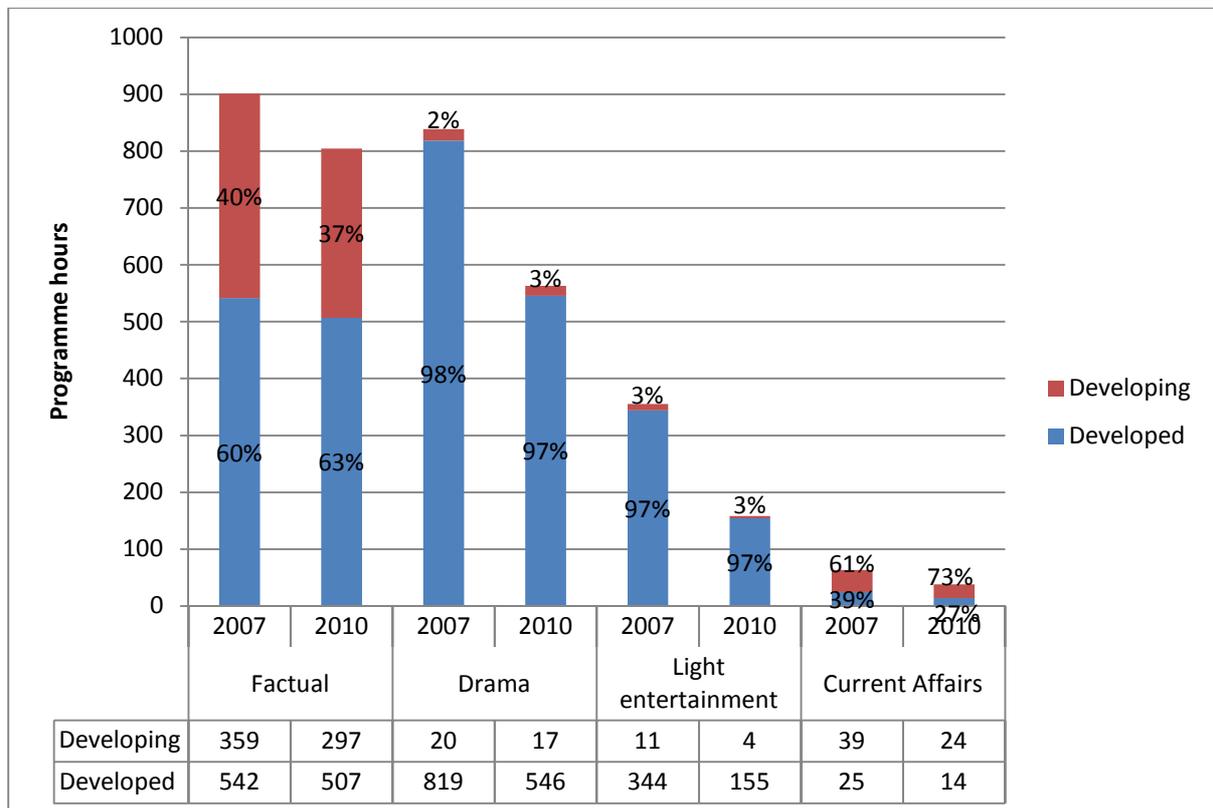
4.1.3.3 Factual programming

Since factual programming dominates non-news television coverage of developing countries it is useful to provide further details of the nature of such programming by disaggregating

the relative quantities of coverage for different sub-genres of factual programming, as defined by Ofcom (2010b:14). Figure 4.8 shows that factual programming about developing countries was dominated by the sub-genre of serious factual programming in both 2007 (65%) and even more so in 2010 (72%). This sub-genre refers to conventional documentaries, such as *Welcome to Lagos* (BBC2) and *The Miracle Baby of Haiti* (Channel 4).

Figure 4.8: Percentage of coverage of different sub-genres of factual programming for developed and developing countries in 2007 and 2010
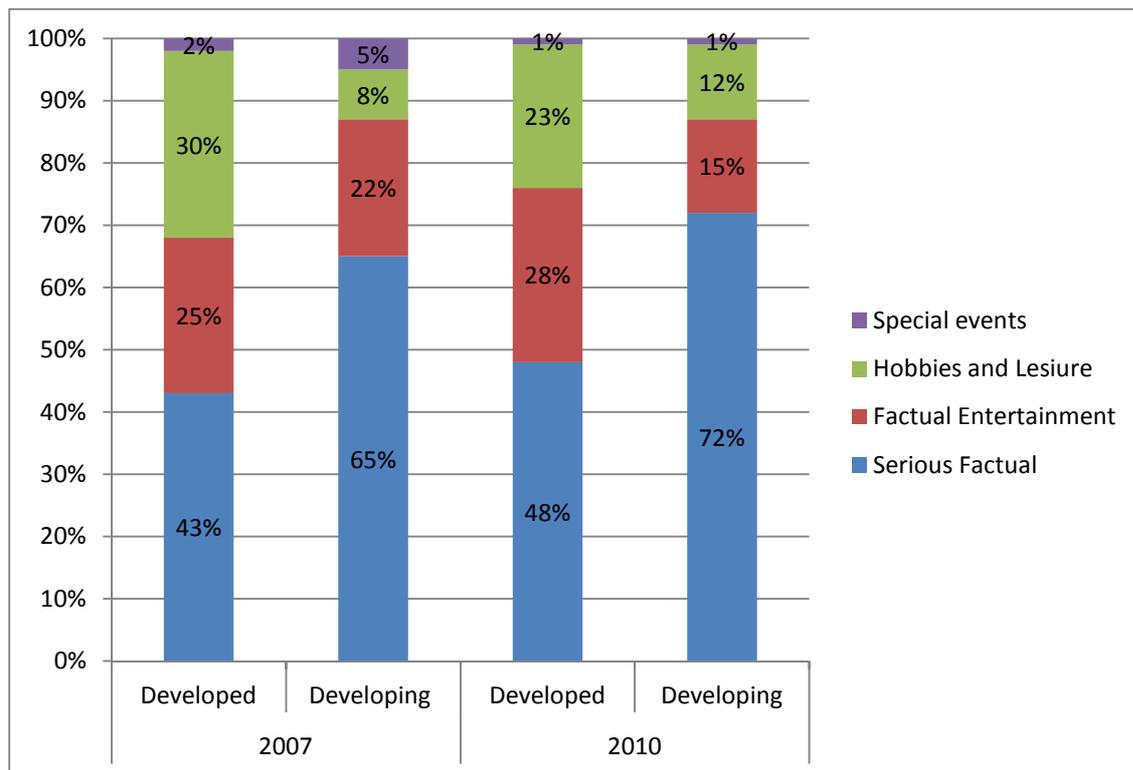
More formatted programming in the sub-genres of factual entertainment and hobbies and leisure accounted for 30% of all factual programming about developing countries in 2007 and 27% in 2010. Factual entertainment includes reality shows such as BBC3's *The World's Strictest Parents*, while hobbies and leisure includes gardening, home, DIY, travel and cookery programmes such as Channel 4's *A Place in the Sun*. In contrast, factual programming about developed countries was dominated by hobbies and leisure and factual entertainment, which together constituted over half (55%) of all factual programming about developed countries in 2007. Serious factual programming constituted only 43% of such programming in the same year. The same pattern is also apparent in 2010, when 48% of all

factual programming about developed countries was in the form of serious factual, while 51% was in the form of either hobbies and leisure or factual entertainment.

These results not only provide further illustration of the extent to which Others from developing countries appear in different contexts to Others from developed countries but the results also further demonstrate the extent to which distant Others appear in only a very limited number of genres, or in this case, sub-genres.

4.1.3.4 Drama and Light Entertainment

In 2007 there was a total of only 20 hours of developing country drama across all 8 channels in the sample (and over half of this was the ITV1 drama *Wild at Heart* which centres on an English family who live in South Africa). This amounts to just 2% of all international drama or just 0.5% of all television drama in 2007, as Figure 4.9 shows. There was no developing country drama about Latin America and the Caribbean, just one hour about Asia and none on any BBC channel in 2007. 92% of all international drama in 2007 was about either North America (63%) or Australia (29%).

Figure 4.9: Percentage of international drama for different countries in 2007 and 2010
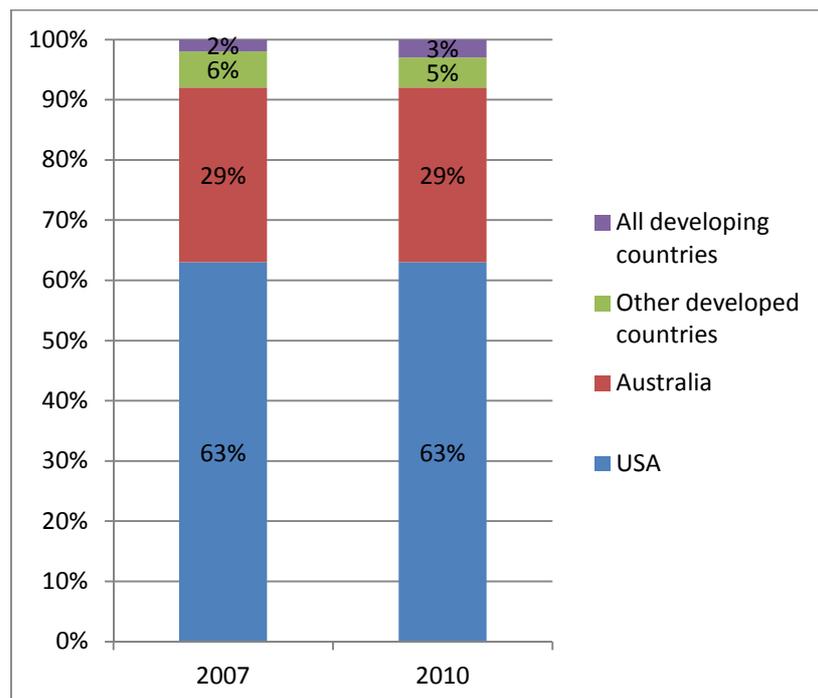
The results for 2010 also reveal a relative and absolute lack of drama about developing countries. Figure 4.9 shows that international drama in 2010 was dominated by North America (63%) and Australia (29%) to precisely the same degree as in 2007. The remaining 8% of international drama covered just 12 other countries. 93% of countries in the world received no coverage through international television drama in 2010. Countries which did receive coverage included Sweden (*Wallander*, BBC4), Afghanistan (*The Taking of Prince Harry*, Channel 4), Sudan (*I am Slave*, Channel 4) and Nigeria (*Blood and Oil*, BBC2). In total, only 3% of all new international drama (or 23 programme hours) was set in developing countries in 2010. The ITV1 drama *Wild at Heart* made up 40% of this.

The disparity between the quantity of coverage of North America and the rest of the world is even more stark in relation to light entertainment programming, which refers to situation comedies, other types of comedy, chat shows, variety shows, cartoons, animation, quiz shows, game shows and family shows (Ofcom 2010b:14). Figure 4.10 shows that in 2007, while 89% of international entertainment programming was about the USA, just 3% of all international entertainment programming was about developing countries with no entertainment programming about Latin America, Africa or the Middle East.

Figure 4.10: Percentage of international entertainment for different parts of the world in 2007 and 2010
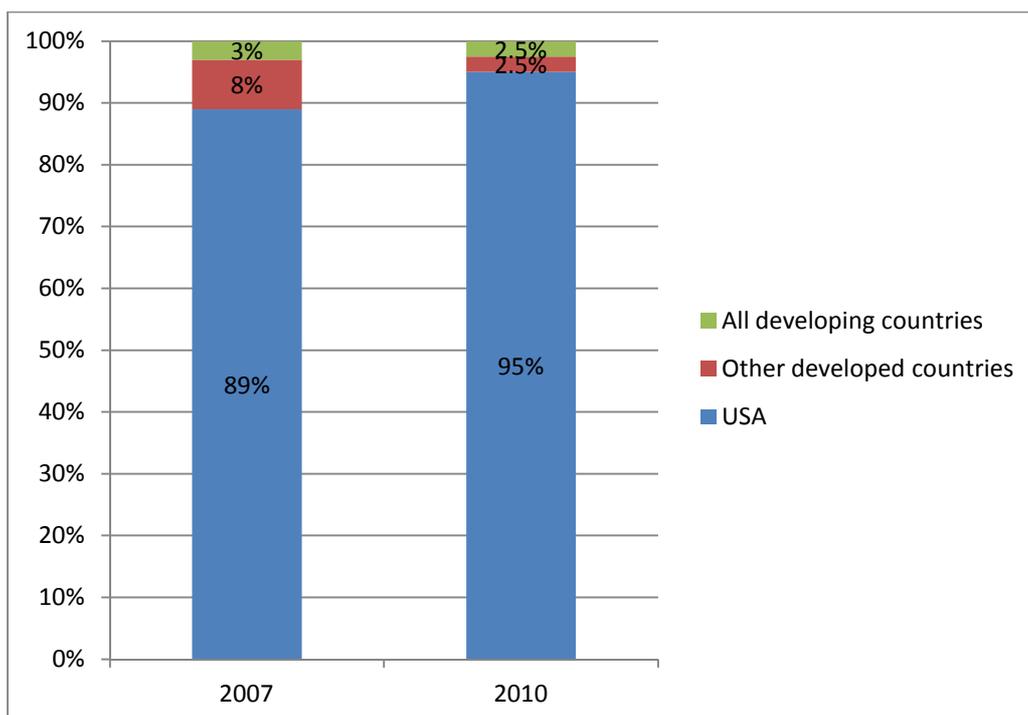
Similarly, in 2010, only 5% of new international light entertainment programming, or 11.5 programme hours, related to countries other than the USA. Of this 5% only half were about developing countries – including an episode of the Indian version of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* (Channel 4) and three episodes of the BBC1 adventure/game show *Dropzone.*

These results provide evidence that for the first time support and quantify the claim that there is almost no fictional programming about developing countries on UK television – or in the terms of this thesis – that spectators in the UK very rarely have the opportunity to encounter distant Others in non-factual contexts.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF NEWS PROGRAMMES

4.2.1 Quantity of news about developing countries

4.2.1.1 Overall quantity of news

Over the two week sample period and across all 18 bulletins, 58% of all news coverage was international, of which, 59% was about developing countries. In total, 34% of all news coverage was about developing countries. This surprisingly high percentage can be explained by the nature of the sample which included two dedicated international bulletins (BBC4 World News (6pm) and Al Jazeera English (9pm)) and four religious and ethnic minority bulletins (NDTV 9 O'clock News, NTA International (BEN 8pm), CCTV News (3.30pm), Islam Channel News). If we exclude these six bulletins from the overall totals, then we find that 24% of all news in the sample was international and 50% of that international news was about developing countries. Thus, the results show that **12%** of news on 'domestic', or non-international and non-religious or ethnic minority, bulletins was about developing countries.

There are two further ways in which the overall quantity of developing country news can be expressed. Firstly, it can be expressed in relation to numbers of news items on domestic news bulletins rather than in minutes of coverage. In which case, the results show that there were 148 news items about developing countries, over the two week sample period, which constitutes 35% of international news items and **11%** of news items in total. Secondly, it can

be expressed as an average percentage across the different domestic bulletins. In which case, I find that news about developing countries accounted for 24% of all international news coverage and **9%** of news overall.

In whichever way the overall quantity of developing country news is expressed, the results suggest that, in general, unless audiences watch dedicated international bulletins or religious and ethnic minority bulletins, they are likely to encounter distant Others in developing country in approximately one in every ten news items.

This difficulty in establishing a clear picture of the precise amount of developing country news on UK television stems, in part, from the dramatic variations in relative and absolute quantities of international news across different bulletins, as is illustrated in Table 4.2. Whereas the six international and religious and ethnic minority bulletins all had over 100 minutes of news about developing countries, and in some cases, almost 300 minutes, Five News had only four minutes of news about developing countries and GMTV had no developing country news at all in the sample period. In relative terms, developing country news in domestic bulletins never constituted more than 23% of all news, with all but two of the bulletins having between 13% and 0%. In relation to international news coverage, news about developing countries on domestic bulletins ranged from 48% for two different bulletins, between 10% and 0% for another three bulletins, with the remaining six bulletins ranging from 35% to 23%. In short, Table 4.2 shows that the frequency with which audiences encounter distant Others in developing countries depends very much on which bulletins are chosen for viewing.

Table 4.2: Total minutes of news about developing countries across all bulletins

	Developing country news (mins)	International news (mins)	Total News (mins)	Developing country news as a % of international news	Developing country news as a % of total news
NDTV 9 O' clock News	279	288	292	97%	96%
NTA International	276	287	287	96%	96%
CCTV News	242	319	323	76%	75%
Al-Jazeera English	177	324	337	55%	52%
Islam Channel News	131	183	191	72%	69%
BBC4 World News	108	215	256	50%	42%
Channel 4 News	87	183	483	48%	18%
BBC Ten O' clock News	66	137	286	48%	23%
Newsnight	50	144	398	35%	13%
Sky News (10pm)	43	182	358	24%	12%
More4 News	24	86	210	28%	11%
ITV 10pm News	24	76	256	32%	9%
BBC Six O' clock News	19	81	275	23%	7%
ITV 6.30pm News	16	53	224	30%	7%
Five News (5pm)	4	39	203	10%	2%
BBC3 60 seconds	0.5	2	6	27%	8%
BBC1 90 second	0.3	2	8	0%	4%
GMTV (8am bulletin)	0	16	58	0%	0%

4.2.1.2 Quantity of news coverage for different regions of the world

Figure 4.11 shows the relative amount of coverage given to different regions of the world by the twelve domestic bulletins and reveals an uneven distribution. While North America received by far the greatest amount of coverage (34%), regions such as Africa (9%), the Middle East (9%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (6%) received relatively little. If 35% of all news items are international, then just 3% of all news items are about Africa, 3% about the Middle East and 2% about Latin America and the Caribbean. Put another way, audiences of domestic UK television news bulletins are only likely to encounter distant Others from Africa and the Middle East on average once every thirty three news items and distant Other from Latin America and the Caribbean once every fifty news items.
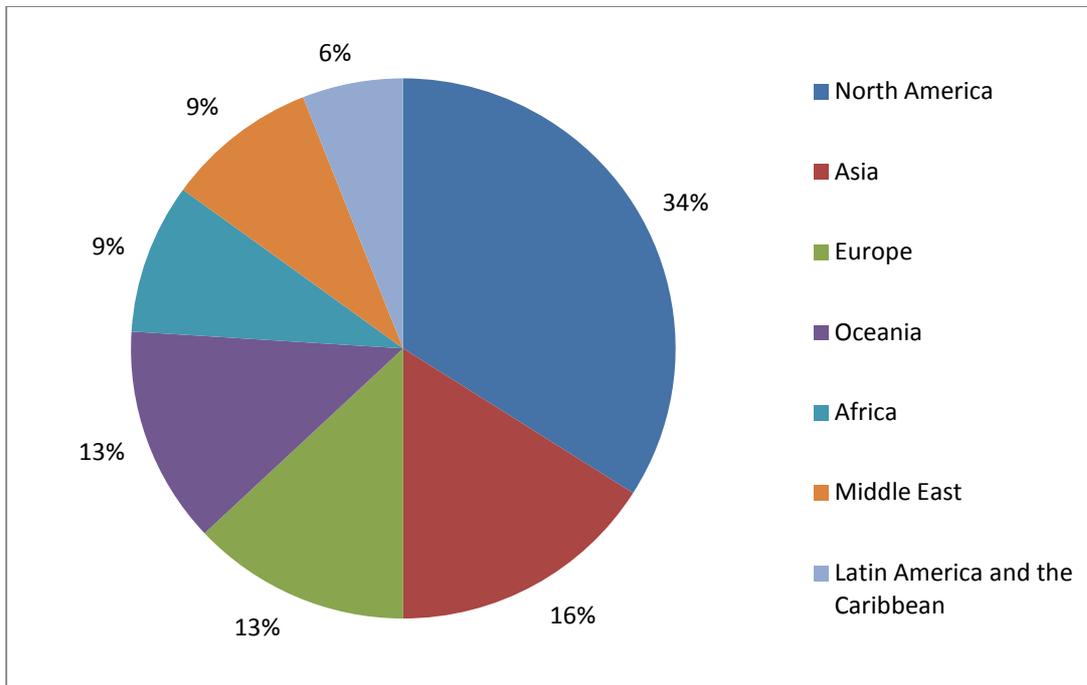
4.2.1.3 Quantity of news coverage for different countries

Further details of the extent to which distant Others in developing countries are made visible to UK television news audiences can be found by examining how much coverage individual countries received. Across all bulletins, 99 different countries were covered over the two week sample period. In relation to the twelve domestic bulletins, 61 different countries were covered in at least one news item, of which 43 were developing countries. The three countries which received the most coverage were all developed countries: USA (34%), Australia (12%) and Israel (7%). Indeed, these three countries received more coverage (53%) than all other international news on the domestic bulletins combined. The developing country which received the most coverage was Afghanistan (5%).

Those regions of the world which received little or no coverage on domestic bulletins included North Africa, which received no coverage outside of Egypt, Central Asia, which received no coverage outside of Afghanistan, and the Pacific, which received no coverage at all. Even in parts of the world which received more coverage, it was concentrated on a very

small number of countries. For example, Zimbabwe received half of all coverage of Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan received 38% of all coverage of Asia, Venezuela received 51% of all coverage of Latin America and the Caribbean and Australia received every one of the 60 minutes of news coverage of Oceania. Israel received 73% of coverage of the Middle East with the only other places to receive any coverage being Iraq (22%) and the Palestinian territories (5%).

Figure 4.12 shows the number of developed and developing countries covered by each bulletin and this once again reveals significant differences between the coverage of developed and developing countries.

Figure 4.12: Numbers of countries covered by each news bulletin
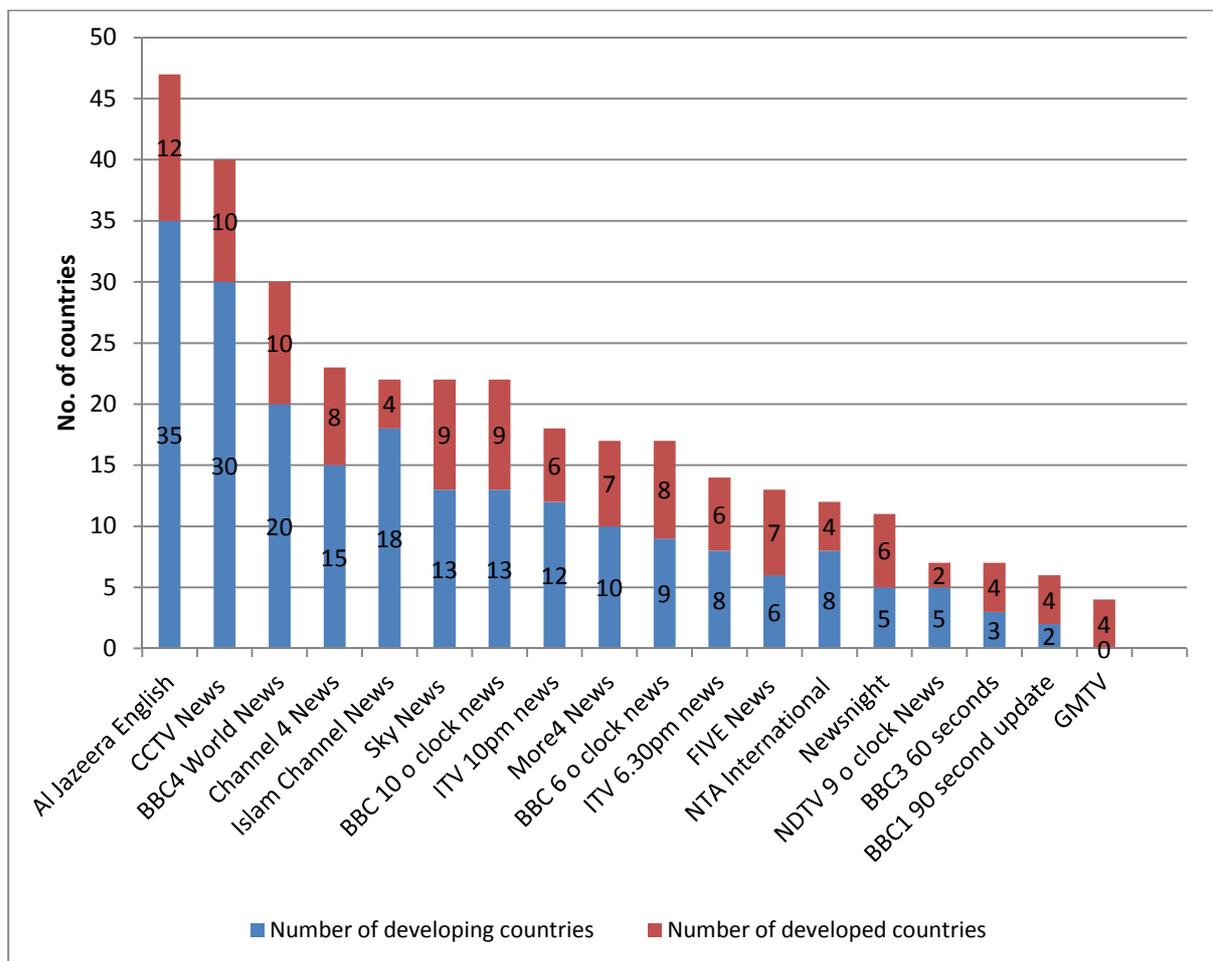
While CCTV News and the two international bulletins (BBC4 World News and Al Jazeera English]) each covered twenty or more developing countries, ten of the news bulletins in the sample covered less than ten developing countries each during the two week period.

Audiences would have seen a greater number of developing countries covered on any one Al Jazeera English bulletin than they would on every news bulletin of GMTV, BBC1 90 second update, BBC3 60 second update, NDTV 9 O'clock News, Newsnight and NTA International. This provides further illustration of the point that while Others from developing countries do not appear very often on UK television news bulletins, the extent of their appearance depends very much on the bulletin being watched.

4.2.2 Prominence of news coverage of distant Others

4.2.2.1 Length

The average length of a domestic news item across all domestic bulletins was 120 seconds, whereas the average length of an international news item was 138 seconds. It is interesting to note that there was no difference between the average length of a news item about a developing country and the average length of a news item about a developed country, with both averaging at 138 seconds. Furthermore, the extent to which the length of bulletins varied around this average figure was also approximately the same. The mean difference from the average of the length of news items about developing countries is just three seconds less than for developed countries (102 seconds compared to 105 seconds).

4.2.2.2 Order

Across the twelve domestic news bulletins over the two week sample period 42 international stories in total ran as the opening news item. Out of this number, only two lead news items were about developing countries[10]. This lack of prominence of developing countries in the ordering of news items is also evident if we examine their relative occurrence slightly further down the bulletins. Of the 97 international news items in positions 2 or 3 in the bulletin, only 22 of these were about developing countries. Significantly, this relative lack of prominence of developing country news could be found

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[10] *Hilary Clinton visits China* (Channel 4 News) and *The Taliban are defiant as US sends more troops to Afghanistan* (ITV 6 o clock News).

across all domestic bulletins. In summary, not only do distant Others in developing countries appear less often in domestic news bulletins compared to Others in developed countries, they also appear further down the bulletin (though the items are generally of the same length).

4.2.3 Context in which distant Others appear in news about developing countries

4.2.3.1 Topic

Figure 4.13 compares the percentage of news items which addressed different topics for domestic news, news about developing countries and news about developed countries, across the twelve domestic bulletins. It reveals that news about developing countries was dominated by just four topics, which together, made up 79% of all coverage: politics (28%), violence (25%), international relations (16%) and law and order (11%). The remaining 21% of coverage was spread across a further 11 topics, with none of these topics receiving more than 5% of coverage.

Interestingly, only 3% of the coverage of developed countries was about international relations, compared to 16% of the coverage of developing countries, indicating that developing countries are considerably more likely to feature in the news when they are discussed in the context of other countries. Indeed, the two news items about developing countries which ran as opening items both came under the topic of international relations as they were principally concerned with relations between two specific developing countries (China and Afghanistan) and the USA. Similarly, developing countries were considerably more likely to be featured in the context of stories about violence (25%) - stories referring to terrorist attacks, violent demonstrations, mass random killings, riots, violent crime or murder - compared to developed countries (3%) or domestic news (4%).

The relative amount of news about politics in coverage of developing countries is perhaps a little more surprising. Such coverage of inter-party conflict, enacted government policies, elections, parliamentary debates, official reports or politician's personal lives constituted the largest proportion of coverage of any one topic for developing countries (28%). It was

also greater than the proportion of political coverage for developed countries (23%) and considerably greater than for domestic news (4%).

Figure 4.13: Topics used to cover international and domestic news on domestic news bulletins
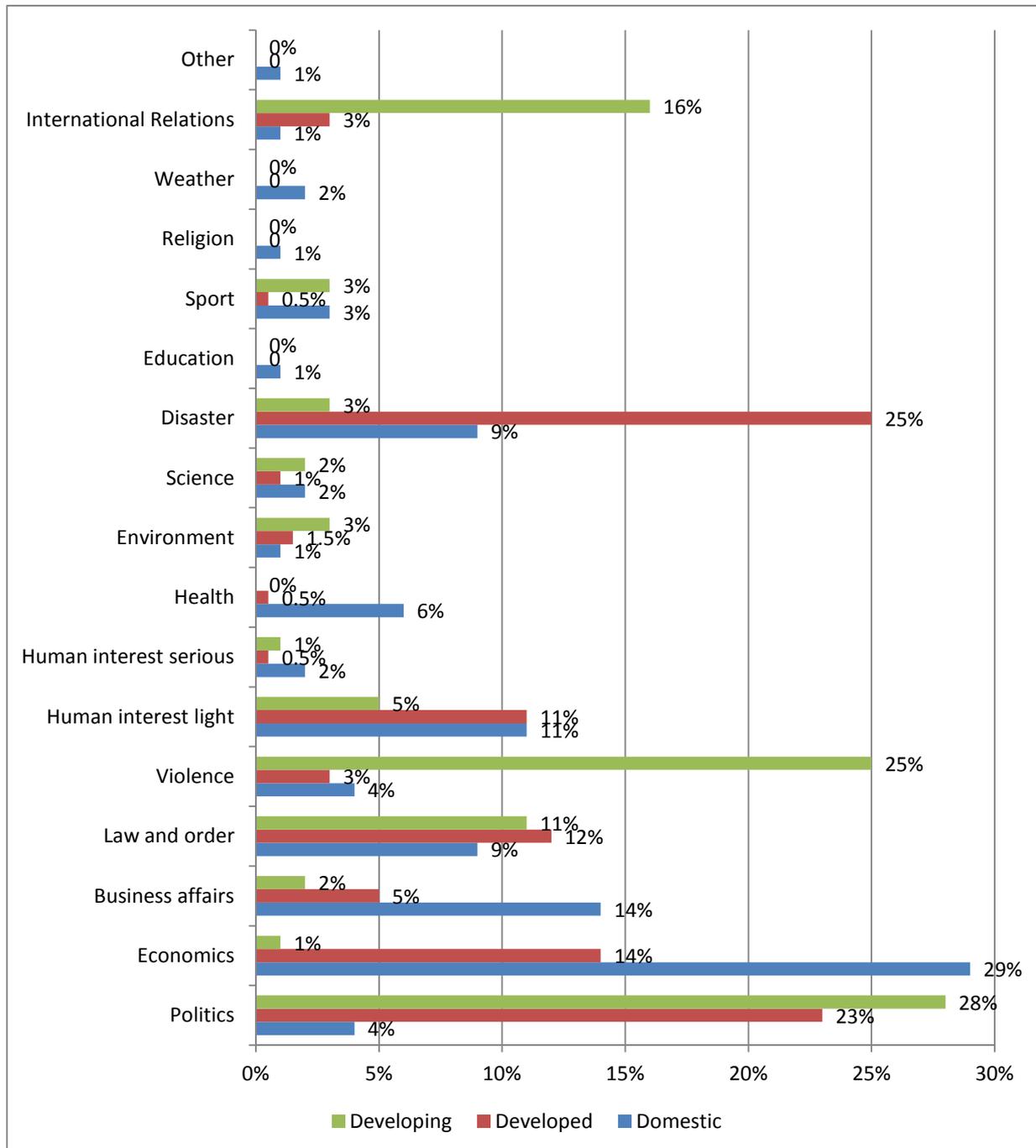
Those topics which received considerably less coverage with regards to developing countries as compared to developed countries and domestic news, include, light human interest (5%:

11%: 11%), business affairs (2%: 5%; 14%) and economics (1%: 14%: 29%). The relatively high proportions of coverage of economics and business affairs in domestic news and news about developed countries can be at least partially explained by the nature of the sample period which included various significant events during the start of the 2009 global recession. This, however, does not explain the relatively very low levels of coverage of economics (1%) and business affairs (2%) for developing countries.

The key conclusion from the data in Figure 4.13 is that distant Others in developing countries appear in very different and very particular contexts, compared to Others in developed countries and news about the UK.

4.3 CONCLUSION

As discussed in the previous chapter, the methodologies of these content analyses have a number of limitations, including the relatively short sample period for the analysis of news texts, equating all programming about developing countries as being about distant Others and the exclusion of texts that are not principally 'about' distant Others (even though distant Others may still be evoked). These limitations render the results presented here as only *indications* of the extent to which distant Others appear on television, rather than precise measures of the exact nature and extent of their appearance. Nevertheless, they remain robust enough for me to suggest a number of well evidenced conclusions regarding the key aims of this chapter.

In absolute and relative terms there was very little coverage of distant Others from developing countries in most television genres. There were, for example, just 74 hours of drama, current affairs and light entertainment programming about developing countries in 2007 and only 45 hours of such programming in 2010, across all eight channels in the sample. In relative terms, spectators were forty times more likely to see Others from developed countries than developing countries in television dramas and more than thirty times as likely to see Others from developed countries in light entertainment in 2007. Indeed, in both 2007 and 2010 current affairs programming was the only genre in which

spectators were more likely to encounter distant Others in developing countries compared to developed countries.

Even in those factual television genres which had greater *absolute* levels of coverage of distant Others from developing countries, these countries still had *relatively* small amounts of coverage and such coverage was often given lower prominence. For example, although there were 304 hours of developing country factual programming in 2007, this represented just 39% of all international factual programming and was shown more often on channels with lower audiences. Similarly, while there were 335 minutes of news about developing countries across all twelve domestic news bulletins in the two week sample period, this represented just 35% of all international news and just 11% of news items in total. Furthermore, only 17% of international stories in first, second or third position in news bulletins were about developing countries.

The absolute and relative lack of coverage of distant Others from developing countries is particularly apparent in the amount of coverage received by specific countries and regions of the world. For all genres, except current affairs, coverage of the continent of North America dominated with 34% of international news coverage, 44% of international factual in 2010, 63% drama and 95% light entertainment. Of the other regions, Europe and Oceania generally received the highest amounts of coverage. The regions which received by far the least coverage were the Middle East, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed, Latin America and the Caribbean received the least coverage of any continent across every genre. Asia generally received the most coverage of any region dominated by developing countries.

Given these findings it is unsurprising to note that a great number of developing countries received no coverage at all. Even in developing country factual programming there were 103 countries, or 52% of all countries in the world, which were not the main subject of any new factual programme across any of the channels in the sample over the entire year in 2010.

Based on these results, the first conclusion to be drawn is that, in absolute terms, distant Others from developing countries seldom appear on UK television and when they do it is almost always in the context of news or other factual programming. In relative terms, distant Others from developing countries appear far less often than Others from developed

countries, reinforcing their status as 'distant', though the extent of their relative appearance differs greatly between genres and between regions. If Chouliaraki is right to argue that choices over whose existence is reported informs the hierarchy of place and of human life we are invited to emotionally and practically engage with (2006:109) then these results clearly suggest that it is those Others in North America, Oceania and Europe who we should care most about. Of those distant Others in developing countries, it is those in Asia spectators should care most about and those in Latin America and the Caribbean who are lowest down this hierarchy. Other large areas of the world which spectators are invited to give almost no regard to include North Africa, Central Asia and the Pacific.

A further aim of this study was to investigate the contexts in which distant Others appear. Although many of the results relevant to this aim are discussed in subsequent chapters, those which have been discussed above do allow us to conclude that distant Others in developing countries appear in remarkably different contexts to Others in developed countries. As has already been discussed, Others from developing countries are significantly more likely to appear in factual programming than fictional. This is in contrast to Others in developed countries, who appear more often in fictional contexts, compared to factual contexts (see Figure 4.7). Others from developing countries also appear in factual programming in contexts that are very different from the factual contexts in which Others from developed countries appear. For example, factual programming about developing countries was found to be characterised by a much larger proportion of wildlife and conflict topics than developed countries. This not only supports the suggestion that Others in developing countries are constructed as being different from 'us' and from those Others closer to 'us' in developed countries, but also indicates some of the ways in which this difference is manifested.

Despite the obvious differences between coverage of Others in developed and developing countries, Others in different developing countries themselves also appear in very different contexts in different regions of the world. For example, while factual programming about Africa was dominated by wildlife programming, factual programming about the Middle East was dominated by conflict and disaster programming. The significance of this is that, while studies of the mediation of distant Others have a tendency to aggregate the subjects of

their studies (see VSO 2001; Dover and Barnett 2004) these results highlight the important differences that exist between the representation of different distant Others.

There is a final conclusion to be drawn from this investigation which does not relate to my initial aims. It is apparent from the results discussed in this chapter that the extent to which distant Others appear varies dramatically, not just between genres, but between different channels. For example, viewers of BBC1 were ten times more likely than those of ITV1 to see non-news factual programming about developing countries in 2007 and two and a half times more likely to see news about developing countries on their respective 10pm bulletins. I can conclude from this, as Robertson (2010) does, that there are various ways in which the world looks different when refracted through different newsrooms and by different broadcasters in general. Furthermore, this is the case, not just when comparing broadcasters from different countries, but also for different national broadcasters. As a consequence, the extent to which different audiences encounter distant Others depends very much upon the channels they watch.

In summary, the results of the content analyses presented in this chapter have allowed me to begin my investigation into how distant Others are mediated by television – principally by establishing the extent to which there are distant Others in many countries and regions of the world which television simply does not enable the spectator to encounter or form a mediated experience of. Investigating how distant Others are mediated on occasions in which they *do* appear is a far more complicated task and one which I turn my attention to in the following three chapters.

Chapter 5: The Mediation of Distant Others in Television News

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the results of two content analyses were used to reveal the extent to which, and context in which, distant Others are potentially brought to the attention of spectators of UK television. In this and the following chapter the focus turns to questions of *how* rather than *if* UK television provides spectators with mediated experiences of distant Others. In this chapter a modified version of the analytics of mediation is applied to a number of television news texts to investigate how the contradictions that exist between the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives are resolved within these texts and thus how spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others are seemingly regulated in these circumstances.

I begin by applying the analytics of mediation to a three and a half minute news item shown on Channel 4 News on 17th February, 2009, about the Taliban response to increased US troop deployment in Afghanistan. This first example illustrates in greater detail how the analytics of mediation is applied and provides a first illustration of what is routine about the ways in which the television news texts in my sample appear to position spectators in relation to distant Others. Secondly, the analytics of mediation is applied to two seemingly similar news items covering the same event – the swearing in of the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Morgan Tsvangirai, on 11th February 2009 on the BBC 6 O'clock News and on the ITV1 Evening News. The analysis of these two news items helps to further illustrate my claims about the routine ways in which television news texts appear to position spectators in relation to distant Others but also the exceptions to this. The analytics of mediation is then applied to thirteen different live-voiceovers (LVOs) in my sample to investigate how these relatively very brief news items, which make up a significant percentage of news coverage of developing countries, regulate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others.

After analysing these specific examples, I draw on further results of the content analysis of television news to consider the extent to which certain characteristics of the texts analysed here are common amongst a much larger sample. I conclude, however, that the limitations of the content analysis render such claims rather more speculative than I would have liked. I also suggest that a study of the role of audiences in the process of mediation is necessary for investigating these claims further.

5.1 AFGHANISTAN: CHANNEL 4 NEWS

5.1.1 Multi-modality

5.1.1.1 Mode of presentation

The mode of presentation refers to the choice of media used to tell a story and the locations from which a story is told (Chouliaraki 2006:74). In this news item the mode of presentation consists of a 40 second introduction by the studio anchor who begins by paraphrasing recent comments made by US president Obama that 'the situation in Afghanistan is worsening and cannot be solved through military force alone' and that 'US reinforcements have been sent to provinces now neighbouring Kabul' (see Appendix K). This recounting of a recent speech is followed by a montage of video footage consisting largely of footage of an interview with a 'Taliban commander' who 'has a very stark message for the US president' about the scale of the threat the Taliban pose to US forces. Before this, the spectator is shown some 'iconic' shots of people in Kabul and Logar province and brief 'indexical' shots designed to illustrate the cameraman's journey from Kabul to the location of the Taliban commander. This video footage is accompanied by the voiceover of a journalist who never appears on screen but who describes events and frames them within the context of US President Obama's response to the apparent growing threat of the Taliban.

I take this mode of presentation to be contributing to a *perceptual* realism in which the spectator is presented with evidence of the 'reality' of events, based on a truth of what we see and what is described to us. The paraphrasing of a recent speech by the anchor, the description of events by the journalist, the 'indexical' shots of the cameraman's journey and the length of time devoted to showing the interview with the Taliban leader (seventy three

seconds, or 42% of the video footage) all contribute to an appeal to a reality of facts, rather than a reality of emotions or ideology. As we shall see through a discussion of the second process of 'passing through the medium', the claim that this text appeals to factuality is reinforced by the verbal-visual correspondence.

5.1.1.2 Verbal-visual correspondence

The news item includes a significant amount of verbal description which presents the report as offering a 'factual' account of 'how things are'. In the opening section of the voiceover, for example, the journalist provides us with specific details about how many troops are being sent and to do what.

> The US is sending over 1000 extra troops here to boost security and to go after this
> man. He says his name is Mullah Abdul Satar. He's the regional Taliban commander.

The verbal narrative also relies heavily on the quotations from sources which supports its appeal to objectivity. The introduction by the news anchor, for example, begins with a quotation from US President Obama and almost half of all the words spoken in the report are in the form of quotations from the Taliban commander being interviewed.

This appeal to an authentic, factual account of events in the verbal is reinforced by the visual elements, which, for much of the news item, are focussed on the Taliban commander who is speaking to the camera. The visuals are also used on numerous occasions to illustrate what is being talked about, for example, by panning across 'captured American equipment' or showing scenes of the 'attack on several government ministries'. Indeed, I interpret the principal relationship between the verbal and the visual in this news item as being what Chouliaraki describes as *indexical* (2006:79). In other words, the verbal and visual dimensions of this news item appeal most strongly to our physical perceptions, or what we see and hear as evidence of reality, rather than to abstract ideas associated with an *iconic* or *symbolic* verbal-visual correspondence (Chouliaraki 2006:79)

Given the dominance of appeals to factuality in both the verbal and the visual and through their correspondence, I conclude that the dominant form of narrative realism in this news item is a perceptual realism, or an appeal to a reality of facts.

Despite the apparent dominance of perceptual realism, though, there is also a relatively strong element of what Chouliaraki describes as ideological realism, or an appeal to certain judgements about how the world is or should be. This is evident in both the verbal exposition and the symbolic meaning of the language and images. In the opening lines of the voiceover, for example, the journalist talks of Kabul as 'a city under siege... its sense of security... shattered' by the Taliban who are 'breathing down its neck'. By drawing on pejorative idioms and words that evoke a sense of unwelcome presence or disruption, the journalist constructs the Taliban as the persecutor figure. This judgement is confirmed later in the news item by the journalist's use of the word 'enemy' to describe the Taliban. Similarly, before the Taliban commander speaks, the journalist uses the word 'glee' to describe his attitude. The use of this word in relation to the Taliban's targeting of foreigners, with its association with heightened merriment and joy, appears to reveal the journalist's sense of resentment towards the Taliban commander.

> He hides his face but not his glee at how freely his men can operate in the capital or how they'll now target any foreigners living there with ties to the occupation.

Although the journalist returns to using more descriptive language after this point, his judgement regarding the Taliban leader has already been revealed.

The suggestion that this exposition reveals the journalist's judgement about the Taliban as being the 'enemy' (and, as I shall argue later, a 'threat' to Kabul and to the West), is supported by the symbolic meaning of the language and images. One of the principal ways in which Chouliaraki identifies symbolic meaning in news texts is through the presence of visual and verbal juxtapositions (2006:140). In this news text, the threat that the Taliban pose to Kabul is verbally juxtaposed with the 'boost to security' that US President Obama is providing by 'sending over 1000 extra troops' to 'go after' the Taliban. This ideological contrast is also visualised when footage of the masked, armed Taliban commander is juxtaposed with footage of US president Obama smiling, eating lunch and shaking hands with American soldiers.

There is little evidence of what Chouliaraki describes as categorical realism, or an appeal to a reality of emotions, in this news item. The only element of verbal and visual narrative proper which might appeal to the emotional reality of events comes when the journalist says in his voiceover that, 'our cameraman drove an hour outside of Kabul to where they've got the closest, Logar Province'. This is accompanied by brief video footage of the journey, taken from the car window, followed by the appearance of the armed Taliban from out of a cave. However, any significant appeal to a reality of emotions that might have been produced by this narrative is limited by the lack of a journalist or mediating figure in shot to demonstrate the spectator's proximity to the Taliban (or presence in a 'zone of danger') and the descriptive rather than emotive language that follows.

5.1.1.3 Aesthetic quality

Despite the presence of exposition and symbolic meaning, which helps to define a clear persecutor figure, I argue that this news item does not offer a particularly strong appeal to responses associated with *pamphleteering*, or a public denunciation of the persecutor of suffering (Chouliaraki 2006:140). This is because there is no strong appeal to any 'universal' sense of justice for the spectator to be outraged about, which Chouliaraki argues is a vital part of pamphleteering. In other words, although there is a clearly identified persecutor figure and they represent a threat, they are not violating any norms or values which might produce a feeling of indignation, for example. This is compounded by the dehumanisation of the people of Afghanistan, insofar as pamphleteering is predicated on a recognition of distant sufferers as humanised. Similarly, as a result of the lack of evidence of categorical realism or iconic meaning and any appeals to a universal sense of care, this text does not offer an appeal associated with the tender-heartedness of *philanthropy.*

Instead, the dominance of appeals to factuality and authenticity may be interpreted as offering the spectator an objective, omnipresent position from which to observe events, and create an overall semiotic effect associated with *sublimation*. In other words, the dominance of perceptual realism and an indexical verbal-visual correspondence in this news item would appear to situate the spectator at a distance from events which they can reflect on seemingly objectively.

This suggestion is supported, to some extent, by a reading of the way in which the paradox of distance is resolved. As I argue below, the sense of threat that the Taliban pose to 'zones of safety' and the relative complexity of space-time might encourage spectators to reflect on the events they witness. However, the sense of immediacy and urgency created by the temporal dimensions of the text and the logic of appearances evident in this text work against any appeals to reflective contemplation. The way in which the paradox of in/action is resolved also works against appeals to reflective contemplation. Specifically, the dehumanisation of the people of Afghanistan and the power of the persecutor in the text renders this an instance of mediation not worthy of strong response.

In summary, some elements of the spatio-temporality of the text may work with the appeals to factuality and authenticity to invite spectators to respond by reflecting at a distance on events, while other elements of the construction of space-time and agency limit the strength of any such response. Indeed, while there is sufficient 'conceptual complexity' (Chouliaraki 2006:99) in the text so as not to invite a response of utter indifference, neither does it provide spectators with a strong appeal to action. We may also find, therefore, that it invites the response of 'solitary enjoyment' since, according to Boltanski (1999:45), this is a likely responses to distant suffering if a particular morally acceptable response is not achieved. Any reflective contemplation on events may also 'slip' into solitary enjoyment because, as is discussed below, the focus of the text is as much on the spectator as it is the condition of the people of Afghanistan.

5.1.2 Space-Time

5.1.2.1 Time

The studio anchor opens this news item by quoting a statement made by US President Obama 'in the last hour', in which he said that the situation in Afghanistan is 'worsening' and that details of his plans for American forces would be given, 'very soon'. These explicit references to events in the immediate past and the near future in the opening of the news item frame events with a sense of immediacy and urgency (Chouliaraki 2006:85). This is reinforced in the opening sequence of the voiceover when the journalist situates the

interview with the Taliban commander in the context of a recent Taliban attack in Kabul and the imminent arrival of more US troops.

> Kabul, a city under siege, the Taliban breathing down its neck. They were able to launch a coordinated attack on several government ministries in its centre. 20 dead and its sense of security here shattered... The US is sending over 1000 extra troops here to boost security.

This sense of immediacy is maintained throughout the news item by the repeated use of the present tense and references to events in the immediate past and the near future by the Taliban commander.

> We see how the occupiers target defenceless civilians. They bomb women and children. That's why the people of Logar are helping us. Mujahadeen fighters can move freely here. We have no problems moving around and they can reach wherever they want...We are waiting for a declaration from our central command. Whatever decision they make, we will follow.

This sense of immediacy is also reinforced visually by the inclusion of four video clips of the Taliban leader speaking directly to the camera and by several other brief clips of video footage used to illustrate events being referred to in the immediate past, such as footage out of a car window of people in Logar province. Chouliaraki argues that such a sense of immediacy and urgency, created by the temporal dimensions of a news item, help to provide the spectator with a more intense involvement in the events and reduces the distance between the spectator and the events (2006:85).

Importantly, despite the length of the article (3 minutes, 34 seconds) and the frequent references to the present, the immediate past and the near future, there are almost no references to wider spatiotemporal dimensions which would situate events within a broader context. The only occasion in which a broader context is evoked is in a passing reference by the Taliban commander to the 'old ways' and the 'old policies' of the US government. Similarly, the only visuals which refer to wider spatiotemporal dimensions are two brief wide-angle shots of Kabul, which seem to appeal to a sense of timelessness. This a-historicity and lack of future perspective presents the spectator with what Chouliaraki

describes as 'logic of appearances' in which causality is presented as being dictated by the immediate context and effects rather than historical circumstances (2006:99). The 'logic of causality', or the longer-term consequences and more subtle contexts, are hidden. Put another way, by failing to connect events to a historical world in which causality is situated within the context of long term political, economic and socio-cultural processes, events are presented as 'random', as if they 'just happen' (Chouliaraki 2006:146). This a-historicity and lack of future perspective also limits any appeals to emotion or action because without reference to a broader context, we may be in a position to comment upon or denounce the actions of persecutors, for example, but we are unable to examine how best to deal with events (Chouliaraki 2006:140). Or as Chouliaraki argues, a logic of appearances presents what we see as what matters, not how to explain or change it, thus, further blocking appeals to action (2006:104).

This distinction between a logic of appearances and a logic of causality appears, in this context at least, to be a useful way of interrogating what has previously only been discussed in terms of a 'lack of context' or 'background' (Philo 2002). Chouliaraki's terms take us away from making judgements about how much or how little context is provided, whether the 'right' context is provided and what 'effect' this will necessarily have on spectators' 'understandings' or levels of 'engagement' (Philo 2002). Instead, they invite us to examine what *form(s)* of context the spectator is offered and what this means for the management of proximity-distance and emotion and action.

5.1.2.2 Space

The most significant spatial dimension of this news item appears to be the interaction between what Chouliaraki describes as the 'zones of safety', and the 'zones of danger', (2006:86). The 'zone of danger' is frequently defined verbally as those areas 'close to the city', or the 'provinces neighbouring Kabul, which now face regular attacks'. The danger of these areas is constructed by the frequent verbal references to the 'freedom of movement' that the Taliban have in these areas and the support of the 'population of Logar towards the Taliban'. This sense of danger is reinforced visually by the frequent use of shaky video footage taken from inside a car and the several occasions on which the camera pans over

masked and armed members of the Taliban. I understand this zone of danger to be important for the way it is constructed as threatening two particular 'zones of safety'.

The first 'zone of safety' under threat is Kabul which is described as a 'city under siege', facing 'regular attacks' such as 'a coordinated attack on several government ministries in its centre'. This sense of 'threat' to Kabul is reinforced by the frequent references to 'how freely' the Taliban 'can operate in the capital' and that they can 'get to the heart of Kabul, to the presidential palace'. The combination of this sense of threat to the zone of safety with the sense of immediacy and urgency suggested by the temporal dimensions of the news item creates an arrangement of space-time which might encourage spectators to feel involved and closer to the events.

The second zone of safety which is under threat is implied on several occasions as being the space-time of the spectator themselves. The Taliban are described as able to reach 'wherever they want' and the Taliban commander is quoted as saying 'those who are aiming to occupy our country, whether military or not, are a target and we will target them'. This implied threat to the spectator's own zone of safety is reinforced when the journalist describes how the Taliban commander is unable to hide his 'glee' at 'how they'll now target any foreigners living there with ties to the occupation'. Chouliaraki argues that the suggestion of a connection between the space-times of the spectator and of the events being represented moves the spectator beyond the 'observation' of events and 'encourages them 'to consider the connectivity between their world of safety and the world of danger' (2006:146). In other words, the suggestion that the Taliban are not only capable of threatening Kabul but of threatening 'any foreigners', 'whether military or not', 'who are aiming to occupy our country' is likely to invite spectators to reflect on the relevance of events in Afghanistan with to their own lives.

5.1.2.3 Concreteness, multiplicity, specificity and mobility

Chouliaraki suggests that considering the *concreteness, multiplicity, specificity* and *mobility* of a news item can also help to determine the extent to which it creates a compelling space-time which encourages spectators to feel closer to events (2006:122). Events in this news

item can be considered *concrete*, as the visual elements situate events within physical spaces (principally the location of the Taliban leader), in a way that a studio discussion, for example, would not. Spectators are offered significant *multiplicity*, or movement through multiple contexts, as they pass through numerous contexts including Kabul, the drive to Logar province and the location of the Taliban leader. Spectators are also offered some degree of *specificity*, or rendering of scenes as unique, as the journalist voiceover specifies details of the locations in which events were taking place. Furthermore, two actors in particular, US president Obama and the Taliban leader, were afforded some degree of individualisation given that they were referred to visually or verbally on several occasions, they were both allowed to speak and the Taliban leader even spoke directly into the camera on several occasions. Finally, the space-time relations in this piece can be considered *mobile* because of the connections made between zones of safety and zones of danger, as described above. Chouliaraki argues that the occurrence of all four distinct spatiotemporal dimensions in one news text represents the construction of a relatively complex space-time which is rendered less Other (2006:88) because the life-world of the Other is constructed as being so complex that it is in some ways comparable to the spectator's.

5.1.3 Agency

5.1.3.1 The people of Afghanistan

As discussed earlier, Chouliaraki argues that the way in which spectators are invited to relate to suffering depends on the *humanisation* of the suffering (or in this case, the Afghan people) which in turn depends on their capacity to speak or act (2006:124). In this news item, the Afghan people have no voice. They are neither given the opportunity to speak, nor does anyone speak on their behalf. Spivak argues that in being deprived of a voice, or of the opportunity to make others aware of their situation, they will remain forever subalterns, or distant Others (1988). The Afghan people also have very little capacity to act in any other way. Visually, they are depicted only in 'iconic' long shots of market stalls and people in the street, which serve only to 'alienate and dehumanise them' (Chouliaraki 2006:90). Verbally, the people of Afghanistan are seldom referred to except in reference to the 'civilian deaths' or the deaths of 'defenceless civilians' and 'women and children' caused by 'heavy-handed...

NATO tactics'. The only occasion in which the people of Afghanistan are attributed with any agency at all is when the Taliban commander says that 'the people of Logar are helping us' but even this action is said to be the result of the NATO bombing. In short, in this news item the people of Afghanistan are dehumanised and inactive (Chouliaraki 2006:91) and as a consequence, they are constructed as entirely Other, 'the subject of radical existential and cultural difference' (Chouliaraki 2006:125).

Chouliaraki argues that a strong sense of pamphleteering or philanthropy can only be gained, 'if a full cast of pity characters' is present (2006:140) around which feeling of indignation or tender-heartedness can be organised. With little more than a passing glimpse of and reference to the people who the persecutor and benefactor figures act upon, the appeal of this news item to pamphleteering or philanthropy remains severely limited. Similarly, even if this text does invite some limited form of reflective contemplation from the spectator, the dehumanisation of the Afghan people means that it will likely not focus on them.

5.1.3.2 Benefactor and persecutor figures

US President Obama is placed in the position of the benefactor figure in the news item by being constructed as the principal figure with the capacity to help the people of Afghanistan and to oppose the persecutor figure. This is achieved through visual juxtaposition, as discussed above, but also verbally, for example, when the 'plan' for American troops in Afghanistan is described as 'his', the 'message' from the Taliban leader is directed specifically at Obama and when the news item ends by concluding that the Taliban is the 'enemy President Obama has inherited'.

The benefactor figure is shown as responding to the plight of the 'victims' (the Afghan people) in two ways. Firstly, he engages in critical reflection on their situation when he is quoted as having said that the 'situation in Afghanistan is worsening and cannot be solved through military force alone' and that he will be detailing his plans for American forces there, 'very soon'. Secondly, he has responded to this situation by 'sending US reinforcement... to provinces surrounding Kabul'. Since both of these actions – reflective

contemplation and sending troops - are also positions which many spectators in the UK can also relate to, we might conclude that this text does invite spectators to feel they have some agency over events since the benefactor figure is able to engage in these actions.

However, any sense of agency is mitigated by the role of the persecutor figure in this news item - the Taliban. They are constructed as having an increasing capacity to 'threaten' zones of safety, as has already been discussed. Not only do they threaten us, but also the benefactor figure, when, in the news item, they are said to deliver him a 'very stark message'. While the benefactor figure may potentially encourage the spectator to feel some agency, the agency of the persecutor and the dehumanisation of the Afghan people (and even their suggested complicity with the Taliban) work against this. Thus, the agency of the persecutor and the dehumanisation of the Afghan people work against any appeals to emotion or action.

5.2 ZIMBABWE: BBC 6 O'CLOCK NEWS

5.2.1 Multi-modality

5.2.1.1 Mode of presentation

The text under analysis here is a two minute and forty-six second news item about the inauguration of Morgan Tsvangirai as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe on 11th February 2009 on the BBC 6 O'clock News (see Appendix L). It begins with a thirty second introduction by a studio anchor who briefly tells us that 'ministers in Zimbabwe's new government have been sworn into office' and that 'shortly before the ceremony a high ranking member of the Movement for Democratic Change was arrested while trying to leave the country'. This is followed by a montage of video footage of various recent events including shots of an empty school, the swearing in ceremony of Morgan Tsvangirai, a brief interview with Morgan Tsvangirai and the journalist's piece to camera on the street (but no live footage). This montage of video footage is accompanied by a reporter's voiceover which describes the various events being shown such as, 'jailed MDC supporters leaving court this afternoon' and the arrest of 'MDC official, Roy Bennett, [who] has allegedly been charged with treason'.

This mode of presentation is similar to that of the news item about Afghanistan. Narrative cohesion is provided by the voiceover who connects the separate pieces of video footage to produce a single, coherent, news story. The visuals are sequenced in chronological order and located in time and space. I conclude that this mode of presentation appeals principally to a perceptual realism, or a, 'this is how it is' form of reality (Chouliaraki 2006:75) because of the close correspondence between voiceover and visuals (Chouliaraki 2006:134).

5.2.1.2 Visual-verbal correspondence

This appeal to a perceptual realism is at least partly a product of the *indexical* relationship between the verbal and the visual. The verbal narrative largely offers spectators a description of events as facts, rather than offering value judgements or normative proposals. For example, in the opening sequence the journalists' voiceover describes for the spectator the state of the country, drawing on the condition of the schools as evidence.

> A derelict school in a derelict country. Almost every rural school in Zimbabwe is now lying empty, a bankrupt state, unable to pay teachers.

This description of events-as-facts is reinforced by the journalist's tone of voice which narrates events in an impassive, matter-of-fact way that is void of emotion. The claim to factuality in the verbal is reinforced by the visuals. The images accompanying the description of events are presented as evidence to support the statements. For example, in the opening sequence, the camera pans and tilts around several empty schools to demonstrate that the schools are indeed 'empty' and 'derelict'. This indexical relationship between the verbal and the visual creates a strong claim to factuality, or perceptual realism.

Despite the dominance of perceptual realism, the descriptive narrative is not without some important exposition and symbolic meaning which appear to reveal two particularly strong value judgments. Firstly, on several occasions the journalist appears to reveal a disdain for President Robert Mugabe who is constructed as the persecutor figure. For example, the responsibility for the arrest of a senior MDC official is blamed on President Robert Mugabe alone when the journalist describes the arrest as, 'a supreme act of bad faith and contempt by Robert Mugabe'. During the swearing in ceremony it is Robert Mugabe, rather than

Morgan Tsvangari, who the camera lingers upon, and this is accompanied by the journalist's voiceover describing, 'Robert Mugabe, presiding, as always'. This appears to present Robert Mugabe as *the* figure of power in Zimbabwe who, by implication, is principally responsible for the 'derelict schools', the 'derelict country' and the 'bankrupt state'. Finally, President Robert Mugabe is only ever referred to as 'Robert Mugabe' and never by his title as 'president'. By contrast, in the news item about Afghanistan analysed above, the US president is referred to by the journalist by his full name and position on every occasion. Brookes argues that referring to political leaders by name rather than the position they occupy can carry the implication that they lack the legitimacy of Western leaders and that this 'discrediting device' is often used to discredit the authority of African leaders (1995:477).

The second value judgement the journalist appears to reveal is a strong sense of scepticism about the possibility of the only 'benefactor' figure, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangari, being able to bring about change. The idea that Morgan Tsvangari might represent a change from the past is explicitly discredited on several occasions when the journalist says, 'how little things have changed' and that 'real change has not yet come to Zimbabwe'. The prospect of Morgan Tsvangari being able to bring about future change is also implicitly discredited on several occasions. For example, references to the deal reached between the two main political parties are accompanied by 'discrediting devices' (Brookes 1995) such as 'in theory', 'messy', 'meant to' and 'unlikely'. The journalist even poses, and leaves unanswered, the question, 'will it really work?'. The idea that Morgan Tsvangari does not have the capacity to bring about change is reinforced when the journalist says that, 'he might be Prime Minster now, but we're still banned from Zimbabwe', implying that despite being Prime Minster, Morgan Tsvangari is not even able to lift the ban on the BBC. In the brief interview, Morgan Tsvangirai does offer us a more optimistic account of events when he says that 'the general thrust and momentum of the process is irreversible'. However this is immediately discredited by the journalist when he responds in his voiceover by saying that, 'the cracks are already starting to emerge in this unlikely political alliance'.

Chouliaraki argues that ideological realism involves an appeal to 'universal' values about the world (2006:75). If the specific value judgments evident in this news item are that Robert Mugabe is a powerful, autocratic leader who has brought 'bankruptcy' and dereliction to

Zimbabwe and that the only benefactor figure, Morgan Tsvangirai, is unable to bring about any positive change, then the 'universal' value being appealed to appears to be that Africa, or Zimbabwe in this case, is a place ruled by corrupt, authoritarian leaders where nothing ever changes (Ebo 1992).

A thirty second interview with Morgan Tsvangirai represents the one occasion in which the news item might have offered a fleeting glimpse of categorical realism, or of a form of realism that relies on appeals to the emotional, rather than the factual. When the journalist says he had to '*sneak* to a safe-house' to meet Morgan Tsvangirai, he draws momentarily on elements of fictional storytelling, adding a sense of danger to the narrative. This interview also presents the only occasion in which we are visually invited to get closer to and look directly at any individual other than the journalist. However, any possibility of fostering a sense of proximity to or feeling for Tsvangirai is quickly negated by the appearance of a strap-line graphic which labels him by his name and position. The rolling out of this strap line frames him in an iconic, way as an individual to be labelled, listened to rationally and observed rather than become closer to. Put another way, the strap line is an example of mediation as hypermediacy, or 'style of visual representation which reminds the viewer of the presence of the medium' (Bolter and Grusin 2000:272) which interrupts the spectator's sense of immediacy.

5.2.1.3 Aesthetic quality

Despite the presence of ideological realism and symbolic meaning in this text and a clear persecutor figure to be denounced, the lack of any clear 'universal' sense of justice which the persecutor is violating limits any appeals to emotion or action associated with pamphleteering. In other words, although Robert Mugabe is constructed as responsible for the implied suffering of the people and other events, since he is not constructed as violating any universal values, there is no issue around which the spectator's indignation can be organised. Indeed, the taken-for-granted understanding of the world appealed to in this text, of Africa being a place ruled by corrupt, authoritarian leaders where nothing ever changes, further blocks appeals to pamphleteering because the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe is constructed as seemingly inevitable and unchallengeable.

Robert Mugabe's role in the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe will also not evoke strong feelings because of the complete dehumanisation of these people, discussed below. Indeed, I argue that the dehumanisation and restricted space-time of the report blocks any options for action or emotion which this text might evoke. In short, the overall semiotic effect of this text is one of indifference towards the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe and even towards the role of the benefactor and persecutor.

5.2.2 Space-time

The news report is situated in various spaces including an empty school, the swearing in ceremony, the outside of a prison and inside a safe-house. However, all of these spaces serve merely as a background to action (Chouliaraki 2006:86) and except for the brief interview with Morgan Tsvangirai and a short journalist piece to camera late in the report, all scenes are filmed from, and therefore position audiences at, a safe distance. All scenes take place entirely inside Harare, which is constructed through language as a homogenous, 'derelict' and 'bankrupt' 'zone of danger'. The spectator is offered no suggestion that there might be 'zones of safety' within Zimbabwe or that the space-time being represented is in any way connected to their space-time. Also, no distinction is made between public and private spaces in Zimbabwe or between different specific named places except 'Harare' and the rest of Zimbabwe.

Both the visual and the verbal elements present the temporality of events as a-historical, taking place only in the present, 'today'. The only references to the future are the implications by the journalist, discussed above, that the future will be no different from the past or the present. Similarly, past events are not referred to directly, either visually or verbally, nor are they implied as having any value in explaining the present or the future. On three occasions the journalist implies or comments on 'how little things have changed'. The past is only really invoked by implication, for example, when the journalist says that schools 'now' lie empty and that this is the 'final' stage of the formation of a unity government. No attempt is made to situate the events in a broader chronology in which current events are contextualised and explained, such as in the context of Zimbabwe's

colonial past, struggle for independence, its relationship with South Africa or the recent land reforms.

In summary, the events reported in this news item can be said to be shown to take place within a narrow, un-complex space-time. In Chouliaraki's terms, we might say that the spatiotemporal order of this news item is *concrete* and *multiple* but not *mobile* or *specific* (2006:88). This has several important implications. The generally low degree of spatiotemporal complexity positions spectators at a distance from events and fails to present events as urgent or to invite the spectator to reflect upon their own connections to events. More specifically, the particular way in which the relationship between the past, present and future is constructed, casts events as part of a never-ending story (Chouliaraki 2006:128) in which nothing changes and no real progress is made. This is particularly evident when Robert Mugabe is described as 'presiding, as always'. The a-historicity and lack of substantial future perspective in this news item presents the spectator with a 'logic of appearances'. Finally, a lack of feelings of proximity, connectivity and awareness of a wider 'logic of causality' are likely to interfere with any appeal to options for emotion or action which this news item might have offered.

5.2.3 Agency

In this news item, the people living in Zimbabwe are not just 'inactive', as was the case for the people of Afghanistan, they are completely *annihilated,* or entirely deprived of their human qualities (Silverstone 2006:89). Neither the 'derelict' situation of the country, nor the coalition deal, is linked to the lives of the people of Zimbabwe and they are neither shown visually nor commented upon verbally, except by implication in the reference to schools in Zimbabwe 'lying empty'. This 'annihilation' not only constructs the people of Zimbabwe as unequivocal Others but without 'a full cast of pity characters' (2006:140) the appeal of this news item to principles of sublimation or pamphleteering, or any options for emotion or action, remains extremely limited.

This sense of a lack of options for action is reinforced by the role of the benefactor and the persecutor. As discussed above, the persecutor figure is constructed as solely responsible

for events but also as unlikely to change. Similarly, the benefactor figure is constructed as unable to impose positive change. In summary, not only are the people of Zimbabwe intensely Other but spectators are placed in a position in which they think there is no way of helping them.

5.3 ZIMBABWE: ITV EVENING NEWS

5.3.1 Multi-modality

5.3.1.1 Mode of presentation

The ITV news item about the inauguration of Morgan Tsvangari (see Appendix M) uses a very similar mode of presentation to the BBC news item to report on precisely the same event. It begins with a twenty two second introduction by a studio anchor who places the inauguration ceremony in the context of Robert Mugabe's hold on power and 'the almost complete collapse of the country'. This is followed by a montage of video footage of various events accompanied by the reporter's voiceover. The video footage includes similar scenes to the BBC news item such as the swearing in ceremony and an interview with Morgan Tsvangirai. However, the treatment of these scenes and inclusion of several other scenes ensures that this news item, although covering the same event, for a similar audience, for a similar length of time (3 minutes 15 seconds), using a similar mode of presentation, offers a very different form of narrative realism.

5.3.1.2 Verbal-visual correspondence

The dominant form of narrative realism in this news item is not perceptual realism but categorical realism. This is described by Chouliaraki as a reality of the heart and of feelings and emotions. Chouliaraki argues that categorical realism is produced by narrative proper, emotive language and iconic imagery, all of which are strongly evident in this news item. The emotive language is evident even before the VT begins when the news anchor describes Morgan Tsvangirai as a 'glimmer of hope' after 'months of wrangling' and of bringing in 'a new dawn'. The story starts, the journalist tells us, 'last night' at 'a party' in Morgan

Tsvangirai's home where the journalist (and through the camera-person, the spectator) has been 'invited' to 'join the festivities' with 'dozens of friends and family'. From our position amongst the dancers we see Tsvangirai inviting more guests into his house. Later we are positioned immediately opposite the journalist and Tsvangirai who are having a conversation and who spontaneously burst into laughter together and put their arms around each other. These verbal and visual elements make an emotional appeal to the spectator to *feel* welcome in Tsvangari's home.

The interview with Tsvangirai is conducted, not formally and in a safe-house, as was the case in the BBC news item, but standing up amongst the other guests during the party. Although a strap-line graphic does appear, it is only there for a short time and the sixty second interview allows the spectator considerably more time than in the BBC news item to dwell on Morgan Tsvangirai as a man, enjoying himself at a party. The language used to describe the party and Morgan Tsvangirai at this point is not formal or descriptive as in the BBC News item, but vivid and expressive – making use of more animated and emotive language such as 'sacrifice', 'struggle' and 'relish'. The journalist describes,

> dozens of friends and family descending on Morgan Tsvangirai's home to see in a new dawn for their country. Invited to join the festivities, I find a man relishing the challenge that awaits him, but realistic as to its scale... Having sacrificed so much for his struggle, Zimbabwe's new prime minster could be excused a celebration.

At this point in the narrative, Tsvangirai describes events as 'an anxious moment for everyone, including me. Personally I don't even know what's going to happen. We are plunging into the unknown'. The narrative conventions and lexical choices here adds urgency, suspense and tension to the narrative which Chouliaraki argues is another important element of categorical realism (2006:79).

The narrative then moves on verbally and visually to 'the morning after... when [Tsvangirai] took his vows' which we briefly watch and listen to from a distance. This is one of the only, very brief, moments of indexical meaning where a formal, framed image of Tsvangirai being sworn in by Mugabe is followed by the journalist's description of the 'tens of thousands [who] turned out today to hear Tsvangirai's inaugural speech'. The news item quickly

returns to appeals to categorical realism though when the journalist returns to using more emotive language to describe the speech.

> Morgan Tsvangirai can offer these people hope but not miracles. His job as Prime Minister is to pull this country back from the abyss and he's going to have to do it handcuffed to the very people who took it there.

The spectator then leaves Tsvangirai for the first and only time to visit 'the townships around Harare' to watch and listen to the people living there. We are offered a montage of iconic shots of sewage in the streets and people eating out of bins and collecting water. Iconicity, Chouliaraki argues, is the use of images as a signifier of generic conditions (2006:79) and is another important element of categorical realism. In this case, these iconic images are used to represent the 'hunger and disease and almost total unemployment' the journalist is describing. Finally, the narrative returns the spectator back to where they began, at the party in Morgan Tsvangirai's house.

As should be evident from some the above quotations, alongside the particularly strong appeals to categorical realism are appeals to a particular ideological realism. Through exposition and symbolic meaning, the journalist reveals his judgments about Morgan Tsvangari and Robert Mugabe as the benefactor and persecutor figures respectively. In this news item, the benefactor, Morgan Tsvangari, is judged by the journalist to possess far greater power to produce change than in the BBC news item. The journalist describes him as having 'a level of expectation to manage' and reports that 'his challenge now... is to bring about change from the inside'. When Tsvangari gives his speech, he is shown calling others to action, proclaiming that 'the culture of impunity, of violence against human rights must end and it must end today'.

The journalist's judgement on the persecutor, Robert Mugabe, is that he is almost solely responsible for the suffering in the country. This is revealed when the journalist describes him as responsible for 'delivering hunger and disease and almost total unemployment' and when the news anchor says he 'still has the real power there'. However, the journalist also argues that Robert Mugabe's power is far from absolute. The journalist describes his 'grip on power' as 'relaxed' and the only image of Mugabe is of his role in the swearing in of

Morgan Tsvangiari. The use of the word 'until' in the following comments about Mugabe by the journalist suggests that there is even a possibility that he can change.

> Many don't see a future until he is gone for good.

> Billions of dollars set aside to re-build this country won't be released until the new unity government has proved it can work. Until Mugabe can demonstrate he has changed.

Indeed, in this second quotation the journalist implies that Mugabe is in some way responsible to a higher authority that will judge his actions i.e. the UN.

5.3.1.3 Aesthetic quality

The overall semiotic effect of this news items appears to be one of philanthropy – informed by the prioritising of feelings over facts, evident in the dominance of categorical realism. Chouliaraki describes philanthropy as a feeling of tender-heartedness towards the victim or the benefactor, who comforts the sufferers' pain (2006:81). In this case, it is the benefactor figure that this feeling is principally directed towards because the narrative and emotive language concentrates on him rather than on the people of Zimbabwe. Pamphleteering is also likely to be evoked by this news item because of the presence of exposition and symbolic meaning in which a clear persecutor figure was identified. This appeal to pamphleteering will be far greater than in the BBC news item because the actions of the persecutor, Robert Mugabe, are constructed as being clearly ethically unacceptable and with the possibility of being challenged, in a way that they weren't in the BBC news item. As we shall now see, the humanisation of distant Others in this news text also contributes to the strengthening of appeals to these options for emotion and action.

5.3.2 Space-time

Although, as was discussed above, the narrative of this news item situates events temporally in the present and in the immediate past, there are also several verbal

references to the future and more distant past. In relation to the past, the news anchor tells us that Morgan Tsvangirai offers the people of Zimbabwe a 'glimmer of hope' after 'months of wrangling'. On several occasions the current state of affairs in Zimbabwe is blamed on the past actions of Mugabe, who 'delivered hunger and disease and almost total unemployment here'. The journalist, Tsvangirai and the news anchor all refer to the future prospects of the country as open and full of possibility, in contrast to the BBC report where it was referred to as predetermined and the same as the past. For example, Tsvangirai is described as being 'the man the people hope will end their suffering'. Tsvangirai's family and friends are described by the journalist as being 'high on optimism and hope'. Indeed, the word 'hope' is used six times in the news item. In the very last sentence, the journalist leaves us with an impression of a future yet to be determined when he says that 'the job has just begun'. In the interview, the question the journalist asks also implies future change is possible, that the people are optimistic of such change and that Tsvangirai may be able to bring this about.

Journalist - You've got a level of expectation to manage though haven't you?

Tsvangirai - Oh yes, there is a high level of expectation, but I tell everyone, we're starting from zero, there is nothing here.

In this exchange, it is Tsvangirai who tempers the expectations of the people, in contrast to the BBC item, where the journalist disregards the optimism of Tsvangirai. This sense of historicity and future oriented perspective is, I would suggest, not specific enough to offer the spectator a 'logic of causality', in which causality is related to specific longer term processes and more subtle contexts. However, it does provide a more complex temporality in which events are not presented as if they 'just happened' or as part of a never-ending story.

The space-time presented in this news item is made further complex by its concreteness, multiplicity, specificity and mobility. The verbal narrative and visual montage takes the spectator through *multiple, concrete* spaces in which the events take place, rather than making use of iconic visuals to denote generic spaces or discussing spaces in the abstract in a studio, for example. Such concrete spaces include Tsvangirai's home, the swearing in ceremony, his inaugural speech and the streets of the townships around Hararre. Spectators

are offered a high degree of *specificity* through the references to particular times and locations but principally through the individualisation and humanisation of the central actor, Morgan Tsvangari.

We see Tsvangiari in both public and private domains, with friends and family, laughing with a journalist, in a formal ceremony with Robert Mugabe, making a speech to supporters and working late into the night at home. Chouliaraki suggests that being shown in both public and private sphere and particular in the public-private boundary gives a certain depth of consciousness to the person being portrayed (2006:99), by which she presumably means that they are further humanised. During the news item we are offered a range of different camera shots of Morgan Tsvangari including a shot from over the shoulder of the journalist during a party in his home, a close up during a public speech and a mid-range shot of him at his swearing in ceremony. These multiple perspective of Morgan Tsvangiari further helps to construct him as a unique and humanised individual. We also hear him speak on four different occasions in three different contexts. In not only speaking but in doing so in different contexts we are further invited to understand him as unique. Finally, Tsvangiari is humanised by the emotive language used to describe him. In the first scene the journalist asks us to excuse Tsvangiari a celebration, since he has 'sacrificed so much for his struggle'. He goes on to describe him as 'a man relishing the challenge that awaits him, but realistic as to its scale'. These examples of humanisation not only add to the overall spatiotemporal specificity of the text but also enhance appeals of tender-heartedness towards the benefactor.

This news item also constructs space-time relations that are *mobile*. The narrative, exposition and humanisation described above, conspire to construct Tsvangirai's home as what Chouliaraki would describe as a 'zone of safety' in contrast to the 'zone of danger' spectators visit in the Harare townships. Here spectators can identify a space that is safe from 'hunger and disease' and in this house people come to 'celebrate', dance, sing and laugh with the benefactor figure. By showing hospitality to spectators in this zone of safety, the news text creates a 'zone of contact between the spectators and the sufferers where practical and personal action in relation to distant suffering becomes possible' (2006:141).

Spectators are also invited to share the same space-time as ordinary Zimbabweans on several other occasions. For example, spectators watch Tsvangiari's inaugural speech over the shoulder of an onlooker and during various scenes at the party the camera is situated amongst Tsvangari's 'family and friends' who frequently make eye contact with the camera/spectator. Spectators are also provided with an option of action (2006:141) through the reference to the international community who have 'set aside... billions of dollars to re-build this country [which] won't be released until the new unity government has proved it can work'. This offers spectators a powerful connection to action that ties into the appeals to *pamphleteering* and *philanthropy.* Spectators can demonstrate their anger at the persecutor and faith in the benefactor by providing money, on the condition that the benefactor fulfils his promise and the prosecutor does not prevent change.

5.3.3 Agency

The people of Zimbabwe are evoked when the journalist describes them as having 'a high level of expectation' and being 'high on optimism and hope'. Visually, we see Zimbabweans en masse in their 'tens of thousands, turned out... to hear Tsangiari's inaugural speech'. In this case though, images and numerical descriptions of Africans en masse do not serve to Other 'them' (as is so often the case) (Chouliaraki 2006:90). Instead, these images and descriptions are part of a montage of images and narratives about Zimbabweans which humanises them (Chouliaraki 2006:88). We see ordinary Zimbabweans celebrating and dancing in front of the camera (motion), frequently making eye contact with the spectator (gaze), in iconic shots of the slums of Harare (condition), and importantly, talking to the camera (voice). The people of Zimbabwe are afforded further agency through the 'benefactor', Morgan Tsvangiari, when he says that his optimism derives from the people. 'The whole nation is hopeful, and so I'm hopeful'.

In a short section of vox pops, two Zimbabweans are given the opportunity to comment directly to the spectator about what is happening.

> Personally, I just don't see it benefitting the common man on the street. So to a certain extent, its a non-event.

We just want something on our tables, that's it.

The journalist responds to these quotations by describing their 'scepticism' as being 'shared by the wider world'. Here, the spectator is invited not only to identify momentarily with these two people by looking their gaze, but they are also being told that they agree with their comments and that their opinions are valid.

In summary, in stark contrast to the annihilation of ordinary Zimbabweans in the BBC News item, in the ITV News item Zimbabweans are commented upon verbally, they are present visually and are even allowed to speak. They are also presented as acting upon their situation through *gaze, motion* and *condition*. As a consequence, the people of Zimbabwe are to some degree *humanised* (though not individualised). According to Chouliaraki, this also means that spectators are more likely to speak about what they are watching because the people of Zimbabwe are construed as being more like 'us' (2006:88).

5.4 LVOS: CHINA, IRAQ AND VENEZUELA

5.4.1 Multi-modality

The visual element of the mode of presentation of all of the thirteen live-voiceover news items (LVOs) analysed here (see Appendix N) consists of news agency video footage (usually the same footage for each event). The verbal element consists of a live voiceover of between 10 and 20 seconds in length delivered by the studio anchor. Rather than drawing on the concepts of perceptual, categorical or ideological realism to discuss the appeal to reality of LVOs, Chouliaraki instead describes the verbal element of the LVOs she analyses as 'descriptive'. She defines this as a simple 'fact-giving' report, consisting mainly of events rather than either narration or exposition (2006:98). Chouliaraki argues that 'descriptive' verbal narratives are concerned only with questions of 'who, where and how', rather than 'why' and do not appeal to a reality of facts, emotions or justice (2006:99).

5.4.1.1 Iraq

What Chouliaraki describes as a 'descriptive' verbal narrative is certainly evident in all of the six LVOs of a suicide bomb attack in Iraq.

> 32 people have been killed in an explosion south of Baghdad, as they took part in an annual Shite pilgrimage. A further 82 people were wounded in the attack by a female suicide bomber. The majority of the victims were women and children (ITV1 Evening News).

As the above transcript of one of the news items illustrates, the concern of these reports is with the number of people who died (variously identified as 30, 32 and 40), who these people were ('mainly women and children', 'pilgrims'), where they died ('in Iskandaria, south of Baghdad', 'near Baghdad') and how ('in a suicide bomb attack'). There is no consideration of the context or causality of this event, only that in describing the victims as 'Shia pilgrims... on their way to the city of Karvaella to take part in an annual religious ceremony' (BBC 6 O'clock News), was it inferred that the event might be related to religion in some way.

These LVOs about events in Iraq would be characterised by Chouliaraki as 'adventure news' because they 'claim objectivity at the expense of emotionality' and, as a consequence, prevent any potential for action or emotion' (2006:104). Put another way, their aesthetic quality is one of 'factual minimalism' (2006:120) which evokes nothing more than indifference because there is apparently nothing to be done except to 'accept the fact of this misfortune' (2006:104).

5.4.1.2 Venezuela

Interestingly, a purely descriptive verbal narrative is not evident in the seven LVOs of the other two events. For example, although the three LVOs covering the referendum in Venezuela do have descriptive elements, they also all make some use of exposition. The LVO of the referendum in Venezuela on More4 News, for example, begins and ends with a description of who has done what, where and when but in the remainder of the narrative there is evidence of exposition.

In Venezuela, Hugo Chavez has won the right to run for president for the third time. His supporters gathered outside the state palace after last night's referendum abandoned the country's 12 year term limit. Mr Chavez says he needs at least another decade to complete his socialist revolution. The next presidential elections will be in 2012 (More4 News).

The use of the word 'abandoned' in this news item offers a value judgement on the referendum as being undemocratic. The idea that the abolition of presidential term limits is undemocratic is also evident in a reference in another LVO to warnings of 'greater authoritarian rule' from 'opponents of Chavez' (Channel 4 News) and by a strap-line in the third LVO which reads, 'Chavez can stand for indefinite re-election' (BBC4 World News). In all LVOs covering this event the deliberate inclusion of length of time Chavez has been in power ('over a decade') reinforces this particular value judgement. It is also significant that the President of Venezuela is referred to only as 'Mr Chavez', 'Hugo Chavez', or 'Chavez' as referring to political leaders by name rather than the position they occupy can carry the implication that they lack the legitimacy of Western leaders (Brookes 1995:477).

The meaning generated through exposition is supported by the symbolic meaning (2006:80) of the visuals. Chouliaraki argues that symbolic meaning is created by 'discursive associations based on conventional knowledge and values such the doxa of 'us' as humane and 'them' as savages' (2006:80). In the LVOs about the referendum in Venezuela the video footage shows a large crowd of people in red shirts celebrating en masse in the streets and Hugo Chavez waving at the people from a balcony in the state palace. The dominance of the colour red, the generic mass of jubilant supporters and the elevated and iconic position of the president combine to evoke the idea of an authoritarian ruler, ruling under the guise of communism, reminiscent of portrayals of China and North Korea. Indeed, it is interesting to note that one of the LVOs covering this event was positioned immediately after a news item about North Korea in which similar symbolic imagery was used.

We might take these verbal elements of exposition and visual elements of symbolism as evidence that these texts appeal, in some way, to a sense of pamphleteering in which the spectator is invited to make a judgement about the undemocratic rule of the President of Venezuela. However, since this is only a very short item which also contains a strong

'descriptive' verbal narrative and in which the spectator is afforded minimal agency and proximity, any options for emotion or action are likely to be entirely blocked. Nevertheless, the point remains that these LVOs consist of more than a purely 'descriptive' verbal narrative and, in this case, reproduce particular discursive associations.

5.4.1.3 China

The LVO coverage of the death of 74 miners in China can also be interpreted as containing more than purely descriptive verbal narratives.

> 74 miners have died in an explosion in china. Scores more were rescued after being trapped underground for hours. It happened the day after a mine safety conference at which officials promised to put an end to fatal mining accidents (ITV Evening News)

As the above example illustrates, the four LVOs did contain some description, such as where the accident took place ('in China') and how many people were killed (74) or trapped ('scores', 'dozens'). However, these descriptions were relatively vague compared to coverage of the incident in Iraq and all of the reports went beyond the purely descriptive.

One report included the statement that 'dozens of others are trapped underground and have been contacting their families using mobile phones' (Channel 4 News), while another reported that survivors had been 'trapped underground for hours' (ITV Evening News). Both of these statements draw somewhat on iconic meaning which appeals to a reality of emotions. By appealing to a universal condition, these statements may invite spectators to question what it might feel like to be a survivor of a gas explosion, 'trapped underground' for an unspecific amount of time and what you would say to your families on a mobile phone. Once again, however, any options for emotion or action, or even, in this case, solitary enjoyment, are likely to be blocked by the dehumanisation and restricted space-times of the texts.

Two other news items about the incident in China follow initially descriptive accounts with the comment that 'the blast happened the day after a mine safety conference at which

officials promised to put an end to fatal mining accidents' (ITV Evening News, ITV Nightly News). Choosing to narrate events in this way invokes, a least momentarily, a judgement about the way the world works. This statement could be seen to be appealing to one of two different discourses. Firstly, this statement could contribute to a frequently cited discourse about China being incompetent and inept in the face of public health issues. In her analysis of Western News coverage of the Chinese government's response to HIV/AIDS in China, for example, Wu (2006:262). identifies an 'incompetence' frame which includes 'scepticism about the fulfilment of the Chinese government's promises' and the observation that 'problems persist despite the government's pledged commitments'. Both elements of this 'incompetence' frame are evident in these LVOs. Alternatively, this statement could be read as rehearsing a similar, more universal, 'bureaucratic narrative' (Van Zoonen 2005:114) about the inefficient and ineffective nature of the political system and of bureaucracy (in this case, promises made by officials at conferences).

The point here is not to argue that the presence of specific examples of exposition necessarily invites feelings of denunciation or indignation, for example, because the restricted agency and space-times of these news items likely blocks such responses. Rather the point is simply that the way in which the paradox of technology is seemingly resolved varies between LVOs, albeit minimally, and that these texts may have the capacity to evoke responses to distant Others beyond that of an unavoidable indifference.

5.4.2 Space-time

5.4.2.1 Iraq

Chouliaraki describes the LVOs she analyses as being placed within a single space and temporality; as being cut off from the chain of events of which they are part. The events do not appear to be connected to other events nor do they contain the potential to predict other events (2006:100). The LVOs of the bomb blast in Iraq can certainly be characterised in this way. Temporally, the event is constructed as having taken only place in the immediate past, as all verbal references to the event are given in the past tense and the only visual element is set in the immediate aftermath of the explosion. The only spatial

dimension of the event relates to where it took place, 'in Iskandaria, south of Baghdad' (Channel 4 News).

The implications for causality here fall firmly within what Chouliaraki describes as a 'logic of appearances' in that causality is dictated by the immediate context and effects rather than historical circumstances (2006:99). Put another way, the dominance of simple verbal description in these news items constructs events as entirely 'random'. In the case of the LVOs of the suicide bomb attack in Iraq spectators are not told about previous bomb blasts, for example, or the political, economic or social conditions in the country. By situating events within a singular space-time Chouliaraki claims they cannot be linked to the space-time of spectators and the life-world of distant Others remains irrevocably distant (2006:114). This is also significant for Chouliaraki because by failing to establish this connection, LVOs 'fail to bring forth any emotional response or motivate the spectator into any form of public action' (2006:104).

5.4.2.2 China and Venezuela

A small number of LVOs about distant Others during the two week sample period did not have entirely singular space-time relations. In all of the LVOs of the explosion in the Chinese mine, for example, spectators are given some account of how this event sits within the context of previous events, either in relation to a mine safety conference the previous day (ITV Evening News, ITV Nightly News) or in the context of the number of miners who were killed in the previous year (Five News, Channel 4 News). In the Channel 4 News LVO, the event itself is constructed as taking place in the present and immediate past when the studio anchor says that, 'dozens of others *are* trapped underground and *have been* contacting their families using mobile phones' (Channel 4 News). In terms of its spatial dimensions, the video footage used by all of the bulletins situates the event outside the top of the mine while the accompanying narrative variously places events underground, in XianXie province, in China and in the world.

More than 400 miners were working <u>underground</u> in the mine <u>in XianXie province</u> when the explosion occurred. <u>China's</u> mining industry is <u>the world's</u> most dangerous (Channel 4 News).

Similarly, the LVOs of the referendum in Venezuela also did not have entirely singular space-time relations. Temporally, the referendum is set in the immediate past when spectators are told about and shown video footage of people 'celebrating victory... last night' (BBC4 World News). The event is also put in the context of the future when we are told that 'the next presidential elections will be in 2012' (More4 News) and that 'Mr Chavez says he needs at least another decade to complete his socialist revolution' (More 4 News). The event is also put in the context of the past when we are told that Chavez 'has been in power for over a decade' (BBC4 World News). The spatial dimension of this event is far narrower, however, as events are simply situated 'outside the state palace' (More 4 News) since this is the only verbal reference to place and it is also the only place we are shown visually. Although the length of these news items limits their potential for spatiotemporal complexity, these news items do at least offer some (very limited) capacity for spectators to understand events involving distant Others as more than just simply occurring.

5.4.3 Agency

5.4.3.1 Iraq and China

In the LVOs of events in China and Iraq, those suffering are entirely dehumanised and are afforded nether *motion, gaze* nor *condition*. Chouliaraki argues that the aggregation of individuals into a specific number dehumanises them and strips them of any agency or personal identities (2006:105). In all of the LVOs which reported on the events in China and Iraq, the sufferers are aggregated in this way. As Channel 4 News reported, 'a gas explosion...has killed 74 miners...Dozens of others are trapped... More than 400 miners were working underground ... more than 2000 miners were killed last year'. Sufferers are also aggregated through functional characterisation, or by grouping them according to what they do (Chouliaraki 2006:105). The victims of the gas explosion in China are referred to collectively as 'miners' while the victims of the bomb blast in Iraq are described as 'mainly

women and children' (ITV Evening News) or as 'taking part in an annual Shiite pilgrimage' (ITV Nightly News).

This functional and numerical aggregation of individuals in LVOs is often unavoidable because the items are too brief to disaggregate further. Nevertheless, this aggregation does, according to Chouliarki serve to dehumanise distant Others, 'minimise the affective impact of their death' (2006:105) and reinforce the idea that people in faraway countries are 'Other' and distant from spectators. As Chouliaraki would argue, 'they remain irrevocably 'Other' – distant, inactive, devoid of feelings and thoughts' (2006:106).

In the LVOs about the incident in Iraq, the persecutor is described only as 'a female suicide bomber' (ITV Evening News) who had 'hidden explosives under her dress' (ITV Evening News). We are not invited to denounce or attack this persecutor, or even demand justice, only to observe that the persecutor was female and, by implication, presumably to note that women can be suicide bombers as well. The only possible benefactor figure in these LVOs is the 'Iraqi leaders' (BBC 6 O'clock News) whose only contribution is to simply say that 'a female suicide bomber was responsible for the blast' (BBC 6 O'clock News). If the benefactor serves as a model for how we are invited to respond to the suffering, then on this basis, it simply reinforces the suggestion that the all the spectator should do is observe the gender of the persecutor.

In the LVOs about the incident in China, the persecutor figure could be interpreted as the Chinese 'officials' since it is implied that their incompetence might have led to this disaster. Once again we are not invited to denounce or attack this persecutor, or even demand justice, but simply, as discussed above, to recognise the ineptitude of (Chinese) bureaucracy. There are, however, some important benefactors in these LVOs. The video footage used in all of the reports consists entirely of members of a rescue team either going into the mine or preparing to go in. One video clip has a particularly dramatic quality in which the camera pans round to follow a group of rescuers running with a stretcher through an on-looking crowd towards a waiting ambulance. The actions of the benefactors and the moment of urgency created by the movement in this clip may offer the spectator a glimpse of how they should act towards the suffering. However, this clip only lasts for three seconds, the benefactors are not referred to verbally by any of the studio anchors and the video

footage is rendered irrevocably Other by the unfamiliar Chinese characters that accompany the footage from a Chinese news agency. Thus, the victims remain both Other and beyond the spectator's capacity for action.

5.4.3.2 Venezuela

In the LVOs of the referendum in Venezuela, the principal actor is defined verbally and visually as President Hugo Chavez. The 'socialist revolution' taking place in the country is described as 'his' (More4 News) while the result of the referendum is described as 'Chavez succeeded' (More4 News) and 'Chavez has won' (More4 News). In both cases, agency is afforded to Hugo Chavez rather than the people who voted in the referendum. In the BBC news item, the '*abandoned'* 12 year term limit is attributed to the referendum itself, rather than the people. This denial of the agency of the people of Venezuela and the attributing of causality to President Hugo Chavez is further reinforced by the description of the people only as 'supporters' of 'their leader' (More4 News) or as 'his supporters' (BBC4 World News). Their supporting role is also reinforced visually by video footage of crowds of people in red shirts celebrating en masse in the streets and Hugo Chavez waving at the people from a balcony in the state palace. As de-humanised, inactive Others, apparently controlled by Hugo Chavez, the spectator is offered no degree of agency in relation to them.

5.5 DISCUSSION

5.5.1 Routine news coverage of distant Others: VT packages

5.5.1.1 Summary of analyses

The principal purpose of applying the analytics of mediation to these sixteen news items is to form the basis of an investigation into the ways in which television news texts routinely appear to regulate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. The results of this study, combined with the result of the relevant content analysis, allow us to draw two conclusions in relation to VTs and LVOs respectively.

Firstly, the results of the content analysis show that VT packages are the most common news format used in the coverage of developing countries in my sample (55% of all such news items). Applying the analytics of mediation to three of these VTs illustrates both the variations and similarities in the ways in which such texts can position audiences in relation to distant Others. In the news item about Afghanistan, an application of the analytics of mediation showed that although there is a dominance of perceptual realism and indexical meaning, and to some extent, ideological realism and symbolic meaning, the spectator is not invited to engage strongly in any emotions or options for action because of the a-historicity and lack of future perspective in the news item and because of the dehumanisation of the Afghan people. Indeed, I conclude that this news text offers spectators either 'weak' positions of reflective contemplation in relation to the persecutor figure (the Taliban), though likely not in relation to the lives of the dehumanised distant Others, but that this reflective contemplation may also 'slip' into solitary enjoyment.

The major difference between this news item and the BBC News item about Zimbabwe is the construction of proximity/distance. Whereas the news item about Afghanistan evokes consideration from the spectator of the connectivity between the space-time of the spectator and the space-time of the events being represented (though not of distant Others themselves), the BBC news item about Zimbabwe contained no such mobility. I conclude that this limited construction of space-time in the BBC News item blocks any appeals to emotion or action and instead invites a sense of indifference towards distant and dehumanised distant Others.

In contrast to both of these news items, the ITV news item about Zimbabwe appeals mostly, not to a perceptual, but to a categorical and ideological realism. This news item provides spectators, not with a distant position from which to reflect on events, nor a sense of indifference or solitary enjoyment, but feelings of tender-heartedness towards the benefactor and denunciation towards the persecutor. This news item also has a relatively high degree of spatiotemporal complexity which provides spectators with a sense of immediacy and urgency, giving them a sense of involvement in and proximity to events. In particular, the mobility in this text offers spectators not only a 'zone of contact' where practical and personal action vis-à-vis the suffering becomes possible but also a concrete option of action - to donate money. Furthermore, the humanisation of the Zimbabwean

people and the role of the benefactor and persecutor figures also invites spectators to feel they have agency in relation to events.

Having discussed how the paradoxes of mediation are seemingly resolved within these three individual cases, the results of the content analysis can be used to give an indication of how routine such instances of mediation are within my wider sample.

5.5.1.2 Agency

In relation to the construction of agency, individuals directly involved in the story ('participants') spoke in only 26% of VT news items about Afghanistan and 9% of news items about Zimbabwe. Similarly, non-expert individuals from within the country ('in country vox pops') spoke in 42% and 55% of VT news items about Afghanistan and Zimbabwe respectively. This supports the suggestion that the way in which the agency of distant Others is managed in the Channel 4 and BBC news items discussed above was common amongst all VT news items covering those two countries in my sample. Indeed, for all VT news items about developing countries in the sample, 'participants' only spoke in 28% and 'in country vox pops' were included in only 38%.

Admittedly, speech is only one, rather crude, indication of the degree of agency afforded to distant Others, as it takes no account of other actions they may take or the orchestration of the persecutor and benefactor figures. Nevertheless, these results suggests that distant Others in developing countries were not afforded agency, at least in terms of the ability to speak about their condition, in a significant number of occasions. Put another way, while distant Others may not always be *annihilated* as they were in the BBC news item about Zimbabwe they may frequently be dehumanised as they were in the Channel 4 news item about Afghanistan.

Furthermore, both 'participants' and 'in country vox pops' were more likely to speak in news items about developed countries than developing countries and 'experts' from outside the country were more than twice as likely to speak in news items about developing countries (8% of people who spoke) compared to news items about developed countries (3.5%). Seen together, these results indicate a general pattern of coverage in which distant Others are

relatively more likely to be spoken about and less likely to speak for themselves - providing further indication of the construction of a (relative) lack of agency.

5.5.1.3 Proximity-distance

In relation to the construction of proximity-distance, none of the 11 VT news items about Zimbabwe included an explicit reference to the relevance of the story to the UK, indicating that the lack of mobility in the BBC news item was common amongst VT news items about Zimbabwe in general. In VT news items about Afghanistan, 5 out of 19 included such a reference, indicating that the mobility in the Channel 4 news item, discussed above, was also common amongst VT news items about Afghanistan in general. Overall, it seems that the way in which mobility was managed in the BBC News item was far more common amongst the wider sample of news items about developing countries than the Channel 4 News item. Just 16% of news items about developing countries included at least one explicit reference to the relevance of the story to the UK. This compares to 21% of news items about developed countries.

This finding would appear to provide a strong indication that news items about distant Others routinely lack a sense of mobility. However, this is not necessarily an entirely reliable measure of space-time. The ITV news item about Zimbabwe, for example, did not include explicit reference to the UK but nevertheless constructed space-time in such a way as to invite the spectator to feel a connection between their life-world and that of distant Others.

Further indication of the way in which proximity-distance is routinely managed by news texts in this sample can be gained by analysing the nature of the subject of the news item. Figure 5.1 shows that news about developed countries was dominated by continuing stories (45%) and to a lesser extent, hard news (32%), with relatively few diary events (17%) or features (6%). By contrast, news about developing countries had considerably more coverage in the form of features (19%) and diary events (29%) and considerably less in the form of continuing stories (17%). The ratio between features and continuing news stories for developing countries is approximately 1:1, compared to approximately 7:1 for developed countries. Being more than three times more likely to be covered as part of a feature, and

almost three times less likely to be covered as part of a continuing news story, suggests that developing countries appear in UK television news in what we might describe as a relatively 'episodic' manner (Iyengar 1990), or through a focus on specific events or issues rather than through a focus on long-running issues or processes. As Wright suggests, the infrequent and episodic appearance of distant Others lends itself to 'the erasure of agency and context... leading to stereotypical 'victim' imagery... diverting attention from broader, political issues' (2011:8).

Figure 5.1: Nature of the subject of news items about developed and developing countries on domestic news bulletins
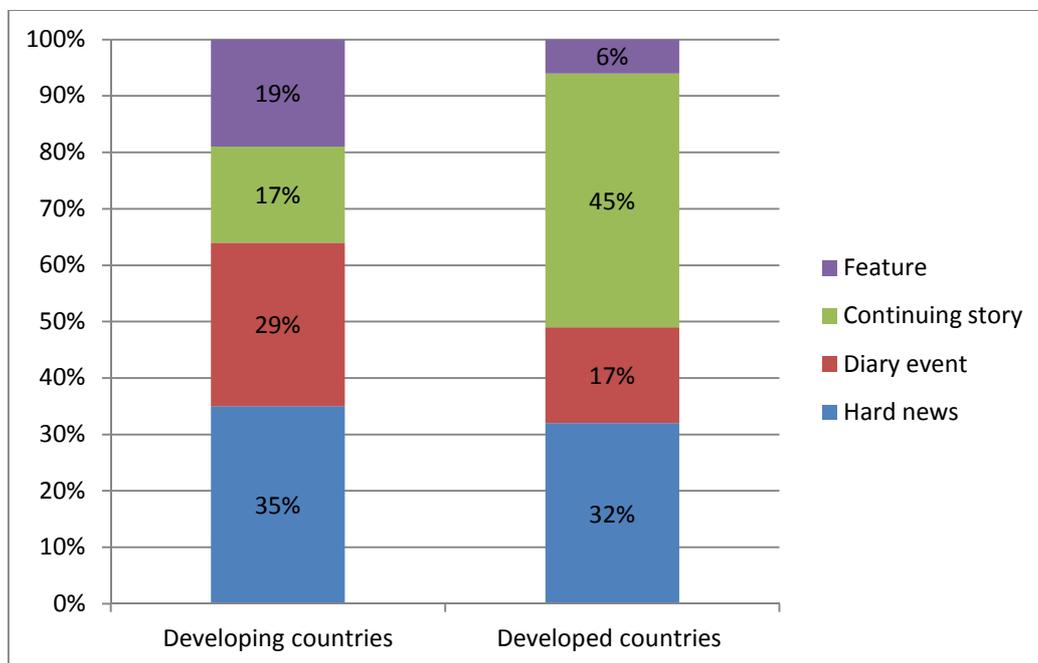
This suggestion is compounded by the relatively high proportion of news items for developing countries in the form of diary events (29%), such as anniversaries or public speeches, which are more likely to be covered as one-off events rather than as part of particular on-going processes. In Chouliaraki's terms, we might regard these findings as an indication that, in general, news about developing countries appears in a way that informs a logic of appearances rather than a logic of causality because events appear most often, not as part of continuing news stories (17%), as is the case for almost half of all news items about developed countries (45%), but in the form of one-off news items. Once again, however, this can only give us an indication of the management of proximity-distance

because it tells us nothing about the way in which events are contextualised within individual texts.

Further indication of a general lack of mobility in news items about developing countries can be seen in the finding from the content analysis that just 5% of all news items about developing countries were covered in two-ways, or discussions between a journalist in-field and a journalist in the studio (see Figure 5.2). By comparison, news items about developed countries were almost three times more likely to be covered in a two-way (14%). This is significant because the physical presence of a journalist in the life-world of distant Others is (assumed to be) a particularly graphic way of establishing a connection, or sense of mobility, between the life-world of the spectator and that of distant Others. This is particularly apparent if the journalist is narrating what they are or have themselves experienced, live and directly into the camera, as is often the case in two-ways.

Figure 5.2: Format of news items about developed and developing countries
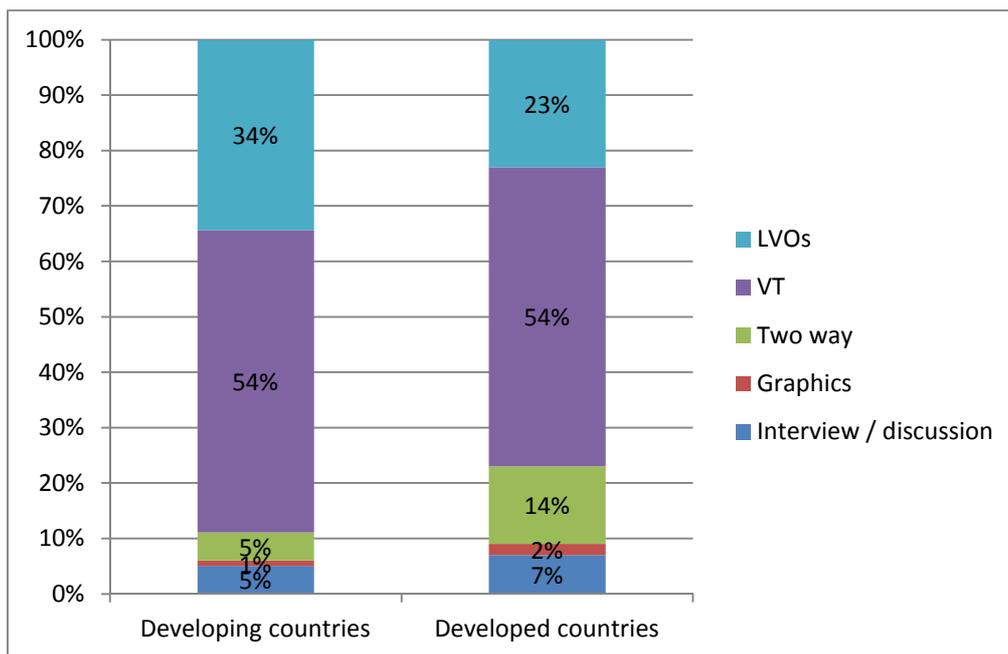
5.5.1.4 Options for emotion and action

In relation to appeals to options for emotion or action, or at least the basis upon which such appeals are made, all VT news items about developing countries in the two week sample

period were coded according to the principal form of narrative realism in the text. The results, given in Figure 5.3, show that the principal form of narrative realism of such VTs was perceptual (58%), just as in the examples of the BBC and Channel 4 News items above. Put another way, within the sample period, the reality of the lives and events which involve and relate to distant Others are told principally in terms of a reality of facts and not in terms of a reality based on the stirrings of emotions or commonsensical views about the world. Indeed, news texts which appealed principally to a categorical or ideological realism made up just 21% and 8% of VT news items respectively. As Chouliaraki herself predicts, 'evidently, the most conventional claim to reality pre-supposes a relationship of correspondence between what we hear and what we see on the screen... a form of perceptual realism' (2006:120).

Figure 5.3: Principal form of narrative realism of all VT news items about developing countries in the two week sample period
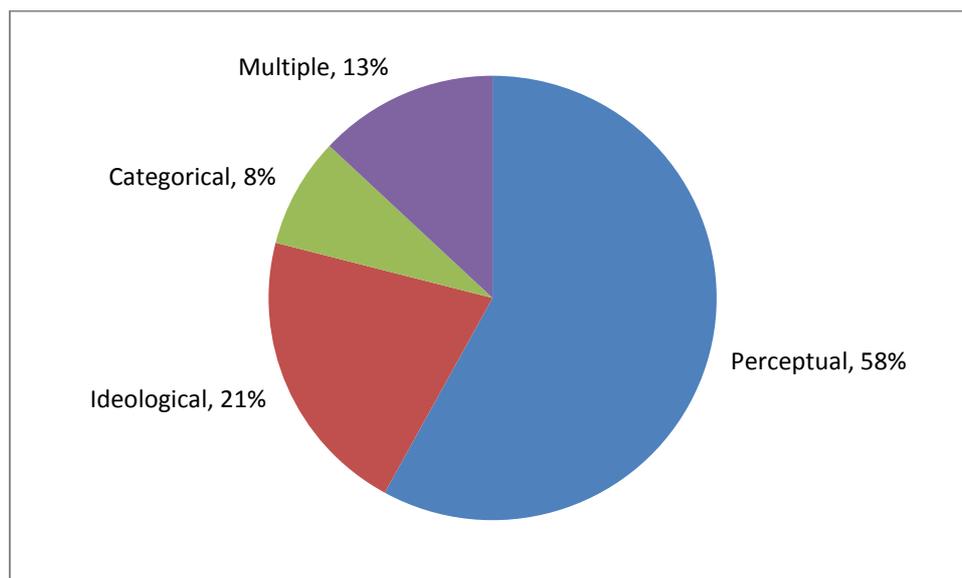
This is an important finding in itself for adding further detail to our understanding of how distant Others are mediated by television news. It is also interesting that, in most cases, symbolic meaning and ideological realism were produced, not in relation to demands for justice with regard to distant suffering, but with respect to a particular appeal to a 'commonsense' view of the world in which the elites of developing countries are authoritarian, corrupt and unchallengeable, as in the example of the BBC News item and the

LVOs about Venezuela. This was evident in news items about the 30 year anniversary of the Iranian revolution and a new President in the Maldives, for example.

However, these results do not, by themselves, enable us to make precise claims about the form(s) of response, or options for emotion and action, that television news texts routinely invite of spectators. The 'semiotic effect' of television texts depends on more than just the principal form of narrative realism. As Chouliaraki argues of the VT news items she analyses, 'the aesthetic quality is that of a... complicated semiotic product that is specific to each piece of news and entails various combinations of narrative and image' (2006:121).

Nevertheless, Chouliaraki also maintains that, 'these combinations show that there is complicity between the mise-en-scene of suffering and the public appeal of news' (2006:121). She further argues that, there is a systematic pattern to the ways in which the image and language of distant suffering combines and co-appears within television news texts such that different regimes of pity are built around certain combinations of verbal-visual correspondence (2006:74). In other words, there are different regimes of semiotic practice which construe the lives of distant Others as a meaningful spectacle with their own proposals for relating to the spectator (2006:70). I suggest, therefore, that while it may not be possible to make precise claims about the form of response that television news texts routinely invite of spectators, the dominance of one particular form of realism does at least allow us to suggest that responses will often be organised around a particular form. Specifically, the dominance of perceptual realism is linked to responses in the order of sublimation, or of a reflective contemplation on distant Others. Furthermore, since a reality of the heart and of ideology is far less evident in the texts in the sample we might also suggest that responses within the order of pamphleteering and philanthropy are relatively uncommon.

While we may suggest that reflective contemplation is one common response to distant Others amongst the texts in the sample, the results of the content analysis also allow us to speculate about others. The aesthetic quality of a text is determined, not only by the mode of presentation and verbal-visual correspondence, but also by the way in which the space-time and agency of distant Others is regulated. Since I have suggested that the texts within the sample routinely place spectators at a distance from dehumanised distant Others, it is

reasonable to posit that news texts frequently block any appeals to emotion or action, as in the case of the BBC News item about Zimbabwe, or transform such appeals into a sense of solitary enjoyment, as in the case of the Channel 4 News item about Afghanistan. In other words, even if there is a dominance of perceptual realism, any options for emotion or action which this may contribute to will be regularly blocked by the restriction of space-time and the lack of agency of distant Others – to the extent that spectators may engage, not with the circumstances of distant Others they encounter, but entirely with their own feelings, or even simply fail to respond in any way, through indifference.

It is worth remembering that these claims about the options for emotion and action which news texts within my sample routinely create, while not unreasonable, are based only on the results of a content analysis and involve a number of assumptions about how the aesthetic appeal of the texts in the sample is created. It may, therefore, be useful to treat them at this stage as hypotheses to be explored further using the results of the focus groups and diary study in chapter 7.

5.5.1.5 Summary of the nature of routine VT news coverage of distant Others

While the severe limitations of the results of the content analysis have been acknowledged, they do at least provide an indication of how the VT news items within the sample routinely position spectators in relation to distant Others. I tentatively conclude, therefore, that within the relatively small number of VT news items in the two week sample period (84), spectators were routinely offered the responses of indifference, solitary enjoyment and reflective contemplation (but not responses associated with pamphleteering or philanthropy) in relation to distant and dehumanised distant Others, just as was the case in the BBC News item about Zimbabwe and, to a lesser extent, the news item about Afghanistan. My analysis of the ITV News item is an important reminder that alternative forms of mediated experience of distant Others were also evident in my sample, though the results of my content analysis suggest that such examples were relatively uncommon.

5.5.2 Routine news coverage of distant Others: LVOs

The second point to be made about how television news texts routinely appear to position spectators in relation to distant Others relates to the analysis of the LVOs. Chouliaraki argues that in the LVOs she analyses events are presented as random and isolated, involving aggregated, annihilated distant Others and they fail to make any demand on spectators to respond to what they see (2006:98). From my analysis of thirteen LVOs during my two week sample period I also find it to be the case that these LVOs place spectators in a position of indifference towards entirely distant and dehumanised distant Others. The LVOs about events in Iraq, for example, draw entirely on descriptive verbal narratives which offer spectators no options for action or emotion. Events in Iraq are also placed within a singular space-time which renders events entirely isolated and distant from spectators; appearing only as random and part of a 'logic of appearances'. Finally, those suffering in Iraq are entirely dehumanised and in-active and thus rendered irrevocably 'Other', with the spectator being afforded no agency whatsoever in relation to their suffering.

These LVOs about Iraq are characteristic of most of the LVOs about developing countries over the two week sample period. Of the 52 LVOs in my sample, only one contains the voice of distant Others and only 3 include any explicit connection to the UK. Indeed, given these results, we might reasonably extend the argument a stage further and consider whether LVOs not only *routinely* mediate distant Others in this way, but whether they have the *capacity* to do anything else.

By definition, this format of news coverage consists of only one mode of presentation and is only 20 seconds long at most. In that time it is not possible to provide sufficient conceptual complexity to explain, elaborate on or evaluate events in such a way as to offer spectators a sense of agency, proximity or emotion/action in relation to distant Others. Indeed, I conclude from my analysis of the seven LVOs about events in Venezuela and China that, despite not always necessarily offering entirely singular-space times or entirely 'descriptive' verbal narratives, these LVOs still construct individuals in Venezuela and China as de-humanised, inactive Others with little or no proximity or options for emotion or action available to the spectator. While there may be some slight variation in the extent to which LVOs construct events as entirely isolated and random, for example, it is reasonable to suggest that they simply do not have the capacity to provide anything like the sort of

intense mediated experience of distant Others found in the ITV VT news item about Zimbabwe, for example.

It is significant, therefore, that the results of the content analysis of news coverage shows that LVOs constituted over one third of all news items about developing countries (35%) and were the only format used to cover 29% of the developing countries that appeared in the two week sample period (see Figure 5.2). It is also important to note that Figure 5.2 shows that news items about developing countries were 50% more likely to take the form of LVOs compared to news about developed countries. The point is that LVOs, as a format for presenting international news, have both an extremely limited capacity to provide spectators with an intense mediated experience of distant Others and form a relatively large part of overall news coverage of distant Others.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The principal aim of this thesis is to investigate how distant Others are mediated by television. The results discussed in this and the previous chapter contribute to this aim by examining the role of UK television news. They show that news items are one of the most common contexts in which distant Others appear to spectators of UK television but that the extent to which different parts of the world appear in television news constructs a hierarchy of place in which some distant Others appear far more often than others. Indeed, there are some parts of the world in which distant Others hardly ever appear in the news. When distant Others do appear in the news, much of the coverage of them is in the form of LVOs. It has been argued in this chapter that the LVOs in my sample not only routinely offer spectators a position of indifference in relation to distant and dehumanised distant Others but that they have little capacity to do anything else. The most common news format in which distant Others appear is the VT package. It has been argued that the VTs in my sample routinely offer spectators a position of either indifference, solitary enjoyment or reflective contemplation. They also appear to routinely position spectators at a distance from dehumanised distant Others and do not invite them to consider the relationship between their respective life-worlds or to consider that they have agency in relation to distant Others. While it has also been shown that VT news items have the capacity to offer

spectators responses in the order of philanthropy in relation to proximate and humanised distant Others, the results of the content analysis have helped to demonstrate that such instances were uncommon.

I hope to have demonstrated in this chapter that it is possible, with the support of the results of a content analysis, to use the analytics of mediation to make claims, albeit rather tentative ones involving a number of important qualifications, about how distant Others are routinely mediated by television news, as was my ambition. However, the level of detail required in applying the analytics of mediation meant that only a relatively small number of news items could be analysed in detail. Furthermore, despite a number of pilot studies, it was not possible to develop codes that would give a reliable indication of numerous aspects of mediation, including, the orchestration of the persecutor and benefactor figures, any dimension of agency of distant Others other than whether they spoke, the mode of presentation (except to record the format of the programme) or the aesthetic quality. As a result, the claims made about how distant Others are routinely mediated by television news are more speculative than I would have liked. A study of the role of audiences in the process of mediation is, therefore, useful for investigating further the claims presented here regarding the routine ways in spectators encounter distant Others through television news. Before seeking to do this in Chapter 7, however, I first turn my attention to another of the aims of this thesis – to investigate how distant Others are mediated by *non-news* television texts.

Chapter 6: The Mediation of distant Others in Non-News Television Genres

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Having discussed the ways in which distant Others are routinely mediated by television news texts, the focus now turns to establishing the ways in which distant Others are mediated in non-news television genres. Specifically, by applying the analytics of mediation to three examples of factual programming the aim in this chapter is to investigate the capacity of the most common forms of non-news television programming to manage spectators' experiences of distant Others.

Firstly, an analysis of the serious factual documentary *Rageh Inside Iran* shows how this programme affords spectators multiple options for emotion and action in relation to humanised and proximate distant Others. This particular programme was chosen for analysis because it helps to illustrate the capacity of non-news programmes to provide intense mediated experiences of distant Others. This example also illustrates the ways in which serious factual programming differs from news programming.

Secondly, an analysis of *Who Killed Scarlett?* - another serious factual documentary - shows that this text offers spectators only the response of indifference towards distant and dehumanised, distant Others. This particular programme was chosen for analysis because, alongside *Rageh Inside Iran,* it helps to illustrate the *range* of ways in which serious factual programming manages spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others.

Finally, an analysis of *The World's Strictest Parents* shows how this factual entertainment programme has the potential to offer spectators both feelings associated with philanthropy towards distant Others, not as victims, but as benefactors, but also that it may result in solitary enjoyment. I also argue that this programme invites spectators to consider the connections between their life-world and that of distant Others. This particular programme was chosen because the experience of watching a sample of texts within this sub-genre suggests that it is illustrative of how some reality-television formats set in Other countries might lend themselves to providing certain kinds of mediated experience of distant Others.

I conclude that, despite the value of the results discussed in this chapter, unless they are complemented with an analysis of the role of spectators in the process of mediation, they remain rather speculative and held together by a set of largely untested assumptions.

6.1 *RAGEH INSIDE IRAN*

6.1.1 Multi-modality

6.1.1.1 Mode of presentation

Rageh Inside Iran is a 90 minute serious factual documentary shown on BBC4 on Saturday 8th February 2009 in which the Somali-British television news presenter and writer Rageh Omaar reports on his experiences of the people he meets and places he sees in the city of Tehran during a one month visit. Visually, this documentary is situated entirely in Tehran with footage consisting largely of Rageh Omar's experiences and meetings with various friends and other people he encounters as he explores the city. The verbal dimension is largely composed of the numerous conversations Rageh has with individuals and his pieces to camera. Rageh provides some narration to events, accompanied by iconic visual images as well as a soundtrack of mixed Persian classical, rock and pop music. While a conventional news broadcast provides a collection of single, finite and usually unrelated pieces of news (Chouliaraki 2006:156), conventional television documentaries, such as this, provide a constant flow of images and verbal narratives. Rather than appealing principally to any one 'semiotic effect', this potentially enables the spectator to engage in multiple forms of emotion and action, as is discussed below.

6.1.1.2 Verbal-visual correspondence

An appeal to a reality of facts, based on the apparent truth of what we see and hear, was certainly evident in much of this programme through descriptive language and indexical images. For example, Rageh's pieces to camera often included statistical information to support the claims he made about Iran.

1 in 7 Iranians lives below the poverty line

Iran has the fourth largest blogging community in the world.

Similarly, there are five separate occasions in this programme, each lasting at least five minutes, in which the narrative clearly moves from following Rageh's experiences to describing a particular aspect of Iranian society, such as the role of religion or the impact of the Iran-Iraq war. In these instances, a perceptual realism is clearly dominant since the spectator is provided with factual and seemingly 'objective' descriptions, as is evident in the following quotation in which Rageh's voiceover explains the nature of Shia Islam.

Shia regimes are rare, in fact, Iran is the only one in the world. Shia's differ from Sunni Muslims in many ways, not least in their worship of martyrs which Sunnis consider idolatry. But for Shia's the shrines of their martyrs from 1400 years ago are as central to everyday life as the bizarre itself.

As a documentary following a fairly conventional mode of presentation, the visual elements were often indexical, meaning that they simply provided evidence of the experiences of Rageh. In-so-doing they supported appeals to the 'this is how it is' claim to reality often evident in the verbal.

Despite the apparent dominance of a perceptual realism in many instances, establishing the dominant form of narrative realism across the entire programme is problematic because the majority of the scenes consisted of a verbal-visual correspondence in which indexical meaning was inter-twined with iconic meaning. For example, when reporting on the state of the traffic in the city, an appeal to perceptual realism, through the use of a statistic about the number of people killed each year, was combined with an appeal to categorical realism. This appeal to categorical realism was evident, not only in the choice of emotive words such as 'exhilarating', 'terrifying' and 'suicidal' but also in the fact that Rageh is walking across eight lanes of busy traffic whilst talking to the camera. On several occasions he narrowly avoids getting hit by a car, adding a sense of drama to the scene.

I was meeting someone at Seventh Tier square in the commercial district and it was rush hour in the country with the worst record for road deaths in the world. Twenty eight thousand people are killed every year. Now there's one thing that you will

simply not be able to avoid when you are in Tehran and that's this. It looks suicidal but it is just a fact of daily life, young or old, Iranian or foreigner, it's just something you have to do and truth be told it is absolutely terrifying but there's a small part of it which is sort of exhilarating.

Similarly, in the opening sequences of this documentary, Rageh describes Tehran, both in terms of facts, such as having 'a population of twelve million', but also by drawing on more emotive language. For example, he describes Tehran as being a 'vibrant and exciting city' which he 'likes' and which has 'an energy and a vitality… that is completely different to the images that we usually have of it'.

A strong appeal to a reality of emotions was evident, not just in the use of emotive language but also in the narrative proper of the documentary. This programme was organised around a strong central narrative which moved chronologically through a series of events in which the experiences Rageh encountered in one scene led him to the next. Apart from two pre-organised meetings with 'old friends' early on in Rageh's stay, many of the events and experiences Rageh encounters are presented as happening surreptitiously. For example, whilst heading back to his hotel, Rageh encounters an apparently spontaneous demonstration, in which he has a chance encounter with a former colleague. This colleague later introduces him to a number of business women who help him to write an article he was asked to write as a result of a previous chance encounter with a local magazine editor. The surreptitious nature of Rageh's experiences creates a sense that the narrative is un-scripted and unpredictable, which creates a more compelling, emotionally engaging narrative.

The narrative is also made compelling by the creation of moments of danger, suspense, joy and sadness in the narrative. For example, whilst being driven in a taxi, the camera shows a near collision with another car and is accompanied by the following conversation which has both elements of suspense and humour.

> **Rageh**: He's about to hit this guy! Seriously, on the right! Has he ever had accidents in this kind of area?!
>
> **Taxi Driver:** 'Accidents? Yes, loads, as many as you like!' (Subtitles)

Significantly, appeals to categorical realism in this documentary were not produced through iconic imagery, which Chouliaraki suggests is the case for news coverage of distant suffering.

A strong appeal to ideological realism was also evident in this documentary in the use of exposition and in the use of particular mundane, or what might be termed, 'un-iconic', images. The principal aim of this documentary, as stated by Rageh on several occasions, was to enable the spectator to 'see... Iranian society... in a completely different way'. Rageh claims that Tehran is 'one of the least understood cities in the world' and implies on several occasions that the Western media is responsible for providing 'us' with incomplete and inaccurate perceptions about Iranian society.

> What do we really know about the Islam Republic of Iran aside from a Cold War rhetoric of politicians from both sides, each accusing the other of evil? I know it has to be more complex than this... When I wasn't compiling my two minute TV news reports, there was something else about being in Tehran that got under my skin.

The thought that spectators in the West are misinformed about the 'true' nature of Iranian society was the principal appeal to a sense of justice in this programme. It was also evident in a number of comments from other individuals who spoke, including a professional Iranian photojournalist and a student interviewed in a shopping mall, who made the following two comments respectively.

> I just wanted to show to people in foreign countries that Iran is not as dark as they think. Especially the women issues.

> BBC channel, they just come to Tehran and film the demonstrations and burning flags and then the whole world will see it and then they will have the idea that Iran is like that. But it is not like that.

What was striking about the iconic, abstracted images used in this documentary was not that they related to any particular ideology, or taken-for-granted understanding Iranian society, but that they did not. Those images which accompanied the voiceover were images of the apparent mundane 'reality' of everyday life in Tehran such as Iranians buying tickets on the underground, talking on mobile phones or clamouring to get the autograph of a celebrity. Rather than appealing to any particular dominant understanding of Iranian

society, these 'un-iconic' images of mundane reality actively appear to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about Iranian society as being different from the UK and in doing so they added to the thought, evident in the verbal dimension, that spectators in the West are misinformed about the 'true' nature of Iranian society.

6.1.1.3 Aesthetic quality

On occasions when perceptual realism dominates and is interwoven with categorical realism, *Rageh Inside Iran* appears to adopt the aesthetic quality of what Chouliaraki refers to as the 'testimonial documentary' (2006:164). She uses this term to refer to texts which bring together both 'subjective and objective witness perspectives in one narrative... The spectator is both called to consume images of raw reality, recorded by technology, and invited to engage with the deep feelings and thoughts of the person who witnesses' (2006:164). Chouliaraki argues that the text she analyses with the aesthetic quality of 'testimonial documentary' evokes *empathy* in relation to suffering. However, I suggest that this is not the case for *Rageh Inside Iran* because it is not principally focussed on any one particular instance of suffering but multiple instances of suffering and non-suffering, as I now explain.

Since *Rageh Inside Iran* is, unlike most news texts, concerned with many different events and conditions, the figures of the victim, benefactor and persecutor are constantly shifting. There are, for example, several possible candidates for the position of benefactor including Ayatollah Khomeini, the 'Bazzarri' and Rageh Omar himself, each of whom could be said to be responsible for, or have the capacity improve, the condition of different corresponding 'victims' (though not always 'sufferers') at various times. Similarly, although there is one obvious persecutor figure in the text (the Western media) and a corresponding victim (the Western public who have been misinformed by this media), these figures are only invoked at the beginning and end of the documentary and on three occasions during the ninety minute programme. There are also various other possible candidates for the position of persecutor who appear at different occasions throughout the documentary, including, 'the USA, Britain and France', Iraq, 'clerics', and 'the Iranian government'. As was suggested in Chapter 3, this proliferation of persecutor and benefactor figures and associated victims,

combined with their infrequent appearance, limits any responses associated with pamphleteering or philanthropy because there is insufficient consensus over who to feel indignation or tender-heartedness towards.

But whilst spectators may engage to only a limited degree in responses associated with pamphleteering or philanthropy, particularly on occasions where the 'victims' are shown to have power over their own condition (as I discuss below), this does not necessarily mean that they cannot feel for them in other ways. Emotional responses to distant Others, as I argued earlier, should not be confined only to different forms of pity. The presence of a compelling narrative and strong sense of ideological realism renders it likely that spectators would respond to these relatively humanised and proximate distant Others with respect or perhaps even admiration. This is particularly likely given their role in helping Rageh and the spectator to challenge the persecutor of the Western media and for having the capacity to overcoming suffering themselves.

Furthermore, I argue that the dominance of perceptual realism combined with specific iconic and symbolic meaning may invite spectators to reflect upon the various appeals to a sense of justice or universal values in the text – such as the thought that spectators are misinformed about the 'true' nature of Iranian society or that British imperialism is implicated in the condition of the people of Iran. Given these topics and the mobility of the text, this reflective contemplation may also stray into solitary enjoyment whereby spectators dwell instead on how this makes them feel about themselves. Appeals to such responses associated with sublimation and solitary enjoyment are enhanced by the considerable degree of mobility in the text and the humanisation of distant Others.

6.1.2 Space-time

6.1.2.1 Concreteness, multiplicity and specificity

The events narrated in this documentary take place in a space-time that is *concrete* and *multiple.* Spectators are visually shown a great many 'real' spaces, both public and private, which distant Others inhabit, such as 'the largest cemetery in Tehran', a wrestling club, two different street protests, a hospital and a recording studio, the opening of a new road, the

home of Rageh's taxi driver and several mosques, shops, cafes, offices, streets and parks. Furthermore, these multiple spaces span a number of times, from the period internal to Rageh's stay in Tehran, to times outside of this (evident in archival video footage of the Iran-Iraq war and references, at the end of the documentary, to what subsequently happened to the various individuals Rageh meets).

These space-times which distant Others in Tehran inhabit, are rendered *specific* by the multiple references to specific times, and particularly, the precise locations of the spaces in which events are shown to take place. Whenever the spectator is introduced to a new space, for example, Rageh almost always describes its location in relation to other spaces.

> My hotel is in the centre of Tehran between Valiasr Street and Palestine Square and within walking distance of my first port of call.

> I've just veered off Valiasr Street and I'm in this neighbourhood called Jumhareer, which is supposedly a middle class district right in the centre of town.

> From Trehada station by the cemetery it's a 40 minute train journey under the city to Mirdamad station in the north. According to Ali Razor it's the hub of the music business here.

As the last two quotations illustrate, spaces are also rendered specific by the way in which they are characterised, either by the nature of their occupants or by their characteristic industries. The frequent verbal references to specific spaces are also supported visually by the regular use of a map-graphic in which spectators are led visually from one part of the map of Tehran to another whenever there is a change of location.

The spatio-temporality of Tehran is also rendered specific by the *individualisation* of a number of different actors. The spectator is told the name of almost every individual Rageh encounters, even many of those who only appear briefly, such as a young wrestler, a waitress, a journalist and a protestor. Since the stated purpose of this documentary is to 'discover from ordinary Iranian, what it's really like to live, work and worship in [Tehran]', individual Iranians are also frequently given the chance to tell lengthy and often emotive stories about their lives. For example, in one scene a music journalist tells Rageh about the

details of his experiences in the Iran-Iraq war and in so doing reveals very specific, personal details about himself, rendering him entirely unique and individualised.

> When I was fourteen I left the house and went to war. ...I was an angry... I hated my father, I wanted to go away and not see him so I just went to war and asked for a gun. They teached me how to shoot and gave me gun but they didn't send me to front... My job was to collect the soldiers, dead bodies, and bring them back. I was there for four months... Somebody needed to collect them. The war made me the person who I am now, I hate killing people, I hate action movies I hate all the violence surrounding the war, I love peace, and most importantly, I found music. After war I was so depressed and two or three years later music helped me to find myself.

This degree of multiplicity and high degree of specificity is significant because it constructs Tehran as a place with a high degree of internal complexity, or as a city which consists of a vast and complex array of unique spaces populated by unique individuals. This complexity is important because it helps to construct the space-times which the people of Tehran inhabit as being similar to those of the spectator, which also contributes to the construction of distant Others in Tehran as less 'other' (Chouliaraki 2006:88).

6.1.2.2 Logic of causality

The multiple and specific nature of this documentary also allows this text to appeal to a logic of causality rather than a logic of appearances. Throughout the documentary, different ways are found of explaining the small-scale events and experiences which Rageh encounters in terms of the wider socio-political and economic contexts. For example, Rageh weaves an explanation of the attitudes of a resident of the Giuam district of Tehran, whom he has just spoken to, with an explanation of the popularity of President Ahmadinejad:

> Giuam is one of the oldest working class districts in south Tehran. People here are conservative in their outlook and unshakable in their faith but they are also poor. They voted for President Ahmadinejad because he promised them an end to

corruption and a greater share in the oil wealth of this country. But they are still waiting. 1 in 7 Iranians lives below the poverty line on less than a dollar day.

Even Rageh's capacity to produce the film, we are told, was only possible 'after more than a year of bureaucratic wrangling'.

On many occasions, Rageh uses the nature of the concrete spaces he encounters as a means of drawing on a 'logic of causality' to explain the social, political and economic dimensions of Iranian society. For example, in the following quotation, Rageh draws on the location of a shrine through which he is walking to explain recent regime changes in Iran.

> It is pretty unusual to find such a significant shrine as this in the middle of a huge bizarre but that you should do so in Tehran is no accident because traditionally the world of the clergy and the commercial world of the bizarre have enjoyed an intimate and powerful relationship that in modern history has been able to make and break governments.

6.1.2.3 Zones of safety and danger

Even though this documentary is not principally about suffering, the concepts of a 'logic of causality' and a 'logic of appearances' remain useful for helping to identify the way in which causality is explained in this documentary. However, the concepts of zones of 'safety' and 'danger' do not appear to be as appropriate. Chouliaraki makes a distinction between 'zones of safety' and 'zones of danger' to draw attention to the way in which television reflects and consolidates the asymmetry of power between the 'comfort of spectators in their living rooms and the vulnerability of suffers on the spectator's television screens' (2006:4). While the distinction between zones of safety and zones of danger may be a considered a 'fundamental aspect of... the viewing relationships of television' (Chouliaraki 2006:4) within the framework of the politics of pity (because pity requires a clear distinction between the fortunate and unfortunate (Boltanski 1999:2)), when we depart from the framework of the politics of pity, this distinction is less meaningful. Since *Rageh Inside Iran* is not principally concerned with suffering, or any topic involving victims en masse, there is no clear

construction of 'threat' which we might use to identify zones of 'safety' or 'danger' nor is there a clear asymmetry of power between spectators and distant Others.

However, the more general thought that different spaces are constructed differently and that paying attention to the interaction between these different spaces can reveal meaningful insights into the process of mediation, does remain relevant. In *Rageh Inside Iran*, a clear difference is constructed between North and South Tehran, as is evident in the following quotations.

> In the south, men in particular, are reluctant to embrace change.

> Women are revered, particularly in the south of the city.

In particular, the distinction between the North and South is constructed in economic terms. Whereas the people in the south are frequently described as 'poor, working class', the residents of Northern Tehran are described as leading 'luxurious lives'. As Rageh describes one community in the north, 'this community has more plastic surgery than Los Angeles. If it wasn't for the Hijab, this could be LA'. Distinguishing between these two 'zones' helps to further reveal the ways in which Tehran is constructed as having an internally complex space-time. Rageh also implies on a number of occasions that the tension that exists between these two 'zones' is symptomatic of the wider tensions that exist in Iranian society, between rich and poor, conservative and liberal and between religious and secular.

6.1.2.4 Mobility

The programme also offers space-time relations that are *mobile* because there are a number of ways in which the space-time of the people in Tehran is connected to that of spectators. Firstly, when explaining events as part of a 'logic of experiences' reference is often made to Britain's role in Iranian history, such as with regards to its support for Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. When describing the taxis in Tehran, for example, Rageh refers them as 'bequeathed to Iran from the time of British influence'. Secondly, comparisons are often made between British and Iranian culture; for example, an Iranian journalist precedes his explanation of the difficulties of releasing an album in Iran by saying, 'it's not like England'.

Similarly, when Rageh talks of the high regard Iranians generally have for literacy he says that 'the literacy rate [in Iran] is over 90%; comparable to Britain's'. Thirdly, the presence of Rageh himself and the focus on this well known Somali-British journalist throughout the film establishes a 'bridge' between Britain and Iran. Rageh Omar became a well known journalist during his time as a journalist for the BBC, particularly for his reporting on the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, this text can be considered mobile for the way in which it addresses a number of issues which might be regarded as common to all humanity. With its focus on 'the lives of ordinary Iranians', this documentary focuses on issues such as people's 'love' of shopping, frustration with traffic jams and love of music and television. Furthermore, the narrative accompanying such issues often explicitly draws attention to their apparent universal nature. In the following quotation, for example, the resistance of Iranian women to wearing a regulation length Jilbab is explained by the narrator as stemming from a universal tendency amongst all young people to reject uniforms.

> Young people everywhere, when faced with a uniform, invariably want it shorter and tighter.

6.1.3 Agency

In this documentary, the people of Iran are afforded agency in a number of ways. Firstly, they are afforded agency en masse in almost all accounts of major social or political changes in Iran. For example, the Iranian people, and particularly those in South Tehran, are constructed as being central to the election of President Ahmadinajad;

> They voted for President Ahmadinejad because he promised them an end to corruption and a greater share in the oil wealth of this country.

This makes an interesting comparison with the news reports of the passing of a referendum in Venezuela, discussed in the previous chapter, in which the role of the people was entirely marginalised.

Similarly, agency is afforded to specific groups in society, such as the 'Bazzari', the wrestlers, and particularly the students, who are described on one occasion as being, 'at the heart of the Islamic revolution in 1979 and the pro-reform movement the followed in the 1990s'. The thought that the people of Iran have the capacity to control events in their own lives remains even to the end when Rageh concludes the programme by saying that, 'Iranians have a deep love of their country, and they believe that if there is to be change here, it'll be done by them, and them alone'.

The affordance of agency to the people of Iran en masse is accompanied by the affordance of agency to many of the individuals Rageh (and the spectator) encounters. For example, after being told about the scale of the problem of drug addiction in Iran, we hear how Rageh's taxi driver was 'addicted to drugs for 24 years', but that he 'decided to quit fourteen months ago and did it'. Similar stories of individual agency are told by a number of successful business women, charity workers and journalists.

It is also worth noting that, in contrast to all other texts reviewed in this thesis, when distant Others speak in a different language, their words are not cut nor paraphrased by a voiceover but are instead simply listened to by Rageh and the spectator and translated by an on-screen translator in real-time after they have spoken. Thus, not only do they have agency in the form of speech, they also have sufficient agency to compel us to listen to them in their own language.

Significantly, in these accounts, the people of Iran are afforded agency principally in the role of humanised distant Others rather than as 'victims'. In other words, they are both shown to be able to act upon their own condition and shown to be more than simply people who suffer. As a result, in many instances the text does not place any demand on the spectator to take action or feel agency in relation to distant Others but to recognise the common humanity between them, as I argued in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, not only are the people of Iran afforded agency as distant Others, but they are also, on occasion, placed in the role of benefactor. For example, when the spectator is placed in the position of the 'victim' of distorted media portrayals of Iran, it is the people of Iran who enable Rageh to challenge this portrayal by enabling him to, 'discover... what it's really like to live, work and worship in [Tehran]'. In-so-doing they assume the role of

benefactor. Similarly, although Rageh is not constructed as a victim, the people of Iran do variously assist him by guiding him around the city and even by throwing him a birthday party on his last day in Tehran, which further supports their role as benefactors. Chouliaraki describes occasions in which the role of distant Other coincides with the role of benefactor as constituting a form of sovereign agency which renders distant Others thoroughly humanised beings (2006:158). Further examples of the way in which distant Others are afforded sovereign agency can be found in the number of occasions in which they are shown to have the capacity to reflect in detail upon the causes of their condition, apparent above in the way in examples of a logic of causality. Thus, while spectators may not feel agency in relation to distant Others, they are invited to regard them as humanised, fellow human beings.

6.1.4 Summary and discussion

Applying the analytics of mediation to *Rageh Inside Iran* reveals that it appeals to a number of options for emotion and action in relation to various different actors. Space-time is constructed as intensely complex, positioning spectators close to distant Others and able to consider the connections between their different life-worlds. Distant Others are themselves frequently rendered thoroughly humanised beings through the affordance of significant degrees of agency, not only over their own condition but also in relation to the condition of Rageh Omar. Finally, I have suggested that there are also occasions where distant Others are both thoroughly humanised and not suffering, and in which the spectator is not invited to take action in relation to them or feel agency towards them but simply to understand them as fellow human beings.

This analysis of *Rageh Inside Iran* helps to illustrate the ways in which serious factual programming differs from news programming with regards to its capacity to provide an intense mediated experience of distant Others. Rather than appealing principally to any one 'semiotic effect', as the news texts I analysed were found to do, the capacity to focus on multiple instances of suffering and non-suffering of serious factual programmes affords them far greater capacity to appeal to multiple responses. The length of this particular documentary also means it has the capacity to present distant Others as possessing a

greater degree of agency than is possible in a two minute news text, for example. Indeed, distant Others in this programme were rendered so active that the forms of agency of 'gaze', 'condition' and 'motion' used for discussing agency in most news texts, proved insufficient for capturing the full extent of their agency. Instead, the concept of 'sovereign agency' proved most useful. Finally, the length and complex narratives of *Rageh Inside Iran* also allowed for a construction of space-time that was far more complex and mobile than any of the news items analysed in the previous chapter. As Ignatieff suggests,

> The best documentaries... force the spectator to see, to shed the carapace of cliché and to encounter alien worlds in all their mystery and complexity. There is almost never an occasion when the time formats of news bulletins allow even the best journalists to do the same (1998:32).

Put simply, this analysis suggests that serious factual programming has greater capacity than routine news coverage for appealing to multiple forms of action, for placing distant Others in a space-time of greater complexity and for humanising distant Others.

6.2 *WHO KILLED SCARLETT?*

6.2.1 Multi-modality

6.2.1.1 Mode of presentation

Who Killed Scarlett? is a sixty minute serious factual documentary broadcast on Channel 4 on Thursday, 12th February 2009, which follows Fiona MacKeown for one year during her 'campaign to find out the truth about her daughter's death and her fight to bring those responsible for her murder to justice'. Fiona MacKeown is the mother of Scarlett Keeling, a 15 year old British girl who died in Goa, India, on 18 February 2008. The verbal dimension of this documentary consists largely of the words of the mother either during her experiences, such as receiving phone calls and talking to the police, or reflecting on them afterwards. There is also a female voiceover who narrates events and a male producer or cameraman who is occasionally heard asking Fiona questions. The video footage consists almost entirely of footage of Fiona MacKeown either in Goa or in her home in Devon. I take the mode of

presentation of this programme to appeals to a perceptual realism because its principal function is to relay events-as-facts to the spectator.

6.2.1.2 Verbal-visual correspondence

A dominance of indexical meaning in the verbal and visual dimensions of the text reinforces appeals to a reality of facts in *Who Killed Scarlett?*. Indexical meaning is produced verbally, not through a reliance of statistics or facts, as is evident in other texts analysed in this thesis, but through a reliance on descriptions of events by both the voiceover and by Fiona MacKeown. In the opening sequence, for example, the voiceover describes how,

> Scarlett met Julio Lobo, a 25 year old tour guide. Julio quickly befriended the family and Scarlett soon started helping out in Julio's business.

Similarly, Fiona MacKeown spends much of the time describing events;

> I just said to him, 'just tell me that she's alive' and he said, 'I can't'... I slammed the phone down and he rang back and he said, 'you can kill me if you like, it's not a motorbike accident, she's been found murdered on a beach'.

Visually, this indexical meaning is evident in the use of video footage to illustrate the events being described, such as particular locations and individuals. There are very few visuals associated with abstraction, which might appeal to an iconic or symbolic meaning.

The second major form of narrative realism evident in *Who Killed Scarlett?* is categorical realism which is produced both through conventions of narrative proper and through the use of emotive language. The principal narrative of this documentary is the experiences of Fiona MacKeown during the course of a year and there are several dimensions of this narrative which made it particularly compelling. Throughout the documentary, deliberate moments of suspense and tension are created by the voiceover, by hinting at the nature of forthcoming events, for example, as in the two quotations below.

> Fiona believes that returning to India will re-ignite her campaign to get justice for Scarlett. But it's going to be far harder than she imagines.

She's about to get a step closer to the truth but what she discovers will bring her little comfort.

The use of particular verbs by the voiceover also, on occasion, serves to reinforce a sense of tension and suspense. For example, the use of the words 'exploded' and 'haunted' in the quotations below is characteristic of apparent attempts to add a sense of drama to the narrative.

When Fiona released the photos to the press the story exploded.

But as the year ends, she is left haunted by the decision she made.

Despite the dominance of perceptual and categorical realism, there was also some evidence of ideological realism in this documentary in which various elements of the Indian state and civil society were constructed as being remarkably corrupt, ineffective and even implicated in Scarlett's murder. This not only constructed clear persecutor figures but also appealed to a 'universal' sense of justice because it was preventing the mother from finding out the 'truth' about her daughter's death. Judgements about the police in particular were revealed in the use of words by the voiceover to discredit them and cast doubt upon their authority. When Fiona first identified Scarlett's body, for example, the voiceover chooses to describe her as being 'flanked' by three policemen, rather than as being 'accompanied' or 'escorted'. In this case, the use of the word 'flanked' implies a controlling and threatening action on behalf of the police. Similarly, the version of events given by the police is described as a 'story', which invites the spectator to question its credibility. The use of the phrase, 'so neatly' to describe the similarities between the first autopsy and the police's 'story' in the following quotation adds further support to the thought that the police can not be trusted.

Two weeks after the arrest, neither of the two men in custody has been formally charged. Questions remain about why the police lied about Scarlett's death, why the first autopsy so neatly supported the police's story of accidental drowning, and why the crime scene, where Scarlett spent her last hours, has been mysteriously removed, leaving just a few wooden stumps. These unanswered questions have led to allegations of a cover up.

Judgements about the Indian state were also evident in the explicit statements made about them by both the mother and the voiceover. For example, the voiceover makes direct references to a police 'cover up' and later refers to the 'police function' in India as 'inadequate'. Similarly, Fiona says that she has, 'no doubt that many people [in the Indian police] have been paid to keep it quiet for various reasons'.

6.2.1.3 Aesthetic quality

The dominance of a single descriptive narrative about the suffering of a particular individualized person, made intelligible through indexical verbal-visual correspondence, invites the spectator to respond at least partly through sublimation. However, this position of reflective contemplation is oriented, not towards distant Others, but towards Fiona MacKeown to whom the indexical meaning relates. In other words, it is Fiona MacKeown's experiences and condition which the narrative describes and which the visuals provide evidence of, and thus I suggest that it is upon her experiences and condition which the spectator is invited to reflect.

Similarly, the affective potential of the text is also principally organised around Fiona MacKeown and not distant Others. Any tender-heartedness which the categorical realism might contribute towards will be directed towards Fiona MacKeown because she is constructed as both the principal benefactor figure and a victim. In the first instance, she is the actor shown caring for and 'prepared to do [anything] to get justice for' the only other 'victim' (in this case, her daughter Scarlett Keeling). It is therefore towards her that the spectator's emotions of tender-heartedness are directed because she is the figure who cares for the victim. In the second instance, Fiona MacKeown is herself constructed as a victim because she has to 'fight the accusation that she is an unfit mother'. On no occasion is the spectator invited to consider the assertion that she might fit the role of a persecutor figure. Instead, the spectator is encouraged only to feel tender-heartedness towards her as a result of these accusations. Indeed, the spectator is told she cannot return to Goa to seek justice because she is 'facing the threat of prosecution'.

Interestingly, the only other potential benefactor figure shown to comfort the suffering of Fiona MacKeown is a British ex-pat living on the seafront in Anduna beach, who Fiona briefly and apparently serendipitously encounters in one scene. She is depicted comforting and consoling Fiona by saying, 'my youngest daughter, she has a temple for Scarlett in her room it's quite beautiful. And often I come out and say a prayer'. Fiona MacKeown's Indian Lawyer and the CBI ('the equivalent of the FBI in India'), whom she persistently attempts to persuade to take the case, both appear to be ideal candidates to be placed in the position of the benefactor, but neither are. In the sixty minute programme the one single indication that an Indian 'Other' might adopt the role of benefactor is in a seven second clip of an Indian journalist who can faintly be heard telling Fiona that the women of India support her.

In relation to the way in which this text organizes the spectator's potential around pamphleteering, there are several persecutor figures which spectators might be invited to denounce. These include the Indian charity demanding Fiona be prosecuted for neglect, the inspector of police who obstructs Fiona's search for justice and 'shouts [at her] down the phone', an Indian television station who 'turn the tables on her' during an interview and the 'dangerous enemies' Fiona has made who threaten to kill her and 'the people involved in Scarlett's death'. Since there are a number of possible candidates, since no one of these figures are consistently situated in the role of the persecutor and since they are all constructed as Indian 'Others', one might reasonably conclude that the people and institutions of India in general, are positioned in the role of the persecutor. The persecutor is not an individual person but a generic category (Chouliaraki 2006:165), which in this case is the people and institutions of India who work against Fiona and towards which denunciation is directed.

In summary, while spectators are offered a number of options for action and emotion, these are principally organised around the figure of Fiona MacKeown rather than distant Others. The spectator's only response to distant Others is likely to be one of either indifference since they are neither 'victims' nor benefactors (nor are they humanised or proximate), or perhaps some degree of pamphleteering since they are evoked as the principal persecutor figure in relation to a fully humanised victim.

6.2.2 Space-time

6.2.2.1 Concrete, multiple and specific

The events narrated in *Who Killed Scarlett?* take place in a space-time that is *concrete* and *multiple* though not intensely so, as was the case for *Rageh Inside Iran*. While the spectator is visually shown a number of different concrete spaces in Goa, these serve largely as a background to the action and are rarely rendered specific. Apart from visiting Anduna beach on two separate occasions, the other scenes in Goa in which events are narrated appear largely as un-named, generic spaces which are not described by the narrator and which Fiona and the spectator simply pass through. Such spaces include beaches, cars, hotel rooms and government buildings. By contrast, the principal space in the UK, Fiona's home in Devon, is rendered specific by the descriptions and naming of the space by the narrator and the details which Fiona gives of the various areas of the land she lives on.

There is also some degree of specificity in the temporality of the documentary. As part of the narrative, the spectator is frequently given precise details of dates and times in which events take place and of time elapsed between events.

> Its two months since Scarlett died.

> Fiona has been back in Devon for two weeks.

However, as these quotations help to illustrate, this temporal specificity relates largely to Fiona's experiences or Scarlett's death and not to the space-time in which distant Others inhabit. Similarly, the only strong evidence of individualisation in *Who Killed Scarlett?* is in relation to Fiona, who the spectator sees in multiple, public and private contexts and who tells the spectator about, amongst other things, her family, her past relationships, her religious beliefs and principally the death of her daughter.

The only two distant Others living in India who are afforded any degree of individualisation are Vikram Varma, Fiona's lawyer, and Julio Lobo, the 25 year old tour guide who was looking after Scarlett Keeling when she died. Although Julio Lobo is a central actor of the narrative, the spectator sees nothing more than a small number of photographs of him and hears no details about him other than a description of his alleged involvement in the

incident. While Vikram Varma is given a slightly greater degree of individualisation by his presence and speech in a number of scenes, the spectator still knows nothing of his background, relationship with Fiona or any other dimension of his life which might render him unique.

6.2.2.2 Mobility

On first appearances, the space-time in this documentary might be interpreted as being relatively mobile since it follows the experiences of a British woman as she travels between Goa and Devon. However, I argue that the space-time of *Who Killed Scarlett?* is not significantly mobile and, indeed, that it is *less* mobile than that of *Rageh Inside Iran*, a documentary set entirely in a foreign country. Although Fiona MacKeown may travel between the country most spectators inhabit and a country inhabited by distant Others, she rarely talks to any people in India, except her lawyer, several journalists and a British lady she meets. When she does talk to local people it is either on the phone or not shown and recounted later. Indeed, other individuals in the UK are rarely shown speaking about India and no individual in India is shown mentioning the UK. While the very fact that Fiona MacKeown, a British citizen, is shown to be travelling to and around India may constitute some degree of mobility, there are few other ways in which the space-time of the spectator is connected to that of distant Others in India in this text.

Despite this, this text can be said to be mobile in another way. Throughout the documentary spectators are encouraged to reflect on the similarities and differences between their space-time and the space-time of Fiona MacKeown. In particular, the spectator is often positioned in such a way as to ask themselves what they would do in her position. For example, the following comment by Fiona MacKeown directly challenges the spectator to engage in empathy, or in imagining taking her place in the mortuary.

> I felt at the time it was just really intrusive. But we felt it was the only way at the time we could prove to people how bad it was. We had to take her clothes off and turn her over, it was horrific. I doubt if there is any parent out there who can imagine having to do that.

While the appeal to this particular sense of mobility helps the spectator to connect their life-world to the life-world of an actor depicted on screen, it once again does not connect them to distant Others.

6.2.3 Agency

Distant Others in India were rarely afforded any agency in this documentary. As already discussed, individuals in India rarely spoke and were surprisingly absent from many of the spaces in India which Fiona passed through. Distant Others in India were also dehumanised through frequently being aggregated in terms such as 'they' or 'them'. This is evident in the following comment by Fiona MacKeown, though it is unclear to whom the word 'they' refers.

> I might be a flaky hippie' but they still underestimated me.

The lack of agency which the dehumanisation of distant Others affords spectators is compounded by the actions of the benefactor and persecutor. The principal benefactor figure, Fiona MacKeown, is constructed as caring, not for distant Others, but for her daughter and distant Others are themselves implicated as part of the persecutor figure, defined previously as the people and institutions of India in general.

6.2.4 Summary and discussion

This analysis of *Who Killed Scarlett?* demonstrates that, although the text offers spectators multiple options for action and emotion, they are directed towards Fiona MacKeown rather than distant Others. Similarly, despite being set principally in India, the most complex space-time is that of Fiona's home in the UK. Fiona herself is constructed as a unique, humanised actor who has connections to the life-world of spectators. By contrast, distant Others are not positioned in the role of either 'victim' or 'benefactor' and are largely dehumanized. The only ways in which spectators are invited to respond to distant Others is either through indifference or weak denunciation of their implied role as the persecutor figure.

This analysis is significant because it reveals that while serious factual programming might have the capacity to provide spectators with an intense mediated experience of distant Others, as the analysis of *Rageh Inside Iran* illustrates, this capacity is not always realised. In other words, while it may be the case that the length, complex narratives and multiple scenes in conventional serious factual programming may allow for the construction of complex space-times, humanised Others and multiple options for emotion and action, it is not necessarily the case that they will. Put another way, the length or genre of a programme is not necessarily a predictor of the form of mediated experience it offers. Indeed, a comparison between the analysis of *Rageh Inside Iran* and *Who Killed Scarlett?* helps to illustrate (but does not necessarily provide an exhaustive account of) the *range* of ways in which serious factual programming regulates spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others: from multiple options for action in relation to humanised, proximate distant Others, to indifference towards dehumanised and distant, distant Others.

I argued earlier in this thesis that while it is useful to investigate the range of ways in which distant Others are mediated by television, it is also important to establish a sense of how often this range of possibilities occurs. In order to provide such an indication here, a randomly chosen sample of 5% of serious factual programmes about distant Others in 2010 were watched in their entirety and analysed using the analytics of mediation (see Appendix 0 for a full list). Of these twenty seven programmes, nine of them (33%) afforded multiple, relatively strong appeals to emotion or action and humanised distant Others whilst also placing them in a complex space-time, close to spectators, in a similar way to *Rageh Inside Iran*. Such programmes included *Syria School* (BBC4, episode 1), *Burma VJ* (Channel 4), *Moving to Mars* (Channel 4), *Zimbabwe's Forgotten Children* (BBC4) and *Jimmy's Global Harvest* (BBC2, episode 3). For example, *Zimbabwe's Forgotten Children* is a Channel 4 documentary following three young children growing up in Zimbabwe. The personal testimonies of individualised and humanised children experiencing extreme deprivation, who were shown to be living in complex and proximate life-worlds combined with the perceptual and categorical realism to create strong appeals to philanthropy and, on occasion, pamphleteering. Similarly, the final episode of the BBC documentary, *Jimmy's Global Harvest*, followed a British famer, Jimmy Doherty, as he met Kenyan farmers using different ways to combat pests and diseases. It presents farmers in Kenya as unique,

individualised and humanised agents with the capacity to improve their lives and the lives of others in their community whilst also situating their life-worlds within a logic of causality.

Three programmes in the sample were found to afford distant Others a limited degree of agency and place events within a space-time of limited complexity, in a similar way to *Who Killed Scarlett?*. These programmes included *Stephen Tompkinson's African Balloon Adventure* (ITV1, episode 1), *A Place in the Wild* (ITV1, episode 1) and *Nigeria's Killing Fields* (Channel 4). For example, *Nigeria's Killing Fields* is a Channel 4 documentary reporting on the immediate aftermath of violence in the town of Job in Northern Nigeria where 500 people were killed in March 2010. In this documentary any appeals to philanthropy evident in the emotive dimensions of the narrative are blocked by the de-humanization of the people of Nigeria and particularly through the relatively narrow construction of space-time apparent in the dominance of a logic of appearances. This is significant because it suggest that the ways in which *Who Killed Scarlett?* manages spectators' experiences of distant Others is not unique, or even necessarily uncommon, amongst the serious factual programmes in this sample.

In summary, these results help to suggest that while *Rageh Inside Iran* and *Who Killed Scarlett?* might illustrate, to some extent, the *range* of ways in which serious factual programmes regulate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others, the kinds of mediated experience they provoke are not unique, or even necessarily uncommon, amongst a wider sample of serious factual programmes.

6.3 *THE WORLD'S STRICTEST PARENTS*

6.3.1 Multi-modality

6.3.1.1 Mode of presentation

The World's Strictest Parents is a 60 minute factual entertainment, reality-style programme, broadcast on BBC3, which reports on the experiences of two 'unruly' British teenagers who live with a 'strict' host family in a foreign country for one week in an attempt to change their behaviour. The episode under analysis was shown on BBC3 on Monday, 9th February, 2009

and follows two seventeen year old British teenagers, Charlotte and Sam, who are sent to live with a Jamaican family, the Rose family. The video footage consists largely of various incidents taking place in and around the home of the Jamaican family and participants' diary pieces to camera in which they express their thoughts and feelings in relation to other actors and the behaviour of the teenagers. This is interspersed with narration and commentary on events by a narrator. Rather than seeking to present a purely 'factual' and objective account of reality as many conventional serious factual programmes do, the mode of presentation of this reality-style programme purports to document dramatic and entertaining events that take place when 'ordinary people' are placed in abnormal situations. As such, I regard the mode of presentation as informing a categorical realism because the strongest appeal is to a reality evoked by strong feelings rather than facts.

6.3.1.2 Verbal-visual correspondence

The dominance of categorical realism is confirmed by a number of dimensions of the verbal-visual correspondence. With regards to the meta-narrative, both teenagers appear to go through dramatic personal transformations within the course of the programme, from being 'beyond [their] parent's control' to 'finding a new way of life', as the following testimony from Sam illustrates.

> Coming here has made everything different. I ain't complaining no more. I ain't got nothing to complain about. I'm just gonna basically not be such a little whining twat.

The spectator is encouraged to feel for and identify with the British teenagers as they go through this 'emotional journey' through the many personal details and personal testimonies given about the teenagers, often told by the teenagers directly to the camera. Sam, for example, speaks frequently about how his father recently 'buggered off' and the impact this has had on him emotionally and spiritually. Sam tells of how he now refuses to step inside a church or use the word 'dad' since his father left home. The personal details Sam gives of his father's behaviour and of his feelings in the following quotation is typical of the way in which the teenagers are constructed as 'victims' for whom the spectator is invited to feel, in a similar way to Fiona MacKeown in *Who Killed Scarlett?*

My dad was a complete and utter bastard. He was constantly belittling me, and making me feel that I was totally totally stupid.

But unlike *Who Killed Scarlett?,* the spectator is also encouraged to feel for and identify with distant Others, principally the different members of the Jamaican host family who are placed in the role of benefactor. The mother in particular is shown in a variety of contexts, dancing, disciplining, listening and talking to the teenagers and expressing affection, 'pride', 'hope' and 'disappointment' towards them. In one scene in which Charlotte has just read a letter from her mother, Sharon is shown embracing Charlotte and saying, 'I'm so proud of you, are you proud of yourself?'. At the same time, the camera shows a close up of Sharon's hand on Charlotte's back demonstrating that she is comforting her.

Sharon's role of benefactor is also particularly evident when she says at the end of the programme,

Charlotte and Sam being with me, we had fun, we had laughter, we had tears, we had screaming, we had shouting. But yet I stood my ground and they knew what I'm all about... and I give them a lot of love. Unconditional love.

The emotional appeal of the text is compounded by the use of emotive language throughout by all of the actors and the narrator. This is particularly evident in a number of scenes involving emotional displays by the actors such as the separation and reuniting of families, the teenagers receiving letters from their real parents about their behaviour and arguments between family members. For example, after first arriving in Jamaica and having been told the house rules, Charlotte is shown crying in her bedroom saying, 'the week ahead is going to be a complete an utter bitch... I just don't want to be here'. Sharon describes Charlotte at this moment as 'looking fragile'.

Despite appealing principally to categorical realism, *The World's Strictest Parents* does not present itself as reporting upon scripted or fictitious events, but as documenting actual events and does contain some appeal to perceptual realism. This perceptual realism is evident principally in the use of indexical meaning created through the context specific, rather than abstracted, images which provide evidence of the 'reality' of events. Despite the inevitable use of editing and other post-production techniques to sensationalize events, the

images still serve as some form of evidence for the spectator of the authenticity of the events. Perceptual realism was also, on occasion, evident verbally through the description of events and contextualisation provided by the narrator, as is evident in the following quotations in which the narrator describes the locations, characters and country which the teenager travel to:

> The team's destination is nearly 5000 miles away, in Maypen Jamaica, with the Rose family. Dad, Dave, is a government driver, his wife is a full time mother to their two daughters.

> May Pen is a two hour drive from the airport into the Island's interior. Jamaica is famed for its beaches and party atmosphere. The Roses live in a modest bungalow. Sam has a room to himself.

> Nearly 70% of Jamaicans are devout Christians.

Despite providing some narrative cohesion through such 'factual' descriptions of events, the narrator also frequently uses sensationalised language and a whimsical tone of voice in his commentary of events, as is evident in the following quotations:

> [These are] parents who demand absolute respect.

> They think they can teach the British a thing or two.

Such deviation from appeals to perceptual realism is symptomatic of the general nature of the programme. Indeed, of all the texts analysed in this thesis, *The World's Strictest Parents,* which was the only factual entertainment programme, had the weakest appeals to perceptual realism.

The only appeal to any sense of justice in *The World's Strictest Parents*, required for ideological realism, are the explicit appeals by the British parents for their 'unruly' British teenagers to be better behaved and more respectful of them.

> She just walks all over me don't she, she's got no respect for me... I really hope I've got a new Charlotte back.

As is evident from this quotation, the principal persecutor figure evoked in such claims for justice are the British teenagers. However, given that the teenagers do appear to change their behaviour by the end of the programme and given their simultaneous construction as 'victims', such appeals to ideological realism are not strongly felt. What this presence of ideological realism does do is reinforce the role of the Rose family, and the 'old fashioned parenting techniques' to which they adhere, as the benefactor figure because it is they who challenge the teenager and protect the 'victims' (in this case, the British parents).

6.3.1.3 Aesthetic quality

As a result of the dominance of appeals to the emotional reality of events in *The World's Strictest Parents* it can be argued that the dominant response spectators are invited to adopt is one associated with philanthropy. The nature of the appeals to categorical realism means that any feelings of tender-heartedness will be directed both at the principal benefactor figure (the Jamaican family), and the principal 'victim' (the British teenagers) whom the benefactor cares for. Feelings of tender-heartedness towards the Jamaican family are further strengthened by the nature of the ideological realism in which the benefactor figure is also constructed as challenging a persecutor figure and in-so-doing protecting another 'victim', their families.

However, the *suffering* in this programme (of the parents and the teenagers) is not of the same order of the suffering that Chouliaraki and Boltanksi are concerned for, nor is it about *distant* suffering (since the victims are members of the spectators' life-worlds). Neither is it about suffering within the politics of pity because, as Boltanski argues, when the fortunate and the unfortunate, or in this case, distant Others and members of the spectator's own community, 'live in the same places and share the same objects, they no longer appear as unfortunates [and]... we leave the framework of the politics of pity' (1999:13). Thus, since philanthropy is a particular response to suffering in the form of pity it might reasonably be argued that philanthropy, as conceptualised by Boltanski, will *not* be evoked by this programme. Nevertheless, it remains reasonable to argue that the logic of emotions in this text and the orchestration of the benefactor, victim and persecutor figures may invite

spectators to, in some way, respond with tender feelings towards the benefactor figure, whether in the precise form of tender-heartedness, or not.

Boltanski also argues that if the element of pity as objective deliberation is overshadowed by the other element of pity - emotional engagement – then not only is a morally acceptable response to suffering not possible but the spectator may also simply end up revelling in the emotional reality of the spectacle of suffering - 'the sweet feeling of feeling sorry for them' (1999:98). Although the apparent suffering in *The World's Strictest Parents* does not fall into the framework of the politics of pity, it remains reasonable to suggest that since the emotional reality of events overwhelms the factual reality of them, this text may also appeal to a sense of solitary enjoyment. In other words, the sensationalism of the text may invite the spectator to respond to *The World's Strictest Parents*, not by feeling for distant Others, or indeed the other actors, but by indulging in his or her own feelings.

It is worth noting here that solitary enjoyment, as a response to distant suffering at least, is often discussed in somewhat pejorative terms (see Boltanski 1999:43). To respond to that which demands action by simply contemplating on oneself is, for Boltanski at least, not to adopt a morally 'acceptable attitude' (1999:114). Similarly, Chouliaraki has argued more recently that the 'over-emotionalization of our safe everyday life... goes hand in hand with the de-emotionalization of the suffering of distant Others' (2011:122). However, as a response to mediated encounters with distant Others in general, such a response is not necessarily undesirable, as was discussed in chapter 1. If, as in the case of *The World's Strictest Parents,* the spectator is not required to act on behalf of distant Others, then to respond to an encounter with distant Others by reflecting anew on one's own life might perhaps be considered a reasonable, or even a valuable, response.

6.3.2 Space-time

6.3.2.1 Concreteness, multiplicity and specificity

The space-time in which spectators encounter distant Others in this programme is multiple and concrete. In Jamaica, events are shown to take place in numerous real private and public spaces including every room of the Rose's home, a number of different rooms in the

local secondary school (Denby High), the local church, a farm, Sangter International airport and a number of streets around these specific locations. The narrator renders these spaces specific by giving details of their names and precise locations and through the time the spectator spends in each scene of action, helping to construct them as unique places.

These spaces are also populated by individualised people, such as 'nineteen year old Malachi Johnson [who] lives in Portland Cottage in the Southern Hurricane belt'. The parents of the Rose family, Sharon and Dave, arrange a meeting between Sam and Malachi, 'which they hope will be a wakeup call for Sam... [because] his father also walked out on him and they think Sam could learn from his example'. During the meeting Malachi is individualised further by the details of his personal life and through meeting his family and seeing his home. Each the member of the Rose family is also individualised through the frequent occasions in which they speak about their lives and interact with the British teenagers.

Temporally, the life-worlds of distant Others are less multiple and complex as they are situated largely within the week of the teenager's stay and most references to time by the narrator are given in relation to the British teenager.

It's day four. The teens are halfway through their experience in Jamaica.

However, there are several occasions in which a wider historical context is invoked which situates events within a logic of causality. For example, Malachi Johnson explains his present circumstances through past occasions, such as the loss of his job, a hurricane, his dad leaving and challenges to his Christian faith and also speaks about how this was likely to affect his future. This logic of causality is further expanded upon by other actors who discuss the long-term causes of Malachi's personal circumstances.

6.3.2.2 Mobility

The space-time which distant Others inhabit is rendered further complex and proximate by the strong sense of mobility apparent in the text. This mobility is evident in the meta-narrative of the programme in which two British teenagers travel to Jamaica to live with a local family and experience life in Jamaica and then return home to the UK. This mobility is

also evident in the visual montage through frequent juxtapositions between footage of the UK and footage of family life and attitudes towards parenting in Jamaica. For example, just before going to school in Jamaica for the first time, Charlotte talks directly to the camera about her lack of achievement at school in the UK. This is combined with a montage of short video-clips of Charlotte at school in the UK and a testimony from her mother about her attitude towards school. The narrative then returns to Jamaica in which the visual depiction of iconic shots of Jamaican school children is accompanied by the following voiceover.

In Jamaica, education is truly a means for a better life.... Education is a means of escaping the rural hardship.

Sharon then explains: In Jamaica, you go to school to do well and be successful.

This verbal and visual juxtaposition serves to contrast Charlotte's attitude towards schooling with attitudes towards schooling in Jamaica and is typical of the mobility in this text and the ways in which the spectator is invited to draw connections between the two countries. This juxtaposition is also an example of the appeals throughout the text to the sense that parents in Jamaica have something to teach people in the UK about parenting.

Mobility is also evident on numerous occasions when actors explicitly compare life in Jamaica with life in the UK. As the father of the Rose family says;

Kids in England and America live a life of paradise, they need to come to Jamaica. This Jamaica can be a hell hole at times... Things in England are put on a silver platter.

The British teenagers in particular frequently reflect upon their experiences in Jamaica in terms of their lives in the UK;

I'm the only white guy in this school so I've had a lot of people look at me... but when I'm back in England I'm hardly the most popular person in the world.

Unlike in Britain where teens are tutored in the art of safe sex, kids here are told only that the only safe sex is no sex.

In summary, an analysis of the *concreteness, multiplicity, specificity* and *mobility* of *The World's Strictest Parents* reveals the construction of a complex space-time which positions spectators close to distant Others and strengthens any appeals associated with philanthropy. Furthermore, the particularly strong sense of mobility, evident in a number of ways throughout the text, invites spectators to draw connections between the life-world of distant Others and their own life-worlds. As Tomlinson argues, 'the condition of connectivity not only underwrites the notion of proximity, but places its own stamp on the way we understand global 'closeness'. Being connected means… we think of distant places as routinely accessible' (1999:4).

6.3.3 Agency

Distant Others in *The World's Strictest Parents*, including not only the Rose family but also most other Jamaicans who appear in the programme, are afforded *sovereign agency* in a number of ways. They are shown to have agency, not only over their own condition, but also over the condition of 'us' (whether as victim, persecutor or spectator). In Chouliaraki's words, the role of distant Other coincides with the role of benefactor (2006:159). For example, Malachi Johnson, is afforded considerably agency over his life and the condition of his family when the spectator is told of how,

> By contrast to Sam, he has shouldered responsibility for his whole family despite facing extraordinary adversity... He gave up his education to get a job to provide for his seven siblings after his father left.

Despite having 'almost nothing', the spectator is told he is 'still happy'. In relation to distant Others' agency over 'us', the mother and father of the Rose family, the head-teacher of the local school and even the seven year old daughter in the family are all shown exerting agency over the British teenagers (as both victims and persecutors) and in some cases, over British parents. For example, in two adjacent scenes the head teacher in Jamaica not only convinces Charlotte to complete an exam after she had initially refused to work (a scene in which Charlotte adopts the position of the persecutor), but also subsequently talks to her about her problems and, in Charlotte's own words, teaches her 'something about herself' (a

scene in which Charlotte adopts the position of 'victim'). The agency of the head teacher in both of these occasions is evident when she says;

> Charlotte, I hear that you are not writing the exams. You don't have a choice. It doesn't matter what you like or do not like, it's what is required of you.

And when Charlotte replies,

> At my school, if you've done something wrong, they'd probably just give you detention. No one would really talk to you about it and it would probably happen again but here they talk to you and make you realise what you've done.

The mother adopts a similar role with respect to 'us' on a number of occasions. For example, when Sam adopts the role of persecutor by refusing to attend Church and arguing with Sharon, the mother rejects his attempts to exert authority over her and instead exerts her own authority over him by saying 'no, no, no, you don't tell me what to do' and sending him to bed early. The narrator's commentary of this incident implies that even Sam's parents in the UK do not have sufficient authority to make him do this.

> Back home [in the UK] after an argument, Sam would normally storm off. Instead he's sent to bed early.

Similarly, when Charlotte adopts the role of 'victim' by crying about an experience at school, the mother, Sharon, is shown as able to comfort her and help her to think about her behaviour. Charlotte says of Sharon at that moment, 'you can talk to her and tell her how you feel and she understands'.

Sharon is even shown to have power over the British parents. This is evident both in the meta-narrative, in which the teenagers are sent to live with the Rose family in order to learn things their parents in Britain could not teach them, but also on a number of occasions when the narrator or the mother speak about what parents in the UK can learn from Jamaican parents. In the quotation below, for example, Sharon's use of the phrase 'too privileged' implies that British parents spoil their children and her reference to the need for discipline implies that her 'relentlessly strict' approach would be more appropriate:

These kids need discipline. It's not about them, it's about the parents, it's too much. [They're] too privileged.

The affordance of sovereign agency to a range of distant Others in this programme is significant because it renders these distant Others as thoroughly humanised and historical human beings – able to feel, reflect, and act upon their fate (Chouliaraki 2006:158).

6.3.4 Summary and discussion

Through a consideration of the multi-modality of *The World's Strictest Parents* it has been argued that this programme evokes feelings associated with philanthropy, not just in relation to people like 'us' in the programme, as was the case for *Who Killed Scarlett?*, but also in relation to distant Others. Furthermore, these feelings associated with tenderness are felt towards distant Others, not as a result of their role as 'victims', as was the case for most news items analysed in the previous chapter, but as a result of their role as benefactor. Spectators' responses may also take the form of solitary enjoyment as a consequence of the emotional reality of events overwhelming their factual reality. It was also argued that since the role of distant Other coincides with the role of benefactor, they are afforded 'sovereign agency' which renders them thoroughly humanised beings. The final key dimension of this text is its intense mobility which evokes a consideration of the connections between the life-world of distant Others and the life-world of spectators.

The way in which *The World's Strictest Parents* regulates spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others is important because, although this is only one example, it indicates that non-news and non-serious factual programming does have the capacity to evoke relatively intense mediated experiences of distant Others. As discussed earlier in this thesis, non-news and non-serious factual genres have often been overlooked in studies of the mediation of distant Others or not taken seriously because of their apparent concern for everyday, trivial or even contrived, issues. Yet the above analysis shows that *The World's Strictest Parents* evokes a more intense mediated experience of distant Others than any other text analysed in this thesis, with the exception of *Rageh Inside Iran*. Indeed, we may even hypothesise that the nature of some reality-television formats set in 'other' countries, with their focus

on 'Westerner's' experiences of these countries, the lives of 'ordinary' distant Others (often acting as benefactors) and a reality of emotions, means that they actively lend themselves to providing mobile, proximate and emotional mediated experiences of humanised distant Others.

This suggestion is informed by an analysis of a randomly chosen sample of 14 factual entertainment programmes from the sample period of the content analysis of non-news programming (covering 50% of all factual entertainment formats in 2007 and 2010 – see Appendix P for a full list). Applying the analytics of mediation to these programmes shows that many of them offer spectators a rather similar mediated experience of distant Others to *The World's Strictest Parents.* Programmes such as *Blood, Sweat and Luxuries*, *Can Fat Teens Hunt?* and *Wags, Kids and World Cup Dreams,* with their tendency to sensationalise events and focus on dramatic and entertaining scenes, preference appeals to a reality of emotions over a reality of facts. Although it is not possible to quantify the extent to which these factual entertainment programmes appeal to a sense of mobility, it is clear that many of them did. For example, programmes such as *Who do you think you are? Last Man Standing* and *Millionaire's Mission* all involve following the experiences of one or more UK citizens as they travel to 'other' countries, either to compete in sport, discover their genealogy or to apply their entrepreneurial skills. Although following the experiences of a Westerner in a foreign country does not necessarily mean that a text appeals to a sense of mobility (as the analysis of *Who Killed Scarlett?* demonstrates), in each of these texts I argue that it does.

Finally, in many of these programmes, including *Tribal Wives*, *Last Man Standing* and *Meet the Natives*, distant Others are afforded sovereign agency and are necessarily humanised by being shown to be able to improve the condition of these UK citizens. This is not always the case, though, as in *Millionaires Mission* and *Mission Africa*, for example, distant Others and UK citizens largely adopt the conventional roles of victim and benefactor respectively. The point remains, however, that the mobility, humanisation and proximity and emotionality evident in *The World's Strictest Parents* is not uncommon amongst factual entertainment programming in general and may even be characteristic of some forms of reality-television programming.

What is being suggested here is perhaps counter-intuitive. Chouliaraki argues that a disposition of global care to distant Others is particularly difficult to achieve in contemporary societies, 'where our own private feelings are the measure against which we perceive and evaluate the world and others' (2006:13). She singles out reality television as an 'obvious manifestation' (2006:13) of the role of the media in reflecting this because of the way it 'takes intense narcissistic pleasure in staging the private for all to see' (2006:14). Here it has been suggested that, rather than appealing entirely to solitary enjoyment, as Chouliaraki suggests, reality television also has the capacity, and perhaps even a tendency, to invite audiences to *feel* for proximate and humanised distant Others and to consider the connections between their respective life-worlds.

6.4 CONCLUSION

I aim to have demonstrated in the last two chapters that asking those questions of news and non-news texts which the analytics of mediation invites us to ask does indeed produce evidence to support a number of claims regarding spectators' options for emotion and action, proximity-distance and agency in relation to mediated distant Others. In other words, it does allow us to investigate how the paradoxes of mediation are seemingly resolved within individual texts. Perhaps the most significant result that the application of the analytics of mediation has enabled here is the suggestion that the nature of different television genres affords different capacities for providing spectators with mediated experiences of distant Others. For example, it has been argued that serious factual programming has greater capacity than routine news coverage for appealing to multiple forms of action, for placing distant Others in a space-time of greater complexity and for humanising distant Others. Similarly, it is argued that the nature of reality-television formats set in 'other' countries, with their focus on the lives of 'ordinary' distant Others, might lend itself to providing spectators with feelings of tenderness towards humanised distant Others who occupy life-worlds similar to their own.

But while the analytics of mediation undoubtedly provides the analyst with a seemingly logical and systematic process to follow, it is not clear what would count as counter-evidence that might challenge the theoretical and methodological framework which

Chouliaraki constructs. Put another way, to make use of the analytics of mediation appears to be to gather evidence to support assumptions already made about the process of mediation. This idea is raised here, not necessarily to undermine or challenge the theoretical basis of this approach, which has been advocated for earlier, but to draw attention to the self-evident logic that it sets up.

In the application of the analytics of mediation in chapters 5 and 6 a number of assumptions have been reproduced about how different dimensions of the text necessarily position audiences in relation to distant Others. For example, Chouliaraki argues that the simultaneous occurrence of concreteness, multiplicity, specificity and mobility within a text represents the construction of a relatively complex space-time which is rendered less 'other' (2006:88). Furthermore, a number of additional assumptions have been introduced in an attempt to ensure that the analytics of mediation remains relevant to circumstances not involving distant suffering. The most significant being that spectators don't feel agency in relation to distant Others who are not suffering, though they may still *feel* for them in some way and that we can at least begin to investigate these emotional responses in relation to the notions of pamphleteering, philanthropy and sublimation. While I hope to have argued that such assumptions are not unreasonable, they are, nevertheless, untested. Furthermore, within the framework of the analytics of mediation there is, unfortunately, no way of interrogating these assumptions further.

The point is that textual analysis using the analytics of mediation can only take us so far in understanding how distant Others are mediated by television. The extent to which these assumptions are valid and whether the analytics of mediation does indeed enable the analyst to determine how texts regulate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others is something that can only be explored by complimenting textual analysis with the study of audiences. It is for this reason that we now turn to the results of a diary study and series of focus groups designed specifically to investigate these very questions.

Chapter 7: Audiences and Distant Others

7.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two chapters a modified version of the analytics of mediation has been applied to various individual television texts in order to make claims about how these texts appear to regulate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. It was argued, for example, that the serious factual documentary, *Rageh Inside Iran,* provides spectators with a number of options for emotion and action in relation to proximate and humanised distant Others, whilst a BBC News item about the swearing in of the Prime Minster of Zimbabwe offered spectators a position of indifference towards dehumanised (or even annihilated) distant Others. Combining these analyses of individual texts with the results of two content analyses led to (albeit rather tentative) suggestions about the capacities of different television genres to manage spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. It was suggested, for example, that serious factual programming has greater capacity than news items for appealing to multiple forms of action, for placing distant Others in a space-time of greater complexity and for humanising distant Others, even if this capacity is often not fully realised. Similarly, it was hypothesised that some reality-television formats set in 'other' countries, with their focus on 'Westerners' experiences of these countries, the lives of 'ordinary' distant Others (often acting as benefactors) and a dominance of a reality of emotions, means that they actively lend themselves to providing mobile, proximate and emotional mediated experiences of humanised distant Others.

The purpose of this final empirical chapter is to analyse a sample of public talk and comment to investigate, firstly, the extent to which the participants in this study did indeed adopt the positions in relation to distant Others which my application of the analytics of mediation to individual texts suggested they would. Secondly, my aim is to investigate further the suggestions made about the capacities of different television genres to manage spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others.

In the previous chapter it was acknowledged that the analysis of individual texts using the analytics of mediation requires a number of assumptions about how texts regulate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. For example, it has been assumed that

when distant Others are constructed as both fully humanised and as not suffering, spectators are not afforded agency in relation to them because no action is required. The third aim of this chapter is to begin to consider the validity of these assumptions by examining public talk and comment.

The talk and comment analysed in this chapter was generated from a diary study and a series of focus groups. The diary study involved 49 participants recording and writing comments about all occasions in which they encountered distant Others in the media over a two month period. In the last month of the diary study, participants were also prompted (but not required) to watch a small number of programmes about distant Others to allow for comparison with my textual analyses. The focus groups generated 30 hours of talk about mediated experiences of distant Others and were conducted in two phases, either side of the diary study, with 108 different participants in total. The focus groups largely involved talk about distant Others in specific television programmes or genres. Some clips of specific programmes were used to stimulate discussion.

The results of the analysis of public talk and comment are organized around the same three dimensions of mediation used for analyzing texts: options for emotion or action, space-time and agency. My analysis of the diary entries and focus group transcripts largely involved grouping relevant quotations into these three dimensions and looking for patterns. In most instances, the quotations I have included in my analysis were selected because they provide the most suitable representation of participants' comments on a particular subject, not because they provided the most extreme examples.

7.1 OPTIONS FOR ACTION AND EMOTION

7.1.1 Sublimation

Boltanski (1999) suggest there are three morally acceptable responses spectators might adopt in relation to mediated distant Others. Of these three, it was responses associated with sublimation which appeared to be most evident in participants' talk and comments. Boltanski argues that to adopt a position of sublimation is to be able to weld together, within a single statement, an un-emotional reflection on the distant Other's condition with a

similarly un-emotional reflection upon the spectator's own sensibility (1999:116). As argued previously, however, sublimation is considered more useful here as a category of response to distant Others in the form of reflective contemplation (on suffering or non-suffering), whether it fully satisfies Boltanski's definition or not.

7.1.1.1 News

Evidence of some degree of reflective contemplation was found in talk and comment about participants' encounters with mediated distant Others with respect to all television genres but was perhaps most apparent in talk about news. In chapter 5 it was argued that while a consideration of the multi-modality of the Channel 4 News item about Afghanistan might suggest that spectators are offered a response associated with sublimation, the restricted space-times and dehumanisation of distant Others would limit the strength of any such appeals. In participant's talk and comment about this news item there does indeed appear to be ample evidence of reflective contemplation, largely in the form of comments about how 'accurate' and 'truthful' the reporting was and reflective (rather than emotive) comments about how spectators felt in relation to what they were witnessing.

> I think it was told very straight to the point... It's showing how easy these people can get moved about, armed and dangerous, and get into places to bomb or cause trouble in them... this was very clear... it brought home the truth (Diary 7[11]).

> This was much clearer... It brought home the truth about the problems Obama is going to face seeing as he is sending in more troops to Afghanistan. He is a clear target for them... The narrator was very clear and it was very interesting to watch... The story states the true facts and how the Taliban are still rife in Afghanistan (Diary 38).

These quotations help to illustrate that, as was suggested would be the case, reflective contemplation related, not to the people of Afghanistan, who were almost entirely absent in both the text and in participant's talk, but to the benefactor and persecutor figures. In the

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[11] In referencing diarist' comments, each number, from 1 to 49, corresponds with a particular participant.

first quotation, the seemingly objective, rather than emotional, response to the persecutor is apparent in the use of the words and phrases, *to the point*, c*lear* and *truth* whilst the same un-emotional response towards the benefactor in the second quotation is evident in the use of the words, *clearer, truth* and *facts.*

The above quotations also help to support the claim that appeals to responses associated with sublimation were limited by this text because while both participants may be reflecting on events, they fall short of Boltanski's requirements for an acceptable response to suffering. They fail to combine both an un-emotional reflection on the distant Other's condition with a similarly un-emotional reflection upon the spectator's own sensibility (1999:116) and instead, appear to resort to what Boltanski describes as a 'that's how it is' kind of reporting that 'states a pure and simple factual description which aims only to state things as they are, just so' (1999:23).

This character of what might be termed 'weak' sublimation, and especially talk in the form of 'that's how it is' reporting, was particularly common in talk and comment about distant Others in television news. This is evident, for example, in the following quotation in a diary entry about a news item about violence in Madagascar.

> The violence at the palace was shown and seemed to consist of damage to property rather than attacks on people. However the report referred to violence that had been continuing there for months previously resulting in over a hundred deaths. It gave an impression of a volatile political situation which had reached the stage where mass action was the only way of making a point and order had broken down (Diary 40[12]).

7.1.1.2. Non-news

Those occasions in which talk about television coverage of distant Others came closest to realising the definition of sublimation which Boltanski sets out were entirely in

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[12] In referencing focus group conversations the number given indicates whether the quotation came from the first or second phase of focus groups while the letter refers to the particular focus group it came from in that phase.

conversations and diary entries about non-news programmes. For example, in a diary entry written after watching the wildlife documentary, *The Secret Life of Elephants*, one participant commented that '[it] hits home just how little money these people have to survive on and how they have to grow all their own food, yet all we have to do is go to a supermarket to get all our food supplies' (Diary 23). The following quotation might also be considered an example of sublimation, as Boltanski defines it, because it combines a seemingly rational recognition of the 'factual' reality of the condition of distant Others with the spectator's own distant reflection on this reality. Furthermore, it does so without drawing on tender-heartedness, associated with philanthropy, or denunciation, associated with pamphleteering and without indulging in the narcissistic introspection associated with solitary enjoyment.

> Most of the innocent victims are living in poverty and so the problems are made so much worse by the fighting and they have no access to basic necessities such as food and medicine. [The current affairs programme, *Congo's Forgotten Children*] made me realise how destructive Man is but I know this is a worldwide issue and not restricted to developing countries (Diary 22).

Yet, just as for talk about news texts, there were also numerous occasions in which talk and comment fell far short of Boltanski's requirements, though could still be categorised as reflective contemplation. The following comments, for example, reflect a 'that's how it is' kind of reporting, or 'description without perspective' (Boltanski 1999:24).

> The place looked very basic, mud huts and the people all bare foot, and wearing rag looking clothes. But they all looked very happy and laughing (Diary 31).

> Their way of life seemed very difficult as lots of men had to go into the forests to collect honey. More than twenty were killed each year (Diary 23).

7.1.1.3. Limitations of talk and comment as evidence of mediated experience

The evidence presented here appears to support the claims made in previous chapters that news texts routinely offer spectators responses associated with sublimation and that non-

news factual genres have the capacity to offer spectators more compelling options for emotion or action, even if this is often not fully realised. Furthermore, in the case of the Channel 4 News item about Afghanistan, the public talk and comment appears to support the results of my reading of the text using the analytics of mediation.

However, it is worth recalling at this stage the limitations of using the character of participant's talk about distant Others as evidence of the character of their mediated experience of distant Others. While evidence of reflective contemplation may have often been apparent in participant's talk and comment, this may be a reflection, not of the nature of their mediated experiences of distant Others, but of the conventions of the focus group or diary study. For example, talk and comment about the BBC News item about Zimbabwe, which was predicted would take the form of indifference, was often characterised by responses associated with sublimation. This took the form of claims about the apparent accuracy and truthfulness of the reporting of the 'corruption and poor government' (Diary 23) in Zimbabwe, alongside more reflective comments.

> I haven't been following what's been happening in Zimbabwe at all really, so I found the report very informative on the current situation. Its opening scenes were hard hitting and it gave me a good insight to the treason charge and helped me to understand it (Diary 1).

Although we might reasonably interpret this as evidence which contradicts my readings of this text, we might also question whether such responses in the order of sublimation are a product of participants' mediated encounter with distant Others in this text, or the conventions of the research. As is argue below, the format of the research often appeared to inadvertently block opportunities for participants to express indifference.

This is a challenging issue and one that needs to be acknowledged in the interpretation of the results presented throughout this chapter. However, the design of this research project is intended to go some way towards compensating for this by including two different phases of focus groups, by having two methods for capturing participants' mediated experiences of distant Others and by involving participants in the research over an extended period of time. The purpose of this was to attempt to get beyond participants' initial conversations and responses to questions about television coverage of distant Others, which were often

rather inhibited or somewhat contrived, and instead to provide them with a greater amount of time and variety of spaces in which to articulate their responses to mediated encounters with distant Others. Indeed, responses associated with sublimation were markedly less common in the diaries, compared to the focus groups, and particularly compared to the first phase of focus groups when participants were arguably likely to be most uncomfortable. By comparing the character of talk and comment in these different contexts we can attempt to establish a more reliable, though still limited, understanding of the character of participants' mediated encounters of distant Others.

Furthermore, while the conventions of a focus group may generally preference responses associated with reflective contemplation rather than emotion, for example, this does not fully explain why there are clear differences in the nature of talk relating to different television genres and different specific programmes. It remains the case that talk about distant Others in television news was markedly different from talk about non-news texts, despite an apparent tendency for the character of talk to be influenced in some way by the format of the research. Thus, it remains meaningful to attempt to produce evidence of participant's mediated encounters with distant Others by examining the nature of their talk and written comments about such encounters, notwithstanding some important qualifications.

7.1.2 Solitary enjoyment

Solitary enjoyment, as a response to distant suffering, is defined by Boltanski as a 'way of looking which is wholly taken up with the internal states aroused by the spectacle of suffering: fascination, horror, interest, excitement, pleasure etc' (1999:21). It is another response to mediated encounters with distant Others which Boltanksi (1999) suggests falls short of a morally acceptable form of response, alongside 'that's how it is' reporting. In this thesis, solitary enjoyment is also used to refer to entirely self-focussed responses to distant Others who are not suffering.

Evidence of solitary enjoyment in participants' talk about mediated distant Others appeared in a variety of different forms, depending on whether talk was about distant Others who

were suffering or not. In talk about distant Others who were not suffering evidence of solitary enjoyment could be found in the form of comments about how 'interesting' and 'informative' it was to 'learn' about events and places in 'other' countries. Such sentiments were relatively very common, far more so than evidence of pamphleteering or philanthropy, for example.

> I want to see more programs on TV about how people live in other countries because it's interesting, it's more knowledge for everyone (Glasgow 1F).

> I think it is interesting realising the way other people live. It's quite enlightening (London 1E).

> I watch the news a lot, Channel 4 News especially I think is fabulous. I look forward to it... Countries of the developing world are featured all the time, so that's quite insightful for me (Glasgow 2B).

Similarly, a number of participants commented on how it was 'good' for other people, particularly children, to 'learn' about distant Others. As one participant said, 'I think it would be a good idea for our kids to see these [factual] programmes' (London 1B). In almost all of these reflections about the apparent educational benefits of watching television programmes about distant Others, the experience for the spectator appeared to be one of learning for the sake of personal gain rather than because it might have wider benefits. As one participant put it, 'I'm keen to know what was going on in the world but just from an educational point of view. I wouldn't want to start going out there and working to make a difference' (Glasgow 1H).

Expressions of solitary enjoyment in talk about mediated encounters with distant Others was also evident on occasions in which participants appeared to position themselves as *voyeurs* of distant Others, or as witnesses to events, 'free from the moral obligation to act... [who] can sit back and enjoy the... spectacle' (Chouliaraki 2006:145). Although such comments were more frequently made in diaries than in the focus groups, in both contexts, they were clearly invoked as a self-focussed response to distant Others.

> If you're someone who likes to travel, it's watching something to get a feel for a place and see if you'd like to visit it.

There are a lot of things you hear about and you think, it would be so cool to see that (Glasgow 1C).

I don't know how many of you have been watching all the coverage of the hotel siege and all of that in India? Do you remember the image of that hotel? I saw it and thought, 'I'd love to stay there'. It looked so amazing (Glasgow 1G).

When talking about distant *suffering* evidence of solitary enjoyment could be found in comments which implied that participants engaged in *schadenfreude*, or took pleasure in other's misfortune (Wood 2009:134). As one participant said, 'that's what makes people interested, they are seeing other people's misfortune and knowing that you're safe' (Norwich 1I). Similarly, when one participant was asked how he felt about encounters with mediated distant suffering, she responded, 'well, I'm obviously glad it's not me' (Norwich 1B). Chouliaraki defines this form of response as *fantasy*, or 'a particular form of pleasure derived from the viewing relationship as the safe spectators are stimulated to project themselves into scenarios of violence and fear that are highly improbably in their own lives' (2006:174).

It should be evident from the above quotations that evidence of solitary enjoyment, in whatever form, appeared in talk about all television genres. Furthermore, it was apparent that talk about those programmes which it was suggested would invite solitary enjoyment, was indeed characterised by this form of response. For example, many of the participants who had watched the Channel 4 News item about Afghanistan appeared to adopt a position of solitary enjoyment, evident in comments about how 'interesting', or not, participants found the news item.

Informative and interesting... Good to see what is happening... [but] lost interest with the second narrator (Diary 32).

Very interesting to watch (Diary 29).

Talk and comment about *The World's Strictest Parents* in the form of solitary enjoyment was particularly common, as was suggested would be the case in the previous chapter. Of the twelve diarists who commented on this programme, seven reflected at least some sense of solitary enjoyment.

> I was embarrassed of the way English children behaved. It seems to me the more English kids have the less they appreciate things. They were rude and lazy. In this country, because all authority has been taken away from the parents and teachers, there is no respect (Diary 28).

Significantly, though, in contrast to what was suggested in the previous chapter, solitary enjoyment did not feature anywhere near as prominently in talk and comment about similar factual entertainment programmes, such as *Paul Merton in India* and *Last Man Standing*. The subject of talk about such programmes was largely directed towards actors within the programme and not the spectators' own responses.

> It was a shock to see the conditions that the people lived in [in *Last Man Standing*] and how difficult the Westerners initially found it to adapt. However the level of camaraderie that developed despite the language barriers was good to watch (Diary 35).

In summary, solitary enjoyment appears to be a particularly common response in talk about all (factual) genres of television coverage of distant Others and appears to be relevant both as a category of response to suffering and non-suffering, albeit in very different forms.

7.1.3 Indifference

Unfortunately, the format of the research often appeared to inadvertently block opportunities for participants to express indifference, since, in many of focus groups and for some of the diarists, expressing a sense of indifference was perceived to be an inappropriate response. As one participant said, 'I don't want to say anything that doesn't make sense' (London 2B). This was despite attempts to not prejudge responses in the focus groups and the opportunity for participants to comment in their diaries on why they chose not to watch particular programmes about distant Others. Similarly, the purpose and uses of the research were not discussed in detail with participants until the end of the process so as not to imply that some responses were more desirable than others. However, participants still speculated about what the purpose of the research might be and knew that their responses were being recorded and analysed and so often felt reluctant to give responses

that they perceived to be undesirable. Given this, it is perhaps surprising that there was still substantial evidence of indifference in responses to mediated encounters with distant Others.

This sense of indifference was evident in talk and comment about many news and serious factual texts in various different ways including statements about a lack of 'feelings' or 'thinking' about 'them'.

> I sadly have little feelings about the war [in Gaza] as it doesn't affect my everyday life (Diary 1).

Indifference towards distant Others was also evident in frequently made statements about participants' attempts to actively avoid watching programmes about distant Others. As one participant said, 'when you're about to sit down to your dinner, you don't want to think about people that don't have it' (Glasgow 1C).

Although more difficult to capture, indifference also appeared to be evident when participants simply failed to respond to mediated encounters with distant Others.

> **Diary Question:** If you only watched part of the program or decided not to watch it, why was that the case?
>
> **Response:** Bored, only listened to it for a few minutes. [It] talked about addressing foreign relations and maintaining global economical stability.
>
> **Diary Question:** What do you think about what you saw?
>
> **Response:** Nothing (Diary 25).

In its most extreme form, indifference was evident in a number of focus groups where some participants gave only minimal or tokenistic accounts of mediated encounters with distant Others. On such occasions, participants struggled to engage in any way with the topic of conversation and found themselves simply unable to talk about the subject of television coverage of 'people who live in countries that are poorer than ours'. Offering evidence of such a minimalist narrative is difficult because it was often characterised by silence or lack of participation but it is fair to suggest from the experience of these focus groups that some

participants at least appeared to be entirely indifferent to mediated distant Others, in whatever television genres.

As well as providing evidence to suggest that indifference was a common response in talk about television news and serious factual programmes, the results of the diary study and focus groups also appeared to support my claims regarding which specific texts would invite responses in the form of indifference. All of the participants who had watched *Who Killed Scarlett?*, for example, expressed little or no concern towards distant Others in India as they were rarely mentioned and when they were it was only in passing. As one participant said, 'watching it I didn't think, 'oh look at the poor people in India' because it didn't show that. It was more about this poor girl' (Glasgow 2A).

Significantly, evidence of indifference was common, not just in talk about specific news and serious factual texts which appear to invite such a response, but also in talk about many other programmes and even in talk about specific texts which other participants responded to either through sublimation, pamphleteering or philanthropy. For example, while I argued that *Rageh Inside Iran* appealed to multiple forms of action, there was evidence of indifference in some participant's talk about this documentary. Such indifference is evident in the following quotation from one focus group participant, for example, who was asked whether he would have watched *Rageh Inside Iran* if it had not been suggested as part of the diary study.

> I wouldn't have gone for *Rageh Inside Iran*... too heavy for me. [I'm] more interested in the English soldiers [in *Ross Kemp in Afghanistan*]. I know they'd show more from the English point of view (Norwich 2B).

In summary, there is evidence to suggest that texts which draw on a minimalist realism or which fail to offer complex space-times or humanised distant Others do place audiences in a position of indifference in relation to distant Others. However, indifference also appears to be predicated on more than just the nature of media texts. Claims to indifference were frequently combined with, or justified by, communitarian sentiments. When discussing distant suffering in television news, for example, expressions of a lack of concern for distant Others were often accompanied by expressions of concern for those 'closer to home'. As

one participant said, 'I think... problems over there... are important, but home is what you've got to sort out first' (Norwich 1A).

Interestingly, the one context in which evidence of indifference was *not* found was in talk and comment about factual entertainment programmes. The following brief diary entry about *Louis Theroux's Weird Weekend* was perhaps that closest that any comment about a factual entertainment programme got to expressing indifference.

It just goes to show that religion is the root of all evil (Diary 1).

While this does not necessarily mean that there no participant responded with indifference towards distant Others in factual entertainment programmes, it is nonetheless interesting to note that factual entertainment programmes appear to be more likely than other genres to be associated with responses other than indifference.

7.1.4 Philanthropy and pamphleteering

As discussed earlier, Boltanski argues that if the spectator of distant suffering is to remain within a morally acceptable framework he or she must 'depict in a single operation both the unfortunate's suffering and what he himself feels at the sight of it' (1999:114). While this may appear as sublimation, it can also take the form of becoming indignant about distant suffering, in the response of pamphleteering, or in the form of tender-heartedness, in the response of philanthropy. While Boltanski's definitions of philanthropy and pamphleteering remain useful as 'ideal' responses, in this thesis the concern is with the occurrence of responses which both achieve and fall short of these ideals.

7.1.4.1 Television news

In general, responses to mediated distant Others associated with philanthropy and pamphleteering were relatively uncommon in talk about television news. In the focus groups in particular, there was little evidence of any anger towards the elites of 'other' countries when placed in the role of persecutor. Instead, accusations took the form of either

mild disapproval or begrudging acceptance of their actions. This is evident in the following quotation, for example, in the use of the phrase 'human nature' to account for and confer judgement upon the actions of the persecutor.

> Too few people making all the decisions and the government not making the right decisions for the population and just lining their own pockets, which is human nature I know (Norwich 1B).

Indeed, one of the most strongly worded statements in any focus group about distant Others as persecutors in television news was from one participant who said that watching news programmes about corruption was 'something to get a bit annoyed about' (Glasgow 1F).

Similarly, very few participants talked about the benefactor figure (evoked most commonly in talk about television news as being the community of the West) with any great emotion or intensity or gave any indication that they took pride in their implied role as a benefactor figure. As one participant said, 'we do everything every year, we do charities and everything just seems to go into a black hole' (Norwich 1H). Instead, participants' responses to the benefactor figure were characterised by 'that's how it is' reporting as in the above example of the Channel 4 News item about Afghanistan.

Focus group talk about distant Others as 'victims' in news coverage was also lacking in evidence of philanthropy or pamphleteering. As one participant described, 'every time I watch the news there is generally violence in a country less fortunate than ourselves. They showed buildings being blown up and people running for safety' (Diary 16). Indeed, there was greater evidence of resistance to emotional appeals than there was evidence of emotional engagement in talk about news. As the following quotation demonstrates, participants were particularly critical of what they saw as attempts to make them *feel*.

> Sometimes it smacks of propaganda when they are trying to make you feel a certain way. It's terrible what is happening in the Gaza but it is a tiny percentage of what does actually go on and they want you to see the worst of it so you can be more aware. Sometimes they can lead you down a path to feel a certain way (London 2A).

Interestingly, the affective dimension of participants' responses in the form of pamphleteering or philanthropy appeared to be somewhat stronger in the diary entries than in the focus groups. As discussed earlier, this may be the result of the difference between the focus group setting, which might lend itself to producing more abstract, considered talk, lacking in emotion, compared to the diary in which participants might feel better able to express their feelings. On a number of occasions, participants wrote of their 'annoyance' and even 'anger' towards a persecutor figure in diary comments about news coverage. Indeed, there were even a small number of examples of responses to distant Others in the form of philanthropy and pamphleteering which appeared to approach Boltanski's (1999) definition of the terms, particularly when talking about news coverage of the war in Gaza.

> It showed a little girl who when she hears a loud noise was cowering in the corner. A mother who had lost her son and was hysterical. I was very upset and emotional as the devastation the situation is causing to innocent people (Diary 43).

Importantly, such accounts of feelings for distant Others in television news were still relatively uncommon, even in diary entries. In general, participants' responses to distant Others in television news were characterised by 'objectivity at the expense of emotionality' (Chouliaraki 106:2006), as was suggested might be the case in chapter 5.

7.1.4.2 Specific news texts

The results of the focus groups and diary study also generally support the claims made about specific news texts. For example, although all twelve diarists who commented on the BBC News item about Zimbabwe identified Robert Mugabe as the persecutor figure, only one of them expressed any form of resentment towards him when they described him as 'a horrible man' (Diary 2). Similarly, only one of the ten diarists who wrote about the Channel 4 News item about Afghanistan gave any indication that this text produced an emotional appeal, when they described one scene as giving them 'a sense of getting deep behind enemy lines' (Diary 18).

Importantly, however, there were also (rare) exceptions to this where participants used emotive language and claimed emotional responses to news texts which were suggested would block any appeals associated with philanthropy or pamphleteering. For example, some diarists who commented on LVOs variously described a number of emotional feelings towards the distant Others being represented, such as being 'shocked' (Diary 19), 'sympathetic' (Diary 7) and 'concerned' (Diary 39). Similarly, in discussing the BBC news report on Zimbabwe, which was argued did not appeal to philanthropy, one participant described themselves as 'saddened... [and] surprised' (Diary 39) at what Robert Mugabe was doing.

This apparent discrepancy between the results of my analysis of news coverage and the responses of some participants suggests that philanthropy and pamphleteering may be predicated on more than just the character of media texts. Indeed, claims to emotional responses to mediated encounters with distant Others frequently appeared to be tied to other factors, such as having children.

> I've not been self employed long so I'm really busy and worried about that and my little girl's not even 2 yet. If I do sit down and watch something about [poverty]... I do think about it, especially now we have a little one, I see the poverty in the other countries and it really gets to me. There are some horrible scenes on Children in Need. I'll pick up the phone and donate a tenner or so. It does really get to me since I have my own child (Norwich 1G).

7.1.4.3 Non-news television texts

In talk about mediated encounters with distant Others in non-news texts, there was a much greater *range* of responses associated with philanthropy and pamphleteering. As has already been demonstrated in the discussions of sublimation and indifference, there were many occasions in which philanthropy and pamphleteering was not evident in talk about non-news texts. However, unlike talk about news texts, there were also many occasions in which talk about non-news programmes was characterised by a strong sense of philanthropy or pamphleteering. Evidence of such responses could be found both in claims

to emotional responses to non-news television programmes and in the use of emotive language to describe distant Others, both of which are evident in the following diary entries made after watching a *Panorama* documentary about the war in Gaza.

> It was very upsetting and emotional. It actually brought tears to my eyes when I saw the 10 year old girl who had lost her parents and had seen other family members killed during the attacks on her home in the Gaza strip. There was a doctor who lost all four of his daughters in the attacks. Yet he still wants peace between the two countries. To see his family killed in front of him was devastating for him. I have always thought war of over land and religion is pointless but this was really brought it home (Diary 38).

> Horrific! Young children who had lost their parents and had nowhere to live. Parents who had lost young children. Everyone's homes had been blown up and all their possessions ruined. Made me feel sick and upset for the people involved especially the children. But we don't know the whole story and the truth from both sides. It also made me feel lucky that we don't have that sort of conflict it our country (Diary 39).

Indeed, both quotations appear to provide evidence of philanthropy as Boltanski would define it because they seemingly combine an account of what is being witnessed with an account of how it makes them feel, without slipping into solitary enjoyment or pure description. Although we cannot be sure that these comments are a faithful reflection of genuine responses in the form of philanthropy, or whether they represent, in Boltanski's words, a 'strategic use of tears' (1999:100), what is clear is that there were far fewer equivalent examples of either philanthropy or pamphleteering in talk about news items.

7.1.4.4 The persecutor, benefactor and victim and emotions beyond pity

A discussion of who or what was evoked in the position of persecutor, benefactor and victim is also useful for establishing a broader understanding of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. In almost every conversation or diary entry in which a persecutor figure was evoked in relation to suffering, responsibility for the condition of distant Others was

attributed to the corrupt and / or authoritarian regimes and elites of 'other' countries. This is evident in the following conversation regarding a current affairs programme about sweatshops in India when the working conditions of the children are described as 'the governments fault' and in the subsequent comment that such problems are 'always the government's [fault]'.

> What annoys me is that it is the governments fault in India.
>
> It's always the governments though isn't it?
>
> ... I think the government should sort it out. What are we supposed to do? Those kids are still getting paid. What else are they supposed to do? It is slave labour but if they didn't have that money they would starve (London 1I).

The accusations levelled against the persecutor related largely to 'stealing... medicines [and] money... [which] the people... should have' (Norwich 1E). The causal role of the persecutor was rarely expressed beyond understandings of simply taking money or goods which results in suffering.

This focus group extract also helps to reveal that the actor placed in the position of the benefactor most often was the 'West', either in the form of the public, or of governments and overseas charities. In most circumstances the role of the benefactor in relation to distant suffering was understood almost entirely in terms of their ability to provide financial aid. As one participant said, 'they need money for this and money for that. It's what you see on the TV' (Glasgow 1D). Indeed, 'a reliance on aid and support from the West' (Norwich 1G) and the presence of corrupt and or authoritarian governments were frequently cited as criterion for being classified as 'a country poorer than ours'. As one focus group participant said, 'they've all got, what do you call it? Dictators' (Norwich 1F). In identifying the persecutor and benefactor in this way, the 'victim' was necessarily evoked as the general population of these 'other' countries who suffer because of the actions of the persecutor. This is also explicitly revealed in the above quotation.

This particular evocation of the persecutor, benefactor and victim figures in talk about mediated distant suffering corresponds closely with the construction of these figures in the texts analysed in the previous chapters. Whether in news reports about Afghanistan or

documentaries set in India, when a benefactor figure was evoked, it was largely in the form of a Western actor such as US President Barack Obama or UK citizens. Likewise, it was the in-country government or elites who were constructed as being responsible for distant suffering, whether in the form of the Chinese government, the Indian police or the Zimbabwean President. Indeed, all of the twelve participants who commented on the BBC news report about Zimbabwe clearly identified President Robert Mugabe as the key persecutor figure. Similarly, half of the diarists who commented on *Who Killed Scarlett* spoke about the Indian police as the main persecutors.

> Who Killed Scarlett... has made me ask questions about the Indian authorities, as this is a country I'd love to visit but I was not impressed with the way they handled this case at all (Diary 14).

Interestingly, in talk and comment about mediated encounters with distant suffering, actors in the West were very rarely evoked as the persecutor figure, just as was the case in the analysis of television texts. The only occasion in which any actor in the West was invoked in this role in talk about news or serious factual programming was in a single comment about a documentary about corruption in Africa when a participant said, 'it is the government's fault that it is allowed to happen. I wouldn't have realised that. Our government's fault' (London 1E).

In talk about mediated encounters with distant Others who were *not* suffering the position of persecutor, benefactor and victim were occupied by a much greater range of actors. Nowhere is this more apparent than in participant's talk and comment about *The World's Strictest Parents* which mirrored my readings of the way in which role of the persecutor, benefactor and victim were occupied. In first quotation below, UK teenagers are constructed as the persecutors (though not of distant Others), in the second quotation, parents and teachers in the UK are constructed as the victims and in the third and forth quotations respectively, distant Others occupy the role of benefactor in relation to both UK teenagers and even to the spectators themselves.

> It really made me embarrassed about the kids in our country. They are so spoiled. They've got no respect for no-one or nothing (Diary 28).

It showed me how much is taken away from the parent or teacher in this country, how we are not allowed to discipline them (London 2A).

It was clear that in the boy's case, he lacked a father figure and learnt a lot from the father of the house in South Africa (Diary 39).

I thought it was amazing, the way the family lives and the rules they live by are completely different than in our country, they are very strict and still use punishment involving the cane etc, they work out there and they have rules to abide by, children over in this country get it so easy because they know one threat of violence from a parent and they can ring social services and cry abuse yet in South Africa it is discipline all the way and even the school punish them, they are very respectful unlike over in this country, I loved watching every minute of it because it gave me an idea on how to cope with my own children (Diary 4).

The references to 'loved' and 'embarrassed' in these quotations also provide evidence to support the suggestion that an emotional response to distant Others is not predicated on the witnessing of distant *suffering*. As argued in the previous chapter, *The World's Strictest Parents* invites tender feelings towards distant Others, if not necessarily in the precise form of 'tender-heartedness', as Boltanski describes it. Indeed, the focus groups and diaries produced evidence of many emotional responses to distant Others who were not suffering, not only in *The World's Strictest Parents.*

I found quite a lot of joy and laughter in some of the programmes, like *The World's Strictest Parents*, although that did make me cry (London 2B).

There is sympathy for [the people in *Tribe*] but also admiration in that they are still surviving in this world by living and adapting to their surroundings and progressing their culture although it is a culture that would be hard to live in by anybody from a country that is wealthy and has a stabilised economy (Diary 46).

I was humbled by the people [shown in *A Fool's Guide to Comic Relief*]. They have all had terrible things happen to them, yet they never gave up and didn't want any pity. Many managed to rebuild their lives (Diary 21).

> [BBC News coverage of local elections in Iraq] seemed to present a positive view of the Iraqi people's enthusiasm to exercise their democratic rights - we saw a lot of positive footage of this enthusiasm. I found it encouraging. It rekindled a hope that the situation in Iraq may be improving at last (Diary 39).

These quotations also help to illustrate that while philanthropy and pamphleteering may be relevant categories for discussing some of participants' emotional responses to distant Others, such as crying or 'sympathy', there are others, such as 'joy and laughter', 'hope' and being 'encouraged' and 'humbled', for which they are not suitable. As one participant said, 'they... didn't want any pity' (Diary 21).

7.2 SPACE-TIME

7.2.1 Proximity-distance of distant Others

In general, participants spoke about distant Others encountered through television as occupying very narrow, un-complex space-times, placing them at a greater distance from themselves. As one participant said in a conversation about television news coverage of poverty in developing countries, 'it all seems a long way away' (Norwich 1C). This narrow, un-complex space time was evident in discussions of both the spatiality and temporality of the life-world of distant Others.

7.2.1.1 Temporality

In participants' talk about television, distant Others were situated principally in the past, relative to 'us' and other 'Western' and 'developed' countries. As one participant said of the BBC2 travel-anthropology programme, *Tribe*, 'it's good that Bruce Parry isn't telling them how to do things in the 21st century... they have lived like that for thousands of years, the same life, the same rituals' (Norwich 1A). This was particularly evident when participants drew on one of the fundamental principles of modernisation theory - that developing countries are chronologically 'behind... us' (Norwich 1A). As one participant put it when talking about the television drama, *Survivors* and the effect that the 'credit crunch' could

have on economic growth in the UK, 'tomorrow we could all be back there just like that' (London 1C). Evidence of situating distant Others in the past was apparent in talk about all television genres, but particularly news and serious factual genres, as the following quotation demonstrates.

> [The documentary about India] shows how different systems work; that just wouldn't happen here. It shows how behind they are (Glasgow 2A).

Participants' discussions of their mediated experiences of distant Others also frequently lacked a future-oriented perspective. This was particularly evident in the numerous comments that 'nothing ever changes' (Glasgow 1D) when talking about news programmes, or that 'these people... [have] absolutely nothing, no hope for the future' (Glasgow 1B). This lack of future-oriented perspective was also evident in discussions about whether particular programmes were about 'developing' countries, or not, whereby participants derided the term 'developing' and the idea that 'their economies are improving' (London 1G) or that they were in some way 'moving forward' (London 1G).

> In [a documentary about Afghanistan] I saw a world centuries behind us. I didn't get the feeling they would ever progress or evolve (Diary 49).

These evocations of distant Others inhabiting a permanent past and a closed future were frequently combined to situate their life-worlds, not just in the past, but as part of a never-ending story in which nothing changes and no real progress is made (Chouliaraki 2006:128). This was revealed both in explicit statements about the lack of capacity for change and in statements which reflected a limited spatiotemporal complexity, both of which are evident in the following conversation about television news coverage of distant Others in general.

> They've been fighting each other for centuries.
>
> Aye, they've been fighting forever.
>
> The third-world I've always seen as.
>
> Kind of Ethiopia and places like that?

> Yeah. People are starving and people are unable to, y'know, they work the land and basically the life cycle carries on the way it's always been (Glasgow 1E).

Evidence for the evocation of space-time as cyclical was also found in the analysis of the BBC news item about the swearing in of Morgan Tsvangari in chapter 5. Those diarists who commented on this news item reflected such sentiments in comments that, 'there is no hope for the country whilst Robert Mugabe continues to preside' (Diary 8) and 'although you think there is hope for change, that actually Robert Mugabe is still pulling all the strings' (Diary 7).

7.2.1.2 Spatiality

The most significant spatial dimension of participants' talk and comment about the mediation of distant Others was the way in which the spaces which distant Others inhabit were frequently talked about in what Chouliaraki would describe as an *anatopistic* manner (2006:108 & 174). Chouliaraki defines this as the rendering of one place as equivalent to other places, on the basis of certain shared characteristics. As one participant said during a conversation about the representation of inequality in television documentaries, 'it's the same in every country' (Norwich 1I). This sense of anatopism is also evident in the following quotation in which Mumbai is rendered equivalent to other places based on the shared characteristic of poverty.

> I think... [the poverty shown in *Slumdog Millionaire*] is the same in any massive slum area in the world. That is the situation in India, Nairobi, Caracas, Manila etc. (London 2B).

Further evidence of this sense of *anatopism* can be found in the unproblematic way in which participants spoke about television coverage of 'developing countries'. Although the need to define the research area and topic of conversation required the researcher to impose a category in the first place, in only one of the thirty focus groups was the aggregation of a huge variety of forms of coverage in terms 'developing countries' or 'countries and cultures that are poorer than ours' explicitly challenged. As one participant in this focus group said in

a conversation about television coverage of Africa, 'you can't generalise about a whole subcontinent can you?' (Norwich 1H). Such sentiments were exceptionally rare.

The effect of this sense of aggregation and generalisation of places was to construct distant Others as inhabiting a relatively homogenous collection of places which participants could express singular sentiments or feelings towards. Indeed, while participants' conversations about mediated experiences of distant Others did include references to specific continents and countries and occasionally named cities, they almost never referred to more specific locations, unless participants were drawing on personal experiences.

> I was lucky enough to be on a cruise at the beginning of the year and part of that cruise stopped off at Madagascar, which is a country off the east coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean (Glasgow 1E).

In Chouliaraki's terms we might say that the evocation of a narrow, uncomplicated space-time was also evident in the limited multiplicity and specificity in participants talk (2006:100).

7.2.1.3 Talking different genres

In summary, participant's talk about their mediated experiences of distant Others was characterised by a very limited spatio-temporality in which distant Others were placed firmly in the past without any potential for real positive change and as collectively occupying a relatively homogenous space. This construction of space-time as narrow and un-complex is constitutive of a considerable distance between spectators and distant Others, rendering their mediated experience lacking in intensity or immediacy (Chouliaraki 2006:85). As one participant said in a conversation about watching suffering on television news, 'I don't think a lot of people let it get to them do they because it's so far away and you tend to distance yourself from it. I do anyway' (Norwich 1G).

The above quotations help to illustrate that this limited spatio-temporality was particularly evident in talk about news coverage and adds support to the suggestion made in chapter 5 that television news texts routinely place spectators at a distance from distant Others.

Indeed, instances of talk or comment about news coverage of distant Others which drew on complex space-times and which revealed evidence of proximity were incredibly rare. When participants did comment on the substance of news texts in such a way as to reveal an appreciation of the wider spatio-temporal complexity of distant Others' lives they often appeared to draw from personal experiences rather than just the news text.

> After visiting India last year it got me thinking about the number of people that were living in poverty and what a difference... [winning the Golden Globe, as shown in this news item,] would make [to the child actors of *Slumdog Millionaire*]. I was also thinking about if they would be able to handle the drastic change in lifestyle. How much of the potential win would they be able to keep and how much would go to the extended family (Diary 35)?

In relation to non-news factual programming, there was much greater variation in the ways in which the space-time characteristics of the life-worlds of distant Others was talked and written about. As suggested above, there were many occasions in which talk about distant Others in non-news factual programming referred to narrow and un-complex space-times. Indeed, as was suggested in the analysis of the serious factual documentary, *Who Killed Scarlett?,* diarists' comments about this particular programme contained much evidence of a narrow construction of space-time. This was evident in comments such as, 'it shows how behind they are' (Glasgow 2A), 'it could be anywhere in Asia' (Glasgow 2B) and 'I think it could have been in any country' (Glasgow 1A).

However, there were also a significant number of exceptions to this in talk about specific examples of non-news programming. For example, when talking about *Rageh Inside Iran*, a number of different focus group participants spoke about the different spaces in Tehran and how this made them feel closer to distant Others there.

> Everyday life and shopping. Home scenes and street scenes. They are trying to tell us that they are normal like us (Norwich 2A).

Indeed, talk about the space-times occupied by distant Others in *Rageh Inside Iran* was often characterised by a considerable degree of complexity with participants commenting upon the complexity, 'normality' and multiple contexts of the 'everyday lives' of people in

Tehran whilst also acknowledging that there was a lot about their lives they didn't know. This adds support to the suggestion, made in chapter 6, that serious factual programming has greater capacity than news programming to create a sense of proximity between spectators and distant Others but that the extent to which this capacity is fulfilled varies considerably.

7.2.2 Further elements of space-time

The positioning of spectators at a distance from distant Others is significant, not just because it constitutes an important dimension of a spectators mediated experiences of distant Others in itself, but also because it is constitutive of a number of other dimensions of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others, namely, a preferencing of a logic of appearances and a lack of mobility.

7.2.2.1 Mobility

In relation to participants' talk and comments about mediated distant Others, mobility can be understood as the capacity of spectators to reflect upon their own connections to distant Others, or to virtually inhabit both the spaces of the spectator's life-world, and the space inhabited by distant Others (Chouliaraki 2006:123). Given the restricted spatiotemporal complexity of participants' talk about television news, and to a lesser extent, non-news factual programming, it is perhaps unsurprising that there was generally little evidence of mobility. Indeed, many participants actively rejected the suggestion that they might physically travel to 'other' countries shown on television, drawing largely on examples of news and serious factual programming to justify their 'immobility' in this regard.

> [*Who Killed Scarlett?*] gives me the impression that [India] is unsafe, and I probably wouldn't want to go there on holiday or anything...Some of the sights you see… it would just put me off going there, to be honest. I don't like to be made to feel like that on holiday, you don't want to feel guilty (Glasgow 1B).

You get such preconceived ideas if you believed what you watch on the news. I think you'd never go anywhere. People are terrified to go to some places (Glasgow 1C).

Evidence of other forms of mobility, such as empathy, or of 'putting yourself in someone else's place' and learning from the experience, were also almost entirely absent from the focus groups discussions. The following quotation represents one of only three occasions in which participants suggested that 'we' might have something to learn from distant Others.

Bruce Parry sees how they live their lives. Some of the natural stuff they use we could learn from (Norwich 2A).

Ironically, perhaps the most often cited form of 'mobility' (understood in a slightly different way here) was that of turning over and away from programmes about distant Others. As one participant said of the two television dramas, *Ladies no. 1 Detective Agency* and *Wild at Heart,* 'I turn over because I can't relate to it' (London 2A).

As is evident from the above quotations, this lack of mobility was apparent principally in participants talk about news and serious factual programming. Exceptions to this general lack of ('positive') mobility were found largely in talk about factual entertainment programmes, such as *The World's Strictest Parents*.

As was argued would be the case, participant's talk about *The World's Strictest Parents* was characterised by a particular form of mobility in which participants reflected upon their own connections to distant Others. As is evident in the following quotations, participants often expressed a sense that there was much 'we' could learn from approaches to education and discipline in 'other' countries.

It's children from this country going out there and experiencing it. The one I saw had this kid whose mum was disabled and he was sent out there and the realisation that he couldn't get away with the same stuff, it's real to me, I see it in my kids every day, that's why it connected (Norwich 2B).

They are just grateful for an education. It's bizarre because our kids you have to push to go to school but all they want over there is an education. That's what I found quite difficult (London 2B).

One participant even commented upon how this mobility was made possible by the text, suggesting that the British teenagers in the programme 'are representing us, even though they're kids, so it's a little bit like how it would be if we went there' (Norwich 2B).

The focus groups and diary study even provide evidence to support the suggestion that there is something about some factual entertainment programmes that involve Westerners visiting faraway countries which means they have a propensity for providing spectators with a sense of mobility. The following quotation taken from conversations about *Amazon* is a clear example of the mobility common in talk about such programmes

> The whole programme made me realise how different some cultures are from ours, and although I wouldn't want to live like them I think that most of them wouldn't like to live like me! (Diary 31).

Indeed, many of the participants commented themselves on how these particular programmes appeared to generate a sense of mobility.

> For me, something verging on reality TV is what I enjoy. I am not saying that I like Big Brother, however I prefer TV I can feel I can relate to... Programmes which show the differences in how people live, for example, *The Worlds Strictest Parents* (London 2B).

It is interesting to note that while participants often drew connections between the space-time of their lives and the lives of distant Others when discussing such programmes, they still maintained a clear sense of difference between 'them' and 'us'. At no point was it suggested that 'they' might be like 'us'. As one participant said, 'it's 'this is how they live and this is how you'll live' and it's very different from how they live here' (Norwich 2B). Similarly, one participant said in a conversation about *The World's Strictest Parents*, 'very very different, aren't they?' (Norwich 1I). In other words, in their expressions of mobility the Other was not brought so close as to challenge the sense of 'otherness'.

Despite evidence of mobility in a number of participants talk about *The World's Strictest Parents* and similar forms of factual entertainment programmes in general, there were also a number of participants who rejected the thought that these programmes might connect them in some way to the life-worlds of distant Others. This rejection appeared to stem from

existing attitudes towards 'reality-style' programming. Participants variously claimed that that the programme was 'hammed up' (London 2A), 'not true to life' (London 2A) or 'staged for entertainment purposes' (Norwich 2B) and in so doing rejected the thought that it could allow them to reflect upon their own connections to distant Others.

Exceptions to a general lack of mobility were also found in talk about a small number of news and serious factual programmes, particularly those concerning Afghanistan, such as the Channel 4 News report about Afghanistan, analysed in Chapter 5. In talk about this particular text, however, the connection between the spectator's life-world and the life-world of the Taliban was used to indicate the potential threat of distant Others. One respondent described the news item as 'really terrifying. It's showing how easy these people can move about, armed and dangerous, and get into places to bomb or cause trouble in them' (Diary 7). Another described the news item as 'leav[ing] one with a feeling of, 'flip, this is real and could get nasty'' (Diary 32). Another participant even attempts to articulate how this was achieved by the news text; a reading that is similar to my own and comes close to applying Chouliaraki terminology of the 'zone of safety' of the spectator being under threat from the 'zone of danger'.

> I noticed that on the Channel 4 News report we did not at any time see the 'reporter', just the subject, clad in his heavy disguise. This served to give the viewer a sense of getting deep behind enemy lines. I realise I was a lot more uneasy watching this report because of the lack of the 'comfort' zone and buffer of the newsreporter (Diary 32).

As my analysis suggested, these feeling of mobility were expressed only in relation to the Taliban and not in relation to other distant Others in Afghanistan. Furthermore, while such mobility was evident in some news items about Afghanistan, it was uncommon in talk about most other news texts.

7.2.2.2 Causality

A restricted spatio-temporality is also constitutive of what Chouliaraki describes as a logic of appearances. Without the context of a wider space-time within which to situate events,

causality is more likely to appear to be dictated by the immediate context rather than historical circumstances (2006:99). A logic of appearances did indeed dominate participants' discussions of causality in relation to events involving mediated distant Others. As the following quotations helps to demonstrate, this frequently took the form of simple explanations of causality, largely based on narrow understandings of the actions of government or elites as being entirely responsible for the circumstances of the people.

> Russia's biggest problems are because they spent most of their money on arms isn't it? On the military rather than looking after their own people (Norwich 1B).

At its most extreme, in a logic of appearances, events can be understood simply as 'random', as if they 'just happen', with little or no explanation, as was discussed previously in relation to LVOs. This was evident in a number of participants' discussions either in the form of tokenistic or nominal explanations or simply confusion.

> I was interested in the Darfur programme.

> **Interviewer: What was interesting about that?**

> Obviously just what's been happening in the country, all the innocent people being killed and beaten up and all the rapes without a reason, just brutality (Glasgow 1F).

> Well you get confused with China because they invent everything and have everything high tech and then there's terrible, terrible, poor, run down, side of it which doesn't make sense. I don't really understand it (Norwich 1A).

This logic of appearances did appear in talk about all television genres but was principally evident in conversations about news. In Chapter 5 it was argued that the a-historicity and lack of future perspective in the BBC News item about Zimbabwe presented spectators with a logic of appearances. Evidence that those participants who watched this programme adopted this position could be found in several diarists claims that the text was 'very confusing' (Diary 4) and that it 'assumed a previous knowledge of politics in Zimbabwe' (Diary 17). The following comment from one diarist vividly demonstrates the idea that by moving between several loosely connected events all taking place within the present

without situating them in a wider context, the spectator is left 'confused' about the nature of causality and is positioned at a distance from distant Others.

> I was very confused about this one as at first it was talking about schooling and how the country is bankrupt and schools are all closed due to no money and the country have no jobs, and then on how we are banned from Zimbabwe and meeting in secret with the Prime Minister about how someone has been arrested for treason. It doesn't explain what the deal is they are trying to do or why someone would want to stop it (Diary 4).

The focus groups and diaries even provided some support for Chouliaraki's assumption that for the spectator of texts which appeal to a logic of appearances, all there is to do is accept the fact of the misfortune they witness (2006:104). As one participant said in response to a news item about violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 'I still didn't understand why the civilians are so badly affected in what should be a military war. Feel helpless' (Diary 43).

When participants drew on a logic of causality to explain events or circumstances involving mediated distant Others, evidence was drawn largely from personal experience, but also, occasionally, from serious factual programming. As one diarist wrote after watching a BBC documentary about corruption in Nigeria,

> It explained how corruption is part of everyday life and people can be bullied into voting for a certain candidate and party in elections. It also showed that a lot of young people turn to illegal gangs as it was more profitable for them than working in a low paid job (Diary 41).

7.3 AGENCY

It was suggested earlier in this thesis that television news texts routinely dehumanise distant Others and that this is important both in itself, because it is a particular quality of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others, but also because it contributes to spectators sense of a lack of agency in relation to distant Others. It has also been

hypothesised that non-news texts, and particularly some factual entertainment programmes, have far greater capacity to humanise distant Others than news texts. However, it has also been argued that the humanisation of distant Others does not necessarily lead to spectators to a heightened sense of agency, particularly if distant Others are not suffering. The purpose of this section of the chapter is to further investigate these various claims.

7.3.1 (De)humanisation of distant Others

7.3.1.1 Television news

When talked about as victims, distant Others in television news programmes were spoken about in focus groups predominantly as lacking almost any ability to affect real change over their own lives. As one participants said, '[television news is] always going on about how they can't do this and can't do that' (Norwich 1C). Distant Others were invoked almost entirely as victims of circumstance, lacking even the acts of 'movement', 'gaze' or 'condition' (Chouliaraki 2006:124). In the following discussion about television news and overseas giving, for example, focus group participants variously talk about distant Others as unable to 'grow things' or to be educated enough to become self-sufficient.

> I always wonder why can't they educate them in a way that will actually teach them to be self sufficient. Why is it still going on?
>
> ... Twenty years down the line we still haven't taught them how to grow things and it's still the same story. It just makes me wonder where all the money goes.
>
> Why doesn't the money go on birth control (Norwich 1C)?

Distant Others were also variously described as being 'unable to manage themselves' (Norwich 1C) and 'helpless' (Diary 8).

Chouliaraki argues that distant Others can also be dehumanised, or denied the power to act upon their condition, through aggregation or even through *annihilation* (2006:105). Although it is almost impossible to establish a sense of the annihilation of distant Others in

conversations designed specifically to generate talk about distant Others, it is interesting to note that not one of the twelve diarists who commented on the BBC news item about Zimbabwe made any reference to the people of Zimbabwe whatsoever. Furthermore, as has been discussed earlier, participants also had a strong tendency to aggregate distant Others in talk about television news, invoking them largely as a collective, homogenous mass and making little or no differentiation between countries, cultures, ethnicity or genders. This is particularly evident in the use of the word 'they' and 'them' in the following quotation taken from a conversation about television news coverage of Africa.

> They hardly give their countries a chance. A lot of them are rich in minerals and all these kind of things but… they're ruining it for themselves (Glasgow 1E).

Chouliaraki would argue that such sweeping statement and broad aggregations is evidence of understanding distant Others as dehumanised because they are stripped of their personal identities and unique qualities (2006:105).

Importantly, distant Others were not always entirely aggregated in talk about television news. Aside from occasional moments of individualisation, participants also made a distinction between the agency of children and adults. Children were often distinguished from adult Others because they were understood to represent or describe 'other' countries in general. In other words, participants often talked about children as having what Chouliaraki describes as 'condition', or a form of 'iconic' agency, which allows an individual to 'stand-for' or symbolise a wider humanitarian condition, such as 'suffering' or 'starvation' (2006:124).

> The only programme which I thought was about the developing world was the Chinese [documentary]. The little kids running down the street and waving, that's what they're like (Norwich 1C).

> My idea of a third world country is a place where you see the children out there, like in the adverts, with ribs and no clean water and nothing to eat (Norwich 1D).

As these quotations illustrate, evidence for understanding children as having agency in the form of 'condition' was not only related to news texts but humanitarian fundraising advertisements and some documentaries as well.

7.3.1.2 Non-news texts

The extent to which distant Others were afforded agency in talk about non-news television content was far more varied than in talk about news programming. There were once again many instances in which distant Others were dehumanised, particularly in talk about serious factual programming. As one participant said in a discussion about a television documentary set in China, 'over there they are just brainwashed' (Norwich 1F). However, such examples were by no means representative of talk about distant Others in non-news texts in general. As one participant said in a conversation about a special international edition of the BBC2 motoring magazine show *Top Gear* set in Botswana, 'they get on with things a lot better than we do because they have to' (Norwich 2A). Similarly, the affordance of agency to the people of Iran is evident, though not so explicitly, in the following comment in which a participant remarks that not only are they not 'brainwashed' but that perhaps 'we' are for thinking this.

> You imagine them all being brainwashed... That is what is definitely portrayed about Iran but *Rageh Inside Iran* brought a completely different perspective to me about how it actually is because we have been brainwashed by the American view (London 2B).

Such expressions of the agency of distant Others were particularly evident in participant's talk about specific factual entertainment programmes, such as *Last Man Standing*, *The World's Strictest Parents* and *Tribe*.

> I liked *Last Man Standing*. It came across that everyone in the world is making the best of what they've got (London 2A).

> That young woman in the car [in *The World's Strictest Parents*] was saying, 'I want to do this and I want to have a business'. That's positive isn't it? It's nice. It's better than sitting there grumbling.

> It came across as her saying I want to do something (Norwich 1C).

[In *Tribe*] they're very welcoming to outsiders, and they'll share food with them even though food is very scarce (Norwich 1B).

Indeed, in the final quotation above, one participant is even claiming that distant Others in the travel-anthropology programme, *Tribe,* exhibit *hospitality*, or a readiness and inclination to welcome the Other into one's home (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000) (a sentiment that was often absent in participants' conversations).

7.3.2 Spectator's agency in relation to distant Others

7.3.2.1 Television news

Expressions of the perceived lack of agency of an aggregated distant Other in talk about television news often dovetailed with, or were used as evidence to support, participants expressions of their own perceived lack of agency vis-à-vis distant Others. This was evident implicitly in statements such as, 'it really gripes me that we have done and are doing so much to help them and they don't seem to help themselves' (Glasgow 1D) but also explicitly in quotations such as the following.

Whether it's the corruption that takes it [the financial aid] I don't know or whether they can't help themselves…

How does that make you feel?

It makes me less inclined to donate (Norwich 1B).

Indeed, participant's talk about those specific news texts which were suggested would block any appeals to agency through the dehumanisation of distant Others did indeed reflect a lack of agency. In a conversation about the BBC News item about Zimbabwe, for example, one participant said,

It's very difficult. I get a feeling of hopelessness sometimes. It's not a thing that money alone can save, it seems to me. You scratch your head and wonder how can you do it? In Zimbabwe, you can't send the army in; it's ridiculously impractical and

> uncalled for. You send money there and it's just falling into the wrong hands. What the hell can one do (Norwich 1H)?

Interestingly, participants differed in the extent to which their comments about children having 'condition' reflected their perceived agency towards these children. Some participants' comments about children as 'standing-for' wider conditions of poverty were dovetailed with clear expressions of agency towards them. For example, one participant claims that her decision to donate money to a Disasters and Emergencies Committee (DEC) appeal was the result of the 'condition' of children in a BBC current affairs programme reporting on the war in Gaza in 2009, although she acknowledges that her decision to donate was not entirely the result of the programme.

> For me it was the child factor that got me because I've got children and I was devastated. It made an impact. I was upset but I'm really glad that I understood because later I donated towards the Gaza appeal. It made me really think (London 2B).

By contrast, many other participants did not express agency as a result of the 'condition' of children. As one participant said, 'asking for help is all they do' (London 1D). Many participants even appeared to take particular offence at what they perceived to be the use of children to manipulate their sentiments. This was also used on occasion to justify their perceived lack of agency, as is evident in the following focus group extract in which participants' talk about children and 'condition' is combined both with expressions of the perceived lack of agency of distant Others and participants' own perceived lack of agency.

> When they have anything on the telly they always bring in the kids don't they? With flies and potbellies and everything.
>
> It's really irritating; it's like 'oh come on more kids with flies'.
>
> It comes on you see the children and see the flies. I don't want to watch all this. To me it just puts me off.
>
> And we're sending all our money over and what are they doing to help themselves (Norwich 1C)?

7.3.2.2 Non-news texts

This combination of talk about distant Others lacking agency and spectators' own feelings of a lack of agency was also evident in talk about many serious factual programmes. Those diarists and focus group participants who commented on or talked about *Who Killed Scarlett?* for example, afforded little agency to the people of India and expressed feelings of a lack of agency themselves. As one participant said in reference to tackling the corruption in India, 'it's just a way of life over there. There's nothing you can do about it' (London 2A). Equally, however, the opposite was also true on many occasions in a way that it was not in talk about television news. In one conversation about a variety of non-news programmes, including *Amazon*, *Last Man Standing* and *Cheetah Man*, for example, the humanisation of distant Others is combined with a sense of agency.

> [On *Amazon*] they showed them releasing slaves that had been on the farms for decades. It really tackled some big issues....
>
> It showed the locals reasonably content with the way they live apart from outside intervention. They've got no money but they are still happy. Food is available and they get on with their lives and much of Africa is like that.
>
> I liked *Last Man Standing*. It came across that everyone in the world is making the best of what they've got....
>
> **Interviewer: After the show do you think you have gained anything about that place?**
>
> You think oh what a brilliant job to do something like that.
>
> You definitely talk about things like that the next day.
>
> I thought how cool it would be to do something like that (London 2B).

What was more common, however, were occasions in which the agency of distant Others related, not to the agency or lack of agency of spectators, but to some other form of relationship. Unlike talk and comment about distant suffering, for which questions over the

spectator's (in)ability to act on the scene of suffering are especially salient, such questions are far less significant in talk about distant Others in general, who are often not suffering and who do not require action, nor feelings of agency. Indeed, since no action is required, it is not evidence of a sense of agency, or lack of agency, that we need to examine, but a broader sense of what it means to participant's relationships with distant Others that they are humanised. Two observations can be made in this regard.

Firstly, participant's talk about mediated distant Others on occasions in which they are humanised and not suffering were frequently characterised by expressions of a recognition of a common humanity. Cohen describes this as identifying with distant Others as humans and not simply as images, or as 'a readiness to extend your circle of recognition to unknown (and even unlikable) people who are not at all like you' (2001:183). For example, when talking about *Rageh Inside Iran*, participants' comments about distant Others as humanised were often combined with comments about how (surprisingly) 'like' the spectator they were. This is evident in the focus group extract below when the people of Tehran are described as both 'free' and as having 'the same problems and issues as we do'.

> It did look a lot freer.
>
> You imagine them...
>
> Making nuclear weapons
>
> And being horrible people...
>
> The people have the same problems and issues as we do. They are really no different.
>
> I imagined them all in yashmaks.
>
> The women aren't how you'd imagine them.
>
> You wouldn't think you would see them for a start. Certainly not in Gucci sunglasses.
>
> Definitely fakes though (London 2B).

Secondly, participant's relationship to distant Others who are humanised was expressed in terms of a recognition of the 'happiness' of distant Others. This was particularly evident in talk about some factual entertainment programmes.

> That's why I put *The Long Way Round* because... even though they didn't have much food, they were very happy people and that was really good to see... They have problems but at the same time they are very happy, very genuine and very caring people (Diary 18).

> I think also from the experience of seeing programs like this, although they are very poor and obviously lacking in so much, they are obviously very happy people (Norwich 1B).

These quotations help to suggest that acknowledging the 'happiness' of distant Others, despite the 'problems' they face, is perhaps another means of expressing a recognition of the humanity of distant Others. They may even be read as expressions of the idea that distant Others may be different from 'us', and perhaps even suffering, but that this does not necessarily equate to 'them' needing 'our' help. Indeed, questions over what should be done to help 'them' and whether or not 'we' are able to help 'them' were simply not raised on such occasions. This corresponds with the suggestion made previously in the analysis of *The World's Strictest Parents* that distant Others are afforded sovereign agency if, despite having 'almost nothing' the spectator is told they are 'still happy'.

7.3.3 Benefactor and persecutor figures

The lack of agency which participants frequently expressed in talk about distant suffering on television news and, to some extent, non-news programmes, also appeared to be tied to the ways in which participants talked about the persecutor and benefactor figures. As discussed earlier, the one set of actors in 'other' countries which participants did afford quite considerable agency to were the corrupt and / or authoritarian governments and elites of such countries. On almost all occasions this persecutor figure was evoked as being particularly powerful in relation to both distant Others and the benefactor figure. This was especially evident in conversations about Zimbabwe in which participants frequently

described the inability of the people or the international community to do anything to stop President Robert Mugabe, who they saw as the principal persecutor figure. As one participant said, 'Robert Mugabe... has almost destroyed his country... the leading party is too corrupt to accept real change' (Diary 17). Similarly, another participant commented in relation to events in Zimbabwe that 'the rest of the world are helpless to intervene' (Diary 28).

This combination of a powerful, corrupt, authoritarian government as the persecutor figure, combined with the limited financial role of the 'Western' benefactor figure and the dehumanisation of distant Others did appear to correspond with expressions of a lack of agency, as Chouliaraki predicts. This is well illustrated in the following quotation taken from a conversation about the Channel 4 serious factual programme, *Congo's Forgotten Children.*

> This programme presented to me a picture of the helplessness of people who were at the mercy of the Lord's Resistance Army. They had no protection and no hope of salvation from the UN or any other power... Despite the huge amounts of money raised by Comic Relief, a lot of which will probably go to African countries, this killing and rape and destruction will go on because the rest of the world cannot step in to stop it. The result will be that the country will remain poor while its leaders milk any wealth to be had (Diary 39).

This sentiment was also particularly apparent when participants talked about the ineffectiveness of giving money as a response to distant suffering.

> I think sometimes that even if you were to give how would you know that money was going to that country? In fact there was a programme the other night with a black African man talking about how bad the corruption is. It was so interesting and so in your face and so upsetting really. He was saying that it is the government's fault... It really puts you off helping (London 1E).

There were two particular exceptions to this general pattern of talk and comment in which spectator's lack of agency in relation to dehumanised distant suffering was compounded by the role of the persecutor and benefactor. In the first instance, as has already been discussed, there were some conversations about particular factual entertainment

programmes in which distant Others were afforded the role of benefactor, not necessarily in relation to distant suffering, but often in relation to spectators themselves. As one participant wrote in her diary after watching the wildlife programme, *Cheetah Man* 'there is a wealth of things they can teach us about respecting other species and their homelands' (Diary 8).

In the second instance, there were occasions in which mediated distant Others who were suffering were not talked about in terms of unfortunates, necessarily undeserving of their plight, but were instead implicated in their own condition. As one participant said, 'if a lot of it is caused by civil war, it's their own fault' (Norwich 1B). This also corresponds with the analysis of *Who Killed Scarlett?* in which it was argued that the only way in which the spectator is invited to relate to distant Others is through weak denunciation of their implied role as the persecutor figure.

In summary, the (de)humanization of distant Others, as both sufferers and not sufferers, the perceived agency of spectators and the role of the persecutor and benefactor figures have a complex relationship in participants talk and comments – but one that appears to be linked to talk about different television genres. Talk about distant Others in television news routinely evoked distant Others as dehumanized, which, combined with a particular evocation of the persecutor figure, was linked to participants' expressions of their own perceived lack of agency vis-à-vis distant Others. While talk about distant Others in non-news texts also, on occasion, evoked distant Others as dehumanized and spectators as lacking agency, there were also many occasions in which this was not the case. Talk about non-news programmes was often characterized by a humanization of distant Others and spectator's feelings of agency, while some talk about some factual entertainment programmes in particular was organized, not around feelings of agency, but around an appreciated of a common humanity. These findings broadly support the claims and assumptions made in previous chapters about how agency, both of spectators and distant Others, is managed by television texts.

7.4 DISCUSSION

7.4.1 Individual television texts

There are three sets of conclusions we might draw from the results discussed here, each relating to the three distinct aims of this chapter, as set out in the introduction. The first aim of this chapter was to investigate the extent to which the participants in my study did indeed adopt the positions in relation to distant Others which my application of the analytics of mediation to individual texts suggested they would. In the majority of cases, participants did appear to adopt such positions. With respect to specific news texts, talk about the Channel 4 News item about Afghanistan, for example, was found to be characterised by reflective contemplation in the form of 'that's how it is' reporting, rather than emotion, and it was directed, not towards the people of Afghanistan, but towards the persecutor and benefactor figures. Evidence of solitary enjoyment and mobility was also identified, just as was predicted. Similarly, every one of the twelve diarists who commented on the BBC News item about Zimbabwe identified Robert Mugabe as the persecutor figure and failed to mention the people of Zimbabwe, just as in the text itself. Their comments also mirrored the text in their preferencing of a logic of appearances and in the construction of the space-time of Zimbabwe as cyclical[13].

With respect to specific non-news texts, evidence has been presented to show that distant Others in *Rageh Inside Iran* were spoken about as both humanised and as occupying multiple, specific and complex life-worlds, as the analysis of this programme suggested would be the case. Similarly, as was suggested in the analysis of the *Who Killed Scarlett?*, participants' comments about this programme rarely mentioned distant Others and when they did speak of them they were afforded minimal agency and placed at an extreme distance from spectators. Finally, talk and comment about *The World's Strictest Parents* was characterised by mobility, solitary enjoyment and humanisation. Perhaps most striking, though, was the way in which talk about the persecutor, benefactor and victim figures reflected precisely the construction of these figures in the text.

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[13] Unfortunately, the research did not generate talk and comment about the ITV News item about Zimbabwe because it was not available online and so could not be sent to participants to watch.

Despite a weight of evidence in support of the claims made regarding individual texts, there was also evidence of responses which appeared to contradict such claims. For example, a number of participants rejected the thought that *The World's Strictest Parents* might connect them in some way to the life-worlds of distant Others. Others appeared to respond to the BBC News item about Zimbabwe with, albeit 'weak', reflective contemplation and even emotion, when only indifference was predicted. Equally, there was even some, limited, evidence of indifference in response to *Rageh Inside Iran* which, it was suggested, would provoke almost anything but this response. Indeed, on more than a few occasions spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others appeared to be predicated on more than just the character of media texts. Personal beliefs, personal experiences and attitudes towards certain media genres and styles of reporting all seemingly played a role in further mediating that which was being mediated. Specifically, evidence has been presented to suggest that personal experiences of countries, communitarian ideals, having children and feelings about 'reality-TV' style programmes all appeared to contribute to producing responses to mediated encounters with distant Others that were not predicted by the analytics of mediation.

This finding is not unexpected since it supports Silverstone's *dialectical* understanding of mediation (2006) which requires us to take into account the role of audiences. In fact, given an understanding of mediation as a dialectical process, what is perhaps surprising is that participants' responses to individual texts did not deviate from the readings produced by the analytics of mediation more than they did. As I have outlined above, on most occasions participants' talk and comment did, to a greater or lesser extent, reproduce the character such readings. In his critical review of the notion of compassion fatigue, Tester argues that 'it is impossible to predict in advance whether, how or which journalist production will be or become morally compelling. Social action is actually much too complex to allow for prediction' (2001:71). My findings appear to contradict this and instead suggest that the analytics of mediation *does* provide a reasonably reliable guide to spectators' likely responses to texts, notwithstanding some important exceptions and qualifications.

7.4.2 Capacities of different television genres

The second aim of this chapter was to investigate further the suggestions made about the capacities of different television genres to manage spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others. In previous chapters it was argued that television news routinely invites responses in the form of indifference, sublimation or solitary enjoyment towards distant and dehumanised distant Others. My evidence does indeed support this suggestion and the suggestion that responses associated with pamphleteering and philanthropy are not commonplace. Furthermore, I also find evidence of a logic of appearances, a lack of proximity and mobility and the construction of distant Others as helpless victims to be most common in talk about television news coverage. While there were some instances in which talk reflected a sense of mobility and responses associated with philanthropy, these were the exceptions rather than the norm, just as in the analysis of news texts.

With regards non-news programming, evidence has been presented to show that there was a much greater range of responses associated with philanthropy, pamphleteering and sublimation in talk about serious factual programming than in talk about news texts. Indeed, examples which came closest to Boltanski's ideals (1999) came almost exclusively from talk and comment about non-news programming. The extent to which distant Others were afforded agency or talked about as being in any way 'close' to participants was also far more varied than in talk about news programming and a logic of causality was only really evident in talk about serious factual programming. This adds support to the suggestion, made in chapter 6, that serious factual programming has greater capacity than news programming to create a sense of proximity between spectators and distant Others, to offer multiple options for emotion and action and to humanise distant Others, but that the extent to which this capacity is fulfilled varies considerably.

While it is difficult to find contrary evidence to what are a rather broad claims about the relative capacities of news and non-news television programming, there is one finding that appears to challenge such claims. Some diarists who commented on encounters with distant Others in LVOs variously described a number of emotional feelings towards distant Others. This appears to contradict the suggestion made in chapter 5 that LVOs do not have the capacity to provoke anything more than indifference from spectators and reminds us of the important exceptions to my general findings.

In relation to factual entertainment, it was hypothesised in chapter 6 that the nature of some reality-television formats set in 'other' countries, with their focus on 'Western's' experiences of these countries, the lives of 'ordinary' distant Others (often acting as benefactors) and a dominance of a reality of emotions, means that they might actively lend themselves to providing mobile, proximate and emotional mediated experiences of humanised distant Others. Indeed, it was in talk and comment about some factual entertainment programmes which evidence of mobility, the humanisation of distant Others and emotional responses were arguably most common. This not only provides further evidence to support the suggestion that different television genres have different capacities for regulating spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others in very different ways but that the character of spectators' talk and comment generally did appear to reflect what was predicted by an application of the analytics of mediation.

Significantly, though, in contrast to what was suggested in the previous chapter, solitary enjoyment did not feature anywhere near as prominently in talk and comment about such programmes, other than *The World's Strictest Parents*. Once again, this reminds us that any claims about the capacities of different television genres or sub-genres should be tempered by a recognition that 'television images [of distant Others] cannot assert anything: they can only instantiate something' (Ignatieff 1998:12). In other words, they can only press a particular (moral) meaning, not enforce it upon all audiences.

7.4.3 Assumptions of the analytics of mediation

The third aim of this chapter was to begin to examine the validity of some of the assumptions made by Chouliaraki in developing the analytics of mediation and of the additional assumptions I made in modifying it. Once again it appears that the results of the diary and focus groups provide evidence to support many, though not all, of these assumptions.

In relation to the assumptions that Chouliaraki herself makes, the degree of humanisation of distant suffering and the orchestration of the benefactor and persecutor figures does indeed appear to correspond with participants' sense of agency. The focus groups and

diaries even provided some support for Chouliaraki's assumption that texts which appeal to a logic of appearances further contribute to feelings of a lack of agency (or confusion, at least). Similarly, the spatio-temporal characteristics of the life-world of distant Others, whether restricted or complex and multiple, does appear to be concurrent with participants' sense of proximity-distance, in their talk and comments at least. Furthermore, talk characterised by a restricted spatio-temporality also often reflected a logic of appearances and a lack of mobility. One of the few challenges to one of her assumptions was the significant number of participants who did not express a sense of agency as a result of the 'condition' of children. In general, however, and perhaps unsurprisingly given the results discussed above, the results of the diary and focus groups appear to support the assumptions Chouliaraki makes in devising the analytics of mediation.

Regarding the assumptions made in modifying the analytics of mediation to make it suitable for analysing non-news texts, the figures of the benefactor, persecutor and victim have been shown to be a useful way of referring, not just to figures who orchestrate spectators' feelings in relation to distant suffering within the politics of pity, but as a means of accounting for the different positions that various actors, including the spectator, move in and out of. This expanded definition has, for example, allowed me to take account of instances in which spectators are constructed as victims and distant Others as the benefactor in talk about *The World's Strictest Parents*, for example. Indeed, such an approach is essential if we wish to understand more fully the role of the media in enabling us to recognise and understand our relationship with Others, not just as victims, but as fellow human beings.

Finally, the results of this study have also largely supported the assumptions made as a result of my expanded concern for distant Others not suffering. In her critique of the suitability of Silverstone's notion of 'proper distance' to empirical evidence, Wright concludes that,

> the responses of participants who engaged in self-focussed conversations highlights the inadequacy of Silverstone's reliance on 'public action' to define 'morality'... [because it makes] it difficult to investigate the importance and meaning/s of listeners' private activities (2011:15).

The inclusion of solitary enjoyment as a category of response helped to deal with this same 'inadequacy' in Boltanski and Chouliaraki's work because it allowed for a discussion of such 'self-focussed' conversations. I would estimate that indifference and solitary enjoyment accounted for the majority of participants' responses in this study (just as is often assumed (Tester 1994; Moeller 1999)). Furthermore, the experience of analysing the results of this study has shown that it is both valid and valuable to treat philanthropy, sublimation and pamphleteering, not just as 'ideal' responses to distant suffering, but as categories of response which can be used to define responses which fall short of these ideals. Unlike Hoijer, who rejects sublimation in his framework for analysing public talk for being too 'hard to identify... as a form of compassionate reading' (2004:522), it was common in the talk of my participants, particularly through 'that's how it is' reporting. Indeed, since they appeared to adopt 'ideal' positions only very rarely, such alternative responses are necessary for capturing what is routine, rather than what is extreme, about spectators' experiences of distant Others.

Unfortunately, while the categories of philanthropy and pamphleteering did serve as a useful starting point for discussing emotional responses to distant Others not suffering, overall they have been shown to be not sufficient for capturing the full range of emotions participants expressed in relation to distant Others. If the analytics of mediation is to be used as the basis for investigations into the mediation of distant Others beyond the framework of the politics of pity then some way of accounting for responses in the form of 'joy and laughter', 'hope' and 'humility', for example, needs to be found.

With regards to the humanisation of distant Others, evidence has been provided to support the suggestion that when distant Others are humanised, it is not only spectator's sense of agency which can be effected, but the extent to which spectators are invited to appreciated their shared humanity. As I argued in chapter 3, the contradiction between the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives in such instances is one of in/humanity, rather than in/action.

Despite the range of evidence presented here, there remain a number of assumptions that I have not been able to investigate further. Specifically, it has been difficult to investigate the assumption that where there are multiple persecutor, benefactor and victim figures, the strength of any associated appeals to forms of emotion or action will be limited, or that such

figures and corresponding responses can be evoked in relation to appeals to universal values not associated with care or justice. While analysis of talk and comment about *Rageh Inside Iran* was intended to enable me to investigate these assumption, the quantity and nature of the talk did not allow for this. Nevertheless, it remains reasonable to conclude that the modifications made to the analytics of mediation in order to make it suitable for analysing distant Others not suffering, outside television news, are largely supported by the evidence produced by this research.

7.5 CONCLUSION

One of the underlying arguments throughout this thesis has been the importance of understanding mediation as a dialectical process. In my introduction this was defined in opposition to Tomlinson's (1999) media-centric view of mediation as an understanding which draws attention to the idea that mediation involves some form of dialogue or interaction between the audience and the text. In chapter 1 it was argued that most accounts which fall into either the 'positive' or 'negative' narratives are not sufficiently sensitive to the role of the audience in further mediating mediated experiences of distant Others. In chapter 2, it was argued that even Chouliaraki's approach, which seeks to resolve these two narratives, also fails to take sufficient account the role of the audience. In chapter 3 it was argued that even those studies which include audience accounts of mediation usually only rely on talk generated from one-off focus group studies. In chapter 5 and 6 I highlighted the assumptions and self-evident logic that the analytics of mediation sets up and argued that this can only be interrogated through audience research. In this chapter I hope to have justified this preoccupation by illustrating the value of listening to audiences in multiple contexts over a sustained period of time. Specifically, it has allowed me to further interrogate and largely support my claims as to the ways in which different television genres regulate our experiences of faraway Others. In the final chapter of this thesis I summarise in more detail what this audience study and the other studies discussed here contribute to our understanding of the mediation of distant Others and reflect on the implications of these findings.

Conclusion: Media and Morality

8.0 OVERALL FINDINGS

8.0.1 Aims and approach of the thesis

The overall aim of this thesis has been to investigate how UK television shapes spectators' experiences of people from faraway countries. It derived, in part, from an interest in exploring further the following question, posed by Tester:

> How is it that in the situation where technology promises the making of the greatest possible solidarity between humans, all that actually results is a kind of moral boredom and dullness? (Tester 1994:105)

I regard such questions about the apparent 'failure' of television to connect 'us' with distant Others as important because there are real-world consequences for spectators (such as for the formation of our sense of our own humanity), for distant Others (such as for levels of charitable donations or levels of overseas development assistance), and for the formation of global civil society. Indeed, for these reasons, this thesis is relevant, not just to media studies but to anyone interested in the condition of people in developing countries, the Western self or the formation of communities of belonging beyond the nation.

To attempt to answer Tester's specific question and address the overall aim of the thesis I have conducted and discussed the results of three inter-related studies. Firstly, I have presented the results of the first ever empirical research into the quantity and nature of UK television coverage of different parts of the world by different genres. This involved the analysis of around 2800 news items and over 5000 non-news texts. This study was designed to investigate both the extent to which the appearance of distant Others is a feature of UK television content and to determine how a hierarchy of place and human life is reproduced by television. The premise of a concern for the extent of the appearance of distant Others is that questions over *how* we are encouraged to feel about faraway others are only relevant *if* we encounter them in the first place.

Secondly, Chouliaraki's analytics of mediation (2006) has been modified and applied to 19 different news and non-news texts in order to examine how these individual texts seemingly

regulate spectators' experiences of distant Others. Additional results from the content analyses were used to establish how common such instances of mediation were amongst a larger number of texts. This combination of textual analysis and content analysis enabled me to examine the routine ways in which television news texts regulate spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others and the capacity of the most common forms of non-news programming to manage such encounters. The analytics of mediation was used because it provides a means of investigating how the principal contradictions that exist between the 'positive' and 'negative' narratives of mediation are seemingly resolved within individual texts. The 'positive' and 'negative' narratives were identified as the competing thoughts amongst much existing literature that the media either helps to overcome the distance between spectators and distant Others, leading to a sense of proximity, or that the process of 'passing through the medium', disrupts the capacity of television to deliver immediacy (Chouliaraki 2006:24).

Finally, this thesis has presented the results of a modified version of Couldry, Livingstone and Markham's (2007) combination of focus groups and a diary study. This generated around 30 hours of talk from 42 different focus groups as well as 290 diary entries. The purpose of this study was to generate evidence of spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others in order to investigate the extent to which they supported claims made as a result of applying the analytics of mediation. Such concern for the role of audiences is a necessary reflection of attempting to take seriously understandings of mediation as a dialectical process.

8.0.2 Results of this thesis

The results of these three studies allow me to reach the following key conclusions. In both relative and absolute terms, distant Others seldom appear on UK television. For example, in 2010 there were just 45 hours of drama, current affairs and light entertainment programming about developing countries across all eight channels in the sample. In relative terms, spectators were forty times more likely to see Others from developed countries than developing countries in television dramas. This relative and absolute lack of appearance is particularly apparent for distant Others from certain parts of the world. In 2010, 103

countries, or 52% of all countries in the world, were not the main subject of any new non-news programme. This included much of Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa and Central Asia. For all television genres studied, except for current affairs, coverage of the continent of North America dominated.

When distant Others do appear on television, it is almost always in the context of news or other factual programming. In 2010 there was over 14 times more coverage of developing countries in the form of non-news factual programming than in the form of drama and light entertainment combined. My research also provided evidence to support the suggestion that television news texts routinely place spectators in a position of indifference, solitary enjoyment and reflective contemplation with respect to distant and dehumanised distant Others. Such support was provided by the results of both a textual analysis of various VT news texts, and LVOs in particular, and an analysis of public talk and comment about news texts. There was also support for the suggestion that serious factual programming has greater capacity than news items for appealing to multiple forms of emotion and action, for placing distant Others in space-times of greater complexity and mobility and for humanising distant Others, even if this capacity is often not fully realised. Again, this finding was generated from the results of both textual analysis and analysis of public talk about serious factual programming.

Finally, there was some evidence to support the hypothesis that the nature of some reality-television formats set in 'other' countries means that they might actively lend themselves to providing relatively mobile, proximate and emotional mediated experiences of humanised distant Others. This was particularly evident in the textual analysis of an episode of *The World's Strictest Parent* and in public talk and comment about this programme, and was also supported by talk and analysis of some other reality-television style programmes.

Put in terms of Tester's question, we might conclude that it is an over-generalisation to claim that 'technology promises the making of the greatest possible solidarity between humans', since, as has been shown, different television genres (let alone different media) have different capacities for producing 'solidarity between humans'. We might also conclude that, despite appearances and common assumptions, the result is not always 'a

kind of moral boredom and dullness'. Neither is this apparent indifference entirely the result of communication technologies themselves.

Notwithstanding these important qualifications, the first answer to Tester's question is that the reason why the apparent 'promise' of technology is seemingly not being fulfilled is at least partly the result of coverage of distant Others being dominated by particular genres of television programming over others. It seems reasonable to suggest that since non-news genres appear to have greater capacity than news programming for producing more intense mediated experiences of distant Others, then if we wish to promote 'solidarity between humans' distant Others should appear outside of the news more often. The second answer to Tester's question is that it is the choices made in everyday production practices over the use of image and language in individual texts, or the 'strategies of discourse' (Chouliaraki 2006:3), which determines the extent to which the promise of technology for generating an intense mediated experience of distant Others is achieved. Put simply, we require more coverage of distant Others outside of news and such coverage should manage their treatment of distant Others in particular ways.

Having summarised the results of this thesis as they relate to its overall aim and to Tester's specific question, the remainder of this concluding chapter is devoted to discussing the implications of these results for broadcasters, producers, policy makers, regulators and academics.

8.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR BROADCASTERS: BRINGING THE WORLD TO THE UK

The suggestion that if we wish to promote 'solidarity between humans', then distant Others should appear more often outside of the news has obvious implications for those (public service) broadcasters with an interest in or commitment to providing spectators with a more intense mediated experiences of distant Others. One implication is that distant Others should appear more often in serious factual programming, in factual entertainment programming, and, it is not unreasonable to speculate, in other non-news television genres too. Indeed, this commitment to coverage of distant Others beyond news is an important part of the BBC's existing public service commitment to 'bring the world to the UK', or more

specifically to 'broaden UK audiences' experience of and exposure to different cultures from around the world' (BBC Trust 2006:2). This is evident in both the details of the remit as set by the BBC Trust and in the BBC Trust's key characteristics of the services of specific BBC channels.

> A public service imperative for the BBC [should be] to make UK audiences aware of international issues, cultures and viewpoints. This should be achieved through the provision of engaging content across a wide range of genres (Trust 2006:5).

What this thesis provides is the rationale for ensuring international content appears outside of news programming in order to meet public service requirements associated with 'bringing the world to the UK' (although I would not go as far as Ignatieff and suggest that news bulletins should be *replaced* with longer documentaries (1998:32)). It also supports the apparent trend amongst public service broadcasters in the UK, but also in other countries, to fulfil such commitments through more formatted, reality-TV style factual entertainment programmes, such as *The World's Strictest Parents* and *Go Back to Where You Came From.*

There is another finding in this thesis which has implications for broadcasters regarding the capacity of different forms of television content. In chapters 5 and 7 it was argued that news items in the form of brief studio-based live-voiceovers (LVOs) have a relatively very limited capacity for offering spectators an intense mediated experience of distant Others compared to VTs. Given that spending on foreign reporting in many news organisations is in decline and, as a result, the number of overseas news bureaus and foreign correspondents is also in decline (Beckett 2008) it is not unreasonable to speculate that international news may increasingly take the form of LVOs. This thesis is clear about the consequences of an increase in such "voiceover" journalism, where correspondents located at the nearest media hub or headquarters narrate other media's videos (Moeller 1999:27). Developing countries are already 50% more likely to be covered in the form of LVOs compared to developed countries and if the relative amount of coverage of developing countries in the form of LVOs increases, then news texts will increasingly offer spectators a position of indifference towards entirely distant and dehumanised distant Others.

8.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR BROADCASTERS, REGULATORS AND POLICY MAKERS: MEASURING INTERNATIONAL CONTENT

The results of this thesis can be used to not only support the rationale for the BBC's public service commitment to 'bring the world to the UK' through different genres but they can also be used to begin to examine the extent to which it is fulfilling this remit. The results of the content analyses presented in chapter 4 show, for example, that factual coverage of developing countries on BBC1 has declined by 71% in five years and in 2010 stood at just 16.7 programme hours. More broadly, over the last five years international content has been migrating from BBC1 and BBC2 to BBC3 and BBC4, which generally have much smaller audiences. While the BBC does not currently have a statutory requirement regarding the minimum hours of international subject matter to be broadcast (unlike for religious programming, for example (Harding 2009:15)), such quantitative findings nevertheless provide strong evidence to suggest that on the BBC, outside of the news, programming which 'brings the world to the UK' is in decline.

This thesis not only examines whether the BBC is fulfilling its international remit, but it also provides a unique way of providing evidence for such claims. Currently, the only way in which Ofcom examines the extent to which the BBC is meeting its public service commitment to 'bring the world to the UK' is through the results of audience research (see Ofcom 2011). Further value of the content analyses presented in chapter 4 lies, therefore, in the way they demonstrate how quantities of international content can be measured and used to assess the quantity of international output of different broadcasters. Indeed, elsewhere I have applied the same approach to analysing the international content of children's programming on UK television (Scott 2008). The results of a similar set of content analyses showed, amongst other things, that just one BBC children's programme - Blue Peter – had greater and more varied coverage of developing countries than ITV1, Channel 4 or Channel Five during the year of 2007. I concluded that the BBC plays a 'crucial role... in providing a diverse range of new international children's programming' (Scott 2008:4). In fact, these results were used by the International Broadcasting Trust (IBT) to submit evidence to the BBC Trust's review of services and content for younger audiences in 2008 (Chalk 2008). IBT claims that this resulted in the BBC Trust amending the licence for CBBC and BBC3 to place a greater emphasis on international content (Galloway 2009).

In fact, the results of this thesis have implications for a number of wider debates about the international dimension of media regulation and policy in the UK. As evidence of this, the IBT, which is an NGO 'working to promote high quality broadcast and online coverage of the developing world' (Galloway 2011) has also drawn on research discussed in this thesis to submit evidence to a range of different bodies including the BBC Trust, Ofcom, the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee and the House of Lords Communications Select Committee. Such submissions have addressed issues ranging from a BBC Trust review of the public purposes of BBC1, BBC2 and BBC4, to a BBC strategy review (Chalk 2010). Most recently, the evidence presented here regarding the decline in quantity of new international factual programming on the BBC has been used to support a call for 'provision in any new communications legislation to ensures high quality content about the wider world in prime time television schedules' (Chalk 2011:3). IBT claims that such submissions, combined with additional lobbying (which also draws on this research), were at least partly responsible for the 2009 Digital Economy Bill being amended so that Channel 4 now has statutory duty to broadcast 'news and views from around the world' and the license for BBC2 being amended to underline the importance of current affairs in peak time (Galloway 2011). While such claims are difficult to confirm they do at least underline the relevance of the results of this thesis to current debates in media regulation in the UK.

8.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRODUCERS: THE ANALYTICS OF MEDIATION AS GUIDANCE FOR MAKING TEXTS 'GOOD FOR MAN'

While the analytics of mediation may be highly regarded by many academics with interests in examining the mediation of distant Others (see Joye 2009; Ong 2009), it has, to my knowledge, never been scrutinised and 'tested' empirically using audience research in the way it has been in this thesis. One of the outcomes of this scrutiny was the finding that the specific claims made by applying the analytics of mediation to a number of individual texts and the subsequent claims about the capacities of different genres were largely borne out in the results of the audience research. One of the additional conclusions of this thesis, therefore, is that the analytics of mediation does provide the analyst with a reasonably reliable means of identifying how television texts position spectators in relation to distant

Others, notwithstanding the important role of audiences themselves in negotiating their mediated experiences of distant Others.

This is an important conclusion in and of itself because it helps to justify the status that the analytics of mediation currently has in this field and the reliability of my own findings. Perhaps more importantly, however, it enables us to conclude that the analytics of mediation may also provide a reasonably reliable means of helping journalists, editors and producers to identify a number of ways in which they can manage the treatment of distant Others in television texts to offer more intense mediated experiences. For example, if producers wish to attempt to enhance the sense of proximity between spectators and distant Others offered by the texts they construct then the space-times which distant Others inhabit should be shown to be concrete, specific, multiple and complex and to have similarities or connections to spectators own life-worlds. Similarly, a sense of agency may be promoted by allowing distant Others themselves to appear more often, not in aggregated or abstract forms, but as individualised, humanised, active people shown to have agency over their own lives.

The suggestion that reasonably subtle changes to the language, focus and editing of television texts can offer spectators very different forms of encounter with distant Others was illustrated most vividly by the comparison of BBC News and ITV News coverage of the same event in chapter 5. Chouliaraki also implies this when she argues that attempts to begin the processes of reversing the apparent 'compassion fatigue' of the public should begin, not with the audience, but by 'tap[ping] into the texts of mediation and work[ing] on their pedagogical potential for evoking and distributing pity in the news' (2006:113). She adds that one of the practical contributions of the analytics of mediation is that it offers us a language with which to revise regimes of pity, 'to make them 'good for man'' (2006:8). Indeed, one of the additional aims of this thesis has been to attempt to make clearer the often obscure language of the analytics of mediation. While readers of this thesis can judge whether I have been successful in this regard, the point remains that I have shown the analytics of mediation to be appropriate, to some degree, for providing guidance for making television texts 'good for man'.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIA: CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

My argument has been that if we think there is a role that television *should* be playing in regulating spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others, then it is important to first establish *how* television *does* regulate spectators' experiences of distant Others. In this respect, this thesis provides a useful starting point for future research in this area and for reconsidering existing research in a number of ways. In particular, there are a number of common assumptions about the character of the appearance of distant Others which my results help to challenge. For example, there is often an unqualified and unsupported assumption, particularly amongst those concerned with mediated cosmopolitanism, that when distant Others appear in the media, it is almost always in the news. As Kyriakidou states, without any apparent empirical support, 'for most people, most of the time the 'cosmopolitan' experience is restricted to news and media images' (2008:485). This thesis has provided evidence which challenges this assumption by revealing the extent to which distant Others appear in serious factual programming. In 2010 there were 343 programme hours of new international non-news content on UK television. I contend that it is not necessarily the 'cosmopolitan experience' which is restricted to news and media images but research into it. At the same time, I hope to have also illustrated the value of moving beyond news as a subject of analysis, not least because non-news factual television programming appears to have greater capacity for offering spectators a more intense mediated experience of distant Others than news.

The assumption that the appearance of distant Others is limited to news is often combined with an assumption that when distant Others do appear in the media, they are almost always suffering. This is evident in the following remark by Tester who, along with Ignatieff, provides no evidence to support this claim.

> Michael Ignatieff rightly points to the fact that television news tends to be full of the suffering of others (Tester 2001:121).

Indeed, one of the overarching questions of a recent conference on mediated cosmopolitanism was, 'can other popular media texts, besides news, also contribute to cosmopolitanism, or is this debate only limited to hard news and their representation of distant suffering' (Yilmaz and Mousoutzanis 2011)? The results presented in this thesis

provide a basis for beginning to investigate this assumption. While texts were not coded according to whether distant Others were suffering, or not, the results in Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.16 do show that only 28% of news about developing countries related primarily to either 'violence' or 'disasters' and just 10% of non-news factual programming was related to 'conflict'. With 44% of news items about developing countries being about politics and international relations and 45% of non-news factual programming being about wildlife, travel and history, it is reasonable to conclude that distant Others are often not suffering when mediated by television.

The work in this thesis has, I hope, not only challenged the assumption that distant Others appear most often as suffering, but also that distant suffering is always necessarily the most appropriate subject of concern for those investigating the moral role of the media. If we wish to investigate the role of television in the seemingly pervasive sense of indifference or solitary enjoyment in the UK towards matters beyond the nation, for example. Or if we are concerned for the conditions that contribute to a sense of common humanity that is necessary for most understandings of cosmopolitanism, then it is the study of distant Others in general with which we must be concerned.

While the notion of 'distant Others' is a useful conceptual tool for allowing us to refer to those faraway Others who spectators only encounter through the media, the term can carry with it an assumption that all distant Others are mediated in the same way. At least, there is a tendency not to disaggregate the concept in both conceptual (Silverstone 2006), and empirical (Kyriakidou 2008) work. By way of challenge to this assumption, this thesis has presented evidence to suggest that distant Others from different parts of the world are mediated very differently. In 2007, factual coverage of Africa, for example was dominated, not by the topic of 'conflict and disaster', which accounted for just 4.5% of coverage, but by wildlife programming (40%). By contrast, 37% of factual output about the Middle East in 2007 related to conflict and disasters and it had no factual coverage related to wildlife. In future, those who make use of this concept may wish to at least question whether it is appropriate to adopt such an aggregating term or whether this masks important differences or even contributes to a sense of anatopism discussed in the previous chapter.

Perhaps most significantly, questions about the role television *should* be playing in regulating spectators' mediated experiences of distant Others are predicated on an assumption that distant Others do indeed appear in the media. As has already been mentioned in this chapter, the results presented in this thesis indicate that for many countries and parts of the world this is simply not the case. Perhaps, therefore, if we wish to continue to focus on those 'peak moments' of coverage which appear to generate 'ideal' responses, it may be useful to compliment this with a focus on, or at least an acknowledgment of, the extent to which spectators even encounter distant Others in such circumstances. Indeed, I hope to have demonstrated more broadly the value of asking questions, not only of the *capacity* of the media to offer particular mediated experiences of distant Others, but of attempting to establish a measure of how often this capacity is realised. While Chouliaraki may provide us with a useful set of 'ideal' types of news narratives of suffering, it is only by complimenting this with some indication of their relative occurrence that we can really begin to understand the role the media actually plays in cultivating a disposition of care for the faraway Other.

8.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Despite the relatively large amount of new empirical research presented in this thesis and the wide ranging implications that stem from it, there remains, as always, much more to be done. The suggestion that different genres, and factual sub-genres, have different capacities for offering spectators more or less intense mediated experiences of distant Others remains a tentative one, based on a relatively small number of textual analyses and one piece of audience research. Any future research which seeks to explore this issue further might take its lead from this thesis and focus their attention firstly, on non-news factual programming, where distant Others appear far more often than any other non-news genres, and secondly, on the differences between different sub-genres of factual programming which I have begun to explore here. Furthermore, it may be pertinent to focus on factual programming in the form of 'hobbies and leisure' which constituted 30% and 23% of all factual programming about distant Others in 2007 and 2010 respectively, but which has not been examined in any detail here, or indeed, elsewhere.

Although this thesis has illustrated the relative and absolute lack of appearance of distant Others in drama and light entertainment programming, this does not necessarily mean that these genres are not worthy of further investigation. Television dramas involving distant Others, such as *The Promise*, *I am Slave* and *Blood and Oil,* though relatively rare, do tend to reach much larger audiences than most equivalent factual programmes and, my own previous research has suggested, very different audiences (Scott 2009). While such investigation would require the development of a very different analytical approach to the one used here, it has often been suggested that television drama does offer a very different kind of mediated experience compared to factual programming (Smith 2006; Harding 2009).

Further avenues for future research can be illustrated by a brief review of some of the additional research which was conducted for this thesis but which has not been included or discussed for want of space. In this thesis, evidence was presented to show that the frequency with which audiences encounter distant Others in developing countries depends very much on the particular news bulletins they watch. Aside from this, however, the different relative measures of the treatment of news and non-news coverage of about distant Others have been given in aggregated form. This has masked significant differences between how different news bulletins and different channels appear to regulate spectators' experiences of distant Others. For example, while 58% of all people who spoke in news items about developing countries were 'participants' on the ITV Evening News, just 10% of those who spoke in news items on the BBC 10 O'clock news were 'participants'. Thus, distant Others who appeared on ITV Evening News would have been afforded greater agency, at least with regards the ability to speak about their condition, than those on the BBC 10 O'clock news. The relative use of different modes of presentation also varied significantly between bulletins. For example, whereas the BBC 10 O'clock News made use of LVOs for just 7% of its international news, Five News made use of LVOs for 50% of its international news items. As a result, audiences of Five News would likely have been offered encounters with distant Others with much less capacity for generating intense mediated experiences. The suggestion from such results is that any future research in this area may do well to investigate the ways in which the quality of spectators' encounters with distant Others varies between different channels, and in particular, to compare commercial and

public service channels as I have begun to. My results also illustrate the significant differences between broadcasters within the same country.

One of the distinct features of this thesis is its use of the concepts of immediacy and hypermediacy to preserve a concern for Tomlinson's two-fold definition of mediation (as 'overcoming distance' and 'passing through the medium') in the analysis of texts *and* my attempts to take account of the dialectical nature of mediation by involving audiences. Despite this, there are still two further dimensions of mediation that have not been incorporated and which future research would do well to include. In the introduction to this thesis mediation was defined as a dialectical process involving some form of interaction between the audience and the text in which the thing that is being communicated is further mediated. This process of further mediation occurs not only as a result of spectators' negotiations of the meanings of texts, as was the concern in chapter 7, but also as a result of the social context in which consumption takes place. As the following quotations illustrate, one of the key ways in which the context of consumption interfered with the process of mediation was that, on many occasions, media texts were not watched in their entirety because consumption is interspersed with daily life.

> The programme was very interesting [but] I needed to get up for work and didn't want to be tired for it (London 2A).

> You see something and think how awful, but you've got to get the kids to school (Norwich 1F).

In the introduction to this thesis, the process of mediation was also defined as being contingent, not only upon the medium and the process of reception, but also upon the process of production. As Thompson argues, the medium itself must be understood, not as some independent force acting upon those experiences which pass through it, but as 'a contextualised social phenomena' (1995:11), which is itself subject to political, economic and socio-cultural forces. Whilst conducting the research presented in this thesis I had the opportunity to speak to a number of journalists, editors, producers and commentators whose comments provided detailed accounts of the political, economic and socio-cultural forces which determine the nature of production (see Appendix Q for a full list of the 42 interviewees). For example, several journalists explained that the relatively 'episodic' nature

of television news coverage of distant Others and the lack of 'voice' of distant Others were the result of a lack of news bureaus in developing countries. This was in turn attributed to wider financial pressures and a perceived lack of audience demand for coverage of distant Others. As one journalist said, 'I think the audience would get very bored if we did a weekly piece from China or Asia or Africa'. Such accounts are useful both for further understanding the nature of the process of mediation but also for finding ways of reforming it.

8.6 THE MORAL HEART OF MEDIA STUDIES

Having discussed the overall findings of this thesis, the implications for a number of different actors and the possible directions of future research, I wish to end this thesis, as it began, with reference to an observation from Tester. In the introduction to *Media, Culture and Morality* (1994) he argues that while the media are being studied as never before, that study is so often trivial and lacking in moral seriousness. He asks, for example, 'why do advertisements for coffee inspire more discussion than do famines' (1994:i)? He goes on to describe media studies as being 'morally cretinous, because it is the bastard child of the media it claims to expose.… Once a critical force, it has become facile and useless … about nothing other than [itself]' (1994:3–10).

I cite Tester's argument here, not to debate the extent to which this is true today, though it may well be, but to evoke the spectre that has haunted the conduct of this thesis. I did not want to make a contribution to the study of the media that was, as Tester describes it, morally cretinous... facile and useless… about nothing other than itself. Instead, I have aimed to add to what Ong describes as a 'dramatic moral-ethical 'turn' in media studies' (2009:449) by contributing to a conversation about the role of the media, recently reinvigorated by the work of authors such as Silverstone (2006), Chouliaraki (2006) and Boltanski (1999), that has a concern for morality at its heart. I have set out in this concluding chapter why I regard my contributions to this conversation as being both distinctive and valuable but also why there is still much to be said.

Appendix

Appendix A: Questions used by recruitment agency for screening participants of the focus groups and diary study

Q1.   Have you taken part in a market research discussion before?

Yes, more than a year ago   (   ) → *Go to Q1a*

Yes, less than a year ago   (   ) → *Close*

No   (   ) → *Go to Q2*

Q1a.   What was the subject being researched?

Close if to do with charity/ media

Q2.   Are you or your close family involved in any of the following professions?

Market Research   (   ) → *Close*

Media/Advertising   (   ) → *Close*

Television/Radio   (   ) → *Close*

Journalism/PR   (   ) → *Close*

Charity worker   (   ) → *Close*

Local/national government   (   ) → *Close*

Lobbying   (   ) → *Close*

Q3.   Is the respondent male or female?

Male   (   )

Female   (   )

Q4.   How old are you?

Under 17   (   ) → *Close*

18 - 25   (   )

26 - 39   (   )

40 - 54   (   )

55 +   (   )

Q5.   What is your marital status?

Single   (   )

In a relationship but not co-habiting (   )

Co-habiting   (   )

Married   (   )

Q6.   Do you have children?

No   (   )

Yes, my children live at home   (   )

Yes, my children live with someone else   (   )

Yes, my children have left home   (   )

Q7a   Looking at the following groups of TV programs, do you watch and enjoy more of those in group A, group B, or group C ?

A group   (   )   B group   (   ) C group   (   )

                                                  → *Close*

Eastenders   Channel 4 News   I don't watch much TV

Coronation Street   Newsnight

The Bill   Dispatches

Holby City   Silent Witness

Casualty   Mock the Week

Little Britain   Dr Who

X-Factor   Panorama

Q7b   Looking at the following groups of Newspapers, are the newspapers that you read most regularly in group A or in group B?

A group   (   )   B group   (   ) C group   (   )

The Sun   The Telegraph   I don't read the paper

The Daily Mail   The Times

The Evening Standard   The Independent

The Mirror   The FT

News of The World   The Guardian

The Metro   The Observer

Q7c   Looking at the following types of leisure activity, are the activities you do regularly and enjoy most in group A or group B?

A group   (   )   B group   (   )   C group   (   )

Musicals   Theatre   I don't do many

Museums   Art galleries   activities

Cinema blockbusters   Independent cinema

Q8. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about other countries and other people's way of life?

I am not very interested in how people live in other countries   (   )

I am more interested in other things   (   )

I have no strong feelings either way   (   )
I am fairly interested in how people live in other countries (   )

I am very interested in how people live in other countries   (   )

Q9a.   How concerned are you by the following issues in the UK?

	Very concerned	Fairly concerned	Not Very concerned	Not at all concerned
Knife crime	( )	( )	( )	( )
The state of the NHS	( )	( )	( )	( )
Education	( )	( )	( )	( )
Threat of Terrorism	( )	( )	( )	( )
Immigration	( )	( )	( )	( )
Child poverty	( )	( )	( )	( )

Q9b.   How concerned are you by the following issues in the developing world?

	Very concerned	Fairly concerned	Not Very concerned	Not at all concerned
Poverty	( )	( )	( )	( )
Third World debt	( )	( )	( )	( )
Human Rights	( )	( )	( )	( )
Equality	( )	( )	( )	( )
Effect of climate change	( )	( )	( )	( )
Use of sweatshops	( )	( )	( )	( )

Q10. Which areas of charitable giving do you support?

	Regularly	**Sometimes**	**Might Consider**	**Would never consider**
Children's charities	( )	( )	( )	( )
Animal charities	( )	( )	( )	( )
Cancer charities	( )	( )	( )	( )
Overseas charities or aid agencies	**( )**	**( )**	**( )**	**( )**
Age-related charities	( )	( )	( )	( )
Other medical / health-related charities	( )	( )	( )	( )

Q11.   Do you have a special interest in any of the following regions outside of Western Europe, and why?

	No, not really	Yes, I recently travelled or lived there	Yes, its related to my work connections there	Yes, I have family or personal experience
USA	( )	( )	( )	( )

Australia &

New Zealand   (   )   (   )   (   )   (   )

Rest of Australasia   (   )   (   )   (   )   (   )

South East Asia   (   )   (   )   (   )   (   )

India & Asia   (   )   (   )   (   )   (   )

Africa   (   )   (   )   (   )   (   )

Middle East   (   )   (   )   (   )   (   )

Central and Southern

America   (   )   (   )   (   )   (   )

Q12.   Ask non-white only

We're particularly interested in talking to people of certain ethnicities. Would you say that your ethnic origin is from any of the following regions?

	Yes	**No**
Asia	( )	( )

Eg India, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka, etc

| Africa | (   ) | (   ) |

Not North Africa eg Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt

| Caribbean | (   ) | (   ) |

Q13.   Ask all. How long have you lived in the UK?

Q14.   Ask all. Do you have a friend or partner who is similar to you in background and outlook?

Figure 9.1: Characteristics of participants in each cell for the first phase of focus groups
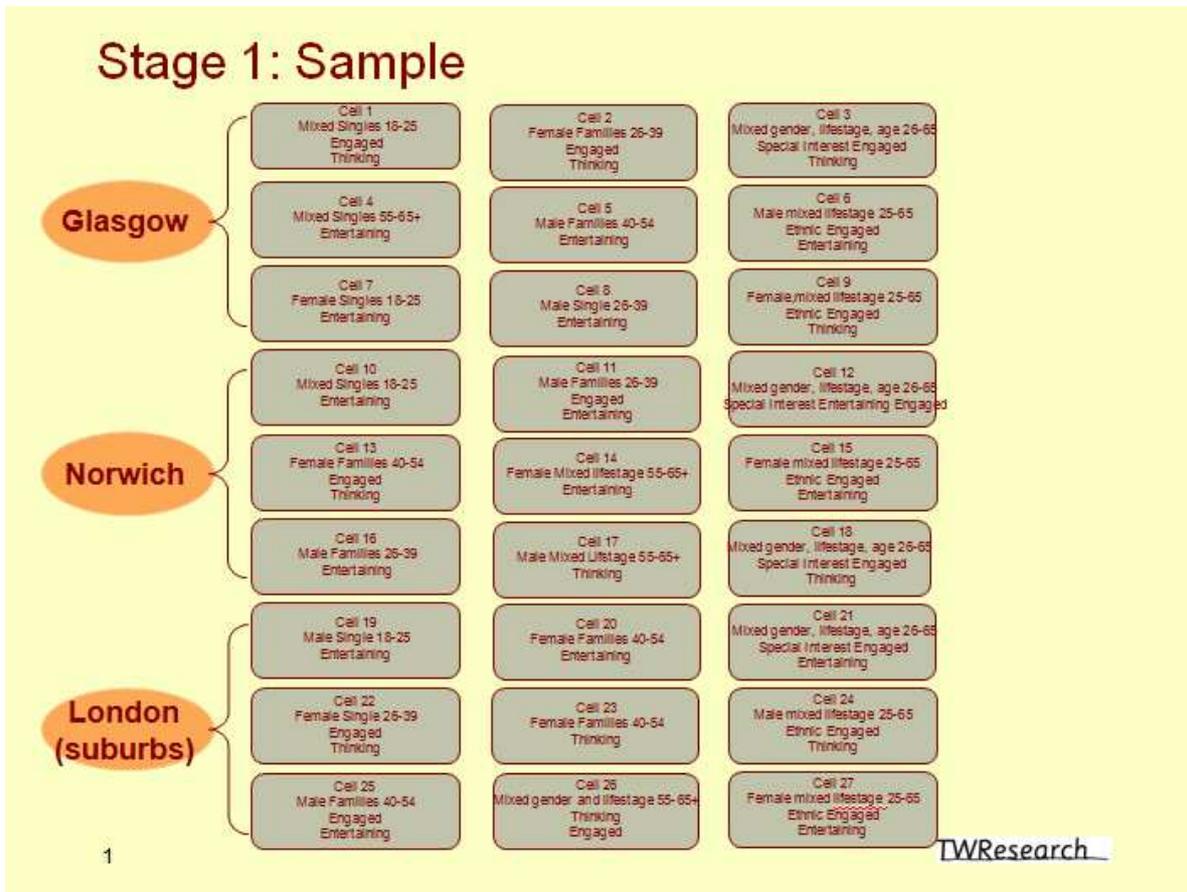
In the first round of focus groups, each focus group 'cell' had 4 participants in it which, as Figure 9.1 shows, were organized according to gender, age, ethnicity, whether they had particular interests in developing countries (described as 'engaged') and the form of media they consumed most often (described as either 'entertaining' or 'thinking')

Appendix B: Text from the front page of the online diary site

Hello and welcome to Project Global.

Thank you very much for your time and effort in taking part in this project

Please use this site to record your thoughts over the next 2 months.

Hopefully you'll find the site extremely easy to navigate. Basically there are 3 distinct pages for you to enter and leave your thoughts as the project progresses.

1. Your TV Viewing Diary - click here to enter a page where you can enter all examples of TV (& media) content that show us what life is like in countries and cultures that are poorer than ours

2. Additional References and Thoughts? – there is space here for you to jot down any other mentions you might have seen or heard about how people live in countries and cultures that are poorer than ours

3. What do you think of this? – In a few weeks time we'll send you some interesting things to look at, but don't worry about this for now!

We'll be in touch about once a week, and if you have any problems or can't remember how to fill something out, please click on Project Instructions to remind yourself

If you have any other questions or would like to send any thoughts to us please feel free to send them to: lyla@twresearch.com

Screenshot of the front page of the site
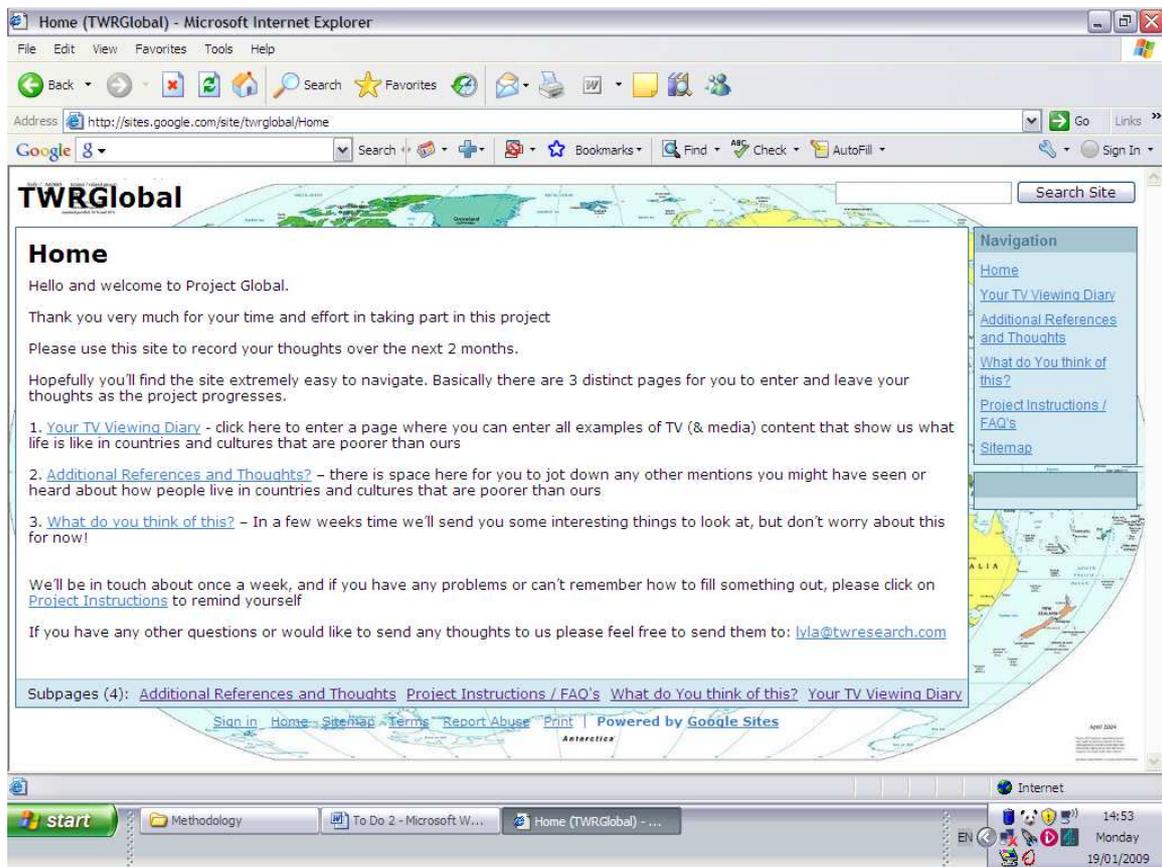
Address of the site: http://sites.google.com/site/twrglobal/Home

Appendix C: Questions in the online diary

Questions for diarist regarding encounters with distant Others in television

1. Your name
2. What was the reference to how people live in countries and cultures that are poorer than ours?
3. Country / Countries mentioned
4. Name of programme
5. Type of programme
6. Time of programme
7. Date of programme
8. TV Channel
9. How did you find out about it?
10. If you watched all or most of the program, why did you decide to watch it?
11. If you only watched part of the program or decided not to watch it, why was that the case?
12. What do you think about what you saw?

Questions for diarist regarding encounters with distant Others outside of television

1. Your name
2. Country or countries mentioned
3. What do you want to tell us about? Please be as specific as you can!
4. What sparked this comment or thought? please be specific and tell us more about the newspaper article, website, radio programme, conversation, advert etc
5. What, if anything, did it make you think about life in countries and cultures that are poorer than ours? Please explain briefly below

Appendix D: Text of the three prompts sent to diarists in the second month of the study

Prompt 1

Hi all, thanks for filling out your diaries for the last few weeks, we're now halfway through this project, so only 1 more month to go! In this final month, please keep filling out your viewing diary and additional thoughts as normal. We're also going to email you now and again and ask you some extra questions about what you've been watching or ask you to watch some specific programmes. So, over the coming week, we would like you to watch at least one of the following programmes (below) and then go and fill in your viewing diary to tell us about what you watched. You don't have to watch the whole programme if you don't want to, just please tell us what you thought of it (whether positive or negative) and let us know what made the programme you watched good or bad television.

Programs to choose from:

- Explore: Istanbul and Anatolia, BBC2, Sunday 08 Feb, 9:00 - 10:00pm

- Ross Kemp: Return to Afghanistan, Sky 1, Sunday 8th Feb, 10-11pm (repeated Tues 10th, 11.00pm-12.00am)

- Panorama Gaza: Out of the Ruins, BBC1, Monday 9th Feb, 8.30-9.00pm

- The World's Strictest Parents, BBC3, Monday 9th Feb, 8.00-9.00pm

- Cheetah Man, Channel Five, Tuesday 10th Feb, 8.00-9.00pm

- Doctors and Nurses at War, ITV, Tuesday 10th Feb, 8.00-9.00pm

- True Stories: Red Oil, More4, Tuesday 10th Feb, 10.00-11.00pm

- Who Killed Scarlett?, Channel 4, Thursday 12th Feb, 10:00 - 11:10pm

We're really looking forward to hearing from you all!

Prompt 2

Hi everyone, This week, please keep sending us comments and thoughts as usual, we're still interested in hearing about all the different references you see or hear about countries poorer than ours. We would also like you to watch one of these short news reports. We would like to hear what you think about the way the story was told in the news report you watched. Please watch one of these 3 reports (just click on the link)

- a BBC report on Zimbabwe http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7889828.stm

- a Channel4 report on Afghanistan
  http://link.brightcove.com/services/player/bcpid1184614595?bctid=13360663001
- an Al Jazeera report on Kenya
  http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/outofwork/2009/02/200921711933684304.html

If you would like to watch and comment on more than one of these then please feel free. Once you have watched please can you fill out the form below

1. Name

2. Which of these news reports did you watch?

3. What do you think of the way this story was told?

Prompt 3

Thank you everyone for responses to date. Your comments have been really interesting. This week we would like you to think back over the programmes you've watched with this project in mind. Many might tackle important subjects and interesting issues, however, for this task we want you to consider the programmes in terms of the simple question - 'what makes good telly'. Sometimes it is hard to separate the subject from the programme approach, but some ideas will make better 'telly' than others. So please tell us about what has made an impression on you during this project. What examples can you remember of TV at its best, and worst! Don't forget, we don't just want serious 'news' and documentary - spread the net wide and consider drama, entertainment, reality shows, etc

1. In your opinion, what do you think makes good telly?

2. Please tell us about any programmes you've watched for this project which were good telly (please try to be specific about the programmes and why they were good)

3. And tell us about any programmes which were rubbish telly

4. Please you explain what it was about these programme that made the difference (think about the way they were made)

Appendix E: Outline of focus groups discussion guides

Discussion guide for first phase of focus groups

Section 1: INTRODUCTION & COMPLETION OF MEDIA PRE-TASK   10 Minutes

- Introduce TWR
- Introduce research: talking about media and the developing world
- MRS Code of Conduct
- **Respondents complete a media usage questionnaire prior to starting the session and answer a few questions on the developing world**

Section 2: DISCUSSION OF DEVELOPING WORLD PERCEPTIONS   10 Minutes

Group introductions:

− Name, who's at home, first thoughts which come to mind when mention the developing world

Tell me a bit more about the developing world

- where is it
- what is it
- how do you feel about it

Imagine you had to describe the 'developing world' to an alien, how will you do that

- ie what are the characteristics of the developing world

How do you know the things you know about the developing world

- any key sources of information? Probe types of TV, film, friends etc

Before you were recruited, when was the last time you heard or spoke about any country or region in the developing world?

Section 3: RESPONSE TO DVD AND BRIEF ONLINE DIARY   10 Minutes

Watch DVD (2 mins)

First impressions?

- Which bits are clearly about the developing world / why
- Which bits are not clearly about the developing world / why not
- What other types of program did it make you think of?

Quick brainstorm as a group of possible sources

- ensure the following are mentioned

- drama / soap
- news / current affairs
- reality tv
- documentary
- sport
- wildlife
- children's
- comedy
- film
- radio
- online
- papers
- conversations
- adverts

We will be asking some of you to take part in an online diary for two months in January and February. We won't decide today but we'll let you know by Christmas. We'll be asking you to fill out an online diary every time you see a reference to the developing world, whether or not you watch the program. You'll get more details nearer the time, but basically we want you to think as broadly as possible about where you might see references to the developing world.

And just to finish up, thanks for the short you've media diary you completed at the start of the session.

Briefly, tell me about which type of media is most important in your lives

So that we remember who's who we need to take your photo as well as contact details

Photograph respondents, take email addresses

Thank and close

Discussion guide for second phase of focus groups

Section 1: RE-INTRODUCTIONS 10 Minutes
Re-Introduce TWResearch and the project
Introduce research: talking about media and the developing world
MRS Code of Conduct
THANK participants for their involvement on the completion of the ongoing media diary
The site will remain open for the time being should they wish to add subsequent comments
– any thoughts after tonight's groups etc

Ask respondents to briefly introduce themselves to their 'seating' neighbour – they have two minutes – tell them something about themselves – their household, work/[play and specifically – examples of 'rewarding TV' and 'a TV guilty pleasure' – easy but fun.

Section 2: (opening) DISCUSSION OF TELEVISION HABITS 20 Minutes
Stress – we are not talking about the project yet – lets find out about your general TV viewing
Since we are already thinking about Television and your viewing habits maybe we can talk some more about what influences what we watch on TV
Can you think of any examples (not just related to this project) of how you have been influenced to watch a specific programme
Is this quite typical?
To what extent do you go looking for new programmes/shows?
What leads you to view new programmes? – how is it dependent on time of day / what mood are they in/
How influential are recommendations? From who?
How do media influence what you watch
Advertising of programmes – trailers and off air?
What is it that gets you interested?
What makes you stick with a programme?
How often do these sources encourage/inspire you to check out a programme that would fit into this project – about the developing world?
Any good examples from the past 3 months?
We've been talking about television and what we enjoy watching – let's expand on this a little
We asked you in the diary to think abut what is good telly? Can you remember what you wrote?
Please give us some examples
When is TV worth the effort / rewarding for the viewer?
What are the qualities of a good programme? – if we were making the list of guidelines now for good TV – what are some of the factors that we should list?
Allow respondents to be as open/creative in thinking at outset

Section 3: FOCUS ON THE PROJECT & DIARY 10 Minutes
Quick 'thought dump' about the project - moderator writes down on flipchart from all member s of the group (no rules /not expectations /event complaints) impressions – what we learned – conclusions – themes – get them to call out quick comments /conclusions /ideas

Leave the thoughts on the flipchart. And break into two groups . Ask them to work as teams – go away for five minutes and then return with their group conclusions about …informally encourage them to consider….

a) what they discovered about themselves undertaking this project

b) what the project revealed about programmes about 'developing world

c) were there any changes about they way they thought about the subject

Open into a general discussion. .Assessment of the project

- How it influenced me – sharing thoughts in a small group
- How has being part of the project affected your TV viewing and thinking about your
- decisions about what to watch?
- What have we asked you / influenced them do that normally would not have happened
- Is their a benefit / negative to this?
- Did you feel that we pushed you to explore 'worthy' TV that normally you would overlook?
- How much did we stretch you into new territories?
- Do you think you found out anything different about yourself?
- Did you surprise yourself or what surprised you at all about the issues we have focused upon?

(start to generate any programme examples / situations where anybody has stretched themselves into watching something that might normally be viewed)

And perhaps those around them – have they discussed the themes / anything they have been viewing?

- Sharing of experiences – what have we been watching?
- Start to generate by example / What gets them talking
- Which programmes or issues have been picked up on?

Begin to generate a list of the programmes discussed (TWR to have a list from the pre-task already generated)

Section 4: DISCUSSION OF Programming specifics 30 Minutes

Across the past 3 months which programmes have had most impact on you individually and why?

What examples of good telly / bad telly from our list?

Why / how do these examples fit with our past discussion of what makes good or bad TV

TWR/IBT will have a list of programmes that have been addressed in online blog – a sample of programmes that have generated response will be addressed

From these examples

- What is it that got your interest initially?
- We / the project prompted you
- Personal interest in a story
- Relates to other people we know
- Is it the location?
- An ongoing theme that you had picked up on elsewhere

- Something topically relevant - unavoidable
- Something unique – unconsidered

What got you to these programmes – think about our discussion of how you decide what you watch?

- Impact of marketing v's personal discovery v's recommendations
- How important is the theme v's the telling of the story?
- Examples of how the telling of the story made the programme interesting?

What is it within the treatment that has helped to:

- tell stories
- inform you
- connect you – create empathy
- engage interest
- surprises you
- challenged or changed your opinions

If not developed, explore with the following in mind - in terms of treatment within stories

- Use of known persons – celebrities / experts
- Use of real people's stories
- Use of politicians / officials / spokespersons
- Details and factual background – how much is needed
- Locating ourselves – maps and diagrams
- Follow up from stories / issues – historical perspective
- Debate
- Taking stories further – possible online resource

Can we move on to think a little about how this differs by genre and type of programme…

- News
- Factual
- TWR Topic Guide – public perceptions Page 5 of 6
- Film
- Soap Operas
- Comedy
- Drama
- Sport

Return to past activity when relevant – in order to assess how the programmes on this project stack up / rate on the list of guidelines – winners and losers

Section 5: DISCUSSION OF 'DEVELOPING WORLD' 20 Minutes

We've struggled all along with what to collectively define the countries and cultures that are relevant to this project….what has changed in your understanding/perception/definitions

(remind participants that in initial discussions this frequently came up as an issue)

Now that we're moving towards the end of the project how would you assess the impact of viewing these programmes on your overall appraisal of the Developing World…

- some of the issues facing the developing world
- how people live their lives in the developing world
- how the developed and developing world relate to one another

Do they think TV & other media could do a better job than they do at the moment – could

they achieve this without making 'worthy' TV that everyone thinks well of but does not watch….any clues from the project (wri te down on a flipchar t)

What are the best examples of programmes that changed the way we think about the developing world. Who would win our project Oscars…..programmes that made their case well and made great TV….

- a serious programme such as a documentary or current affairs programme
- an entertainment programme – such as a drama or comedy
- a travel or nature programme

Any examples of situations / issues or countries where your perceptions have changed at all?

How informed do you feel about the developing world?

Section 6: Marketing 10 Minutes
Role of marketing of programmes that cover content relating to the project

We have already looked at this but do you have any more thoughts on how these programmes are marketed?

Return to stimulus material

Do you feel any sense of being informed about these programmes

Should you?

Section 7: Broadcasters 10 Minutes
Across media but primarily TV

Thinking about different channels and broadcasters and where possible referring to examples – does their coverage differ – can we now offer some examples of this

Have channels names on separate sheets of A4 – get quick review of how they faired in this project – push to ensure we are getting opinion with example – rather than just 'cliched' perceptions (e,g. BBC is formal, C4 is cutting edge, etc)

- Does it influence your perceptions/attitudes toward a broadcaster?
- Do you think the programmes we have been discussing have an agenda?
- Do you always believe / trust the coverage that you watch about the developing world?

Final Activity
- Recommendations for broadcasters on how to address issues in the future – all broadcasters
- Are they doing a good job on this subject/and could it improve.

On a flipchart create a hypothetical Audience charter– 6 points in hierarchy
- what would you like the broadcasters to promise to do
- is there anything you think they could do

Section 8: Concluding Thoughts 10 Minutes
After the project – any longer term implications do you think?

Has your behaviour changed – and will it return to the way it was before we met

An artificial experience but does it change the way we think and behave

Do you really remember items from 3 months ago?

How quickly does the world move on?

Thank and close

Appendix F: United Nations Development Programme classification of countries

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm

Geographical region and composition of each region

Africa

Eastern Africa

108	Burundi
174	Comoros
262	Djibouti
232	Eritrea
231	Ethiopia
404	Kenya
450	Madagascar
454	Malawi
480	Mauritius
175	Mayotte
508	Mozambique
638	Réunion
646	Rwanda
690	Seychelles
706	Somalia
800	Uganda
834	United Republic of Tanzania
894	Zambia
716	Zimbabwe

Middle Africa

024	Angola
120	Cameroon
140	Central African Republic
148	Chad
178	Congo
180	Democratic Republic of the Congo
226	Equatorial Guinea
266	Gabon
678	Sao Tome and Principe

015	Northern Africa

Algeria

818	Egypt
434	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
504	Morocco
736	Sudan
788	Tunisia
732	Western Sahara

Southern Africa

072	Botswana
426	Lesotho
516	Namibia

710   South Africa
748   Swaziland

Western Africa
204   Benin
854   Burkina Faso
132   Cape Verde
384   Cote d'Ivoire
270   Gambia
288   Ghana
324   Guinea
624   Guinea-Bissau
430   Liberia
466   Mali
478   Mauritania
562   Niger
566   Nigeria
654   Saint Helena
686   Senegal
694   Sierra Leone
768   Togo

Americas
419   Latin America and the Caribbean

Caribbean
660   Anguilla
028   Antigua and Barbuda
533   Aruba
044   Bahamas
052   Barbados
092   British Virgin Islands
136   Cayman Islands
192   Cuba
212   Dominica
214   Dominican Republic
308   Grenada
312   Guadeloupe
332   Haiti
388   Jamaica
474   Martinique
500   Montserrat
530   Netherlands Antilles
630   Puerto Rico
652   Saint-Barthélemy
659   Saint Kitts and Nevis
662   Saint Lucia
663   Saint Martin (French part)
670   Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
780   Trinidad and Tobago
796   Turks and Caicos Islands

850   United States Virgin Islands

Central America
084   Belize
188   Costa Rica
222   El Salvador
320   Guatemala
340   Honduras
484   Mexico
558   Nicaragua
591   Panama

South America
032   Argentina
068   Bolivia
076   Brazil
152   Chile
170   Colombia
218   Ecuador
238   Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
254   French Guiana
328   Guyana
600   Paraguay
604   Peru
740   Suriname
858   Uruguay
862   Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Northern America
060   Bermuda
124   Canada
304   Greenland
666   Saint Pierre and Miquelon
840   United States of America

Asia
143   Central Asia
398   Kazakhstan
417   Kyrgyzstan
762   Tajikistan
795   Turkmenistan
860   Uzbekistan

Eastern Asia
156   China
344   Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China
446   Macao Special Administrative Region of China
408   Democratic People's Republic of Korea
392   Japan
496   Mongolia
410   Republic of Korea

Southern Asia

004   Afghanistan
050   Bangladesh
064   Bhutan
356   India
364   Iran, Islamic Republic of
462   Maldives
524   Nepal
586   Pakistan
144   Sri Lanka

South-Eastern Asia

096   Brunei Darussalam
116   Cambodia
360   Indonesia
418   Lao People's Democratic Republic
458   Malaysia
104   Myanmar
608   Philippines
702   Singapore
764   Thailand
626   Timor-Leste
704   Viet Nam

Western Asia

051   Armenia
031   Azerbaijan
048   Bahrain
196   Cyprus
268   Georgia
368   Iraq
376   Israel
400   Jordan
414   Kuwait
422   Lebanon
275   Occupied Palestinian Territory
512   Oman
634   Qatar
682   Saudi Arabia
760   Syrian Arab Republic
792   Turkey
784   United Arab Emirates
887   Yemen

Europe

151   Eastern Europe
112   Belarus
100   Bulgaria
203   Czech Republic
348   Hungary

616	Poland
498	Republic of Moldova
642	Romania
643	Russian Federation
703	Slovakia
804	Ukraine

Northern Europe
248	Åland Islands
830	Channel Islands
208	Denmark
233	Estonia
234	Faeroe Islands
246	Finland
831	Guernsey
352	Iceland
372	Ireland
833	Isle of Man
832	Jersey
428	Latvia
440	Lithuania
578	Norway
744	Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands
752	Sweden
826	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Southern Europe
008	Albania
020	Andorra
070	Bosnia and Herzegovina
191	Croatia
292	Gibraltar
300	Greece
336	Holy See
380	Italy
470	Malta
499	Montenegro
620	Portugal
674	San Marino
688	Serbia
705	Slovenia
724	Spain
807	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Western Europe
040	Austria
056	Belgium
250	France
276	Germany
438	Liechtenstein
442	Luxembourg

492   Monaco
528   Netherlands
756   Switzerland

Oceania
053   Australia and New Zealand
036   Australia
554   New Zealand
574   Norfolk Island

Melanesia
242   Fiji
540   New Caledonia
598   Papua New Guinea
090   Solomon Islands
548   Vanuatu

Micronesia
316   Guam
296   Kiribati
584   Marshall Islands
583   Micronesia, Federated States of
520   Nauru
580   Northern Mariana Islands
585   Palau

Polynesia
016   American Samoa
184   Cook Islands
258   French Polynesia
570   Niue
612   Pitcairn
882   Samoa
772   Tokelau
776   Tonga
798   Tuvalu
876   Wallis and Futuna Islands

        Developed and developing regions
Developing regions
002   Africa
019   Americas excluding Northern America (numerical code 021)
029   Caribbean
013   Central America
005   South America
142   Asia excluding Japan
009   Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand
        (numerical code 053)

Developed regions
021   Northern America

150	Europe
392	Japan
053	Australia and New Zealand

Least developed countries

004	Afghanistan
024	Angola
050	Bangladesh
204	Benin
064	Bhutan
854	Burkina Faso
108	Burundi
116	Cambodia
132	Cape Verde
140	Central African Republic
148	Chad
174	Comoros
180	Democratic Republic of the Congo
262	Djibouti
226	Equatorial Guinea
232	Eritrea
231	Ethiopia
270	Gambia
324	Guinea
624	Guinea Bissau
332	Haiti
296	Kiribati
418	Lao People's Democratic Republic
426	Lesotho
430	Liberia
450	Madagascar
454	Malawi
462	Maldives
466	Mali
478	Mauritania
508	Mozambique
104	Myanmar
524	Nepal
562	Niger
646	Rwanda
882	Samoa
678	Sao Tome and Principe
686	Senegal
694	Sierra Leone
090	Solomon Islands
706	Somalia
736	Sudan
626	Timor-Leste
768	Togo
798	Tuvalu
800	Uganda

834   United Republic of Tanzania
548   Vanuatu
887   Yemen
894   Zambia

Landlocked developing countries
004   Afghanistan
051   Armenia
031   Azerbaijan
064   Bhutan
068   Bolivia
072   Botswana
854   Burkina Faso
108   Burundi
140   Central African Republic
148   Chad
231   Ethiopia
398   Kazakhstan
417   Kyrgyzstan
418   Lao People's Democratic Republic
426   Lesotho
454   Malawi
466   Mali
496   Mongolia
524   Nepal
562   Niger
600   Paraguay
498   Republic of Moldova
646   Rwanda
748   Swaziland
762   Tajikistan
807   The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
795   Turkmenistan
800   Uganda
860   Uzbekistan
894   Zambia
716   Zimbabwe

Small island developing States
016   American Samoa
660   Anguilla
028   Antigua and Barbuda
533   Aruba
044   Bahamas
052   Barbados
084   Belize
092   British Virgin Islands
132   Cape Verde
174   Comoros
184   Cook Islands
192   Cuba

212	Dominica
214	Dominican Republic
242	Fiji
258	French Polynesia
308	Grenada
316	Guam
624	Guinea-Bissau
328	Guyana
332	Haiti
388	Jamaica
296	Kiribati
462	Maldives
584	Marshall Islands
480	Mauritius
583	Micronesia, Federated States of
500	Montserrat
520	Nauru
530	Netherland Antilles
540	New Caledonia
570	Niue
580	Northern Mariana Islands
585	Palau
598	Papua New Guinea
630	Puerto Rico
659	Saint Kitts and Nevis
662	Saint Lucia
882	Samoa
678	Sao Tome and Principe
690	Seychelles
702	Singapore
090	Solomon Islands
670	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
740	Suriname
626	Timor-Leste
776	Tonga
780	Trinidad and Tobago
798	Tuvalu
850	United States Virgin Islands
548	Vanuatu

Transition countries
172	Commonwealth of Independent States
051	Armenia
031	Azerbaijan
112	Belarus
268	Georgia
398	Kazakhstan
417	Kyrgyzstan
498	Republic of Moldova
643	Russian Federation
762	Tajikistan

795   Turkmenistan
804   Ukraine
860   Uzbekistan

Transition countries of South-Eastern Europe
008   Albania
070   Bosnia and Herzegovina
191   Croatia
499   Montenegro
688   Serbia
807   The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Appendix G: Definitions of main network and regional programming genres and factual sub-genres (Ofcom 2010b)

Genre	Definition
CURRENT AFFAIRS	A programme which contains explanation and analysis of current events and issues, including material dealing with political or industrial controversy or with public policy. Consumer programmes and special events are included under 'General Factual'. Party Political and Election Broadcasts are excluded completely.
FACTUAL	Includes any form of Factual or documentary programming, including features and coverage of special events. Hobbies/leisure programmes and reality shows are also included. Drama documentaries are included in the Drama genre. Coverage of Sports events are included in Sport. All religious and arts and classical music programming are also included in this category.
DRAMA	Drama productions including Drama series and serials, Soaps, mini-series and single plays, Drama documentaries and TV movies.
LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT	All Entertainment, including situation comedy, other comedy, chat shows, variety, cartoons and animation (except children's cartoons and animation), quiz shows, game shows and family shows.

Factual Entertainment	Including reality shows, human interest stories and other similar factual material.
Hobbies and Leisure	Including gardening, homes, DIY, travel, cookery and other leisure pursuits.
Serious Factual	Documentaries covering, for example, science and medical issues, nature and wildlife, history and other topics.
Special Events	All special events (excluding Sports events), such as coverage of parliamentary proceedings, party conferences, royal events.

Appendix H: Definitions of the various topics used to code factual and current affairs programming (Dover and Barnett 2004:22)

1. Conflict and Disaster: comprising international and civil war, global security, terrorism, crime and civil unrest within the past ten years, and both historical and contemporary natural and man-made catastrophes.
2. Crime: all aspects of crime, criminal activity and investigation, including CCTV and police video compilations.
3. Development, Environment and Human Rights (DEH) issues.
4. History: factual programmes telling stories which took place over ten years ago (in order to distinguish the 'History' category from 'Conflict and Disaster,' in the case of war documentaries). This category also comprised archaeology, and included standard documentaries made up of archival footage and 'talking head' interviews, if the historical subject matter was placed outside the British Isles.
5. Miscellaneous (Misc): comprising lightweight human interest topics, observational documentaries or docu-soaps, science and medicine less easily classifiable programmes.
6. Politics: comprising elections and political change, political economics, and political analysis within the past 10 years.
7. Religion, Culture and Arts (RCA), including anthropology.
8. Travel: all variations on the travel/adventure/holiday programme.
9. Wildlife and natural history: shows mainly about animals. Purely reconstituted footage of animals was distinguished from animal programmes examining their environmental and human contexts, which would fall into the 'DEH' category.

Appendix I: Definitions of topics used to code international news items (Harrison 2000)

1. Politics, including; inter or intra party conflict and disagreement, enacted government policies, elections or election campaigns, parliamentary debates, official information or reports, local government actions, politician's personal lives, political implications of events or actions.
2. Economics, including; government actions such as tax increases, city news, exchange rates, trade talks or international meetings,
3. Business affairs, including; forecasts, redundancies, industrial reports, industrial disputes, general recession and recovery stories, announcements of losses and profits.
4. Law and order, including; human rights, criminal proceedings, inquests, non-violent crime, corruption.
5. Disputes, including; negotiations between countries, non-violent aspects of peace keeping,
6. Violence, including; terrorist attacks, violent demonstrations, mass random killings, riots, violent crime, murder, armed robbery, funerals of people killed violently and control of violence by authorities.
7. Human interest (light), including; light, humorous, unusual or celebrity stories, historic occasions, nostalgia, centenaries or ceremonies.
8. Human interest (serious), including; tragic stories about 'ordinary' people, victims of crime or violence, individuals protesting for their rights.
9. Health; including government policy, scientific medical discoveries, official reports and statistics, general health stories and the work of private or charitable health organisations.
10. Environment; including environmental pollution and the environmental consequences of disasters,
11. Science, including; scientific inventions or breakthroughs.
12. Disasters, including; earthquakes, floods, typhoons and cyclones, or damage or death caused by accident such as plane crashes or explosions. Does not include droughts or famine causes by human action. Where the cause of droughts or famine is not clear it is coded as a 'disaster'. Also includes 'near misses'.
13. Education, including; government policy, stories about educational institutions, official reports or statistics, general education stories and the work of private or charitable education organisations.
14. Sport, including; incidents involving sportsmen and women or teams, sporting occasions or achievements.
15. Religion, including; visits or announcements by religious leaders, religious ceremonies or festivals,
16. Weather, including; the predictions or consequences of extreme weather conditions reported on as part of the main news bulletin.
17. International relations, including; diplomatic relations, conferences and meetings, not based on violence or economics.
18. Other, including; all stories which do not fit into any of the above categories

Appendix J: Total number of programme hours of factual coverage received by different countries in 2007

Rank	Short Name	Terrestrial and 3 digital mins 2007
1	United States	13387
2	India	3047
3	Spain	2821
4	France	1872
5	Israel	1674
6	Australia	1647
7	South Africa	1600
8	China	1562
9	Iraq	1298
10	Italy	1118
11	Russian Federation	1023
12	Indonesia	786
13	Botswana	710
14	Germany	700
15	Afghanistan	665
16	Kenya	660
17	Ireland	600
18	Japan	548
19	Canada	537
20	Madagascar	508
21	Portugal	498
22	Brazil	498
23	Malaysia	474
24	Slovakia	432
25	Uganda	410
26	Argentina	375
27	Namibia	360
28	Greece	338
29	Papua New Guinea	336
30	Austria	326
31	Egypt	297
32	Pakistan	294
33	Poland	264
34	Bolivia	255
35	Mexico	238
36	Colombia	227
37	Serbia & Montenegro	212
38	Nepal	208
39	Bulgaria	203
40	Cuba	200
41	Jamaica	191

42	Ecuador	185
43	Romania	182
44	Samoa	180
45	Thailand	180
46	Turkey	178
47	Denmark	170
48	DPR Korea	170
49	Cameroon	168
50	Slovenia	162
51	Cyprus	162
52	Estonia	162
53	Vanuatu	162
54	Netherlands	148
55	Czech Republic	146
56	Switzerland	145
57	Peru	139
58	Costa Rica	120
59	Turkmenistan	120
60	Solomon Islands	118
61	Trinidad & Tobago	117
62	Islamic Republic of Iran	117
63	Belgium	114
64	Nigeria	114
65	Sri Lanka	113
66	United Arab Emirates	108
67	Zambia	108
68	Lebanon	94
69	Kuwait	90
70	Morocco	90
71	Myanmar	90
72	Sierra Leone	90
73	Liberia	90
74	Venezuela	88
75	Mongolia	87
76	Cambodia	87
77	Angola	86
78	Ethiopia	83
79	New Zealand	81
80	Chile	81
81	Azerbaijan	70
82	Bangladesh	69
83	Sudan	65
84	Honduras	64
85	Republic of Korea	60

86	Latvia	60
87	Viet Nam	60
88	Bhutan	60
89	Senegal	60
90	United Republic of Tanzania	60
91	Norway	58
92	Zimbabwe	57
93	Oman	54
94	Guyana	54
95	Ghana	54
96	Benin	54
97	Gabon	50
98	Democratic Republic of Congo	50
99	Tonga	41
100	Philippines	40
101	Iceland	30
102	Saudi Arabia	30
103	Lithuania	27
104	Bahamas	27
105	Haiti	27
106	Timor-Leste	27
107	Cote d'Ivoire	27
108	Guinea-Bissau	23
109	Sweden	22
110	Chad	5
111	Somalia	4
112	Finland	0
113	Luxembourg	0
114	Hong Kong (China)	0
115	Singapore	0
116	Barbados	0
117	Malta	0
118	Brunei Darussalam	0
119	Seychelles	0
120	Hungary	0
121	Saint Kitts & Nevis	0
122	Bahrain	0
123	Uruguay	0
124	Qatar	0
125	Croatia	0
126	Antigua & Barbuda	0
127	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	0
128	Macedonia FYR	0
129	Panama	0

130	Belarus	0
131	Mauritius	0
132	Albania	0
133	Bosnia Herzegovina	0
134	Suriname	0
135	Ukraine	0
136	Saint Lucia	0
137	Kazakhstan	0
138	Fiji	0
139	Armenia	0
140	Maldives	0
141	St Vincent & The Grenadines	0
142	Paraguay	0
143	Jordan	0
144	Tunisia	0
145	Grenada	0
146	Dominica	0
147	Georgia	0
148	Dominican Republic	0
149	Belize	0
150	El Salvador	0
151	Cape Verde	0
152	Syrian Arab Republic	0
153	Uzbekistan	0
154	Algeria	0
155	Equatorial Guinea	0
156	Kyrgyzstan	0
157	Republic of Moldova	0
158	Tajikistan	0
159	Nicaragua	0
160	Guatemala	0
161	Sao Tome & Principe	0
162	Lao People's Dem Republic	0
163	Comoros	0
164	Swaziland	0
165	Togo	0
166	Congo	0
167	Lesotho	0
168	Yemen	0
169	Mauritania	0
170	Djibouti	0
171	Gambia	0
172	Eritrea	0
173	Rwanda	0

174	Guinea	0
175	Malawi	0
176	Central African Republic	0
177	Mozambique	0
178	Burundi	0
179	Mali	0
180	Burkina Faso	0
181	Niger	0
182	Andorra	0
183	Cook Islands	0
184	Greenland	0
185	Holy See	0
186	Kiribati	0
187	Liechtenstein	0
188	Marshall Islands	0
189	Fed States of Micronesia	0
190	Monaco	0
191	Nauru	0
192	Niue	0
193	Palau	0
194	Puerto Rico	0
195	San Marino	0
196	Taiwan	0
197	Tuvalu	0
198	Western Sahara	0

Appendix K: Transcript of Channel 4 News item about Afghanistan

Studio anchor - In the last hour the US president, Mr Obama has said that the situation in Afghanistan is worsening and cannot be solved through military force alone, adding he will be detailing his plans for American forces there, quote, very soon. The latest US reinforcements have been sent to provinces now neighbouring Kabul, which now faces regular attacks. Channel 4 News has spoken to a senior Taliban commander close to the city who has a very stark message for the US president as Nick Paton Walsch now reports.

Journalist voiceover - Kabul, a city under siege, the Taliban breathing down its neck. They were able to launch a coordinated attack on several government ministries in its centre. 20 dead and its sense of security here shattered. Our cameraman drove an hour outside of Kabul to where they've got the closest, Logar Province. The US is sending over 1000 extra troops here to boost security and to go after this man. He says his name is Mullah Abdul Satar. He's the regional Taliban commander. He hides his face but not his glee at how freely his men can operate in the capital or how they'll now target any foreigners living there with ties to the occupation

Mullah Abdul Satar – (translated) – our holy warriors can get to the heart of Kabul, to the presidential palace. So you can see how effective we are, how close we can get. But those who are aiming to occupy our country, whether military or not, are a target and we will target them.

Journalist voiceover - They show us captured American equipment and they have a message for a man whose grandfather was Muslim, American President Barak Obama, 'change your ways and we might talk to you'

Mullah Abdul Satar – (translated by a voiceover) - If Obama brings some changes in policy then we will think about revising our way of dealing with him and America but from what we can see, there won't be any changes. Bush failed so they brought in Obama, he's just a new face. The policy is the same. America still sticks with their old ways. Their old policies.

Journalist voiceover - More of the same would suit him. He says NATO tactics, their heavy handedness, that led to civilian deaths, have turned the population of Logar towards the Taliban.

Mullah Abdul Satar – (translated by a voiceover) we see how the occupiers target defenceless civilians. They bomb women and children. That's why the people of Logar are helping us. Mujahadeen fighters can move freely here. We have no problems moving around and they can reach wherever they want.

Journalist voiceover - He says he and his men want Sharia law. That would mean an end to gambling and DVDs but they claim no affiliation with Al Qaeda. An insurgency where the hierarchy are still waiting to learn whether they should disrupt key presidential elections later this year.

Mullah Abdul Satar – (translated by a voiceover) We are waiting for a declaration from our central command. Whatever decision they make, we will follow.

Journalist voiceover - Politically aware, organised, and with freedom of movement in and around the capital. This is the enemy President Obama has inherited. Nick Payton-Walsh, Channel 4 News, Kabul. http://link.brightcove.com/services/player/bcpid1184614595?bctid=13360663001

Appendix L: Transcript of BBC News item about Zimbabwe

Studio anchor – Ministers in Zimbabwe's new government have been sworn into office nearly a year after the disputed elections. Shortly before the ceremony a high ranking member of the Movement for Democratic Change was arrested while trying to leave the country. He has now been charged with treason. The BBC is banned from Zimbabwe but our correspondent Andrew Harding is in Zimbabwe and he sent this report.

Journalist voiceover - A derelict school in a derelict country. Almost every rural school in Zimbabwe is now lying empty, a bankrupt state, unable to pay teachers, or anyone else for that matter. Hence the importance of today's ceremony in Harare. Robert Mugabe, presiding, as always. This is the final stage in the formation of a controversial unity government. Jobs and, in theory, power, shared between Robert Mugabe's team and his bitter rivals from the movement for democratic change. Its a messy deal, meant to kick-start urgent reforms here. But will it really work? Today in a sign of how little things have changed i had to sneak to a safe house to meet Morgan Tsvangirai. He might be Prime Minster now, but we're still banned from Zimbabwe.

Journalist in shot to Tsvangirai - Are you concerned that there are still hardliners inside ZANU-PF who will try and scupper this deal and are you seeing signs of that already?

Tsvangirai in shot to journalist- Well we have to budget, we have to budget for resistance, naturally, for those who feel that, one, that they have been left out, two, that they are entitled to retain power at any costs. You have got those residual resentments and you have to deal with that. But to me, the general thrust and momentum of the process is irreversible'

Journalist voiceover - The cracks are already starting to emerge in this unlikely political alliance. In what looks like a deliberate provocation today police arrested a senior MDC official and prospective minister. A Western diplomat here described it as a supreme act of bad faith and contempt by Robert Mugabe. Tonight the arrested official, Roy Bennett, has allegedly been charged with treason. Another worrying sign; these are jailed MDC supporters leaving court this afternoon. They were supposed to be set free, but no such luck. Real change has not yet come to Zimbabwe. Andrew Harding, BBC News. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7889828.stm

Appendix M: Transcript of ITV News item about Zimbabwe

Studio anchor - There was a small glimmer of hope for the people of Zimbabwe today after months of wrangling, the popular opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai officially became prime minister. But he was sworn in by his sworn enemy. President Robert Mugabe still has the real power there despite the almost complete collapse of the country. ITV news is banned from the country but we've been given unprecedented access to Morgan Tsvangirai, the man the people hope will end their suffering. From Harare, our African correspondent, Martin Geisler sent this report

Journalist voiceover - Having sacrificed so much for his struggle, Zimbabwe's new prime minster could be excused a celebration, the party began last night. Dozens of friends and family descended on Morgan Tsvangirai's home to see in a new dawn for their country. Invited to join the festivities, I find a man relishing the challenge that awaits him, but realistic as to its scale.

Tsvangirai in interview- This is an anxious moment for everyone, including me, personally i don't even know what's going to happen, we are plunging into the unknown. But im hopeful, the signs are there, the whole nation is hopeful, and so I'm hopeful too.

Journalist in interview – You've got a level of expectation to manage though haven't you?

Tsvangirai in interview- Oh yes, there is a high level of expectation, but i tell everyone, we're starting from zero, there is nothing here

Voiceover – and so this morning he took his vows.

Tsvangirai in a ceremony - I, Morgan Richard Tsvangirai do swear...

Journalist voiceover - But he is swearing to work with his sworn enemy. Robert Mugabe remains President of Zimbabwe, his grip on power relaxed, but not released. There is no doubt who most people here trust, tens of thousands turned out today to hear Tsvangirai's inaugural speech.

Journalist to camera – Morgan Tsvangirai can offer these people hope but not miracles. His job as Prime Minister is to pull this country back from the abyss and he's going to have to do it handcuffed to the very people who took it there.

Journalist voiceover – his challenge now he told the crowd, is to bring about change from the inside

Tsvangirai in a speech – the culture of impunity, of violence against human rights must end and it must end today.

Journalist voiceover - But in the townships around Harare they know Mugabe only too well. He delivered hunger and disease and almost total unemployment here. Many don't see a future until he is gone for good.

Vox pops - Personally, i just don't see it benefitting the common man on the street. So to a certain extent, its a non-event

Vox pops - We just want something on our tables, that's it.

Journalist voiceover – that scepticism is shared by the wider world. Billions of dollars set aside to re-build this country won't be released until the new unity government has proved it can work. Until Mugabe can demonstrate he's changed. Back at Morgan Tsvangirai's house, they are high on optimism and hope. The party will continue long into the night, with one noticeable absentee. The host. He is working now. The job has begun, but he's there in spirit. Martin Geisler, ITV News, Harare.

Appendix N: Transcripts of live voiceovers (LVOs)

LVOs regarding trapped miners in China (22/02/09)

- **FIVE News -** 74 people have been killed after an explosion at a mine in China. Dozens more were trapped underground by the gas blast. Chinese mines have a terrible record. More than 3000 people were killed in them last year alone.
- **Channel 4 News -** A gas explosion in a Chinese mine has killed 74 miners. Dozens of others are trapped underground and have been contacting their families using mobile phones. More than 400 miners were working underground in the mine in XianXie province when the explosion occurred. China's mining industry is the world's most dangerous. More than 2000 miners were killed last year.
- **ITV Evening News -** 74 miners have died in an explosion in china. Scores more were rescued after being trapped underground for hours. It happened the day after a mine safety conference at which officials promised to put an end to fatal mining accidents.
- **ITV Nightly News -** 74 miners have died in an explosion in china. The blast happened the day after a mine safety conference at which officials promised to put an end to fatal mining accidents

LVOs regarding outcome of poll in Venezuela (19/02/09)

- **More 4 News** - In Venezuela, Hugo Chavez has won the right to run for president for the third time. His supporters gathered outside the state palace after last night's referendum abandoned the country's 12 year term limit. Mr Chavez says he needs at least another decade to complete his socialist revolution. The next presidential elections will be in 2012
- **BBC4 World News -** Supporters of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez have been celebrating victory a referendum which could allow their leader to stay in office for life. ... opponents of the president have warned of greater authoritarian rule after Chavez, who's been in power for over a decade, succeeded in ending term limits. He will stand again in the 2010 elections

LVOS regarding suicide bomb attack in Iraq (13/02/09)

- **BBC1 6 o clock News** - At least 30 people, mainly women and children, have been killed in a suicide bomb attack in Iskandaria, south of Baghdad. The blast targeted Shia pilgrims who were on their way to the city of Karvaella to take part in an annual religious ceremony. Iraq's leaders say a female suicide bomber was responsible for the blast.

- **ITV1 Evening News -** 32 people have been killed in an explosion south of Baghdad, as they took part in an annual Shite pilgrimage. A further 82 people were wounded in the attack by a female suicide bomber. The majority of the victims were women and children.
- **More 4 News -** A female suicide bomber has killed 40 pilgrims on their way to a religious ceremony near Baghdad. The bomber, who blew herself up in a crowd in Sagaria, had hidden explosives under her dress. Most of the dead were women and children.

Appendix O: List of randomly selected sample of serious factual programmes watched

1. Stephen Tompkinson's African Balloon Adventure (ITV1, episode 1)
2. A Place in the Wild (ITV1, episode 1)
3. Zimbabwe's Forgotten Children (BBC4)
4. Jimmy's Global Harvest (BBC2, episode 3 – Kenya)
5. New Kings of Nigeria (BBC4)
6. Syria School (BBC4, episode 1)
7. A Woman Among Warlords (More 4)
8. Moving to Mars (Channel 4)
9. Burma VJ (Channel 4)
10. The Tutu Talks (BBC3, episode 3)
11. The World's Most Dangerous Place for Women (BBC3)
12. Kids for Sale - Stacey Dooley Investigates (BBC3, episode 1)
13. Bombay Railway (BBC2, episode 1)
14. The African Rock and Roll Years (BBC4)
15. Lindsay Lohan's Indian Journey (BBC3)
16. South Africa in Pictures (BBC4)
17. South Africa Walks (BBC4, episode 3)
18. Louis Theroux: Law and Order, Lagos (BBC2)
19. Extreme fishing with Robson Green (Channel 5)
20. Wedding, War, Women and Me (BBC3)
21. John Sergeant on Tracks of Empire (BBC4, episode 1)
22. An African Journey with Jonathan Dimbleby (BBC2, episode 1)
23. African Railway (BBC4, episode 1)
24. Tsunami: Caught on Camera (More 4)
25. The Lost Girls of South Africa (Channel 4)
26. Kevin McCloud Slumming it (Channel 4, episode 1)
27. Nigeria's Killing Fields (Channel 4)

Appendix P: List of randomly selected sample of factual entertainment programmes watched

1. Tribal Wives (2007)
2. Last Man Standing (2007)
3. Meet the Natives (2007)
4. Who do you think you are? (2007)
5. Millionaire's Mission (2007)
6. Cat fat teens hunt? (2007)
7. Mission Africa (2007)
8. Return of the Tribe (2007)
9. Blood, Sweat and Luxuries (2010)
10. Wags, kids and World Cup Dreams (2010)
11. Indian School (2010)
12. My Family's Crazy Gap Year (2010)
13. Top Gear: Middle East Special (2010)
14. Jack Osborne: Adrenaline junkie (2010)

Appendix Q: List of elite interviews conducted with journalists, editors, producers and NGO workers

1. David Aukin – Executive Producer, Daybreak Pictures
2. Alanna Clear – Strategic planner, Red Bee Media
3. Matthew Godfrey – Senior Strategy Manager, BBC
4. William Greswell – Controller, Strategy, BBC Vision
5. Roly Keating – Director of Archive Content, BBC
6. James Kirkham- Managing Director, Holler
7. Martin Kirk – Head of UK campaigns, Oxfam
8. John McDonald – Creative Strategist, BSkyB
9. Mark Rossiter – Producer/Director, Fresh One
10. Mark Sandell – Editor, *World Have Your Say*, BBC World Service
11. Oliver Steeds – Journalist, *Unreported World,* Channel 4
12. Terry Stevens – Head of Home Entertainment, Dogwoof
13. Celia Taylor- Head of Factual and Features, Sky Entertainment
14. Vicky Taylor – Commissioning Editor, New Media, News and Current Affairs, Channel 4
15. Clive Tulloh – Head of Entertainment, Tiger Aspect
16. Hal Vogel – Executive Producer, Daybreak Pictures
17. Terry Watkins – Media consultant, TWResearch
18. Michael Holman – Former Africa Editor, Financial Times
19. Beatrice Karanja – Kenyan journalist
20. Firoze Manji – Director, Fahamu
21. Tim Marshall – Foreign Affairs Editor, Sky News
22. Paul Mason – BBC Newsnight Correspondent
23. David Mugonyi – Reporter, The Nation, Kenya
24. Sylvia Mwichuli – Africa Communications Coordinator for the UN Millennium Campaign
25. Adam Mynott – BBC East Africa Correspondent
26. Helen Palmer – Global media officer, Oxfam
27. Deborah Rayner – Senior Foreign Editor, Channel 4 News
28. Sinead Rocks – Editor, Newsround
29. Tim Singleton – Foreign Editor, ITV News (2 occasions)
30. Wachira Waruru – Chair, Media Council of Kenya
31. Sally-Ann Wilson – Project Director, CBA/DFID Broadcast Media Scheme
32. Adrian Wells, Foreign Editor, Sky News
33. Alistair Burnett, Editor, The World Tonight
34. Charlie Beckett, Director, POLIS and former Programme Editor, Channel 4 News
35. Chris Shaw, Head of News and Current Affairs, Five
36. Jon Williams, World Editor, BBC News

37. Martin Fewell, Deputy Editor, Channel 4 News

38. Martin Frizell, Editor, GMTV

39. Mohamed Ali, CEO, Islam Channel

40. Paddy Coulter - Director, Oxford Global Media

41. Sam Barratt - Head of Media, Oxfam

42. Suzanne Bush - Programme Editor, Al-Jazeera English

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